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Work life balance mediate: Workplace flexibility on job satisfaction

Gede Agus Yogiana * and I Gede Riana

Faculty of Economics and Business, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia.

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the role of Work Life Balance in mediating the effect of Workplace Flexibility on Job Satisfaction. The research was conducted on Education Personnel both civil servant status and contracts at the Head Office of Udayana University with a sample of 181 Education Personnel. Sample determination using proportionate random sampling. The data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Square (PLS) approach. The results showed that workplace flexibility has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, work life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, workplace flexibility positively and significantly affect work-life balance, and work-life balance is able to mediate the effect of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction. These results illustrate that to increase employee job satisfaction at work, work unit leaders must provide good Workplace Flexibility that can improve Work Life Balance.

Keywords: Workplace Flexibility; Work Life Balance; Job Satisfaction; WLB

1. Introduction

The impact of the worldwide spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has created shocks in all fields, such as economic, social and other fields. In the organisational world, this impact may reshape the way employees work, and organisations operate. One of the most visible changes resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic is teleworking or a policy of working outside the workplace, which has an impact on work flexibility. Workplace flexibility means working away from the workplace, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic because there are government regulations to limit the mobility of people causing public sector service employees to work from home to keep the organisation running.

Teleworking was suggested by the World Health Organisation and implemented by organisations around the world as a new work innovation to prevent the spread of the virus as well as a solution so that work can be done as usual. It refers to a flexible working approach that is not limited by time, place, type of technical communication, using information technology. Finally, work from home is inevitable, as the pandemic has turned it into a compulsion.

After the pandemic ends, it is expected that global work norms will continue towards the new normal era. Not only the way organisations work, but also the relationship between workers and employers is greatly affected by this transition. In government agencies, especially in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) issued Circular Letter of the Secretary General of Kemendikbudristek Number 1 of 2023 concerning Adjustment of the Work System of Employees of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in the Context of Prevention and Control of Corona Virus Disease 2019 during the Transition Period Towards Endemic. Furthermore, the President of the Republic of Indonesia issued Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 21 of 2023 concerning Working Days and Working Hours of Government Agencies and ASN Employees. The regulation regulates the implementation of flexible work in government agencies, namely in Article 8. Paragraph (1)

* Corresponding author: Gede Agus Yogiana

ASN employees can carry out official duties flexibly and Paragraph (2) Flexible implementation of official duties as referred to in paragraph (1) includes flexible location and/or flexible time. Related to the derivative rules of the Perpres that have not yet been issued, Udayana University applies flexibility with the Hybride system, namely working offline (at the workplace) and online (teleworking). Although teleworking from home is considered less common in society (Mohalik et. al., 2019), the COVID-19 pandemic makes working arrangements applicable to public sector organisations worldwide (ILO, 2020). While some authors emphasise that there will be greater acceptability of the emerging practice of teleworking among public entities (Langa and Conradie, 2003), research by de Vries et al. (2019) claims that the benefits of teleworking in the public sector are undermined by professional isolation which can reduce organisational commitment.

The prominence of teleworking is also driven by the demand for work-life balance as a result of the increasing number of single parents in today's world Baruch (2000); Marx et al., (2021). furthermore, Bentley et al., (2016) responded to the rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT) due to the pandemic crisis and suggested that teleworking should be reintroduced. Most organisations have begun to offer new ways of working (Fedáková and Išto nová 2017) to effectively respond to these innovations, both in terms of the work and personal lives of workers.

Working from home has been regarded as a means to improve individuals' work-life balance because working from home provides opportunities to take care of family members (Ammons and Markham 2004; Johnson et al., 2007). Work from home policies have several advantages and potential risks at the same time that must be considered. Doing work from home in the form of flexible time was found to be more effective for improving quality of life (Azarbouyeh and Jalali Naini 2014), employee happiness, job satisfaction (Kazekami 2020). Flexible time policies at work can support creativity which will lead to increased innovation (Ellis and Webster 1998) because employees can be freer to organise work time according to their needs.

Telecommuting from home has been widely adopted as a measure to ensure the continuity of public service provision in fulfilling social distancing issued by international and national health agencies to prevent the spread of the pandemic (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garces, 2020). However, the use of the conventional tool that is remote working to address unprecedented challenges opens avenues for several issues, which scholars and practitioners are yet to discover (Yang, 2020). Research has not consistently addressed the implications of working from home on work-life balance. It is argued that telecommuting from home, to support flexible work arrangements can increase employee control in completing work which can improve the quality of organisational activities (Breaugh and Farabee, 2012).

