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FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT, WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND COMMUNICATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the effects of work-life balance, family communication, and flexible work arrangements (FWAs) during the COVID-19 epidemic. Employees now have more workplace flexibility because to recent changes in the accessibility of FWAs, giving them the power to manage their own work schedules. Additionally, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, family communication is crucial for preserving bonds and promoting the wellness of family members. This research methodology employs a systematic literature review so that the review may be methodically explained. It is envisaged that, based on the results of this literature review, there will be frameworks or methodologies that can be used to flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication to serve as an inspiration for future study.

KEY WORDS

Flexible work arrangements, work life balance, communication, systematic literature review, family.

Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, the adoption of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) has accelerated. It provides the theoretical and empirical frameworks that ought to direct their use while taking into account personal preferences, organizational norms, and culture. The demand for data-driven, temporary yet long-lasting solutions to the problems associated with a multigenerational workforce and its various expectations on flexible work arrangements has increased as a result of the global coronavirus epidemic (FWAs). There are three types of FWAs: flexibility in the employment relationship, flexibility in the work schedule, and flexibility in the location of the work. Individual distinctions like age, gender, and degree of employment may have an impact on how an employee feels about FWAs (Waples & Brock Baskin, 2021).

The concept of "work-life balance" encourages harmonizing one's personal and professional lives in order to be fulfilled and satisfied in life. It involves striking a balance between the demands of work and personal life and preventing one from taking precedence over the other. It involves striking a balance between the time and energy one dedicates to their work and the time and energy one dedicates to their personal life, such as family, friends, leisure activities, and physical and mental health. Work-life balance also includes having a balance between work, rest, and play, so that all aspects of one's life are attended to, and none are neglected (Parkes & Langford, 2008).

Rosabeth Moss Kanter published a book in 1986 that popularized the idea of work-life balance (Kanter, 1989). This idea was meant to help families, particularly women with children (Lockwood, 2003). In the 1980s, American businesses started implementing programs to encourage workplace wellness. Juliet Schor later published a book discussing the idea of the 'overworked American' and the trade-off between employer needs and employee requirements (Schor, 1991). Since the advent of flexible family-related benefits, gender roles in the workplace have changed (Nieto, 2003), and the difficulties related to work-life balance are no longer as gender-specific (Lockwood, 2003).

Equal quality can be provided for personal needs, leisure, employment, religious activities, and other obligations with a healthy work-life balance. Work-life balance and work have a negative and significant impact on each other. A sense of comfort in juggling work



and life will come with a healthy work-life balance. When the circumstances are different, this can be different. It is impossible to feel comfortable and happy when working or living. (Marpaung et al., 2021).

The implementation of FWAs has the potential to improve work-life balance, as well as family communication needs (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Flexible work arrangements can help reduce stress and fatigue, while also providing workers with more time and energy to spend with their families (Putnam et al., 2014). In addition, FWAs can help to reduce the need for long commutes, thereby freeing up time for family activities and communication (Waples & Brock Baskin, 2021). Furthermore, FWAs can also help to improve communication between family members, as telecommuting enables family members to work from the same location and interact in person. Finally, FWAs can also help to foster a better work-life balance by allowing employees to tailor their work hours and schedule to better fit their home life, such as setting specific hours for work and family activities, or taking more time for leisure activities. In conclusion, FWAs can help to improve work-life balance and communication needs, while also providing employees with more flexibility and autonomy (Klindžić & Marić, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flexibility in the workplace has been defined as the ability to make choices regarding when, where, and for how long work-related tasks are carried out. Workplace flexibility has increased as a result of recent trends in the availability of flexible working arrangements, giving employees the power to set their own schedules. FWAs include a wide range of situations, including flexible scheduling, part-time or reduced hours, term-time employment, homeworking, job sharing, compressed hours, and family-leave programs. Despite the growth of FWAs and the benefits extolled by academic studies, there are often difficulties in implementing flexible policies and supervising flexible workers. The ultimate goal of workplace flexibility is to provide employees with the freedom to choose their own working arrangements, while also ensuring the satisfaction and performance of both the individual and the organisation (Clarke & Holdsworth, 2017).

The usage of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) has been found to reduce work-family conflict and improve employee wellbeing, albeit the effects are mostly limited to women with heavy family responsibilities and are predominantly brought about by time flexibility as opposed to other types of flexibility. When the organization and line managers promote FWAs and spouses have a positive attitude toward FWAs, the benefits of FWAs are increased. In general, FWAs may have a negligible but considerable effect on work-life balance, health, and well-being, which may enhance performance and job satisfaction (Clarke & Holdsworth, 2017)

Work-life balance is a crucial organizational behavior concept that employees in the commercial and public sectors are very concerned about. It is defined as the proper prioritizing between work and life and is seen to have implications on employee's attitude, behavior, wellbeing, and organizational effectiveness. Finding a healthy balance between work and life is crucial for people's social, psychological, economic, and emotional health (Jackson & Fransman, 2018).

