

Flexible Work Arrangements and Their Relationship with Stress Levels Among Women Employees

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Abstract

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) have emerged as a key tactic for improving employee well-being, particularly for female employees who juggle work and family obligations. The need for encouraging work environments that lower stress and enhance work-life balance is highlighted by the growing number of women entering the workforce. This study investigates the connection between female employees' stress levels and flexible work schedules. A structured questionnaire was used to gather the data, and the Chi-square test and percentage analysis were used for analysis. The results highlight the significance of flexible work policies by showing that female employees who have access to flexible work options—such as work-from-home, flexible schedules, and hybrid models—experience lower stress levels than those who work in traditional office-based systems. The need for flexible and supportive workplaces that encourage work-life balance and reduce stress has grown in importance as women's employment rates continue to rise. Because of the long commute times, time constraints, and limited control over work schedules, traditional office work and rigid schedules can make it difficult for women to manage multiple responsibilities. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and percentage analysis and the Chi-square test were used for analysis.

Keywords: *Flexible Work Arrangements, Stress Levels, Women Employees, Work-Life*

Introduction

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are receiving growing attention as organizations look to enhance their work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity and employee wellbeing. Being burdened with the dual roles of worker as well as caregiver can result in a spillover of work and family related stressors. These stressors can be minimized through alternative work arrangements including teleworking or work-from-home arrangements, hybrid arrangements (combining work-from-home and working in the office), flextime, and a compressed workweek. Increased autonomy over work schedules and work environment may assist women employees in reducing their resultant stress levels.

Flexible working arrangements can indeed lead to reduced level of stress, for instance, by afford employees a better work-life balance, effectively reduces commute time and allows them to address family and personal needs more efficiently and effectively. Employees are better able to customize their working environment to such extent that can enhance positive emotion, boost job satisfaction and alleviates fatigue. Nevertheless, whether couples can benefited from flexible working arrangements to reduce their stress effectively may depend on other moderates, for example, type of jobs, organizational culture, supervisor support and others individual factors, due to that flexibility at work is not that effective as we expected if not being implemented properly

Review of Literature

1. The study “Are Flexible Work Arrangements Associated with Lower Levels of Chronic Stress-Related Biomarkers” by Booker, C. L., Kumari, M., Chandola, T., and Benzeval .M (2019)¹. These arrangements allow women to allocate time more effectively between paid work and caregiving duties, reducing long-term physiological stress. The study highlights that flexibility can act as a protective factor against chronic stress by improving work-life balance and reducing role overload. Employees with flexible schedules manage work and family responsibilities better, reducing stress. Reduced-hours arrangements, especially for women with young children, are linked to lower chronic stress.

2. The study “**Balancing Boundaries: A Comparative Study of Fixed and Flexible Work Schedules of Women Professionals in India**” by **Khandagale, A., and Mahajan, A. (2025)**². This study shows that flexible schedules improve work-life balance, mental health, and job satisfaction among Indian women professionals. Women feel more control over their time and experience less burnout. Fixed schedules often hinder career growth and family balance. Flexible work fosters healthier and more inclusive workplaces. This study shows that Indian professional women’s mental health, job satisfaction, and work-life balance all benefit from flexible work schedules.
3. The study “**Control over Time: Employers, Workers, and Families Shaping Work Schedules**” by **Fugiel, P. J., Lambert, S. J., and Henly, J. R. (2014)**³. This study focuses on how control over work schedules affects employees’ lives. Inequalities in gender, race, and class shape access to predictable schedules. Greater employee control over time leads to healthier work and family outcomes. The study also highlights that access to predictable and flexible schedules is not equally distributed. Structural inequalities related to gender, race, and class significantly influence who benefits from schedule control. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, and lower-income workers are more likely to experience unstable or unpredictable work hours, which can intensify stress and disrupt family life.
4. The study “**Exploring Academics’ Work-Life Balance and Stress Levels Using Flexible Working Arrangements**” by **Raju, R., Putit, L., Subramaniam, G., and Ramachandran, J. (2020)**⁴. Among Malaysian academics, flexible work options significantly improve work-life balance and reduce stress. Post-COVID remote work has increased the importance of flexibility. Institutions with supportive policies see higher wellbeing and productivity among academic staff. The period following COVID has highlighted the significance of workplace flexibility in higher education institutions even more. Academic tasks like online teaching, research collaboration, and administrative work can be effectively managed outside of traditional campus settings, as demonstrated by the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work during the pandemic.
5. The study “**Flexible Working Arrangements and Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Supervisor Support**” by **O. Protsiuk (2025)**⁵. This study finds that FWAs improve job performance when supported by supervisors. Supervisor support builds trust, motivation, and engagement. Without such support, remote workers may feel isolated. Overall, FWAs enhance performance and work-life balance when leadership is supportive. Employees are also assisted by supervisor support in navigating the difficulties of flexible and remote work. Regular feedback, guidance, and recognition reduce uncertainty and help employees stay aligned with organizational goals. Overall, the findings suggest that FWAs are most effective when supported by positive leadership practices.

