

**Organizations Offering Flexible Work Arrangements Will Improve Work-Life Balance and Job  
Satisfaction**

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## **Abstract**

Flexible work arrangements have become a standard method to engage with work. As the term implies, a flexible work arrangement offers flexibility with work engagement compared to traditional work arrangements. Due to an increase of workers having multiple life roles such as care-giver, single-parent, volunteer, and having more than one employer, it is important for workers to properly manage their work-life balance. Organizations offer Flexible work arrangements to help workers manager their work-life balance and to increase the workers' job satisfaction. Increased job satisfaction benefits the organization in several ways such as reduced turnover. The other consequence from flexible work arrangements is they do not always provide the expected benefit to the worker and organization. From the review of research on flexible work arrangements, this discussion arrived at the position that organizations should offer flexible work arrangements because of the opportunities to be gained. These opportunities benefit both workers and organizations.

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## Background

### Importance of Topic

Flexible Work Arrangements, or FWAs, have become the norm in the working environment. FWAs originated in the past few decades to help workers improve the management of their life roles (Shockley and Allen 2012, 219). In the past decade, the number and variety of FWAs have greatly increased. It is the norm to encounter an organization or worker engaged in a FWA. FWAs are a major topic of interest to policy makers, organizations, and researchers.

There is no standard design in offering a FWA or to engage with it. There is no universal definition of a FWA. However, the general definition of a FWA is the work role offers some flexibility with where someone works, when someone works, and how much they work. If at least one of these flexible traits are present, then the role is a FWA (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 383). There is no legal requirement to offer or standardize a FWA (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 384). FWA's are not just becoming the norm but are also becoming diverse in how they are offered and engaged in.

This topic is very significant for many reasons. First, research indicates those who use a FWA are more productive (Lambert et al. 2008, 115). Companies that offer a FWA appear to have lower turnover, higher employee satisfaction, and higher work engagement (Dizaho et al. 2017, 458). From a study of 10,447 leaders in business and human resources across the globe, 88 percent of respondents stated building the organization of the future is an important topic. Three out of five respondents stated this is a very important issue. The challenge is evident because only 11 percent stated they believe they know how to build the organization of the

future (Walsh and Volini 2017, 19). Further, “This concern is warranted. Organizational design and change are complex. Many organizational re-designs fail because they are reduced to an exercise to cut costs” (Walsh and Volini 2017, 19). However, there is not any uniformity with how FWAs are being offered and engaged with (Thompson et al. 2015, 742). The value of FWAs have been demonstrated but it is key to understand there is no set formula in their design.

All organizational processes, formal and informal, are present in the work environment. It is important to reconcile all processes to build a highly functional work environment (Timms et al. 2015, 98). FWAs are here to stay and will only increase in availability and diversity in design. FWAs have become a viable means to access work. The increasing popularity of FWAs might influence a majority of organizations to consider creating FWAs. Organizational leaders need to know the efficacy and validity of a specific FWA, so they can properly ascertain if the FWA design will be a good fit for the organization’s personnel and culture.

#### Problem Statement

There are two common reasons why a FWA will exist. First, it can be offered for the worker’s benefit which is to help them manage both personal and work responsibilities. This is generally referred to as the work-life balance, or WLB. The WLB belief posits a healthy WLB enables a worker to be more effective managing their work and life roles. The second common reason is to increase job satisfaction which benefits the organization. This can reduce turnover and absenteeism. Therefore, offering a FWA provides significant benefits to both workers and organizations. The worker will have a healthier WLB and the organization will experience reduced turnover and absenteeism via increased job satisfaction.

## Approach

The approach in this study was centered mostly on peer-reviewed research in the FWA field with the majority being published within the past decade. There are a few studies included because the study design included thousands of participants around the globe. The main reason why recent research and studies were used was to aim the conversation towards the contemporary work environment.

