

# Flexible Working as an Influencer of Employee Engagement Practices

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## Abstract

The study was done to know how best workplace flexibility acts as an influencer towards employee engagement. How best an employee commits himself/herself towards the organisation is called employee engagement and it is very much important for the development of organization. Workplace flexibility will be a best practice to create employee engagement in organization. In the modern era workplace flexibility is no more a new concept or an option it is one of the vital policies to engage the employee. In some of the difficult situations like COVID, workplace flexibility will act as an influencer to engage employees. This study identified that work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk are the independent variables and workplace flexibility was an intermediating variable and employee engagement was a dependent variable. In this study, 150 respondents were selected to undergo study in Bangalore and the questionnaire encompasses a 25-point Likert scale. The respondent was selected as working women who have to balance kids and work. By using path analysis, we found that work-family conflict, stress and perceived risk have a direct influence on employee engagement and have an indirect influence on employee engagement by providing workplace flexibility. Further study can be made by considering various other factors and different methods of workplace flexible options to have a better and healthiest working environment.

**Keywords:** Work family conflict, Stress, Perceived risk, Workplace flexibility, Employee engagement

## 1. Introduction

The employee who commits towards the organisation is called as employee engagement and it is very much important for the

development of organization. An engaged employee connects himself positively towards organization goals and which is something more than job satisfaction. The flexible workplace includes flexi place, flexi

time, work-sharing, compressed shifts, career breaks, choice in shifts. In the modern era workplace flexibility is no more a new concept or an option it is one of the vital policies to engage the employee and due to the outbreak of pandemic the women employees faced many difficulties in balancing work and life which created work-family conflict, with the help of flexible option it was overcome in a better manner. Availability of facilities like technology made workplace flexibility still best. To bring a successful result on flexibility it's important to create etiquette, guidelines and tools because to engage the employee we use workplace flexibility as a tool and that should not have any snags. By providing a slight flexible option to employees we can create greater commitment towards works. Bal and Lange (2015) providing flexible working practices that will enable employee engagement and increase performance. Flexible work practice is one of the tactics implemented in the organisation to engage the employees. van Bijsterveldt (2014–2015) The flexible work practices manages the psychological, social, & physical welfare of an employee which gives engaged employee in an organisation.

There is a certain myth towards the concept of flexibility like supervision is not possible, lack in productivity but one of the clandestine to increase productivity and engage the employee is to implement workplace flexibility. Employees feel happy, satisfied, stress-free and engaged at workplace by adopting workplace flexibility practices. Ugargo (2018) says that providing flexible work arrangements increases employee engagement. The employer should realise that employees have a life outside work and every one of us has different types of responsibilities towards our personal life, to make their life & career successful as well

and to be comfortable in both work & life one of the best practices an employer can provide is workplace flexibility. Positive mindset, positive environment creates employee engagement so one of the leading ways to provide employee engagement is by providing workplace flexibility to employees in choosing the best option of flexible methods. Pitt-Catsoupes (2008) says that different age group of employee requires workplace flexibility for different reasons, parents who have newborn kids, employees who have old age parents, employee due to health conditions cannot commute for longer distance. All these difficulties can be overwhelmed by providing flexibility.

## 2. Review of literature

Sankar (2010) says that work-life balance directly associates with employee engagement, retention. Richman (2008) conclude that the flexible option can be either occasional or regular both are highly related to employee engagement as well as employee retention. Some employee requires flexibility due to alternative; some might require regularly. Attridge (2009) says that work arrangements provided by the employer are highly involved with employee engagement, the workplace practices, culture, working environment, leadership style also influences employee engagement. Sekhar (2018) finds that providing flexible human resource management is directly related to engaging employees and performance. Koon (2018) says that implementing flexibility creates a positive behaviour attitude which increases performance and can engage the employees. Bal and Lange (2015) found that providing flexibility to the younger generation creates employee engagement and increases performance

among the old age generation, so the outcome of providing flexibility will be subject to the age factor. Höge (2019) Says that workplace flexibility provides well-being to an employee and supports health. Grzywacz (2008) concludes that the benefit of providing flexibility differs based on gender and also flexitime is considered as one of the important flexibilities. UNICEF (2020) Due to the outbreak of disease the consequences were felt all around the world, many working parents felt difficulty in managing things, by providing flexible working policies—helped them reduce the burden