Statement of the Problem

The combined demands of work and family obligations often result in high levels of stress for female employees. Women find it challenging to successfully maintain a work-life balance in many organizations due to inflexible, traditional work schedules. Employee wellbeing and organizational productivity may suffer as a result of this imbalance, which frequently causes physical exhaustion, emotional stress, and decreased job satisfaction. Although flexible work arrangements like work-from-home options, flexible working hours, and hybrid work models have been introduced to address these issues, it is unclear how effective they are at lowering stress levels among female employees. Therefore, in order to evaluate their role in fostering a healthier workplace, it is imperative to systematically investigate the relationship between flexible work arrangements and stress levels among female employees.

Objectives of the Study

- To access the level of job satisfaction among women employees using flexible work arrangements.
- To identify key factors that affect women employees Experience with flexible work arrangements.

- To measure the perceived stress levels among women employees working with and without flexibility option.

Research Methodology

Methods of Research The study uses a descriptive research design to examine the connection between women employees’ stress levels and flexible work schedules.

Data Collection: Gathered directly from respondents forms the basis of the study. Data Gathering A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data. The survey asked about demographics, stress levels, and flexible work schedules.

Sample Size: One hundred female employees made up the study sample. Convenience sampling was used to choose the respondents.

Area of study: The study was conducted among women employees working in selected organizations in Coimbatore city, representing diverse sectors. It reflects urban workplace conditions, professional responsibilities, and the challenges women face in balancing work demands and personal well-being.

Limitations:

- There is a small sample size of 100 respondents for the study.
- Convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- Self-reported data are used in the study, which may be influenced by personal bias.

Period of Study: November 2025 to January 2026

Statistical Tools Used : The collected Data will be Analyzed using Appropriate statistical tool such as :

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-square Test

Table 1.1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic variables	Categories	No. respondents	Of Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25 years	18	18%
	25 – 35	42	42%
	36 - 45	28	28%
	Above 45 years	12	12%
Marital Status	Single	35	35%
	Married	65	65%
Educational Qualifications	Undergraduate	22	22%
	Post graduate	58	58%
	Professional degree	20	20%
Types of Organization	Private sector	55	55%
	Public sector	25	25%
	Educational institutions	20	20%
Work Experience	Less than 5years	30	30%
	5 – 10 years	25	25%
	Above 10 years	25	25%
Total		100	100

Interpretation

According to the demographic table, the majority of female employees are between the ages of 25 and 35 (42 percent), followed by those between the ages of 36 and 45 (28 percent), indicating that the majority of

respondents are in their prime working years. With respect to marital status, 65% are married, suggesting that a large proportion of the respondents are managing both work and family responsibilities. A highly educated sample is represented by the fact that 58% are postgraduates, 22% are undergraduates, and 20% hold professional degrees. Regarding the type of organization, 55% of respondents work in the private sector, followed by 25% in the public sector and 20% in educational institutions. Regarding work arrangements, 40% work from home, 35% use a hybrid model, and 25% work in an office, indicating a significant use of flexible work options. In terms of work experience, 45% have 5–10 years of experience, 30% have less than 5 years, and 25% have more than 10 years of experience. In general, the table highlights a diverse group of female employees who have had a lot of experience with flexible work schedules.