Another focus was to integrate peer-reviewed research to allow evidence-based studies to become the central part of this discussion. As stated in the Background, there are no standards with designing, implementing, and engaging in a FWA. The integration of peer-reviewed research articles herein gave some level of stability due to the usage of standardized statistical measurements in research design.

There are three components of this discussion. First, organizations were briefly reviewed because every FWA initially comes from an organization. It can be argued the FWA stems primarily from work. However, this discussion used the organizational aspect since most of the included articles and studies included organizational elements in their design. Second, WLB was used to define the worker's benefit because of the significant number of research and studies available. The WLB concept is simple enough for most people to understand.

Finally, job satisfaction was used to evaluate the organizational benefit. The purpose was to provide a measure of balance to the WLB. This triad of the organization, the worker's benefit, and the organization's benefit anchored the conversation in the realities of the contemporary work environment. Global studies are integrated only to share the results of such, not to examine their research design or statistical validity.

## Literature Review

### A FWA Begins With the Organization

To state what should be the obvious point, a FWA is directly connected to work. The work organization is the gatekeeper as to if a FWA will be offered, when, and how. It is part of the exchange an organization provides to a worker to accomplish responsibilities. Benefits and pay do not exist in a vacuum (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 383). An organization is not legally required to offer a FWA (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 390). An organization will offer a FWA based on its resources, organizational design and characteristics (Peretz et al. 2015, 186).

Organizations encounter various aspects of people's lives such as motivation, emotions, personalities, cognitions, and leadership (Daft 2016, 33). It is common for FWAs to be utilized as part of the organizational strategy (Allen et al. 2013, 345). Thus, a FWA is another avenue how people can engage with work and collaborate with co-workers.

Organizations will offer a FWA for various reasons. One reason is to give the organization a competitive advantage and to stay current with globalization (Peretz et al. 2015, 183). Another reason is a FWA is associated with organizational outcomes and attitudes (McNall et al. 2010, 63). A third reason a FWA is offered is to utilize social exchange theory which is to align an organization's activities with enriching the life of a worker (McNall et al. 2010, 76). The cultural values of a worker can influence an organization to offer a FWA. An organization will connect to a worker's culture by virtue of the employer-employee relationship. A FWA can be designed to complement a worker's culture (Peretz et al. 2015, 183). FWAs have great functionality in they can be designed in countless manners (Dizaho et al.

2017, 462). Organizations need to strategically act to respond to institutional pressures, market forces, and cultural expectations (Masuda et al. 2012, 4).

In a study during 2007 through 2008 with approximately 90,000 participants in 18 countries, the number one attribute important to workers in their job roles was to have a good WLB (Towers Perrin n.d., 3-7). It makes sense for every organization to consider how a work role will impact the worker if one of the organizational strategic goals is to retain top talent. FWAs are now part of the mainstream business culture. Not only are they here to stay but the types of FWAs are expanding. A 2017 survey showed an increase of 45 percent more workers telecommuting in the prior two years and there would be 38 percent more workers telecommuting in the following two years (Dougherty 2017, 52).

Research has shown from the usage of the FWA types of flextime and flexspace that work requirements and output do not change. With other types of FWAs such as shift-work or contract work, work requirements and output might change. Part of the reason this occurs is from the organizational design, resources, and needs (Shockley and Allen 2007, 228). Another factor is how the members of the organization perceive and use FWAs (Peretz et al. 2015, 197). Hence, it is important a FWA efficacy is measured alongside an organization's dynamics.

The organization still maintains the greater measure of control when it offers flexibility. From Dougherty's (2017, 52) study, 46 percent of organizations offering telecommuting options still required employees to work specific hours. It would be a mistake to focus solely on the FWA design and benefit without acknowledging the work domain. The organization itself plays a key role in a FWA success as stated by Timmes et al. (2015, 83), "...the take-up of FWAs is highly dependent on work-place cultural norms."

