

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

STUDY OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS IN CONTEXT OF COVID-19 IN

QATAR

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Digitalization and social networks have impacted the way people communicate, collaborate and work. Employees are starting to take greater control and autonomy over their working hours. Experts suggest that flexible work arrangements can be a major tool that can contribute to achieve this goal. When COVID-19 pandemic hit the globe, Qatar too, had followed remote working arrangements and shift jobs as a preventive measure to avoid human interaction as much as possible to reduce the spread of contagion. The purpose of this study is to gain an insight about employees' perceptions of adopting flexible working arrangements in Qatar and the impact it has on their wellbeing, productivity and work/life balance and at the same time contribute as a cost-efficient tool for organizations.

The study found that:

- Culture change will take time and the continuing reasoning why flexible working arrangements will work, its benefits, challenges and solutions to overcome those.
- There is no one size fits all for flexible working arrangements, as individual needs are different.
- The need for flexible working arrangements will grow overtime with newer generations.
- Employees feel more productive and have better well-being with the adoption of flexible working arrangements.

Key Words: Flexible Working Arrangements, COVID-19, Employee Well Being,
Work Life Balance, Digitalisation, Cost-Efficient

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family who has been a great support to help me complete this project. I also dedicate it to those individuals who participated in this research because it is their contributions that have helped me to process the findings and develop an insight about the perception of flexible working arrangements in Qatar.

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In this paper, I have made considerable efforts to understand the perceptions of individuals about flexible working arrangements in Qatar as this approach is very novel to this country. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a challenge to get participants on board to support with this project, but I managed with God's grace.

- Firstly, I thank God for blessing me with good health, sanity, resources and the opportunity to pursue my higher education in such a prosperous country and University. This opportunity led me to complete this project.
- After God, I am very thankful to my family members and Children's Nanny who is a part of our family. I am a full-time working mother of 2 children under the age of 5 and undergoing MBA program from Qatar University with evening classes. The project is a part of my MBA graduation project. Under such circumstances, it would have been impossible for me to complete this project if it weren't for the childcare support from my family during my absence.
- Qatar University has provided me and other students a very rich learning experience on master's degree level research work and an advanced environment filled with highly qualified faculty, inbuilt modern technology, library and classrooms that has contributed to complete this project.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As the society continue to evolve, the business environment is also changing accordingly. Today's employees have much higher expectations from their employers to treat them fairly and offer opportunities where they can prove their worth and feel satisfied about the work and environment. The main aim of businesses is to retain their best talents in order to keep up with the pace of ever-changing business practices. Those employers who focus on employee satisfaction gains a competitive advantage over other businesses, because of thier enthusiastic and dedicated workforce who are highly motivated and productive. This makes them an employer of choice.

There was a time when a workplace was altogether viewed as a separate domain from one's home and family. This separation was largely defined by gender roles, as it was usually men who were working outside as the breadwinner and women stayed home as a home maker managing the house, children and old parents. However, since few decades, women participation in the workforce have been increasing that caused major transition in the family structures from single income families to dual income ones.

Although, there is more financial benefit involved in dual career families; the main challenge they face is maintaining work life balance; especially those with dependents such as children and old parents. Such a transition has also shifted the roles of men in the family; as they share the responsibility of childcare along with their wives. Thus, flexible working arrangement has gained popularity and is a very attractive tool for employees who are coming from such backgrounds. While some people may still prefer the return of the traditional family culture, in today's times, such a reversal would be a difficult choice for an economic sustainability. On the other hand, employers benefit from flexible working arrangements as they can attract and retain

their qualified workforce.

During economic recessions, most of the organizations depend on laying off their staff in order to save cost because this helps in reducing operating costs and promoting greater operational efficiency. Downsizing can result from technological advances and economic recessions such as industrial downturns, governmental and political issues, pandemics or natural calamities.

COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on Humans

Corona Virus Disease 19, popularly known as COVID-19 is a communicable disease and the main cause is by a microbe named Coronavirus². The first outbreak happened in Wuhan, Hebei Province, China in 2019 and eventually spread to other parts of the world, including Qatar and resulted in an ongoing pandemic. As of August 2020, around 188 countries of the world were affected by this disease and more than 18.3 million people were infected resulting in more than 695000 deaths. Thus, this disease had posed an unparalleled challenge to humanity. (Coronavirus disease 2019, 2020). The main symptoms of this disease are severe respiratory congestion, fever, cough, exhaustion and short breath.

COVID-19 is reported to have been transmitted from humans to humans, and it is highly contagious with close physical interactions starting from a handshake, cough, or sneeze. The spread of the disease is so vulnerable that the scale and severity have risen a high level of threat to public health. The deadly disease has changed the way of life for people where their personal, professional, social lives and hygienic practices such as washing hands and sanitizing surroundings have come into sharp focus, for the main purpose of combating the disease.

The International Human Rights law advises every individual to adopt very high

standards of health and hygiene and urges Governments of all countries to implement preventive measures to curb COVID-19 threats to public health and provide medical care to the affected. The global GDP rate has fallen from 2.5% to 1.5% because of the recession caused by the pandemic. The crisis impacted major industries such as Oil& Gas, Tourism, Aviation, Hospitality, Electronics, Automotive, and other consumer products and services. Its impact presents uncertainty and complexity and will also have lasting changes in the way organizations and employees will operate going forward (United Nations, 2020). Apart from loss of lives, the crisis caused major loss of businesses and jobs for millions of people around the globe.

COVID-19 in Qatar

The first case of COVID-19 in Qatar was confirmed on February 27, 2020 (COVID-19 pandemic in Qatar, 2020). The state responded rapidly to enforce social distancing and widespread testing of the disease to mitigate the impact. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) had been proactively taking strong precautionary measures to combat the spread of this contagious virus and to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all residents of the country. It was announced that all individuals and agencies are required to adhere to the requirements of home isolation and not to go out unless deemed necessary. The MOPH recommend the use of social distancing strategies to increase the physical distance among people and apply preventive and hygienic practises to alleviate the spread of infection. They have issued educational materials, including workplace guidance that are advising local organizations and educational institutions to develop work from home policies and online teaching resources along with other useful technical guidelines. A toll-free helpline number (16000) had been introduced by the MOPH to enquire or report about the virus. Mortality rates in Qatar

have been relatively low as compared to other countries in the world which has similar rates of infection.

Impact of COVID-19 in Qatar

As a local impact in Qatar, it has caused supply chain disruptions, as companies may not easily get supplies or workforce. The industrial area, which is the major hub for labour had closed for a significant time, and essential routes, including shipments, have slowed down or stopped completely. There are changes in the ways of working in terms of accessibility, performance bonds, and interactions. Only the most essential outlets, such as food stores and pharmacies, could operate during the initial period of the pandemic.

The energy sector, which revolves around oil prices had also faced the adversities of the crisis, while financial services struggle with liquidity pressures and revenue compression. Airline and Travel sector suffered seriously because the pandemic battered global travel demand. Education sectors adapted to the crisis by adopting entirely different delivery models such as virtual learning. Whereas businesses such as telecom, media and technology, have experienced growing demand as they can operate digitally. COVID-19 crisis had emphasized on the importance of digital innovation to build resilience and tackle future growth.

