

Gender Perception on Flexi and Virtual Time and Work-Life Balance

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Abstract - The research is aimed to study the perception of males and females regarding Flexitime and work-life balance. The research is descriptive in nature and data is collected from 380 working professionals using questionnaires on google forms (including males and females). The T-test is used to know the empirical results. It is found that although flexi work arrangements are important for reducing attrition rate but along with a strong policy is also required to cope with the challenges faced in the workplace.

Keywords: Flexi Time, Work-Life Balance, Females, Males, Virtual

I. INTRODUCTION

The Flexi time concept is very popular in this pandemic situation where most people have been working from home as it is risky to go to the office due to Covid 19 conditions prevailing in the world. Most companies have allowed their employees to work from home. Before this pandemic, traditional work techniques were popular where employees were asked to report to the office at their scheduled timings and it was the usual eight-hour day schedule in the office for them. Flexible work is also known as flexitime, adjusted hours or nontraditional working hours which helps to maintain a better work-life balance and reduces the stress of employees as they can start and finish their work according to their convenience. Thus, flexible working means working arrangements at home other than the traditional working that is working in the office usually from nine to five.

In simple words flex time means working of employees at the alternate schedule that is working at that time when they are most productive and most comfortable.

A flexible work arrangement may include any of the following.

1. Flexibility in the schedule of hours worked like alternative work schedules for example flex time, arrangements for shift and break schedules;
2. Flexibility in the number of hours worked like part-time work or sharing of job.
3. Flexibility in the workplace like working from home.

Flexible work policies may include-adjustable time, alternative work schedule, freedom to move work hours, working from a remote area, job sharing, or even unlimited

vacations Flexi working was not admired in a developing country like India but under UK law, companies must offer flexible working arrangement to certain groups. Further, the parents with children under 6 or those with disabled children under 18 can demand flexible working arrangements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Amrita (2020) has highlighted the importance of flexi work for women by explaining the problems that they face in traditional workplace culture. She stated that women face various problems and challenges which hamper their employment in a developing country like India. First of all, there are no sufficient jobs for educated women in India. Even if they get a job, some of them have to leave the job due to socio-cultural norms around which they are supposed to function. Overview of India has revealed that 50% of Indian women leave corporate jobs at a rapid pace in executive positions. Thus they leave managerial positions due to marriage, child care, family commitments and elderly parents. If flexi-time option is given to them, they will not leave their jobs.

According to Davidescu, Apostu, Paul and Casuneanu (2020) the employees are more satisfied and happy and do not intend to change jobs when they are given the option to work at their preferred timings as they can manage their professional and personal lives. In fact, flexibility is required due to digital advancements and improved technology. The employees can work anywhere provided they have an internet connection.

Kiran ad Khurram (2018) stated that employees are now considered the asset of the organization, so the policies are people-oriented in the current scenario of strategic human resource management. The focus of the organization is on the psychological aspects of the employees. Employee happiness is one of such psychological factor that is gaining popularity now a day. This concept has also developed the concept of workplace flexibility. He has concluded in his research that if the organizations give options to the employees to decide about when, where, what and how to work, employees become more dedicated, engaged, satisfied, and happier.

Uglanova and Dettmers (2018) states that the companies have to face a lot of competition in the market and due to increasing demand they have to extend service hours. They expect that the employees should work at unusual times, that is, evenings and weekends. So, they may give flexible time option to their employees who have numerous advantages both for the employers and employees. Flexi time provides benefits to employers as it increases employees' performance and organizational productivity. Flex time results in low on turnover intension, absenteeism and sick leaves. The organization can maintain a culture of trust and can attract and retain the competent employees. Employees can adjust work hours according to their convenience, can escape rush hours and work without facing any stress. It brings more commitment and loyalty. This is more beneficial for females as they have dual career responsibilities.

Saxena (2018) stated that flexible work arrangement has a positive effect on employees' motivation and satisfaction. It reduces organizational turnover rates. Not only this flexi time also assists in improving health, better sleeping as it provides more time for exercise. Additionally, it reduces stress and also brings job satisfaction and retention in organization. Flex time also motives employees to balance their job and personal lives as employees can connected with their family and friends and can also handle job responsibilities. Flex time arrangements provide married women with youthful offspring as they need the maximum parental time to balance their work and family. According to Goel and Monika (2016) Working from home improves the productivity of employees as a result output per worker also increases. Not only this, the cost of the company also goes down in terms of less usage of space, infrastructure, electricity-saving etc. Employees feel happier and more comfortable working at home. A study was conducted in China and the findings revealed 13% increase in productivity when employees were given the option to work from home. Although working from home has several advantages still it cannot be applied in all types of firms. Work needs to be done from office premises only in some types of firms, for example, pharmaceutical firms, manufacturing firms, etc.

Mungania, Waiganjo and Kihoro (2016) analyzed the influence of flexi time on the performance of the banking industry in Kenya. The employees there work for more than 48 hours in a week. Hence they are not able to balance between job, family, and other personal matters. Due to this they also face issues related to mental health like stress and depression. In their research, the authors took the target population of 36,212 employees from Kenya banks. The findings of the study revealed that flexible work arrangements can greatly influence performance in banks in Kenya. With flexi time concept they could handle child care issues and were having more time for the family members. The multiple regression results of their study revealed linear relationship between flexible work arrangements and performance.