## The Worker's Benefit: Work-Life Balance

### *Positive Outcomes For the Worker*

WLB has been given several definitions. The definition used herein is, "The extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role" (Greenhaus et al. 2003, 457). This definition is applicable because it maintains the simplicity of why FWAs were originally created. During the same time this definition was provided, FWAs were initially developed by organizations so they could enable workers to take an actionable step in the managing their various life roles. Some of the various roles a worker might have is being a single-parent, a care-giver, and other roles requiring time and effort (Shockley and Allen 2007, 219). Today, the need is greater because there is more diversity in the workforce such as more women, more dual-earners, more single-parents, and those assuming care for the elderly (Masuda et al. 2012, 3). There is the common belief of being engaged in a FWA will alleviate conflict between family and work. It appears this belief is rooted in the original purpose for a FWA (Allen et al. 2013, 345).

A valuable component to FWAs is they provide the worker to have more choice in accessing work responsibilities (Allen et al. 2013, 361). Enhancing flexibility through a FWA can promote the integration of work, personal life, and family (Hayman 2009, 455). A FWA can be an effective method to manage WLB (Dizaho et al. 2017, 455). Research indicates a lack of balance in a worker's life can be related to higher stress, less life satisfaction, and lower work effectiveness (Lambert et al. 2008, 107). Dougherty (2017, 2) stated from his study the number one reason why a FWA is offered is due to WLB.

A big part of fulfilling WLB is acknowledging how workers expect an increasing level of flexibility in their work role due to demands of their work and personal lives. Unlike several decades ago, it appears employees are more vocal now about asking for flexibility. Further, it is common for organizations to expect such demands from their employees (McNall et al. 2010, 77). Organizations should consider all work factors that impact a worker and not just focus on alleviating stress between work and family. Hence, the WLB approach includes enriching the life of workers (McNall 2010, 76). Researchers identified there are several relationships between an employee's personal responsibilities and work responsibilities. There is reciprocity between them (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, 197). The domains of a worker's personal and work lives are distinct but have mutually-shared areas.

It is important to note the effects of how a FWA can impact work-family conflict. When a worker has very high family responsibilities, there is a strong correlation between a FWA and work-family conflict. This is a valid reason why organizations need to develop work environments that are family-friendly. Though the work-family conflict relationship can be complex, the need to offer at least a generic form of a FWA is present. (Shockley and Allen 2012, 490). "From a practical perspective, this study suggests organizations consider offering specific work policies such as flextime and compressed workweek schedules to facilitate work-to-family enrichment" (McNall et al. 2010, 77).

#### *Outcomes Are Not Consistent*

The discussion of the positive results from a FWA should include contrary results from research. One of the most interesting research findings is despite the multitude of research and studies in this field, there has not been a variable clearly defined that connects a worker in a

FWA and then experiencing better life management (Shockley and Allen 2012, 219). Though workers have experienced positive benefits from using a FWA, researchers cannot identify a singular cause-and-effect variable. There are many facets to this discussion. First, culture plays a very key role. Results from research involving the three cultures of Anglo, Latin American, and Asian showed Anglos were more likely to engage in a FWA than the other two clusters (Masuda et al. 2012, 2). In collectivist societies where the home can be very busy with family and extended family, a FWA may not make sense because the worker may be motivated by familial needs before individual needs (Masuda et al. 2012, 6).

The opposite is true for individualistic societies such as in North America and Europe (Masuda et al. 2012, 4). Further, there can be different measures of how the uncertainty avoidance principle plays out. Someone with low uncertainty avoidance is more likely to accept situations where there is uncertainty, such as in a FWA. Individuals with high uncertainty avoidance prefer to avoid uncertainty and the unknown. Hence, if a culture promotes high uncertainty avoidance then it is very possible the worker will not prefer to engage in a FWA (Peretz et al. 2015, 183-185). A FWA can be correctly designed but may not be effective due to a worker's culture. Some cultures do not endorse the FWA concept (Dizaho et al. 2017, 462).