Although the utmost priority of the Qatari Government is to protect the health and well-being of its people, they have also implemented measures to secure the country's economy. The Qatar Central Bank had declared a relief fund of QAR 75 billion (\$20.5 billion) for various private sectors that contribute for the sustenance of the economy. (Home.kpmg.2020)

Change Management of organizations in Qatar in context of COVID-19

In the global business context, several factors such as innovative technologies, economic crises, increased unemployment and extensive competition have enforced the need for change management and working approaches. After the oil crisis that happened in 1970s, many businesses re-created innovative and people-oriented methods for saving costs; gaining a competitive edge and retain a productive workforce. (Soidre, 2004)

In response to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce human contact as much as possible, Qatar government implemented social distancing and lockdowns as necessitated by the pandemic. As a result, many organizations in the country developed re-emergence strategic approaches such as remote working policies, shift works and virtual collaboration to maintain business continuity and executed its COVID-19 crisis management plan as per the advice and regulations of the state. The main objective of implementing management of change and adopting re-emergence plans is to ensure business continuity whilst safeguarding the health and safety of all stakeholders amidst the pandemic.

Qatar Government strategically collaborated with Microsoft and Cisco to foster an empowering remote working experience in the country. Microsoft helped to implement modern means of technology such as Microsoft Teams for workplaces to ensure smooth communication, collaboration, and uninterrupted delivery of employment services. Meanwhile, educational institutions were using effective Learning Management Tools to interact with students and parents by providing digital content to run a smooth educational process. The main telecom companies in Qatar viz Ooredoo and Vodafone had enhanced the capacity of existing infrastructure and connectivity in order to support an efficient and effective remote working and learning policy for people in Qatar.

(Qatar, 2020). While many may not favour this approach, there are millions of people who thrust into flexible working arrangements. However, when the pandemic settles and businesses get back to normal, flexible working arrangements may be a necessity for the future survival of organizations as a cost saving measure.

The government of Qatar had announced to ease down lock down restrictions in four phases. During these reopening courses, there would be various issues to be considered such as quarantine measures, use of technology and strategizing mobilization and re-mobilization of employees. (COVID-19 and Reopening Qatar: What You Should Know | Fragomen, 2020).

1.2 Research Purpose

This paper is intended to study the perceptions of employees and management towards adopting flexible working arrangements in Qatar. When COVID-19 pandemic hit globally, most of the companies and businesses in the world; including Qatar; switched to remote working or shift jobs to reduce human interaction and mitigate the spread of contagion. The work context had been changing and was challenging at the same time due to the pandemic. Although; it was a necessity in the initial period of the pandemic, it could possibly be the best opportunity for organizations in Qatar to embrace flexible working arrangements considering its benefits in the long run such as creating choice and agility, employee retention and cost effectiveness. The study also addresses the strengths and challenges of flexible working arrangements and understand the ways to best implement them to avoid conflicts and mismanagement. It also outlines the cultural and procedural barriers to flexible working arrangements and provides suggestions to overcome them.

1.3 Motivation for the Study

I have been working in Qatar since the year 2005 across various range of industries, different shifts in different type of companies such as private, government and semi-government. As time and age passed by, my priorities in life also changed. Today, being a full-time employee, an MBA student, and a mother of 2 children under the age of 5, I would prefer my employer to provide me flexible working arrangements to meet all my priorities smoothly. Currently, I am working for Qatar Museums which is a government organization and provides me with 2 years maternity hours to meet the parental needs of my infant. This arrangement has been very beneficial for me both in personal and professional terms. It would have been very stressful for me otherwise to manage both family and work. When COVID-19 disease hit globally, the organization was forced to necessitate remote working as per state directives. This arrangement introduced new normal of working remotely. As the organization is re-opening according to the four phases imposed by Qatar Government, (Covid19.moph.gov.qa. 2020); the management is evaluating if the implementation of remote working arrangements will be beneficial to reduce cost, add as an employee retention tool and build more resilient business operations. Currently, as the organization has started to operate with full employee attendance as per Phase 4, (Statement by the Supreme Committee for Crisis Management on Phase Four of the Gradual Lifting of Coronavirus Restrictions - Government Communications Office, 2020) it is also offering remote working option to accommodate the requirement of employees who are vulnerable to infection or for those who have to attend online or blended learning school children at home or any other critical circumstances as deemed necessary in the midst of the pandemic. Although Remote working arrangements and other flexible working arrangements; was a necessity during the pandemic and are reluctantly embraced by

employers, it can possibly be a permanent trend, because it worked effectively during the course. There is a realization that many jobs that had to be done onsite could be done elsewhere within the time frame. However, challenges include sustaining the company culture, engaging employees, and ensuring a cooperative workforce.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study is conducted to comprehend the perception of employees and employers whether flexible working arrangements must be implemented as a way of work in future. The study also examines whether there is a correlation between flexible working arrangements and employee retention, employee wellbeing, productivity, work life balance, job nature, digitalization, and monetary benefits.

1.5 Research Questions

The following Research Questions were tested from this study:

1. Does digitalization facilitate flexible working arrangements?
2. What is the degree of relationship between flexible working arrangements and the various forms of employee well-being in Qatar?
3. Does the access to flexible working arrangements affect productivity of an employee?
4. Does the need for work life balance of an individual impact the adoption of flexible working arrangements?

1.6. Scope of the Study

Qatari citizens and residents who are legally employed in Qatar are the main targets of this study. Students, domestic workers, labours, and unemployed people within the

country are excluded. Accessible employees were provided with electronic questionnaire through email addresses or social media. The accessible management team were interviewed virtually through modern electronic means such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

1.7. Structure of the Study

The following is the structure of the study:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction that gives an overview about the purpose of the thesis and the motivation behind it.
3. Literature Review that gives an in-depth description of Flexible Working Arrangements, its objectives, and various reasons why it has been favoured by individuals in today's world.
4. Methodology which was through qualitative and quantitative methods such as Interviews and surveys respectively.
5. Data Analyses was developed with corresponding variables and testing measures with the tool SPSS.
6. Case Study with Management Interviews
7. The paper ends with conclusion, recommendation, and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Flexible working arrangement is a practise in an organization that gives provisions for employees to alter standard working hours or carry out their work in an alternate location away from standard workplace. This contributes to attain work-life needs of an employee whilst fulfilling their job obligations and achieving total daily, weekly, or monthly hours within the bandwidth set by the employers. (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell & MacVicar 2006, p. 138). Under flexible work arrangement, employees have greater freedom in scheduling their work execution and may thus meet their family or personal needs and achieve a better work life balance. However, such an arrangement is always at the discretion of the supervisor. Although there will be changes in the schedules, the total working hours required of employees on flexible arrangement is the same as that required under standard working hours. (Owen, 1977). Advances in technology such as internet, email, intranet, smart phones, cloud, and many more modern technological means easily facilitates to adopt such a policy in an organization with minimum hurdles and at much higher efficiency. According to Gardiner and Tomlinson (2009); this approach can be viewed as a broader concept that helps to gain a competitive advantage where work arrangements deviate from standard employment, but the job responsibilities are completed. Flexible working arrangements are generally expected to create a win-win working arrangements benefiting both employers and employees, however, managing such an arrangement may be a challenge considering the size and type of businesses. Therefore, it is important that employers undertake an organizational assessment to determine the type of flexible working arrangements that suits their needs the best.

The reasons why flexible working arrangements have become so important globally are because, as time had evolved, the human and work culture were also evolving.

There are 3 significant changes that occurred in the human culture after the Second World War that created the basis for flexible working arrangements, which are:

1. The separation of workplace and home life
2. Decline in Birth-rate since the 18th century
3. Increase of women participation in the labor force; specially those who are mothering children.

The combination of these circumstances created the need for flexible working arrangements in working conditions of the new social movement. (Bohen and Long, 1981).

2.1 The Changing Context of Work

The external business context has changed significantly in terms of technology, society, demography and globalization. This has developed various challenges as well as opportunities for businesses.