The concept of work-life balance has gone through many changes in its nomenclature, such as work/family life balance, life role balance, and role balance. Role work-life balance is the propensity to give one's all to each and every role in their system, treating each one and every role partner with care and attention. Over the years, this idea has been defined in a variety of ways (Marks & MacDermid, 1996)

Work-life balance is important for both organizations and employees. It is a broad term to define laws that were previously referred to as "family-friendly," and it goes beyond the confines of the family. It is regarded as a means of boosting output and worker satisfaction. Finding a balance between job and family, which are two of the most significant areas of a person's life according to research, is crucial for success. Work-life balance is a key component of employee well-being and overall satisfaction (Salolomo & Agbaeze, 2019).



Research has shown that flexible work arrangements (FWAs) can have a positive effect on work-life balance (Lewis & Humbert, 2010), health and well-being (Mache et al., 2020), leading to improved job satisfaction (Kotey & Sharma, 2019) and performance (Klindžić & Marić, 2019). However, our research found that when it comes to homeworkers in both public and private organisations, there can be negative effects of remote working. These include difficulties in maintaining informal communication (Waples & Brock Baskin, 2021), misunderstandings arising over communication and a lack of feeling in the loop (Huang et al., 2022). To ensure that the benefits of FWAs are maximised, organisations need to provide training and education to employees and line managers, and develop policies and systems that support flexible working practices. Additionally, it is important to note that the effects of FWAs are largely confined to women with high family responsibilities and are mainly due to time flexibility rather than other forms of flexibility. The benefits of FWAs are also enhanced when supported by the organisation, line managers and spouses having a positive attitude towards FWAs (Clarke & Holdsworth, 2017).

Maintaining family bonds and promoting the wellness of each family member depend on effective communication. Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing information with family members and creating family groups on instant messaging services have been found to promote family communication and welfare (Putri, 2021). The pandemic has exacerbated the urge to feel safe and socially connected by causing worry, uncertainty, and social isolation. The spread of information via electronic communication technologies has increased with the development of technology, resulting in an infodemic of false information. (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Exposure to unreliable information sources and false information may increase uncertainty and the perception of COVID-19 dangers as well as generate psychological discomfort, which may eventually result in family disputes (Sun et al., 2022). This may be offset by work-life balance and flexible work arrangements (FWAs), which help to balance work and personal life while lowering stress and enhancing family communication (Wong et al., 2022).

In particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, family communication is crucial for preserving connections and promoting the wellness of family members. According to research, creating family groups and exchanging information on instant messaging apps can boost family welfare and the effectiveness of communication within households. However, disinformation, uncertainty, and perceived threats may proliferate as a result of the dissemination of information through electronic communication technologies, which may result in family disputes and psychological suffering. To address these issues, more flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and better work-life balance can be implemented to provide families with the time and resources to share information in a meaningful and reliable way. FWAs can also help reduce stress, uncertainties, and social isolation, while also providing a platform for people to stay connected and informed (Suwana & Pramiyanti, 2020).

METHODS OF RESEARCH

The systematic review of the literature will be used to carry out this study. This approach will make it easier to find scholars and encourage them to assess earlier work. This in-depth analysis of the literature is based on (Denyer & Tranfield, 2003) It makes it easier for the researcher to decide what should be included in line with the research theme and what should be excluded since it goes against the research's suggestions. The researcher will be helped by using this process to get a wide range of publications. The five phases of the methodology used by (Denyer & Tranfield, 2003) are planning, searching, screening, extraction, and synthesis, which also includes reporting.

In order to specify the research topics, the researcher makes an effort to create a plan. What is the relationship between flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication? is the review of the research's questions. The solutions to this research topic will help with the subject matter and show how theories and practices are applied. The following step is to choose the research database and then use key words to search databases that are appropriate for the research queries.



Three electronic databases—Scopus, Sagepub, and Proquest—are utilized in the process of looking for relevant publications in relation to this research subject. These papers were chosen based on their quality presentations of flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, communication, and relevant empirical research. Flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication were the research's main phrases. The researcher uses these keywords to look broadly at flexible work arrangement, work life balance and communication so as to answer research questions from the general to the specific.