Employees who work from home tend to have greater productivity as it can reduce work-life conflict, as they have the opportunity to work in a familiar and comfortable environment (Hill et al., 2003). In addition, as employees are more orientated towards effective human resource practices (Hornung and Glaser, 2009), home-based telecommuting can reduce the friction between personal and work life and thus can trigger better work-life balance (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). In turn, better work-life balance has direct and indirect positive implications for organisations, including improved social exchange processes, reduced turn-over, and increased productivity (Beauregard and Hendri, 2009).

Side effects and risks to consider when introducing work telecommuting such as social isolation can be a serious issue that causes workers to become disengaged and leads to decreased motivation and performance (Martin and MacDonnell 2012). Working from home often leaves workers with no clear boundaries between work and personal life resulting in excessive workload which can increase stress (Liu and Lo 2018) and anxiety, and affect job satisfaction. This study is expected to fill a gap in the literature by investigating some potential predictors of job satisfaction while working from home due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014), stated that the flexibility policy in working time has a positive effect on employees, where employees can determine when, where and how long employees work. This flexibility makes employees ultimately achieve success at work and outside of work which has an impact on achieving work-life balance and ultimately also makes employee satisfaction increase overall. Flexibility in the workplace is especially important in the new normal era to be able to adjust to work after a prolonged pandemic.

A number of researchers (PalkiSetia and Shah, 2015; Shagvaliyeva, and Yazdanifard, 2014; Irawanto et al., 2021), corroborate this statement, where it was found that the use of flexible working hours positively has a strong influence on work life balance and overall employee satisfaction, but if the practice of flexible working hours is not monitored, it can create difficulties in the workplace. Rawashdesh et al. (2016) confirmed that the implementation of flexible work arrangements has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction and work life balance.

The concept of work life balance can be interpreted as a point or condition of balance where an individual can carry out various roles in life with his work in harmony (Clarke et al., 2004). Work life balance can also be defined as the amount of time spent doing work compared to the amount of time spent with family and favourite things. Work life balance is a condition of comfortable balance that can be achieved between the employee's main priorities from his job position and personal lifestyle (Meenakshi et al., 2013).

According to Pathak et al., (2019), Work life balance has a strong influence on employee job satisfaction in industry. The higher the level of balance in the work and personal life of an employee, the higher the level of employee satisfaction with their work. In organisations where employees operate work from home policies such as workplace flexibility can provide family-friendly benefits, programmes and initiatives about work and personal life. Another benefit of workplace flexibility is increased job satisfaction at the level towards loyalty and commitment to the goals and mission of the organisation (Agha et al., 2017).

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

Teleworking is very popular in the European context in terms of aspects related to work-life balance, especially after the European Framework Agreement on Telework, signed in 2002, which states that teleworking is defined as a type of activity or performance of work utilising information technology where work can be performed on a regular basis (Wojčák and Baráth 2017). Some experts suggest that the concept of telework is the main idea behind working from home (Baruch 2001; Chung 2018). Teleworking has always been discussed due to the blurred boundaries of not being physically present at work concerning non-work and work, personal and social consequences, and the risks and benefits of flexible working hours.

There are several advantages of teleworking, namely, time planning skills, the possibility to work during the most productive times and to access organisational documents from home, the suitability of having a workplace at home, the possibility of working from home in case of illness, and being able to care for family members (Nakrošienė et al., 2019). Empirical studies found several outcomes of working from home, such as improved job performance, increased job satisfaction, lower turnover intention, and reduced stress levels (Vega et al., 2015; Contreras et al., 2020; Kossek et al., 2006; Fonner and Roloff 2010; Coenen and Kok 2014; Anderson et al., 2015). Working from home is undertaken by various private and public sectors in Indonesia to work safely by adapting the concept of telework, telecommuting, or flexible work. Working from home is a double-edged sword (Schieman and Glavin 2017; Kim et al., 2019) that has mixed effects on work-life balance, well-being, and worker satisfaction.

Working at home promotes job satisfaction (Cohen and Liani 2009; Chung 2018; Coenen and Kok 2014; Contreras et al., 2020). Many scholars explain that teleworking or working from home can support work-life balance positively (Fisher et al., 2009; Ellis and Webster 1998; Fedáková and Išto nová 2017) and negatively (Wessels et al., 2019; Novianti and Roz 2020).