1. **Advanced Technology:** The work nature for several businesses are getting more complex, automated and technology dependent. This enables employees to manage their working style and schedules differently from traditional working arrangements of being at workplace in each time frame. The latest technologies such as cloud, intranet, and outlook to name a few also facilitates easier collaboration and coordination virtually. Technology also helps to disrupt traditional hierarchical structures by encouraging network-based work.
2. **Societal values:** Employees mostly retain in an organization because of the work environment and when they can work in a more agile and meaningful manner. This gives employees more autonomy in their working styles and thus they take more responsibilities for personal and organizational development.

3. **Demographics:** In an organization, multiple generation work together starting from Baby Boomers (individuals born from 1948 to 1964) to Generation Z (individuals born between 1995 to 2009) and thus an organization will have around 4 generations of workforce together. Each generation have their own set of values, working styles and challenges. Organizations must understand and accommodate the needs of the diverse needs of each generation to retain the best talents and be an employer of choice.
4. **Globalization:** A global market demands 24/7 culture and requires the ability to collaborate and connect rapidly, around the clock to meet the diverse customer demands and expectations. Flexible working arrangement helps to manage time pressure, uncalled workflows, meet tight deadlines and fast paced work.
5. **Sustainability:** Flexible working arrangement also contribute to sustainable environmental growth as it reduces the emissions of carbon footprint by reducing the office space and commuting.

These above forces when combined creates an urgent need for an agile and flexible approach to work.

The main objective behind the concept of flexible working arrangement is to help employees manage work life balance which in turn results in overall job satisfaction and reduced stress. It is mainly attractive to those who face challenges in balancing their personal and family obligations with their professional responsibilities. Thus, it is generally viewed as a family friendly policy. Some advantages include maternity hours for female employees with newborn babies or allowing employees to coordinate their work hours with the schedules of their school going children, or those dealing with daily traffic patterns to avoid high congestion times. Bloom, Krestschmer and Van Reenen (2009) states that when employees can maintain a good work life balance,

then its positivity affects the workplace performance. Giving employees more autonomy to complete their work makes them more productive and motivated.

Ralston (1989) also confirmed that employees working under flexible working arrangements are happier because of the access to good work life balance. Hill et al. (2001) conducted a study with IBM, which consisted of a sample of 6000 employees and the study revealed that almost half of them faced challenges to balance their work and personal life. Participants who had access to flexible working arrangement confirmed that they did not face much difficulty in balancing their work and life. Such employees also stated that they were able to and willing to work longer hours when required. Thus, the Hill's study proposes that when an organization provides flexibility in work for their employees, it results in more loyalty, productivity and lesser stress. Anderson e al. (2002); Scandura & Lankau (1997) and Pierce & Dunham (1992) reveals that flexible working arrangements also increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as this creates a family friendly image for the organization. Thus, the following hypothesis was generated:

This study derives the following hypothesis:

H1: Flexible Working Arrangement is positively related to employee retention.

Casper & Bufardi (2004) analyzed and confirmed that flexibility in working hours and dependent care assistance were significant predictors of an anticipated organizational support. When an organization facilitates flexible working arrangement, it positively affects the job pursuit intentions of an individual; as it gives an impression that the organization has a supportive work environment; thereby; increasing job seekers desire to get employed with the organization.

Flexible working arrangements also reduces the absenteeism rates. In his study, Baltes et al (1999) revealed that flextime, which is one of the types of flexible working

arrangement, was certainly related to productivity, overall job satisfaction and lower absenteeism.

In this paper, we will discuss about some of the most common types of flexible work arrangements which are Flextime, Compressed work weeks, Job sharing and Telecommuting.

2.2 Types of Flexible Working Arrangement

With the outbreak of COVID-19, changes have occurred in work environment and the way of life for people all over the globe. As a result, most of the businesses instigated changes to their working strategies to fight against the pandemic. Many employers have temporarily adopted remote working or flexible working arrangements as a social distancing approach to lessen human contact as much as possible. Adopting flexible working arrangements during COVID-19 pandemic phase was a necessity. But should businesses move forward to continue using these approaches when things get back to normalcy?

As companies aim to reduce cost and retain talented employees, it is very important for Human Resource management to understand the critical issues of work life balance for them. As much as; increasing the financial benefit is an important employee retention tool, it is also an unsustainable strategy. Many firms around the globe have begun to consider flexible working arrangement as an alternative tool to retain talented employees because a good work life balance is what many people, especially millennial generation look for in a job. (Zarim and Zaki, 2015). Moreover, with the advancement of technology, adopting flexible working arrangements can be easier than it could have been two decades ago.

The most popular types of flexible working arrangements are telecommuting,

flextime, job sharing, and compressed workweeks. These types are prearranged work agreements that allow employees flexibility with their working conditions (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell, & MacVicar, 2006).

- Flex time

Flextime allows employees to determine the start and end times of the workday; without changing the total work hours set by the employer.

Flex time allows employees to meet their personal requirements such as medical schedules, dropping children to school, fitness routines or other obligations; thus, helping them to lower conflicts that may arise between work and life. (Rocereto, Gupta, & Mosca, 2011). Qatar Foundation, a non-profit organization in Qatar, which has around 50 entities operating under their umbrella working in education, research and community development provides flex time arrangement for their employees. (Reference from the interview conducted with the Human Resource Manager of Pre-University Education entity of Qatar Foundation)

According to Rocereto et al. (2011) employees who had access to flex time was significantly correlated to both job satisfaction and work life balance and attributed negative scores for those who did not have access to. The idea of flex time working arrangement was conceived by a German Management Consultant named Christer Kammerer. (Christel Kammerer, 2020). It was however, implemented at the headquarters of a German Aerospace company in Munich named Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm (MBB) in the year 1967. The company had around 3000 employees which included white collar jobs and those in research and development managers, administrators and clerical staff. (It's Time to Get Flexible or Get left Behind • FlexTime, 2020) Road traffic was a bottleneck even in those days and it was

challenging for many employees to arrive at work on time. Loss of time in turn hampered the morale and productivity among employees. In order to alleviate this situation; MBB management approached a sociologist Kristel Sammerer for a solution. She questioned about the fixed start and ending timings of the standard working hours in a day and assessed if employees' workloads could be buffered to make the fixed arrival and departure schedules less important. After measuring and assessing all these elements, Kristel introduced the flex time working arrangements where employees can determine their arrival and departure time between a set of given periods for the start and end time. For example, an employee could choose to arrive between 07:00 am and 09:00 am and leave between 17:00 pm and 19:00 pm. This idea was initially named Glitziest, which means gliding time in Germany. ("Origins of Flexible Working Hours • FlexTime", 2020). As per this idea, employees are mandatorily required to be at workplace during core hours.

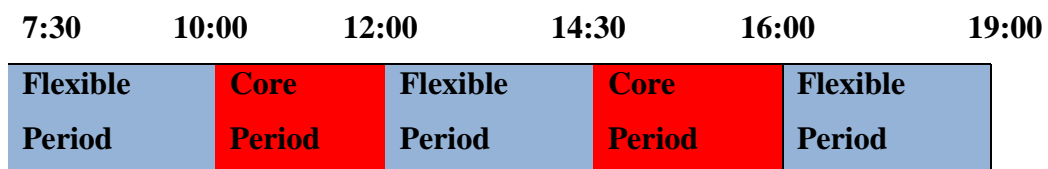


Figure 1. A typical flex time schedule at Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm

Later on other ideas such as Flexible lunch break (between 12:00 pm to 14:00 pm), the provision to build up extra hours to use as flexi day per month; mandatory attendance

during core periods; telecommuting, job sharing and compressed week became significant features of flexible working arrangement.

The benefits of flex time work arrangements are better work life balance, employee wellbeing and job satisfaction. On the other hand, this arrangement can also have negative effects such as job pressure and job insecurity. Evans et al (2000) argued that this arrangement is not applicable to all industries, especially medical field.