Engaging in a FWA is not an automatic trigger to achieve WLB. Every worker in a FWA still has to be very intentional with how they manage their own WLB (Dizaho et al. 2017, 462). This principle is important because adding more flexibility may increase the blurring of work responsibilities with family responsibilities. Also, it is possible with more access to flexibility there can be an increase in work and family responsibilities (Allen et al. 2013, 360). Since there is no standard design of a FWA, the multiple ways of having a FWA will have multiple degrees of

control (Allen et al. 2017, 364). Perhaps contrary to what some might believe, flexibility is not the cure for managing the combination of work and personal responsibilities (Shockley and Allen 2012, 490).

Perhaps one of the biggest drawbacks of engaging in a FWA is the lack of consistent empirical evidence in this field. Research in the work-family conflict arena has provided inconsistent results. There are many relevant variables and co-variates needing much more intense investigation such as the family environment (Shockley and Allen 2012, 489-490). Empirical studies in the general field of FWA provided incongruent results because there has not been a clear differentiation in research in how a FWA is offered such as flextime or flexspace. Alongside this, there has not been a clear and consistent differentiation in research between the availability of FWA and the actual use of it. Finally, researchers have co-mingled terms. For example, work-family conflict has been exchanged for other terms such as WLB. Keeping variable clearly defined and consistent really matters (Allen et al. 2013, 346-348).

Longitudinal research is lacking. Perhaps if more were available, researchers could better measure the efficacy of results (Shockley and Allen 2007, 228). Especially in cultures where gender-roles are clearly defined, longitudinal research is critical (Kim and Gong 2016, 2953). Though empirical evidence does support the positive findings, researchers agree much more work is needed (Hayman 2009, 336).

The difficulty with defining WLB is the word “balance” indicates things should be equal on every side. People with both individual and work responsibilities should be aware of managing time, attention, and effort in both life and work. It is important to know the outcomes for both life and work. Pursuing the WLB requires effort (Greenhaus et al. 2003, 512).

## The Organization's Benefit: Job Satisfaction

### *Job Satisfaction Leads to Good Things*

Organizations have offered FWAs to their workers for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons is to increase a worker's positive attitude towards their job. There is evidence stating workers who know a FWA is available may have an increased positive job attitude (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 390). The availability of a FWA is strongly connected to job satisfaction (Masuda et al. 2012, 5). Workers can perceive the availability of a FWA as an organizational benefit (Masuda et al. 2012, 3). Per signaling theory, the FWA can provide a signal to the worker the organization cares about their welfare. This can be very effective where cultural expectations shape characteristics for the ideal job (Masuda et al. 2012, 7). The availability of a FWA may signal to workers they are cared for and thus increase the workers' job satisfaction (McNall et al. 2010, 76).

This discussion is important because research proves there is a relationship between FWA and its benefits to the organization. It is highly likely a FWA contributes positively to enriching the worker's life, which in turn leads to higher job satisfaction, which in turn leads to higher retention. The increased autonomy and variety may add to the enrichment process (McNall et al. 2010, 77). When the FWA is culturally aligned, it can help reduce turnover and absenteeism (Peretz et al. 2015, 198). Research also shows a FWA may not always increase work engagement, however, it does not decrease it. In fact, for workers who perceive themselves as relatively healthy may experience increased work engagement by using a FWA (Rudolph and Baltes 2017, 54). Some companies that offer a FWA have lower turnover, higher work engagement, and higher employee satisfaction (Dizaho et al. 2017, 458).

Researchers know by now there are clearly defined relationships between work and family. To name a few on the work side are work-role performance, work mood, and work time. A few on the personal side are family-role performance, family mood, and family time. There are various connections to which they all have reciprocity with each other. To impact a singular variable may impact all the others (Edwards and Rothbard 2000, 195). Research has not proven flexibility is the key driver to managing a worker's life enrichment. However, there can be unmeasured benefits by the FWA offer itself towards the worker's care and well-being (McNall et al. 2010, 75). Hence, an organization can create multiple benefits that impact both the workers and the organization by simply creating FWAs.