Table 1.2

Percentage Analysis of Stress Levels Among Women Employees Satisfaction

Work Arrangement	High Stress (%)	Moderate Stress (%)	Low Stress (%)
Work From Home	15	40	45
Hybrid Work	30	45	25
Office-Based	50	40	10

Interpretation

The table clearly demonstrates the connection between stress levels and work arrangements. Employees who work from home report the highest levels of low stress (45%) and the lowest levels of high stress (15%), suggesting a better work-life balance. The majority of employees who work in hybrid environments report moderate levels of stress. On the other hand, office-based work has the lowest low stress (10%) and the highest high stress (50%), which reflects the effects of commuting and strict schedules. In general, less stress is linked to more flexible work schedules.

Work From Home: Most employees who work from home report feeling less stressed, with 45% of them falling into the low stress category.

Hybrid Work: The majority of workers (45%) report moderate stress, indicating that hybrid work results in a demanding but balanced work environment.

Office-Based Work: Traditional office-based work is linked to higher stress levels, as evidenced by the majority of employees (50%) experiencing high levels of stress.

Table 1.3

Chi-Square Analysis Between Flexible Work Arrangements and Stress Levels

Work Arrangements	High Stress	Moderate Stress	Low Stress	Total
Work from Home	6	16	18	40
Hybrid work	10	16	9	35
Office Based	14	13	3	30
Total	30	45	30	100

Chi-Square Test Result

Particulars	Values
Calculated x ² value	12.48
Table value (df =4)	9.49
Level of Significance	5%
Result	Significance

Interpretation

The table clearly demonstrates the relationship between employees' stress levels and their work arrangements. Remote work reduces stress, as evidenced by the fact that employees who work from home report the highest number of low stress cases (18 out of 40). The majority of hybrid workers (16 out of 35) report moderate stress, indicating that juggling remote and office work can still be challenging. The impact of strict schedules, commuting, and workplace pressure is highlighted by the fact that office-based workers exhibit the highest high stress levels (14 out of 30) and the lowest low stress levels (3 out of 30). In general, compared to traditional office-based work, flexible work arrangements are associated with less stress.

Work from Home: Majority experience low stress (18)

Hybrid Work: Majority experience moderate stress (16)

Office-Based Work: Majority experience high stress (14)

Overall: The largest group of employees falls under moderate stress (45)

Findings

- The majority of respondents, 42%, are between the ages of 25 and 35, and 65% are married, indicating that the majority of female employees balance work and family responsibilities.
- In terms of education, 58% are postgraduates, showing a highly educated sample.
- Most respondents (55%) work in the private sector, followed by public sector (25%) and educational institutions (20%).
- An analysis of stress reveals that hybrid workers typically experience moderate stress (45%), while workers who work from home report the lowest levels of stress (45% low stress, 15% high stress).
- Office-based employees report the highest stress, with 50% experiencing high stress and only 10% low stress.
- The Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.48 > 9.49$) confirms a significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and stress levels.
- Overall, flexible work arrangements, especially work from home, help reduce stress among women employees compared to traditional office-based work.

Suggestions

- **Increase the Number of Flexible Work Options** To meet the various personal and family needs of female employees, companies should provide a variety of flexible work arrangements, including compressed workweeks, remote work, flexitime, and part-time options.
- **Boost Managerial Assistance** In order to prevent discrimination or unfavorable career outcomes for female employees who use flexibility options, managers should be trained to support flexible working practices with empathy.
- **Encourage policies that promote work-life balance** To lower stress levels among female employees, clear organizational policies that promote work-life balance, such as family-friendly leave policies and childcare assistance, should be created.
- **Make Sure Workloads Are Reasonable** To avoid work overload and burnout, which can offset the advantages of flexibility, flexible work arrangements should be paired with reasonable workload expectations.

Conclusion

The study comes to the conclusion that flexible work schedules are essential for lowering stress levels among female employees because they allow them to more effectively balance work and personal obligations. More autonomy is offered by flexible options like workfrom-home, hybrid work models, and flexible working hours, which also lessen the stress of commuting and strict schedules. According to the research, female employees who have access to these arrangements report better work-life balance, increased job satisfaction, and reduced stress levels when compared to those who work in conventional office-based systems. These favorable results

are further reinforced by organizational support and the successful application of flexible work policies. Organizations can encourage employee well-being, lessen burnout, and boost motivation by implementing inclusive and well-structured flexible work arrangements. In the end, flexible work policies help female employees as well as increase productivity, lower absenteeism, and improve employee retention. In order to promote healthier, more sustainable, and productive work environments, companies should think about implementing flexible work arrangements.

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