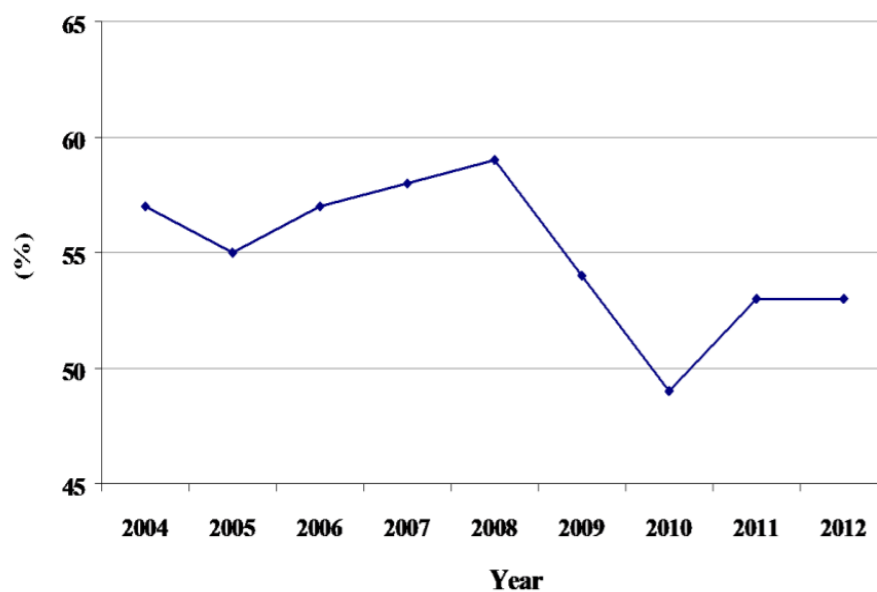


Figure 2. Flextime Availability Overtime

The figure is referred from 2008 employee benefits: How competitive is your organization, Copy right 2008, by SHRM and 2012 Employee Benefits: The Employee Benefits landscape in a Recovering Economy, Copyright 2012 by SHRM.

- Compressed Work Week

A compressed work week is an alternative arrangement where an employee can extend the length of their working hours; beyond the standard 8 hours a day; while

simultaneously completing their work week within three or four days and having more than two days off. This arrangement is usually created based on business requirements and not worker requirements. (Zeytinoglu, Cooke, & Mann, 2009). The type of sectors that generally follows such an arrangement is Oil & Gas, manufacturing, Insurance, Information Technology and Medical industries. (Vega & Gilbert, 1997). In 1972, the federal government at the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Albuquerque, New Mexico initiated an experiment on the compressed workweek idea. The program was extended until 1982 and successfully enforced in 1985 as Public Law 99-10 (McC Campbell 1996). The main idea behind this program was to measure the positive effects of compressed work week for employees and their wellbeing. Mitchell and Williamson (2000) conducted a research for workers in a factory who worked from 8 hours shifts to 12 hour shifts and collected data such as employee performance, work attendance, general health, sleep patterns, mood behaviors and accident rates. They analyzed that this arrangement had positive as well as negative effects. Positive effects included improved employee morale, employee savings, reduced absenteeism, reduced commuting time and environmental protection due to lesser transport emissions. (Crosby et al., 2008).

In America, the transport sector consumes 27% of energy and 70% of petroleum. According to U.S Census Bureau 2003, Americans take around 24.3 minutes to travel to work. (ORNL, 2001). This also includes heavy traffic, congestion, and environmental pollution. Studies and surveys prove that; implementing compressed work hours in the United States had helped to reduce the automobile commute by 7-10% which in turn helped to combat congestion and pollution. (CUTR, 6 1998).

While on the negative sides, the longer working hours had the potential to create higher rates of error and risk of damage to machines or worker injuries; especially in

factory set ups. It could also create fatigue for workers, difficult to set up meetings, reduced quality of work towards end of a shift, reluctance, and tiredness to return to work after a long shift. (Ronen & Primps, 1981).

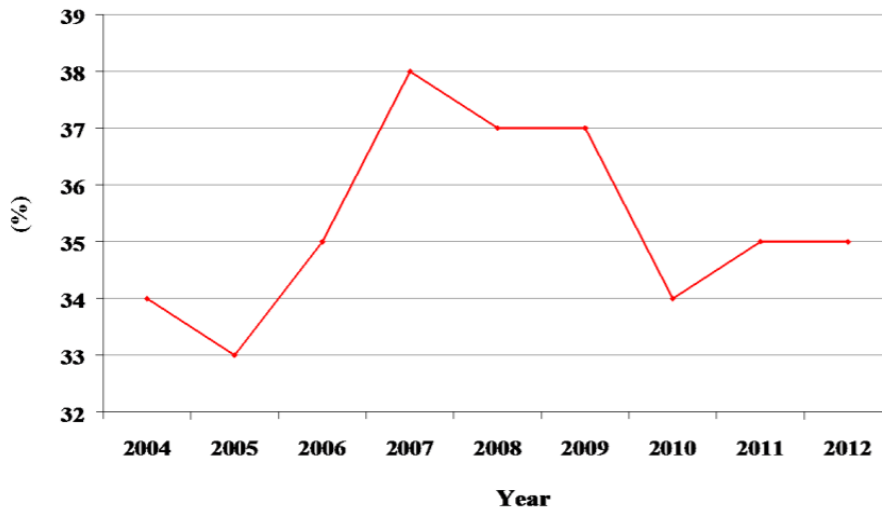


Figure 3. Compressed Work Week Availability Overtime

This figure is referred from the 2008 employee Benefits: How Competitive is your Organization, Copyright 2008 by SHRM and 2012 Employee Benefits: The Employee Benefits Landscape in a Recovering Economy, Copyright 2012 by SHRM.

- Job sharing

In job sharing set up, two persons share the duty, pay and benefits of one full time position (Dimarco, 1979). This concept was promoted in the 1960s and further developed through the 1978 Federal Employee Part-Time Career Employment Act where the need for workers to work less than 40 hours were considered. (Tingir, 2008). The main objectives of this arrangement were to improve work life balance, especially for women with young children, better retention of highly qualified employees, skills

and knowledge sharing of two employees who are allotted the same job. Job sharing is mostly common in the health care and government sectors. Weekly and daily rotations are part of job sharing. The advantages of having job sharing in an organization are that there will be minimal disruption of sick and vacation leaves. When one person is on leave, the other can cover his/ her absence. It also contributes to employee retention and productivity. However, the disadvantages are that this arrangement can be costly for the organization. The employer must bear the cost of benefits of two employees for one job, such as medical insurance and training. If there is no effective communication between the job-sharing employees, it can lead to chaotic and duplicated work processes. ("Job Sharing", 2020). According to Employee Benefits Program, the growth rate of companies providing job sharing opportunities from 2004 to 2007 was 17% to 20%. However, during the recession, it fell to 18% and further declined to 12% in 2012. This outcome can be predicted either due to cost cutting by companies or simply a decline in the job-sharing opportunities.