Scopus, Sagepub, and Proquest are the three electronic databases used in the process of looking for related publications to the research query. These papers were chosen based on their quality presentations of flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, communication, and relevant empirical research. Flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication were the research's main phrases. The researcher employs these terms to look generally at communication, work-life balance, and flexible work arrangements in order to respond to study questions that range from the general to the specific.

154 papers with their abstracts were found after searching the three electronic databases, Scopus, Sagepub, and Proquest. The research question, "What is the relationship between flexible work arrangement, work-life balance, and communication?" is then used to examine the search results. The researcher then employs the approach of including and excluding items from the search results in order to streamline the review of the article. The researcher's inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Only select articles in English;
- Only look at research paper articles;
- No duplication;
- Read the abstract, which includes justifications for the research questions;
- Articles that demonstrate empirical research techniques.

The researcher's exclusion criteria are as follows:

- Avoid choosing any articles that aren't in English;
- Leave out non-research items (such as novels, magazines, conference papers, proceeding papers, audio/video, and theses/dissertations);
- Articles that are not relevant to the research questions;
- There is Duplication.

The researcher found 57 articles using the inclusion key string search terms "flexible work arrangement, and "work-life balance," and communication?" based on the findings of the aforementioned screening criteria. As a general search technique, the researcher then made further inclusion according to the research question which only looked for themes for "flexible work arrangement", and "work-life balance" and communication?". The researcher only found 6 publications that directly addressed the research questions after that. This indicates that research on flexible work arrangement, work life balance and communication is still rare. The researcher deliberately looked generally to see the methods and also the underlying theories used in general research. The researcher performed a thorough analysis of the results, which was documented in the form of an Excel spreadsheet used as an inclusion data base. The Excel data base is useful for knowing and analyzing the articles in a systematic manner and can make reviews available in Excel in the form of columns (Tranfield et al., 2003). The researcher can organize data into a group on the aspects of the paper using the Excel column. The researcher categorized the articles according to their Title, Author, Publisher, and Year of Publication. The researcher then created groups for different types of papers, study designs, research methods, and the research's focus. The most crucial phase in writing this article is the following one, which involves looking at the research's goal, definition, keywords, underlying theory, relevant factors, and the units that will be subjected to analysis. This study's primary objective is to examine the analysis sections of earlier studies on flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication.