When an organization offers a FWA, it is applying the value precept theory that posits people are more satisfied in their jobs when their expectations are fulfilled. In individualistic societies where privacy and autonomy are valued, a FWA can create the opportunity for workers to increase their job satisfaction (Masuda et al. 2012, 6). There are direct and indirect evidence workers are engaging in a FWA based on work-related motives. A FWA can give the worker the opportunity to create their own work environment, play the music of their preference, place working objects to their preference, and even work in a way they can be more inspired and motivated (Shockley and Allen 2007, 220).

FWAs help address the various needs of a diverse workforce in ways a traditional work environment may not suffice (Sweet et al. 2016, 101). "Organizations are more boundary-less, agile, global, and transparent... organizations themselves will be more diverse, and work will be organized... increasingly through arrangements outside of regular full-time employment" (Boudreau 2016, first paragraph).

### *Many Variables Can Negatively Impact a FWA*

One of the issues with researching an employee's experience being in a FWA is the lack of research on the antecedent of an employee's choice to be in a FWA. According to the Brofenbrenner's human ecology theory, people make behavioral choice to adapt to their environment. Hence, workers in FWAs have adapted to suit the FWA environment (Lambert et al. 2008, 108). Its possible psychology is instrumental in why research has not been able to identify causation in research variables. Job satisfaction of a worker in a FWA can be impacted by the worker's experience in the FWA. It is possible different workers in the same FWA design may experience different results with job satisfaction (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 393). For example, some workers choose a FWA because their co-workers are in one. This can skew research results if the FWA purpose is misaligned with usage (Lambert et al. 2008, 115).

There are multiple life management motivations connected to work. This impacts a worker's reasons to engage in a FWA (Shockley and Allen 2007, 219). There are many other factors that contribute to life enrichment besides being in a FWA (McNall et al. 2010, 76). The singular concept of telecommuting may increase the difficulties of maintaining healthy work and family boundaries (Shockley and Allen 2012, 481). Simply stated, there are psychological components involved which cannot be controlled from how a FWA is designed.

The results of having a FWA, for the purpose of reducing work-family conflict, does not always match research findings (Shockley and Allen 2012, 489). It is myopic for an organization to aim the trajectory of the FWA to solely improve WLB which in turn to increase job satisfaction. For example, organizations have different methods in how they measure flexibility and its results. (Allen et al. 2013, 364). It is very important to differentiate between the major

components of FWA's such as flextime and flexspace. In addition, their availability and their usage also need to be appropriately segregated (Allen et al. 2013, 348). Organizations that utilize FWAs solely to increase job satisfaction are probably not aware of the various subtleties involved. There are three key areas to measure; when, how much, and where (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 384). This is important because "when" is more strongly linked to job satisfaction than "where" and "how much" (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 384). Yet, personal lifestyle is a key variable than can impact not just research results, but how someone is likely to experience a FWA regardless the FWA design (Lambert et al. 2008, 114). It's more important to design a FWA on individual needs than to use a blanket approach (Rudolph and Bates 2017, 54).

To complicate the picture, there are other disagreeing factors to the stance FWAs increase job satisfaction. One of these factors is how a worker perceives the organization's corporate policies. A well-designed FWA may not be effective if the organization's corporate policies are counter-productive to increasing job satisfaction (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 391). Another factor relates to societies where gender-roles dominate. Male and female managers can exhibit different demands and expectations for a FWA (Kim and Gong 2016, 2938-2939). Another factor is not many workers can access a FWA whether it be for family responsibilities, low choice for employment, or skill levels (Lambert et al. 2008, 115). Though research findings indicate FWAs can increase job satisfaction, the findings should be considered in the light of all factors involved. It is difficult to correctly pinpoint the success of a FWA only upon a few factors because of the plethora of variables.