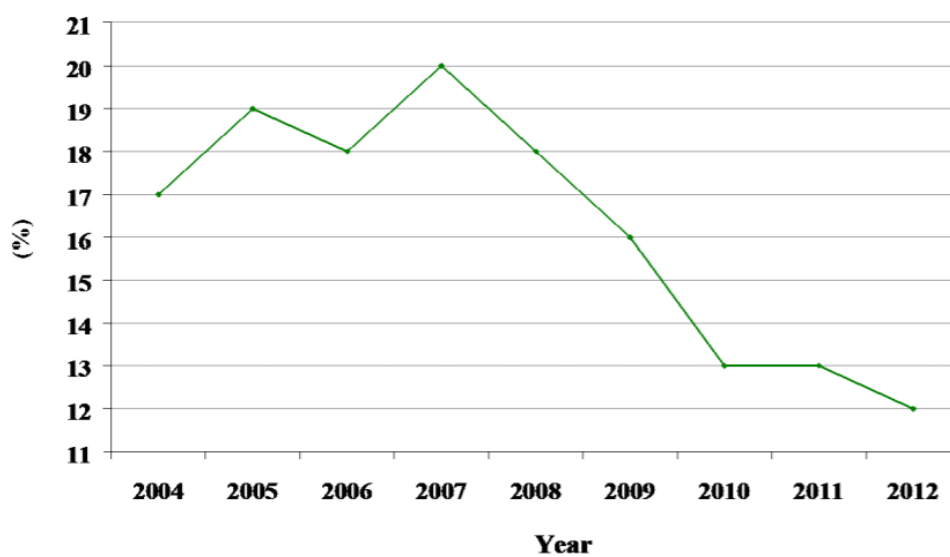


Figure 4. Job sharing availability overtime

The figure is referred from the 2008 Employee Benefits: How Competitive is your Organization, Copyright 2008 by SHRM and 2012 Employee Benefits: The Employee Benefits Landscape in a Recovering Economy, Copyright 2012 by SHRM.

- Telecommuting

Telecommuting allows employees to work from home or an alternative location away from the standard workplace. Such type is usually adopted by Information Technology professionals; mostly those who are doing Data Entry or software programming. The main element in a telecommuting set up is the elimination of travel and working with the help of technology. A small-time business owner such as cake bakers or youtubers who does business from home cannot be categorized as telecommuting as this does not eliminate a travel. (Handy & Mokhtarian, 1995).

The term “Telecommuting” was introduced by Jack Nilles in 1972 while he was working on communication system for NASA. After 20 years; in 1992; the Interagency Telecommuting Pilot Project developed the use of external telecentres for US government. In 1996, The National Telecommuting Initiative was developed to set forth telecommuting as the norm in the United States. Then in 2004, the US government pushed the bill that encouraged the use of remote working arrangements within federal Agencies. Besides, many technological companies such as Microsoft began to launch streaming technology to help the smooth operation of telecommuting for remote workers. By 2010 the US Government had passed the Telework Enhancement Act, which required to make telecommuting more secure and effective for Federal employees. (Telecom, 2020). Telecommuting is a great cost efficiency tool for an organization as they can save cost from overheads and travel cost; which in turn helps to promote Go Green environmental culture; because of lesser emission of greenhouse gases. It helps employees to balance work and family especially for

women and increases independence and autonomy for employees; thereby resulting in increased job satisfaction. (Sullivan & Lewis, 2001) The demerits of this arrangement are that it becomes a challenge for management to manage telecommuting staff. Furthermore, professional isolation without face to face human interaction can have a negative impact on employees and career development. An email can possibly be a highly misinterpreted mode of communication as one may not be able to catch the nuances of tone of voice or facial expressions. Even in video conferencing, the body language or gestures of the other person cannot be easily understood. Remote working may also mislead the employees' social and family circle to think that he/ she is not employed or are not serious at his job; which have possibilities to cause stress in relationships. In addition, when employees are working remotely, the possibilities for distraction from family, or other tasks such as checking non-business emails or irrelevant side conversations are high.

It is a fact that human beings are social creatures. Humans feel emotionally fulfilled when they are physically present with their peers at the same place. Remote working may not fulfill this primitive human need completely. Another disadvantage of remote working could be the slow pace of decision making as people usually work at their own pace. Whereas during face to face interactions, real time decisions are made quicker.

As per SHRM, around 45% employers around the globe offered telecommuting option to its employees in 2006. By the year 2008, there was an increase of 2% more making it up to 47%. Organizations opt for telecommuting as it is more beneficial to the organization in terms of cost efficiency and provision of non-monetary benefit for staff. The following figure exhibits the change in the access to telecommuting over the years between 2006 and 2012. COVID-19 crisis has forced many organizations and its employees globally, including Qatar; to adopt remote working arrangement in

order to reduce human interaction and mitigate the spread of contagion. It was the necessity of the hour. In the gulf region, 37% organizations each in Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait adopted remote working arrangements during COVID-19 crisis. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia indicated 30% businesses to work remotely. Bahrain observed 38% of remote working which is the highest whereas Oman observed the lowest rate of 18% organizations working remotely. ("One-third of Gulf companies planning work from home to combat Coronavirus threat | GulfTalent", 2020)

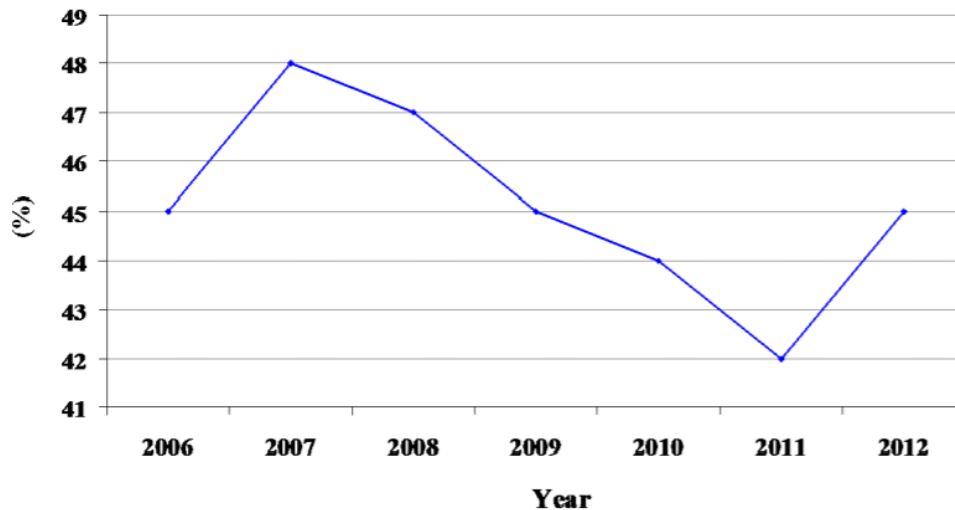


Figure 5. Telecommuting Availability over time

The figure is referred from 2008 Employee Benefits: How Competitive is Your Organization, Copyright 2008 by SHRM and 2012 Employee Benefits: The Employee Benefits Landscape in a Recovering Economy, Copyright 2012 by SHRM.

2.3 Employee Well Being

Employee well-being is of utmost importance for any business because emotionally

fulfilled employees contribute to positive outcomes for the organization. (Grant, Christianson, and Price 2007). Well-being means, the overall quality of employee experience at work that consists of psychological, social, and physical factors.

- Psychological well-being involves the subjective experience and functioning such as the activities, skills and capabilities, satisfaction, and self-respect.
- Social well-being involves the relational experience such as community participation, acceptance by the society and helping and being there for others.
- Physical well-being are the elements that fulfil the health and biological functioning of individuals such as shelter, nourishment, health care and agility.

Work environment is an important determinant of employee well-being which includes all the above three factors. (Warr, 1987). Fisher (2003) states that when organizations focus on employee well-being, then employees increase their efforts, contributions and productivity. Organizations must monitor whether their employees are happy and content with their work environment through regular employee surveys. (Rynes, Colbert & Brown, 2002). With the current turbulent situations, flexible working arrangement can act as a strong pillar for organizations to create competitive advantage for itself. Flexible working arrangement is of increasing importance for modern organizations because to maintain their competitive edge, organizations must adapt to newer technologies, globalization, increased market competitiveness and rapid fluctuations in labor market. Flexible working arrangement supports organizations to make continuous adjustments to keep up with the ever-changing market and society.

2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

This theory demonstrates that job satisfaction is aligned with motivation at workplace.