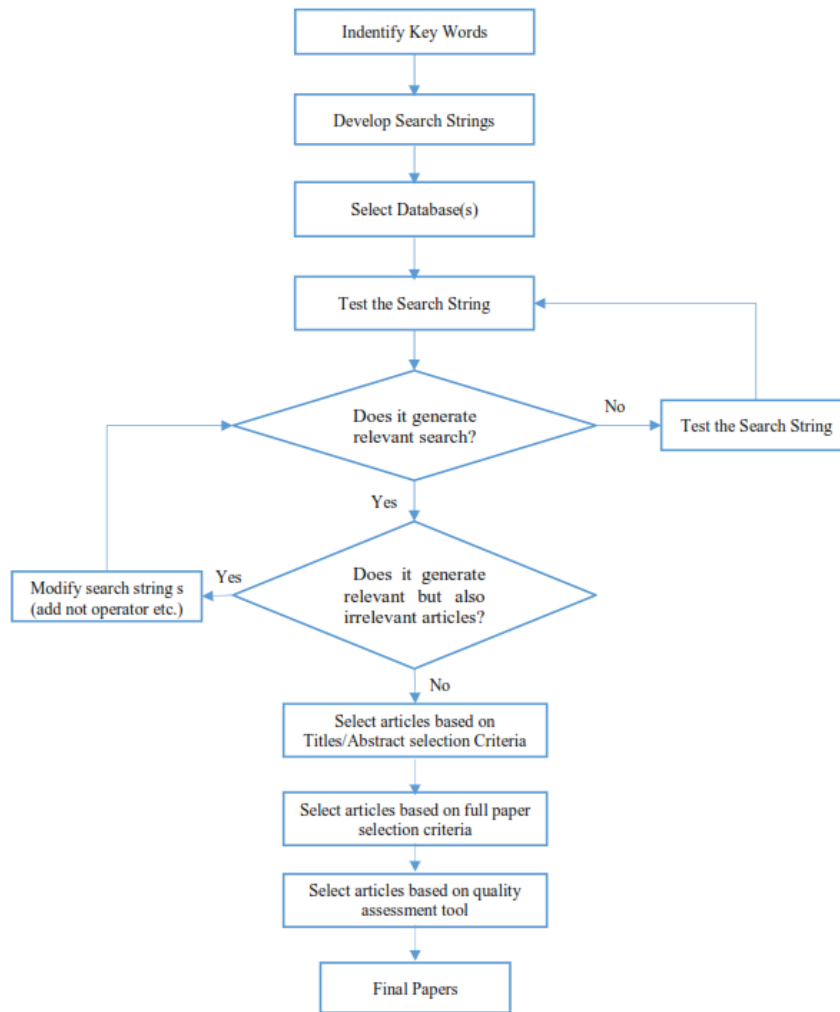


Figure 1 – Search process Literature (Source: Chandorkar, 2013)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher will describe the systematic review's findings in this part, which were found using the group criteria in the Excel database (Nugroho et al., 2019). The researcher will discuss the conclusions of the six publications from the year and publication that particularly address the research question at hand.

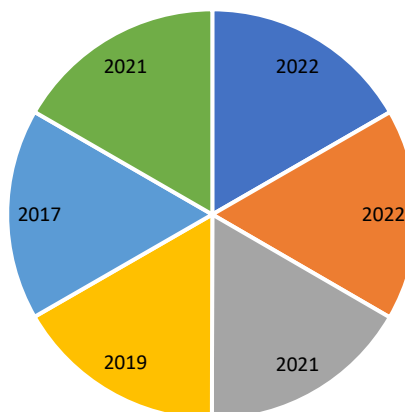


Figure 2 – Years of Publications of Articles



Based on research conducted using the keywords “flexible work arrangement”, “work-life balance”, and “communication”, it was found that articles related to these three variables were only beginning to be published in 2017. This indicates that research on these three variables is still rare and further research is still of interest. Six articles related to this research were published by Research Square, Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, Journal of Communication Management, Anales de Psicología, and Advances in Developing Human Resources.

According to the type of paper used in the systematic literature review, researchers categorize from Petersen et al., (2008), This includes the following 6 categories of research paper facets:

- Validation Research: These methods are brand-new and have not yet been used in real-world settings. Experiments, or laboratory work, are one type of technique;
- Technique evaluation research: These strategies are put into use, and the methodology is assessed. That is to say, it is demonstrated how the method is put into use (as a solution), as well as the results of the implementation in terms of advantages and disadvantages (implementation evaluation). This includes figuring out any issues with the industry;
- Proposed Solution: A proposed solution to a problem may be innovative or a major improvement on an already-used tactic. A brief illustration or persuasive line of reasoning demonstrates the possible advantages and the applicability of the proposed solution;
- Philosophical Papers: These documents offer a fresh perspective on the world by classifying it according to a taxonomy or conceptual framework;
- Opinion papers: These papers present the individual's viewpoint on whether or not a particular method is effective or how things ought to be carried out. They don't rely on connected research and study techniques;
- Experience Papers: Experience papers describe what has been done in practice and how it has been done. It has to come from the author's own experience.

There were two primary results, according to the findings of the prior study. Three studies incorporated validation studies. (Huang et al., 2022; Mangla, 2021; Wang et al., 2016), two studies used evaluation research(Heshmat & Neustaedter, 2021; Walden, 2017) , and one study used experience papers(Çetin, 2022).

Working in a pandemic and post-pandemic period – Cultural intelligence is the key from Mangla, (2021) examined the link between virtual team effectiveness and cultural intelligence (CI). According to the study, cognitive and metacognitive CI were not significantly correlated to the variables of virtual team effectiveness, in contrast to motivational and behavioral CI, which were discovered to be strongly connected with all of the components of virtual team success. Additionally, respondents with technical backgrounds (such as engineering, computer science education, etc.) showed noticeably greater levels of virtual team performance. The efficiency of virtual teams was discovered to be positively impacted by interaction frequency and cultural intelligence. Additionally, it was discovered that behavioral CI contributed significantly to improvements in virtual team performance, trust, and role clarity. According to the study's findings, organizations should incorporate CI into their training plans because it improves virtual team productivity. Organizations should use appropriate video conferencing platforms and ensure regular video communications within teams, it was also urged.

Not Your Parents' Organization? Human Resource Development Practices for Sustainable Flex Work Environments from Waples & Brock Baskin, (2021) In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this article examined the role that HRD practitioners can play in controlling the organizational climate of work and job expectations. This entails educating managers on improved feedback and communication, as well as encouraging staff development through proactive job design. This will make flexible work arrangements (FWAs) easier to accept and more successful for both managers and employees in the short- and long-term. Decision-makers in enterprises interested in developing human capital as well



as HRD specialists interested in creating long-term FWA systems are among the stakeholders for this article. In a period of societal and economic instability, HRD professionals can assist individuals and groups by offering answers. People can make accommodations to the discrepancy between their tastes and the surroundings they have found themselves in thanks to the solutions they offer. HRD professionals can improve people's lives and the workplace by doing this.