- Hypothesis 1: Workplace Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

Work life balance is described as achieving a balance between an employee's family or personal life and work life (Jyothi and Jyothi 2012). The concept of Work life balance is built on the idea that work life and personal life complement each other in the presentation of perfection in one's life. Furthermore, men and women employ flexible work in different ways, resulting in varied outcomes in terms of well-being and work-life balance (Chung and van der Lippe 2020; López-Igual and Rodríguez-Modroño 2020).

Work-life balance can affect employee performance both positively and negatively. An imbalance between work and personal life can result in low productivity and reduced performance for an organisation (Konrad and Mangel 2000; Cohen and Liani 2009). People feel stressed when they lack the necessary resources to fulfil work and family roles. Previous studies have shown that work-life balance is positively related to job satisfaction (Jackson and Fransman 2018). Thus, the following research hypothesis is proposed.

- Hypothesis 2: Workplace Flexibility has a positive and significant effect on Work Life Balance.

The most widely cited of the many advantages of teleworking is increased job satisfaction (Virick et al., 2010). Job satisfaction has been defined and measured both as a global construct and a multi-dimensional dimension (Lund 2003) as the perceived correlation between what a person wants from his or her job and what he or she perceives it to offer (Locke 1970). Job satisfaction is described as a person's emotional state when something pleasant and favourable has

occurred as a result of their job appraisal or work experience. Workers experience a sense of fulfilment as a result of features that help and facilitate the achievement of their work values (Clark 1996).

When organisations refer to teleworking or working from home, they seek to develop new ways of organising work to support and improve their employees' work-life balance (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés 2020). One of the possible determinants that will create innovation as a result of working from home is worker satisfaction (Ellis and Webster 1998). This is done in an effort to increase employee job satisfaction when working from home and has mixed effects on work-life balance, well-being, stress-related outcomes, and satisfaction (Roz 2019; Kim et al., 2019). Thus, it is proposed that :

- Hypothesis 3: Work life balance has a positive and significant effect on Job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 4: Work life balance mediates the effect of Workplace Flexibility on job satisfaction.

3. Methods

This research was conducted first by collecting theories and references as well as data on workplace flexibility, work life balance, and job satisfaction, as well as employees with administrative positions at the Head Office of Udayana University. The population of all civil servants at the Head Office of Udayana University totalled 329 people spread across 8 Work Units while the number of research samples was determined using the Slovin formula. From this calculation, a sample of 181 people was obtained. Then determining the number of samples in each Work Unit by determining the proportion according to the number of employees studied. The data analysis technique used in this research is using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or structural equation modelling using the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Convergent Validity

Table 1 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.511
Workplace Life Balance (Z)	0.586
Workplace Flexibility (X)	0.737

Primary Data. 2023

Table 2 Outer Loadings

Workplace Flexibility (X)	
X1	0.878
X2	0.799
X3	0.894
Work Life Balance (Z)	
Z1	0.745
Z2	0.795
Z3	0.746
Z4	0.737
Z5	0.792
Z6	0.763

Z7	0.746
Z8	0.790
Z9	0.773
Job Satisfaction (Y)	
Y1	0.705
Y2	0.732
Y3	0.658
Y4	0.690
Y5	0.811
Y6	0.751
Y7	0.679
Y8	0.803
Y9	0.680
Y10	0.628
Y11	0.701

Primary Data. 2023

In Table 1, all variables have an AVE value above 0.5 with the lowest AVE value, namely job satisfaction of 0.511. While in table 2 all variables have an outer loadings value above 0.5 with the lowest outer loadings value for the Workplace Flexibility variable of 0.799. in the Work Life Balance variable the lowest outer loadings value is 0.737 and in the job satisfaction variable the lowest outer loadings value is 0.628. Thus, it can be stated that the data in the study are valid, meaning that the latent variable is able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average.