It exhibits the hierarchy of human needs in the form of a pyramid where the basic needs are placed at the bottom while self-actualization need is placed at the topmost. (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Physiological needs comprise of the most basic need for humans such as food, water, and oxygen. When this is fulfilled, then comes the safety needs that comprises of health, well-being, and security. Need to belonging follows thereafter which are fulfilled by the presence of family, friends, and colleagues. After this follows, the self-esteem needs comprising of self-confidence and self-esteem. The final but not the least, comes the self-actualization need where an individual yearns to attain their full potential (Maslow, 1943).



Figure 6. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The Image is referred from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - Explore Psychology, 2020. The management of an organization must have a good insight about these psychological processes to motivate their staff and develop productivity that can help in achieving organizational objectives. When Maslow's theory is aligned with employee's

motivational needs, it comprises of 1) Rewards: such as remuneration; vacation leaves, pension, etc. 2) Personal objective such as self-preservation 3) Recognition and sense of belonging: 4) Self Esteem is when a person loves himself, his employer and colleagues will accept and support him to accomplish all tasks needed. 5) Self-actualization is when an employee has autonomy in his work and can balance his work and life. When the working hours are family friendly or helps in maintaining work life balance, the employee will feel more motivated and productive. Thus, providing flexible working arrangements for employees is a great employee retention tool for an organization. Although Monetary factors such as remuneration, annual bonuses and other allowances are of paramount importance to employees, non-monetary benefits such as flexible working arrangements are an important tool that can contribute to employee retention.

2.3.2 Flexible Working Arrangements & Psychological Well Being

Theory of Human Ecology and Demand Control Model

The theory of Human Ecology states that individuals choose the environment in which they exist as per their preferences and eventually adapt to it. Their set of behaviors and growth are also a part of this perceived environment and it becomes a stable atmosphere for them to function as normalcy. This stability decodes to patterns resulting in people having repetitive manners of lifestyle. Psychologically, they use a similar set of social representations which enables them to function with their environment and its elements smoothly. The main idea behind this is to come in terms to the subtle tinges what the environment could provide and reduce the possibilities of undesired surprises. The elements include, but not limited to; gaining support from those in the same environment, observing, understanding, learning, and adapting to others' behaviors, so that they could function more efficiently within the environment

and turn their life much easier. In such conditions, Individuals will be able to deal with the challenges the environment has to offer and develop new skills as per situations' demand. A workplace is one such environment where change is constant and people must adapt to the changes that occur, in order to match up to the trend and survive with the employer. (Lee et al., 2002a).

Human ecology theory is compared with the Demand Control Model which demonstrates that individuals operate as per the demands of the employer. When job stress increases and perceived control on the job decreases, then health related stress tends to shoot up. If flexible working arrangement is applied to Demand control model, then it is most likely that individuals may experience lesser stress because of more control on their jobs and having the opportunity to maintain work life balance. (Karasek, 1979). Where-as under Human ecology theory, individuals choose a work type that fits in their own demand which could possibly be reduced workload.

After comparing both these theories, Lee conducted a survey and collected information from the participants in the following five areas:

1. How and why the individual chose the reduced workload?
2. How the job was restricted to accommodate reduced hours?
3. Challenges faced during the restructuring process.
4. Costs and benefits of the job restructuring from perspectives of employees, family, supervisor, colleagues and Human Resource department.
5. Factors that were important to ensure success and avoid failure.



Figure 7. The Job Demand Control Support Model

The Image is referred from the page The Job-Demand-Control-Support Model: What it is and why it matters to cope with workplace stress | CQ Net - Management skills for everyone, 2020.

Based on the study; Lee revealed that reduced workload arrangements were highly preferred by participants (62%) and 91% of participants preferred a good work life balance after they chose a reduced schedule. The results indicated that the decision to choose reduced work schedules were not a temporary plan but a long-term one. Employees revealed that; with reduced working hours, they felt more productive, creative and focused. Lee then compared these results to the employees who were trying to reach the equilibrium of functioning between the environment and own personal needs and thus concluded that Human Ecology Theory was strongly supported over Demand Control Model. Although the latter attributed in reducing stress in jobs, that was not the only reason for employees to choose a reduced workload. Apart from reduced work stress, they also wanted to spend more time with family and attend to their personal needs which means they were yearning for a good work life balance as well. Therefore, as per Human Ecology theory, individuals chose the environment of reduced workloads as per their own preference, which better

explains why employees choose flexible working arrangements to adapt to their environment and fit in their own needs.

Hence, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: Flexible Working Arrangement has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing.

2.3.3 Flexible Working Arrangements and Social Well Being

Social Wellbeing of employees is influenced by the interpersonal relationships between individuals and stakeholders in an organization. Employees receive direct social support from their families, friends, colleagues and management which directly influences their choices and behaviors in life. (Ganster, Fusilier & Mayes, 1986). Olsen (1987) indicates that; providing flexibility for employees may have a negative effect on the interpersonal relationships between colleagues and their management. For example, when an employee uses remote working arrangements extensively, he may be physically unavailable when required at the floor or may interact much lesser with his co-workers. This can create a negative impact on his profile, as it not only creates a stress among other employees who are on site, but there are possibilities of work getting delayed. (Baily & Kurland, 2002).

Human beings are social animals and individuals are happier when they are socially accepted. In a workplace, an employee is mostly accepted when he is visually present, cooperative and carries a team spirit attitude. When employees work On-site, they comprehend their roles and organizational culture much better than working in isolation. During face to face meetings, participants develop more exchange relationships that are built on direct interactions and negotiations or even crack more innovative ideas. Such a relationship building can be challenging with a virtual set-up. Considering this study, the following hypothesis is formed:

H3: Flexible Working Arrangement has a negative relationship with social well-being.

2.3.4 Flexible Working Arrangements and Physical Well Being

When employees are provided with flexible working arrangements, their physical wellbeing is benefited as they get the opportunity to balance their health, work, and life. With flexible working arrangements, employees have more time to focus on their health, arrange healthy food, have time cook meals at home, enroll for fitness sessions or manage personal work outs. When employees have control and autonomy over their job, they have lesser frustration and completes their work in a more efficient manner. According Karasek's (1979) Job Demand-Control Model (JD-C), when employees have the autonomy and control to make decisions on their work processes, this will contribute to stress reduction. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: Flexible Working Arrangement has a positive relationship with physical wellbeing of employees.

2.4 Changing Demographics

Table 1. Category of Generations

Category	Years of Birth	Youngest Age in 2020	Oldest Age in 2020
The Silent Generation	1925 to 1945	75	95
Baby Boomers	1946 to 1964	56	74
Baby Bust, Generation X	1965 to 1979	41	55
Millennials, Generation Y, Gen Next	1980 to 1994	26	40
iGen/ Gen Z	1995 to 2012	8	25
Gen Alpha	2013 to 2025	1	7

In an organization, multiple generations will have to work together simultaneously. In today's world, individuals from the Generations of Baby Boomers, Baby Busts, Millennials and iGens are all present within the workforce. Each set of generation carries distinct work nature, experiences, skills and brings different challenges along. For example, baby boomer generation is almost touching retirement age, but they still prefer to work. Whereas, Baby Busts are those who generally have dependents in the form of children and elderly parents. The Millennial generation places more emphasis on the need for work life balance. With ethnic diversity and increased opportunities and levels of education, the Millennials; prefer to keep changing their jobs for various motives; mainly for economic reasons. If they are given appropriate trainings and opportunities, they could potentially help in strategic development of organizations to adapt and function according to the digital era. In the coming time starting from the year 2020; the millennials would dominate the global workforce comprising of 35% whereas baby boomers comprise of 6% only, as they would be of retiring age groups. (Bean, 2020).