### 3. Methodology

The study was carried out in May 2020 and targeted women who were offered flexi work in April as a peak of pandemic and strict lockdowns. The framed questionnaire contains 25 Likert scale that reflects scales leading to workplace flexibility moderate’s employee engagement. It consists of 5 points Likert scale with values at 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 as highly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, highly agree. A total

of 150 respondents in Bangalore predominantly working women were considered as sample size and sampling technique used is convenient sampling. The respondents were identified that who are in need of workplace flexibility like women employee who are having kids and to manage work-life and by utilising the facility how their behaviour changed and made them to engage themselves at work place.

In the model shown above in Figure 1, work-family conflict, stresses, perceived risks have a direct influence on employee engagement and also has an indirect influence on employee engagement through workplace flexibility. In this model, workplace flexibility has intermediating variable for the effect with work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk on employee engagement.

From Table 1, it is found that the Chi-Square value is 2.311 where the value of *P* is greater than the 5% level. The values calculated from CFI and NFI are bigger than 0.90. GFI, Goodness of Fit index is the amount of fit in the sample covariance matrix advocated for by the model which should be above 0.9 for a good model. The

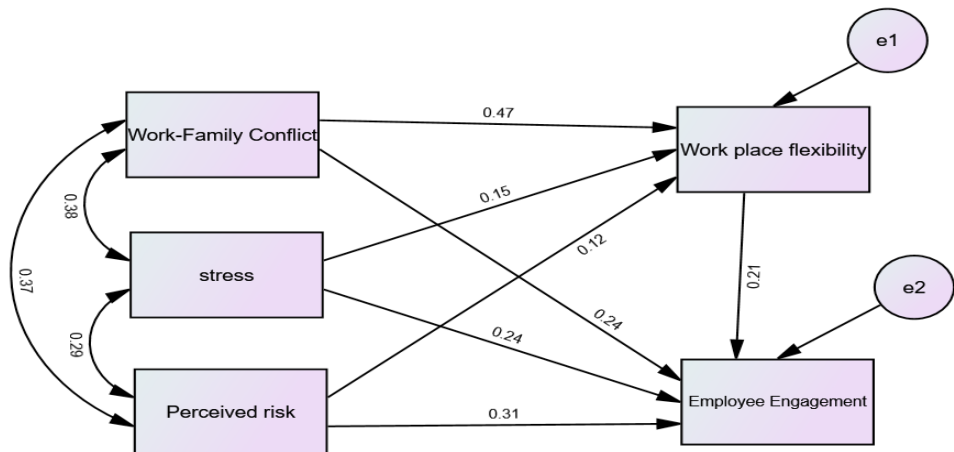


FIGURE 1. Path analysis

**TABLE 1.** Model fit indication

Names	Observed values	Recommended values
Chi-Square	2.311	-----
P	0.185	> 0.050
GFI	0.932	>0.90
AGFI	0.998	>0.90
CFI	0.998	>0.90
NFI	0.999	> 0.90
RMS	0.015	< 0.080
RMSEA	0.001	<0.080

GFI value that is found from the model is 0.935. It was found that the RMS value is 0.014 and the RMSEA value is 0.001 which is less than 0.08. For continuous uninterrupted data, the CFI value should be greater than 0.95 and the RMSEA value should be lesser than 0.06 as suggested by Bentler (1999) which both satisfies in the above model and the SRMR (Standard root mean square residual) should be less than 0.08. According to the interpretation by Schermelleh (2003), the CFI greater than 0.90 and near to one has a good fit. Bayram, (2003). AGFI values should be greater than 0.90 is suggested to be good fit.

Work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk has an influence on workplace

flexibility with the CR values as 12.492, 4.005, 3.262. From table 2. The beta value indicates that 46.8, 14.6, 11.8 percentage of impact on workplace flexibility is through work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk. Hayman (2009) Flexible schedule has a positive influence on employee work-family conflict, many working parents felt flexible schedule helps them to manage their work and life in a better way. The employee felt that due to the flexible schedule they can take care of kids, they can concentrate on their kids' studies and well-being which made them be loyal and commit themselves towards their job. The calculated values of CR are 6.613, 9.995, 7.702, 5.910 and the beta values are 0.238, 0.311, 0.242, 0.208 which implies 23.8, 31.2, 24.2, 20.8 percentage on employee engagement through work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk and flexibility. The number of employees involved is huge and the relationship of employee engagement to have a lesser influence on perceived risk but the other factors such as work-life balance and stress level have a greater influence on employee engagement.