4.2. Discriminant Validity

Tabel 3 Cross Loadings

	Job Satisfaction (Y)	Work Life Balance (Z)	Workplace Flexibility (X)
X1	0.209	0.167	0.878
X2	0.236	0.167	0.799
X3	0.273	0.154	0.894
Y1	0.705	0.348	0.294
Y2	0.732	0.356	0.303
Y3	0.658	0.352	0.167
Y4	0.690	0.407	0.098
Y5	0.811	0.467	0.187
Y6	0.751	0.451	0.122
Y7	0.679	0.441	0.129
Y8	0.803	0.437	0.173
Y9	0.680	0.420	0.128
Y10	0.628	0.394	0.459
Y11	0.701	0.503	0.123

	Job Satisfaction (Y)	Work Life Balance (Z)	Workplace Flexibility (X)
Z1	0.375	0.745	0.105
Z2	0.483	0.795	0.239
Z3	0.516	0.746	0.069
Z4	0.343	0.737	0.124
Z5	0.453	0.792	0.249
Z6	0.470	0.763	0.059
Z7	0.376	0.746	0.115
Z8	0.484	0.790	0.252
Z9	0.492	0.773	0.051

Primary Data. 2023

The discriminant validity value is greater than 0.5. so the latent variable has become a good comparison for the model. In table 3. the cross loadings of each indicator on each variable are greater than 0.5 so that it can be stated that the data in the study are valid. meaning that the latent variable has become a good comparison for the research model or means that the combined set of indicators is not unidimensional. The results of cross loadings can also be stated that each indicator has the largest outer loadings value when associated with its endogenous indicators. This shows that each indicator has accurately explained its respective endogenous variables. This proves that based on discriminant validity all indicators are valid.

Discriminant validity in this study can also be seen in the root value of AVE (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) value. Discriminate validity is seen from the root value of AVE by looking at the correlation value between latent variables where the root value of AVE must be greater than the correlation between latent variables. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion value based on the SmartPLS analysis results can be seen in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Job Satisfaction (Y)	Work Life Balance (Z)	Workplace Flexibility (X)
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.715		
Work Life Balance (Z)	0.587	0.766	
Workplace Flexibility (X)	0.281	0.189	0.858

Primary Data. 2023

The root value of AVE (Fornell-Larcker Criterion) in Table 4 can be seen that each construct is greater than its correlation with other variables. The root AVE value of the Job Satisfaction variable of 0.715 is greater than its correlation with other constructs. namely work life balance of 0.587 and workplace flexibility of 0.281. Likewise with other latent variables. where the root AVE value is greater than the correlation with other constructs. Because the root AVE value is greater than the correlation with other constructs. the discriminant validity requirement is met.

Table 5 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Job Satisfaction (Y)	Work Life Balance (Z)	Workplace Flexibility (X)
Job Satisfaction (Y)			
Work Life Balance (Z)	0.633		
Workplace Flexibility (X)	0.322	0.212	

Primary Data. 2023

Discriminant validity in this study can also be seen in the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) value. Discriminant validity seen from HTMT uses a multitrait-multimethod matrix as the basis for measurement. where the HTMT value must be less than 0.9 to ensure discriminant validity between two reflective constructs. The HTMT value in this study can be seen in Table 5 as above.

Based on Table 5. all HTMT values in this study have values below 0.9 so that it can be stated that all constructs have valid discriminant validity based on HTMT calculations.

4.3. Composite Reliability

Table 6 Nilai Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.903	0.919
Workplace Life Balance (Z)	0.913	0.927
Workplace Flexibility (X)	0.820	0.893

Primary Data. 2023

Based on Table 6. all Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values on each variable are greater than 0.7. so it can be stated that the data in the study are reliable.

4.4. Evaluation of Structural Model or Inner Model

Table 7 R-Square & R-Square Adjusted

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.375	0.456
Work Life Balance (Z)	0.036	0.240

Primary Data. 2023

The R-Square test data in Table 7 shows that the R-Square value for the workplace flexibility variable on work life balance is 0.036. which indicates that it has an influence of 3.6%. The R-Square value of work life balance of 0.036 is a weak model. meaning that the influence of all workplace flexibility constructs on work life balance is weak.

The R-Square value for the workplace flexibility and work life balance variables on Job Satisfaction is 0.375 which indicates an influence of $0.375 \times 100\% = 37.5\%$. Job Satisfaction's R-Square value of 0.375 includes a moderate model. meaning that the workplace flexibility and work life balance variables are able to explain the Job Satisfaction variable by 37.5% and the remaining 62.5% is explained by other factors outside the model. The calculation of Q Square is done by the formula:

- $Q^2 = 1 - [(1 - R1^2) (1 - R2^2)]$
- $Q^2 = 1 - [(1 - 0.375) (1 - 0.036)]$
- $Q^2 = 1 - [(0.625) (0.964)]$
- $Q^2 = 1 - [0.603]$
- $Q^2 = 0.397$