Part of the issue in research is the lack of populations to sample. A study in 2014 showed only one in five employers in the USA offered more than one approach for a FWA

(Sweet et al. 2014, 134). Not only does this limit research, but it greatly limits the generalizability of any findings. Further, FWA research lacks widely-accepted definitions and high standards (Sweet et al. 2014, 135).

#### Literature Review Summary

Organizations are directly connected to the work environment. The organization's resources and the compensation for the worker do not exist as singular points (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 383). An organization's internal components are connected to the external environment. These relationships are primarily comprised of people which involves emotions, motivation factors, and culture (Daft 2016, 33). When evaluating FWA research, it is important to include organizational components. This is especially true of the organization designed the FWA as part of their strategic plan (Allen et al. 2013, 345).

FWAs have been offered as a means to help workers better manage their WLB. In today's working environment, there are more roles being carried out by workers than years ago such as single-parents, students, volunteers, and those working multiple jobs (Masuda et al. 2013, 3). There is a widely-held belief that FWAs help alleviate the tension between work and family mainly because FWAs were originally designed to reduce stress between work and family (Allen et al. 2013, 345). FWAs can promote better integration between work and family (Hayman 2009, 336). FWAs are an effective tool to manage WLB (Dizaho et al. 2017, 455).

However, research results from WLB studies have not shown a direct link between a worker in a FWA and the experience of better life management (Shockley and Allen 2012, 219). Also, cultural values can impede the value of a FWA especially in collectivist societies (Masuda et al. 2012, 6). In individualistic cultures where a FWA are embraced, it is possible a worker may

prefer not to use a FWA due to personal preferences with uncertainty avoidance (Peretz et al. 2015, 183-185). Finally, offering a FWA is not a guaranteed principle the worker will not have less stress between work and life. Every work situation, including FWAs, requires the worker to be responsible for their own life management (Dizaho et al. 2017, 462).

FWAs are not only for the benefit of the worker but also for the organization. Evidence has shown the option of using a FWA may increase a worker's attitude towards their job (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 390). Research has shown the increased autonomy in a FWA can enrich a worker's life which ultimately increases job satisfaction (McNall et al. 2010, 77). A FWA can be a positive factor in reducing turnover and absenteeism (Peretz et al. 2015, 198). FWAs give organizations increased capacity in addressing diversity in the workforce whereas a traditional role may not (Sweet et al. 2016, 101).

On the flip side, there are a plethora of mutual motivational drivers shared between the management of life and work. These diverse motivations can impact how much a worker is willing to engage in a FWA (Shockley and Allen 2007, 219). Also, offering a FWA from a generalized perspective to simply reduce conflict between work and family is not supported by the limited research findings (Shockley and Allen 2012, 489). Male and female genders can exhibit different demands and expectations for a FWA (Kim and Gong 2016, 2938-2939). Further, as stated above, a well-designed FWA can be nullified by the organizational processes and policies (Chen and Fulmer 2017, 391).

Finally, the results from research with validity towards a specific population is limited. The ability to generalize evidence is difficult (Sweet et al. 2014, 135). Though FWAs are increasing, the availability of populations to sample and test are limited (Sweet et al 2014, 134).

## Solution

Organizations should consider offering FWAs to workers and workers should consider engaging with a FWA. This solution is not a generalized approach and includes parameters. First, the FWA should be congruent with an organization's vision, mission statement, and strategic goals. As said by Wheelen et al. (2015, 128), both the external and internal environments need to be evaluated and measured against the organization's competencies and resources. This is affirmed by McNall et al. (2010, 63) by their belief that FWAs are connected to organizational outcomes and attitudes. Further, the organization should have the capacity, resources, and expertise available when designing and offering a FWA. Organizations are responsible for their own competencies and resources. Having a strength does not provide automatic competency in managing the strength (Wheelen et al. 2015, 128-129). Finally, the FWA should be aligned with the cultural values of workers because some cultures are not aligned with the offer and engagement of a FWA (Dizaho et al. 2017, 462). There are no global standards in designing a FWA. Hence, leaders should be encouraged from this discussion to design FWAs that best fit their organization and workers

## Discussion

### SWOT Analysis Upon the Solution

This section will examine the solution by utilizing a SWOT analysis. A SWOT approach integrates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relating to the solution (Wheelen et al. 2015, 164). The SWOT results will then be used to examine the hypothesis.