Communicating role expectations in a coworking office from Walden, (2017) In order to improve their careers, people sought to be positioned in clearly defined roles among various groups of professionals within and outside of the workplace, according to this study of transition scripts and communication boundary management in a coworking space. Transitions between expertise giving and receiving positions are managed by participants using both explicit and unconscious conversational strategies. These strategies include using indications like donning headphones as a reactive step to minimize disrupting requests for advice and sitting in open seating areas and participating in the office's Facebook group as proactive means to be recognized as an expert. Additionally, even if they work different hours or just sometimes utilize the office, co-workers retain an office presence to foster new business prospects and stay in touch with one another. Finally, team boundaries at SunSpace are demonstrated by two types of exchanges that show how members of the team express role and boundary expectations to shift between expertise receiver and giver: requesting immediate feedback on a project from someone nearby and comprehensive technical support from a team member outside of their area of expertise.

Communication Technology Use for Work at Home during Off-job Time and Work–Family Conflict from Wang et al., (2016), This study examined the relationship between employees' work-family conflicts and their use of technology during their free time, revealing the impact of psychological detachment and family support. The findings shown that the use of technology for work-related tasks at home during non-working hours considerably reduces both time-based and strain-based work-family conflicts. In addition, family support and psychological detachment had mitigating roles in the association between technology use and work-family conflict. Practical ramifications of the study include the recommendation that employees should differentiate between time and space when working from home in order to increase psychological detachment as well as how family support can lessen the positive relationship between technology use and work-family conflict. The study has several flaws, including the inability to differentiate between employees' willingness or preference to use technology for work during non-work hours, the failure to survey those who don't have a set workday, the failure to look at the moderating effects of other types of support, and the failure to use a longitudinal design to confirm the causal relationship between psychological detachment and work-family conflict.

College Students' Degree of Support for Online Learning during the COVID-19 from Huang et al., (2022), This study looked at how supportive Chinese college students were of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and the contributing causes. More over half of college students supported online learning, according to the findings. According to structural equation modeling, support for online learning was positively impacted by social support and family communication but negatively impacted by depression. Additionally, it was discovered that family communication, loneliness, and depression significantly moderated the association between social support and the degree of support for online learning among college students. These findings suggest that in order to boost support for online learning, the government and educational institutions should concentrate on the mental health problems that college students face and offer general assistance, family interventions, and family counselling.

Family and Friend Communication over Distance in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic from Heshmat & Neustaedter (2021), The utilization of communication technologies and family communication requirements during the first four months of the COVID-19 epidemic in Canada are examined in this paper as the findings of an exploratory study. The study discovered through in-depth interviews and an open-ended survey that people started the pandemic with a phase of changing and experimenting with new



communication behaviours, including more frequent connection with family and friends. People sought to simulate in-person scenarios using big group video chats, which presented control and participation issues. People also looked into techniques to boost physicality and a sense of community over distance. By the conclusion of the four months, individuals had started to give up numerous forms of online engagement in an effort to distance themselves from technology and occasionally to clear their minds. The findings recommend future research that examines many nations, demographics, and life circumstances, as well as design lessons for periods of intense social isolation.

CONCLUSION

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) can assist to lessen work-family friction and improve employee wellbeing, according to studies. Additionally, research has shown that FWAs can boost job satisfaction and performance by promoting work-life balance, health, and well-being. Additionally, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, family communication is crucial for preserving bonds and promoting the wellness of family members. Organizations must train and educate their personnel as well as line managers, and create systems and policies that promote flexible working arrangements.

In order to get an answer to the research question, "What is the relationship between flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, and communication?" a systematic literature review was used in this study. To meet the parameters of the study topic, the researcher assembled a variety of publications and performed an inclusion. The three electronic databases—Scopus, Sagepub, and Proquest—turned up 6 articles as a consequence.

The systematic literature review found that articles related to the variables of flexible work arrangement, work-life balance, and communication are still rare and further research is still of interest. The research found that organizations should incorporate cultural intelligence into their training plans, HRD practitioners should educate managers on improved feedback and communication, and people should distinguish between time and space while working from home in order to increase psychological detachment. Additionally, family support and psychological detachment had mitigating roles in the association between technology use and work-family conflict, and family communication, loneliness, and depression significantly moderated the association between social support and the degree of support for online learning among college students. These findings suggest that in order to improve flexible work arrangements and communication, organizations should emphasize cultural intelligence, HRD practitioners should focus on job design, feedback, and communication, and family should provide support and psychological detachment.

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