The magnitude of Q2 has a value with a range of $0 < Q2 < 1$. the value of Q2 where the closer to 1 (one) means the better the model. A value of $Q2 > 0$ indicates that the model has predictive relevance. The Q2 result in this study is 0.397 or 39.70%. thus it can be stated that the model in this study has a relevant predictive value. where the model used can explain the information in the research data by 39.70%.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

4.5.1. Workplace Flexibility on Job Satisfaction

The results of the analysis of workplace flexibility on Job Satisfaction can be seen that the parameter coefficient for the workplace flexibility variable on Job Satisfaction is 0.281. which means that there is a positive influence of workplace

flexibility on Job Satisfaction. which means that the better the value of workplace flexibility. the higher Job Satisfaction will be. Based on calculations with bootstrapping. where the test results of the coefficient of the effect of workplace flexibility on Job Satisfaction are 0.281 with a calculated t value of 3.638 and a standard deviation of 0.077 and a p value of 0.000 <0.05 so that hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted. which means that the direct effect of workplace flexibility on Job Satisfaction is meaningful or statistically significant.

Table 8 Direct Effect

	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (STDEV)	P Values	Result
Work Life Balance (Z) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.554	0.071	7.825	0.000	Accepted
Workplace Flexibility (X) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.281	0.077	3.638	0.000	Accepted
Workplace Flexibility (X) -> Work Life Balance (Z)	0.189	0.076	2.481	0.000	Accepted

Primary Data. 2023

4.5.2. Workplace Flexibility on Work Life Balance

The results of the analysis of workplace flexibility on work life balance can be seen that the parameter coefficient for the workplace flexibility variable on work life balance is 0.189. which means that there is a positive influence of workplace flexibility on work life balance. which means that the higher the value of workplace flexibility. the higher the work life balance will be. Based on calculations with bootstrapping. where the test results of the coefficient of the effect of workplace flexibility on work life balance are 0.189 with a calculated t value of 2.481 and a standard deviation of 0.076. and the p value is 0.000 <0.05 so that hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted. which means that the direct effect of workplace flexibility on work life balance is meaningful or statistically significant.

4.5.3. Work Life Balance on Job Satisfaction

The results of the analysis of work life balance on Job Satisfaction can be seen that the parameter coefficient for the work life balance variable on Job Satisfaction is 0.554. which means that there is a positive influence of work life balance on Job Satisfaction. which means that the higher the value of work life balance. the higher Job Satisfaction will be. Based on calculations with bootstrapping. where the test results of the coefficient of the effect of work life balance on Job Satisfaction are 0.554 with a calculated t value of 7.825 and a standard deviation of 0.071. and the p value is 0.000 <0.05 so that hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted. which means that the direct effect of work life balance on Job Satisfaction is meaningful or statistically significant.

Table 9 Indirect Effect

	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (STDEV)	P Values	Result
Workplace Flexibility (X) -> Work Life Balance (Z) -> Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.105	0.045	2.342	0.019	Accepted

Primary Data. 2023

4.5.4. Work Life Balance Mediate the Effect Of Workplace Flexibility on Job Satisfaction

The t-statistics value \geq t-table (1.96) or p-value <0.05. then the research hypothesis is accepted. In Table 9. the parameter coefficient for the workplace flexibility variable on Job Satisfaction through work life balance is 0.105 with a calculated t value of 2.342 and a standard deviation of 0.045 and a p-value of 0.019 <0.05 so that hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted. which means that the indirect effect of workplace flexibility on Job Satisfaction through work life balance is meaningful or statistically significant.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that workplace flexibility has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. work life balance has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. workplace flexibility has a positive and significant effect on work life balance. and work life balance can mediate the effect of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction.

This research also contributes to border theory. where there are mutual obligations and expectations felt between education personnel and organisations. In this case the organisation needs to provide good flexibility to all education personnel in terms of work. The existence of good flexibility felt by education personnel will increase job satisfaction. Based on these findings. the results of this study are able to enrich the development of human resource management science. especially related to job satisfaction and enrich empirical studies related to the role of work life balance in mediating the effect of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction.

The results of this study can practically be used by the leadership of Udayana University as input and consideration related to policy making to increase job satisfaction. Udayana University leaders should pay attention to employee work flexibility. so that employees can increasingly feel an increase in work life balance Furthermore. seen from job satisfaction where Udayana University leaders are required to pay attention to aspects related to employee job satisfaction. By paying attention to this. Udayana University leaders can increase the job satisfaction of Udayana University education personnel.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to disclosed.

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