#### *Strengths*

The strengths of the proposed solution are hinged on what is known thus far from research. One constant theme gathered from the research evaluation is there are not many standards and there are many unknowns. For example, more research is needed and especially with longitudinal design in social sub-sets like gender-role theory (Kim and Gong 2016, 2953). In the face of many uncertainties, this proposal offers stability if even at a minimal level.

Another strength of this proposal is its congruency with the reality organizations should consider offering FWAs simply on the principle to be current with globalization (Peretz et al. 2015, 183). Several decades ago it was common for organizations to maintain a simplistic structure with simplistic processes that were managed by simplistic policies. In today's environment, there is much more complexity (Walsh and Volini 2017, 21). The option of a FWA can give an organization another resource in managing these complexities.

The final strength of this proposal is two-fold. First, the worker has opportunity to be benefited. Research highlights the strong relationship between FWA and enriching the life of the worker (McNall et al. 2010, 77). The second part is the opportunity to benefit the organization. FWAs have a high potential to increase job satisfaction (Masuda et al. 2012, 3).

Companies that use FWAs appear to have lower turnover and higher job satisfaction (Dizaho et al. 2017, 458).

### *Weaknesses*

A weakness of this proposal is the reciprocity of the strengths. There are many variables and co-variates in the overall study of FWAs. The lack of consistency in research design, usage of terms, and definitions has probably been more hurtful than helpful. Research results are all over the board and it is very difficult to compile the diverse studies and research results (Shockley and Allen 2012, 490).

Another weakness is designing this solution from a simplistic view. Kim and Gong (2016, 2953) posited there are too many factors involved to simply design a FWA as a way to help a worker resolve conflict between work and life. Also, each culture has defined expectations for genders and the process of designing a FWA can become complex (Kim and Gong 2016, 2939).

Finally, the results for both the worker and organization can greatly vary depending upon the type of FWA, how it is offered, and how the worker engages with it. Research results are clear these differences indeed matter (Shockley and Allen 2012, 490-491).

### *Opportunities*

A major opportunity with this solution is an organization will be very intentional with the design of a FWA. This focused approach will increase the potential for the FWA to be successful. Including the FWA design within the organization's corporate strategy will provide assessments to its viability, productivity, and resource management (Wheelen et al. 2015, 162).

This solution also provides the opportunity for the FWA to increase WLB and job satisfaction in areas needing improvement in such. For example, even the offering of a FWA can

increase job satisfaction (McNall et al. 2010, 76). Also, research has shown the perceived availability of a FWA can increase WLB (Hayman 2009, 336). Further, research evidence states there are measurable differences in the effectiveness between the types of flextime and flexpace. (McNall et al. 2010, 76). Hence, researchers know a FWA can be an asset.

### *Threats*

There are threats to this solution. First, in the lack of sufficient longitudinal research, it is difficult to generalize results from earlier studies (Shockley and Allen 2007, 228). As stated earlier by Walsh and Volini (2017, 21), today's business environment is much more complex than in the past. Utilizing research results beyond an acceptable time range could be detrimental to the FWA's success. Further, there needs to be re-testing of research designs from over ten years ago simply to measure their validity with today's environment.

Second, the application of Brofenbrenner's theory is very applicable (Lambert et al. 2008, 108). In a new work environment, workers become aware of the intricacies and will adapt to them (Lambert et al. 2008, 104). It is possible many workers could state their WLB or job satisfaction have increased simply due to this adaptation. Also stated by Lambert et al. (2008, 108), there is little to no research to the antecedent of a worker's choice to engage in a FWA.