**TABLE 2.** Regression weight

DV		IV	Estimate	SE	CR	Beta	P
Workplace flexibility	<-----	Work-family conflict	0.346	0.028	12.492	0.468	0.001
Workplace flexibility	<-----	Stress	0.140	0.035	4.005	0.146	0.001
Workplace flexibility	<-----	Perceived Risk	0.103	0.032	3.262	0.118	0.001
Employee Engagement	<-----	Work-family conflict	0.317	0.048	6.613	0.238	0.001
Employee Engagement	<-----	Perceived Risk	0.491	0.049	9.995	0.311	0.001
Employee Engagement	<-----	Stress	0.420	0.055	7.702	0.242	0.001
Employee Engagement	<-----	Workplace flexibility	0.375	0.064	5.910	0.208	0.001

**TABLE 3.** Parameter estimates -covariance model

IV		IV	Estimate	S. E	C.R.	R	P
Work-family conflict	<-->	Perceived Risk	9.486	1.122	8.454	0.373	0.001
Perceived Risk	<--->	Stress	5.706	.842	6.755	0.292	0.001
Work-family conflict	<---->	stress	8.673	1.015	8.546	0.377	0.001

## 4. Result

The relationship between work-family conflict, stress, perceived risk was identified, and the value of CR is From TABLE 3. The value of covariance is 0.373. The covariance value indicated that there is a 37.3 percentage relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction and reduce stress level. The value of p is less than 1% level of significance and hence it is conducted that there is a relationship between work-life balance, stress and perceived risk at 1 % level. Shagvaliveya and Yazdanifard (2014) suggest that flexibility at workplace helps and enables work-life balance, reduces stress level and increases productivity.

The relationship between stress and perceived risk showed the value of CR 6.775 and the value of covariance is 0.292, which indicates that there is 2.92 percentage relationship between stress and perceived risk. From the value of P, it is found that there is a significant relationship between stress level and job satisfaction at a 1% level of significance. Marie (2020) found that providing various assistance programs like workplace flexibility and time flexibility will be the key in reducing the stress level and fear of risk related covid spread.

The relationship between work family conflict and stress was found that the value of CR was 8.546, The covariance was 0.377 which implies that is a 37.7 percentage relationship between work-life balance and reduced stress. Halpern (2005) workplace

flexibility policy creates an environment where the employee can live and work. In this competitive world, people work more and live less, but this can be overcome by providing flexibility. Josh (2020) Due to covid working mothers was stressed since they have to take care of loved ones, the better solution is providing flexibility where they can take care of loved ones and which in turn reduce stress.

## 5. Managerial Implications

The study benefits employees, employers & society. Employees able to balance work-life and contribute towards organisation growth, in a pandemic situation children are at home and parents can take care of them by using flexible arrangements options. Employers rather than focusing on unwilling employees to work, can extract work & still engage employees during the pandemic situation. Towards society, employees who don't want to travel as it ensures unwanted commute can be avoidable during the pandemic situation.

## 6. Conclusion

Workplace flexibility is not a new concept but it was recently welcomed by most of the organisation since the flexible environment creates a positive attitude in the mindset of the employee where, they can reduce

work-family conflict, stress, and the perceived risk during covid like effect towards virus and risk involved in spreading too beloved once. The engaged employee does not require any supervision, since an employee can take care of their personal responsibility without any difficulty it positively impacts work. From this study, we can conclude that by providing well-planned workplace flexibility we can reduce work-family conflict, stress and perceived risk which will engage the employees at workplace. We had found that workplace flexibility creates employee engagement but finding the right method of flexible option and right tool as to be implemented to avoid any misperception. specifically, to retain a talented employee in an organisation choosing workplace flexibility will be a great option and it is the best option during the pandemic situation to be safe and work.

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