Baby boomer individuals are mostly idealistic, competitive and results driven. They work hard and prefer to stick with one employer for long term as they believe that their value, identity and career is based on their employers. In their younger years, they had not laid much emphasis on work life balance and had sacrificed their personal time for the well-being of their employers and families. Individuals from this generation tend to have health related issues as they have been taking high degree of responsibilities of their careers and dependents. Today, most employed individuals from the baby boomer generation are holding senior positions with obviously higher responsibilities which in turn lead to more stress. Baby Boomers may require flexible working arrangements to mitigate stress and take care of their health to remain motivated, engaged and healthier.

When they feel healthier and happier, they tend to mentor the younger generation and share the wealth of experience and knowledge they carry; which in turn is beneficial for the organization.

On the other hand, Baby Busts and Millennials do not stick much with one employer for a long time and prefer more work flexibility in their jobs than baby boomers did. Millennials are the ones who have grown up with the connected world of social platforms and technology. They are tech savvy, confident and achievement oriented. 40% employers admit that they depend on the young graduates or millennial employees for their digital skills. (Cotton, 2020). Their growth was corresponding to the rapid technological evolution and are now deeply connected to the digital world. Their social habits, behaviors and communication styles are much different from previous generations as it is mostly virtual. They had also grown up during major world events that had caused huge economic downturns, such as HIV/AIDS Pandemic, fall of Soviet Unions, Fall of Oil price, and financial crisis as such where they had witnessed and experienced the times where their parents or guardians lost jobs. (WIRE, 2020). Thus, this generation is less committed to one organization and prefer job hopping for more marketability. Millennials favor flexible working arrangements as they prefer to have a better lifestyle with mix of activities including fitness. Social media has provided them so much visibility about health and fitness, making them more health conscious than previous generations. Thus, they prefer flexibility in their work to have time for fitness sessions, arranging healthier food and for self-care.

The survey conducted by Cisco says that 45% Millennials claimed that they prefer flexibility over a highly paid inflexible job. The Millennials and iGens aspire to have freedom and flexibility and are typically known as digital entrepreneurs. iGens are natives of the digital world and are usually seen as multitaskers and make complete

utilization of the gig economy.

What is common among all these generations are the need for good work life balance and flexibility in working arrangements. Flexible working arrangements and telecommuting seems to gain more popularity than standard working arrangements. 74% of millennials and 94% of baby boomers aspire for flexible working arrangements. (2020). Millennials are more accepting towards the concept of hot desk and shared spaces in contrast with the baby boomers who demand traditional rows of tables and computers. (Robinson, 2020). The trend, especially among millennial generation globally and now in the Middle east, including Qatar is such that both parents are holding full time jobs. Flexible working arrangements help individuals for personality development as they have more time to attain higher education or training courses while keeping their jobs. They can further attend activities that help or personality development such as more community or social gatherings, attending motivational seminars, have time for fitness and so on. Flexible working arrangements can enable individuals who wish to attain multiple income as they attend to other businesses apart from their jobs. or having more leisure time by indulging in sports, movies, travel, friends gathering to name a few. From above information the following hypothesis can be generated:

H5: Flexible Working Arrangement is positively influence employee productivity.

2.5 Gender Role Theory and Access to Flexible Working Arrangements

The society in general places certain constructed social roles to both men and women that includes a range of behaviors and attitudes that are generally accepted, anticipated and appropriate for an individual based on their gender. (Gender role, 2020). For example, childcare or home making is generally the responsibility of women. In today's

times, women have entered the workforce with equal or close to equal number as men in all fields. Women in Qatar are better educated than men in general and are entering the labor force in increasing numbers. (The Dearth of Qatari Men in Higher Education: Reasons and Implications, 2020). Several women; once employed; tend to persevere in their professional commitments; even through their child-bearing years. Qatar, in comparison to many other countries have strong political, educational and social legalities that encourage economic participation for women (2020). Most of the organizations in the world provides maternity leaves and feeding hours to women. Female employees with newborn babies or infants feel emotionally frustrated and demotivated when they do not have access to this benefit. This leads to turnover of many female employees. Women who were employed at organizations with family friendly policies, showed higher work satisfaction, lesser absenteeism, worked during pregnancies and mostly returned to work after maternity leaves (Galinsky & Stein 1990). The following image is derived from a survey conducted by the flex job survey of mothers and work which covered various topics such as women reentering workforce after having children, career development and flexible work options. The image shows how flexible working arrangements impact decision making of women to get back to work. (Reynolds, 2020)

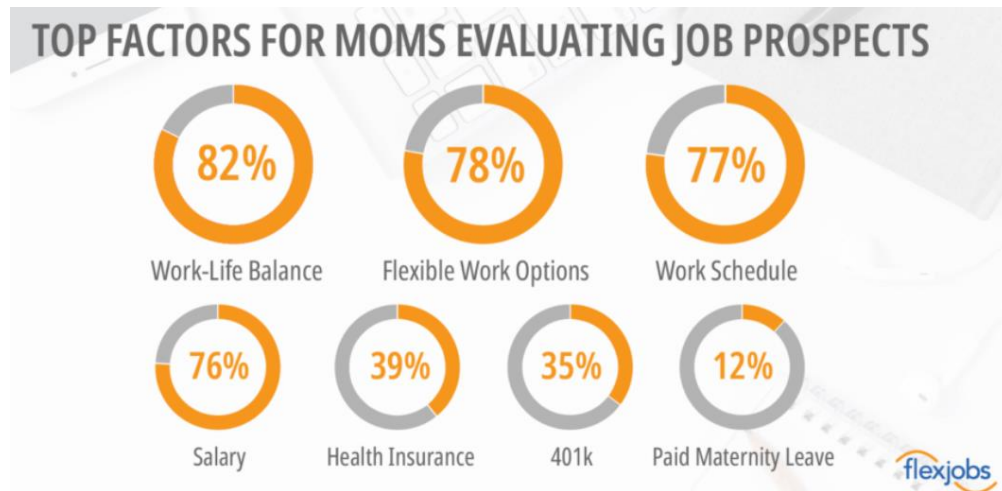


Figure 8. Impact of Decision making for Women who wish to return to work after child delivery. Image Reference: (Reynolds, 2020)

It has been argued that men are usually discouraged from using flexible working arrangements due to the general assumption that it is not a necessity or desire for men to work flexibly, even though such beliefs are associated with increasing paternal involvement with childcare. (Holter, 2007).

Childcare is an essential part of Family friendly policies in an organization that helps to support employees to take care of their children. Childcare is any service or action that involves in providing care for children by parents, nurseries, care providers or even teachers. Employees may face challenges with childcare due to lack of trust with childcare centers, high expense of childcare centers, opening hours that is not favorable with working hours, long commute time, incompatible working hours, expensive transport and so on. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit globally, it had a tremendous impact on education as well. The government authorities of most countries including Qatar imposed closure of schools and enforced remote learning or blended learning for children. All the childcare centers were also imposed closure to avoid spread of infection through human to human contact. Since remote learning has become a standard in many

schools, parents are worried about their children's education without any supervision at home and how to navigate e-learning for smaller children.

According to flex jobs survey, when school shut down due to the pandemic, 63% of working mothers and 42% working fathers reported handing childcare duties. 80% of working mothers and 31% of working fathers reported on applying for remote working in order to support remote working for their children. For managing childcare at home due to the pandemic, 22% of respondents reported that they had to apply for full time remote working from their workplace while 7% of respondents mentioned that their partners had to quit jobs to balance the family. In such a challenging situation, having access to flexible working arrangements can be very beneficial to several working parents. Approximately, 58% of respondents confirmed that a flexible working arrangement would be very beneficial for their situations. (Pelta, 2020)

Therefore, flexible working arrangements in general is very appealing to families, especially women and mostly identified primarily to motherhood, given the competitive forces they face in both professional and personal lives. Certainly, for working women with children, such an arrangement at job helps largely to maintain a good work life balance and children's safety at home (Michael, 2004). In situations when women are obliged to choose between work and family life, some of them prefer financial necessity over childcare, thus either tend to delay childbearing or forgo the whole idea of having children. In such circumstances, it is these kinds of programs that that help families to maintain a good work life balance and women may not be forced to make difficult choices (Castles, 2002).