## Hypothesis Examination

### *Support*

Research evidence states the validity of FWAs connection to WLB and job satisfaction. Even though researchers are calling for much more research, there is sufficient evidence justifying an organization's position to offer a FWA. There is sufficient evidence promoting a worker to use FWAs if there is the possibility for the worker to better manage the WLB or to

increase job satisfaction. The lack of an independent and dependent variables with high validity should not discourage the offering and utilization of FWAs. There is sufficient evidence the business environment is becoming more global and more complex. Since FWAs are already a tried-and-true component, it only makes sense from a strategic perspective for organizations to have FWAs as an option.

### *Opposition*

The opposition to the hypothesis centers around the lack of consistency and standards in prior research, and the lack of sufficient populations to sample. These facts cannot be dislodged. Also, research is very clear how culture can support or disrupt the purpose of FWAs. There are many relationships in the FWA research field lacking study and there are many variables still to be discovered.

### *Hypothesis Affirmed*

The strengths and threats from the SWOT analysis have validity. The opposition to the hypothesis is non-argumentative. Whether or not the organization is for-profit, non-profit, governmental, or a quasi-form, the complex business world impacts everyone. In a fast-changing global business world that waits for no one, it is imperative for organizational leaders to be proactive instead of reactive. FWAs indeed can create the opportunity to provide WLB and job satisfaction benefits. Though the parameters in properly designing FWAs can be complex, the smart organization will consider adopting FWAs as part of strategically accomplishing their vision. The fact there are no guarantees in business, including FWAs, should not refrain organizations from designing FWAs and encouraging workers to use them.

## **Recommendations**

### Recommendation For Organizations

Organizational leaders are encouraged to work closely with the research community when designing FWAs. They are also encouraged to explore possibilities of creating new forms of FWAs which may serve their workers much better than current forms. Finally, organizational leaders should make FWA decisions primarily what is best for the organization and stakeholders and less on external pressures from the global environment.

### Recommendation For this Capstone

Here are two recommendations for those who engage in this topic during their Capstone. First, the researcher should understand that global studies by for-profit organizations may not have the scrutiny of a peer-reviewed article, but the results can affirm what research indicates. Second, due to the increasing complexity of FWAs, it might benefit the researcher to keep their seminar scope very narrow.

### Recommendation For Future Research

The amount of research and studies in this area has dramatically increased in the past decades. More variables and co-variates have been exposed since research in this area over a decade ago. For example, there is the variable of how work interferes with family and there is the variable of how family interferes with work (Shockley and Allen 2007, 480). Researchers are highly encouraged to continue exposing variables and relationships in the FWA world. Also, researchers have clearly pointed out the lack of consistency and standards in research (Shockley and Allen 2007, 490). The research community may be best served if they build a long-term vision together to guide them in resolving conflicts and discrepancies in research.

## Conclusion

FWAs are normative and increasing in number, complexity, and functionality. They are being driven by worker demands, organizational demands, and business globalization. Research on FWAs has been extensive and yielded results that can be successfully utilized by organizations. However, the inconsistencies in definitions, the lack of standards, and an insufficient number of sample populations are evident. Perhaps this will encourage the research community to become more united for the purpose of obtaining clarity in the many areas of ambiguity. Research has shown there are many variables and co-variables to be defined, standardized, and researched.

Though research and global studies have not provided much-needed standards and evidence, they have provided valuable information which should be utilized. The WLB indeed needs to be properly managed by the worker whether they are in a FWA or not. Research results indicate the WLB can be a successful method to help workers manage the tension between work and life responsibilities. When an organization is intentional about increasing enrichment for the worker for the purpose of increasing job satisfaction, this benefits the organization in several ways such as low turnover and reduced absenteeism. A FWA can definitely help organizations design a path to increase a worker's job satisfaction. Organizations should carefully craft FWAs based on the little evidence from research. Finally, organizations should also be proactive to use their resources, expertise, and strengths to provide workers the best work environment possible.

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