According to Deshwal (2015) Flex time produce a persuasive list of benefits. These include increased employee productivity, effective virtual teams, meeting customer needs, reduced business travel, greater retention, etc. She has explained some of the most popular flexible working arrangements which include part-time work, telecommuting, flexi-time arrangements, compressed work hours, annual hours' contract, job sharing and term-time work. She has concluded in her research that the organizations should provide its employees certain amount of flexibility to balance their work and life, to reduce absenteeism and to increasing productivity. It is a fact that if a company takes care of its employees, they also serve the company better.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this paper is to study perception of males and females regarding Flexi time and work life balance

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. A questionnaire was prepared to collect the data through google forms. The total number of professional respondents for the study is 380 (including males and females) aged between 18-60 years.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the perception of Gender about Flexi time and work life balance.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Statement 1 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that most respondents (Male as well as female) believe that flexible working arrangements helps in balancing life commitments.

Statement 2 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be said that most respondents (Male as well as female) agree that the loss of pay associated with most flexible work arrangements comes with a loss of pay that is unaffordable.

Statement 3 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the majority respondents believe (Male as well as female) that flexible work options do not suit them because they tend to make them feel disconnected from the workplace.

Statement 4 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, working shorter hours would negatively impact on career progress. Statement 5 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, more flexible hours are essential for (Male as well as female) in order to attend to family responsibilities.

TABLE I INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST

Statement Number	Statement		Statistic	df	p
1	Flexible working arrangements help me balance life commitments	Student's t	-0.284	378	0.778
2	I cannot afford the loss of pay associated with most flexible work arrangements	Student's t	1.664	378	0.105
3	Flexible work options do not suit me because they tend to make me feel disconnected from the workplace	Student's t	0.279	378	0.782
4	Working shorter hours would negatively impact on my career progress	Student's t	0.295	378	0.77
5	Working more flexible hours is essential for me in order to attend to family responsibilities	Student's t	-0.303	378	0.764
6	Flexible working arrangements are essential for me to participate in family and social events	Student's t	-1.404	378	0.169
7	Flexible working arrangements enable me to focus more on the job when I am at the workplace	Student's t	0.404	378	0.689
8	People at my workplace react negatively to people using flexible working arrangements	Student's t	-1.292	378	0.205
9	People using flexible working arrangements usually have less commitment to their work role	Student's t	-0.919	378	0.364
10	People using flexible working arrangements often miss important work events or communications such as staff meetings, training sessions, important notices, etc	Student's t	-0.139	378	0.89
11	I would not be able to do paid work at all, if I could not use flexi work arrangements	Student's t	0.282	378	0.78

Statement 6 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, flexible working arrangements are essential for participating in family and social events.

Statement 7 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, Flexible working arrangements enable me to focus more on the job for Male as well as females when I am at the workplace.

Statement 8 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, people at the workplace react negatively to people using flexible working arrangements.

Statement 9 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, people using flexible working

arrangements usually have less commitment to their work role.

Statement 10 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, people using flexible working arrangements often miss important work events or communications such as staff meetings, training sessions, important notices, etc.

Statement 11 has a p-value of >0.05 hence, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the majority of respondents would not be able to do paid work at all, if they could not use flexible work arrangements.

TABLE II GROUP DESCRIPTIVE

STATEMENT	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Flexible working arrangements help me balance life commitments	Female	190	3.79	4	1.357	0.311
	Male	190	3.89	4	0.875	0.201
I cannot afford the loss of pay associated with most flexible work arrangements	Female	190	3.89	4	0.994	0.228
	Male	190	3.37	3	0.955	0.219
Flexible work options do not suit me because they tend to make me feel disconnected from the workplace	Female	190	2.68	3	1.108	0.254
	Male	190	2.58	3	1.216	0.279
Working shorter hours would negatively impact on my career progress	Female	190	3.16	3	1.214	0.279
	Male	190	3.05	3	0.97	0.223
Working more flexible hours is essential for me in order to attend family	Female	190	3.68	4	1.204	0.276
	Male	190	3.79	4	0.918	0.211
Flexible working arrangements are essential for me to participate personal events	Female	190	3.16	3	1.015	0.233
	Male	190	3.63	3	1.065	0.244
Flexible working arrangements enable me to focus more on the job	Female	190	3.74	4	1.284	0.295
	Male	190	3.58	4	1.121	0.257

People at my workplace react negatively to people using flexible hours	Female	190	2.79	3	1.084	0.249
	Male	190	3.21	3	0.918	0.211
People using flexible working arrangements usually have less cooperation	Female	190	2.58	2	1.071	0.246
	Male	190	2.89	3	1.049	0.241
People using flexible working arrangements often miss important events	Female	190	2.95	3	1.129	0.259
	Male	190	3	3	1.202	0.276
I would not be able to do paid work at all, if I could not use flexi work	Female	190	3.11	3	1.243	0.285
	Male	190	3	3	1.054	0.242

The above table highlights that majority of males believe that Flexible working arrangements helped them balance life commitments, working more flexible hours is essential in order to attend family, flexible working arrangements are essential to participating in personal events, People at the workplace react negatively to people using flexible hours, People using flexible working arrangements usually have less cooperation, People using flexible working arrangements often miss important events.

A majority of females feel that they cannot afford the loss of pay associated with most flexible work arrangements, flexible work options do not suit them because they tend to feel disconnected from the workplace, working shorter hours would negatively impact career progress, and cannot afford the loss of pay associated with most flexible work arrangements, enable them to focus more on the job, would not be able to do paid work at all if they could not use flexi work.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the above data analysis, it can be said that there is no significant difference between the perception of males and females regarding flexi work environment. It must be noted that females and males both believe that flexi work environment is important for creating a balance between personal and professional life however, pay cuts often deter females to move toward flexible work arrangements also males feel that flexi work environment leads to missing important events at workplace and females feel disconnected to the workplace. Hence, although flexible work arrangements are important for reducing the attrition rate but along with a strong policy is also required to cope up with the challenges faced in the workplace.

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