Another reason why work life balance is given emphasis is the work family conflict. An individual has multiple roles in life such as being an employee, spouse, parent, child or sibling. One must fulfill these roles which are professional as well as personal and each

role places different demands on the individual's time and energy. Stress and conflict emerge when the pressures from each of these demands dissent. Thus, work life balance provides opportunities for employees to mitigate such conflicts. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The analysis can be complicated because perceptions and experiences among employees about the need for flexible working arrangements may differ from everyone. However, McNall (2010) confirms that flexible working hours creates job fulfilment emotionally, engaged and motivated regardless of gender or generation. Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis can be stated:

H6: Flexible Working Arrangement is positively related to attaining work life balance.

2.6 Flexible Working Arrangements and Technology

In today's world, advanced technology plays a major role in workplaces. It facilitates faster operations through lesser processes and paperwork. A job that could be done by two or three individuals can be done using advanced technology. Wireless communication, easier connectivity, and Portable hardware such as smart phones, laptops and mini tabs have made it easier for employees to work on a virtual basis and away from standard workplace. (Technology and its impact on flexible work - Employment and HR - Australia, 2020). With the help of such technologies, organizations can easily facilitate flexible working arrangements for its employees. During COVID-19 pandemic, most of the organizations around the globe were working remotely and if it wasn't for the advanced technology such as remote access, emails, online meeting platforms, then businesses and schools would not have been able to continue and operate smoothly. This in turn also helps to increase productivity and improved job satisfaction among employees, as they can gain a better work life balance. On a commercial basis, businesses can highly benefit by offering improved customer

service through better and larger contacts with employees and customers with faster response times. Therefore, the following hypothesis is generated:

H7: Flexible Working Arrangement is facilitated by advance technology.

2.7 Flexible Working Arrangements and Employers

Flexible working arrangement can be beneficial for employers as well. As previously mentioned, when employees are given certain autonomy on their work schedules, it surges employee engagement, motivation and commitment towards the organization which in turn contributes to employee retention and reduced absenteeism. Such productivity helps in achieving bigger goals for the organization. According to a CIPD report survey 72% of employers believe that flexible working arrangement is a great tool that contributes to staff engagement. While 75% says that FWAs was positively related to employee motivation. (Barr, 2020).

Flexible working arrangement has access to broader talent pool and is a striking non-financial benefit that can attract outstanding employees who are usually not available due to family obligations. Organizations can develop an image of Employer of Choice. Retaining experienced employees can also help to retain the expertise required to maintain client satisfaction, which in turn helps to make more profitable businesses. Remote access and Cloud technology help employees work outside office environment in much easier manner. This also allows companies to expand its services to other parts of the world; thereby attaining a global status. Reduced overhead costs is another benefit what organizations can reap from flexible working arrangements.

Greenblatt (2002) argues that organizations must identify the importance of work/life balance; then only it will enable the management to implement flexible working arrangements for its employees. Brough et al., (2008) states that a good work life balance influences social, financial and organizational matters such as increasing

longevity of Senior employees or retention of best talents, lessening labor supply and encouraging more women participation in workplaces which in turn results in good balance of gender diversity. This can also help the organization in cost efficiency. As per Flex Job survey results, employers can gain benefits when they provide flexibility for working parents: (Reynolds, 2020)

1. 31% of females with children under the age of 18 prefer to take up a job with pay cut and more flexibility in work such as remote working or job sharing.
2. 64% working parents report that they are much productive working remotely than onsite as they are emotionally relieved.
3. 40% of those parents who discontinued their jobs upon delivering kids wished to maintain their jobs but could not do so, because of inflexibility to stay in the workforce.
4. Around 48% working parents felt discrimination at the workplace because of their gender.

Organizations can also benefit financially from flexible working arrangements. Organizations can be agile with much lesser leases and relocation costs. Employees can be easily moved to newer markets or closer to suppliers and can be brought back again when required. (2020).

Therefore, organizations providing access to flexible working arrangements to their employees, can gain various benefits such as:

1. Cost savings on overheads.
2. Extended operating hours of service for customers.
3. Attract and retain talented and diverse workforce.
4. Satisfied, productive, engaged, motivated and committed staff leading to good employee relations.

5. Lesser absenteeism.
6. Employer of choice as the organization gives an impression of blending according to market trends.
7. Improved customer satisfaction due to above points.

However, like every coin has two sides, flexible working arrangements have some disadvantages for the organization as well. There could be resistance from the management, challenges in measuring cost and benefits of FWAs, resentment from co-workers, disruptions in customer service and client satisfaction, and negative career concern. Some managers find it challenging to adapt to the new management style that supports such an arrangement as they are used to the traditional system of standard working hours and punctuality. Team oriented sections require appropriate guidelines and schedules in place in order to run the operations smoothly. Therefore, there could be challenges in scheduling shifts with different work arrangements leading to disruptions in discipline and emotional turmoil for the management. Many critics oppose flexible working arrangements arguing about the possibilities of ill-considered plans which can have a fatal impact on a company. Some employees abuse the advantages of working flexibly which is unethical and thus there is lack of focus on the job. Several employees also refrain from adopting this approach as they are concerned about the potential negative impact on their career due to lack of visibility. (Flexible work arrangement, 2020).

Compressed work weeks can challenge the client projects, as many clients prefer 5 days service in a week to run their business smoothly. Thus, customer service-oriented jobs may not have access to any kind of flexible working arrangements. Even jobs in factories such as assembly line manufacturing; security employees, or nursing jobs in

healthcare settings or academic faculties cannot easily access flexible working arrangements due to their job nature and workload. Thus, organizations struggle with fairness when it comes to adopting flexible working arrangements for all type of works. Thus, the following hypothesis was generated:

H8: Employee job type is significantly related to uptake of Flexible Working Arrangement.

However, in general, the advantages weigh more than the disadvantages and a solid management and company policies can help in adopting this approach in an efficient manner. Overall, flexible working arrangements have positive effect on incompatible professional and personal responsibilities. And there is no one-size-fits-all provision under flexible working arrangements. The needs of a young mother with an infant is significantly different from those with personal interests such as schedules for fitness or further studies. The flexible working environment can be a catalyst for transformation which will allow organizations to extend their reach to secure the best talents and can work the best when there is a clear and transparent communication between employees and management providing realistic expectations. This means that the effectiveness with which organizations plan people management will be critical to long-term viability. The key to unlock future growth is to ensure that organizations have the right people, with the right skills, in the right places. Think too much in the short-term; then employers may find themselves on the back foot, unable to catch up with sudden shifts in the marketplace. However, before embracing tele-work, or any other type of flexible working arrangements, organizations must undertake a rational analysis on flexible work arrangements to determine if they are suitable for the organization and for the individual employees involved. Because mismanagement of such arrangements, can cause several chaotic situations and consequently expose organizations to legal and

commercial risks.

Some of the companies in the world who adopts flexible working arrangement policies are All State Insurance company, American Express, Bank of America, IBM, Intel, Johnson and Johnson, Verizon Wireless, Wells Fargo Company to name a few. (Working Mother, 2020). Apple, Pearson, Salesforce, Kelly, SAP, United Health Care, Xerox, DELL, Capital One etc. (FlexJobs: The Best Remote Work from Home & Flexible Jobs, 2020).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is designed to examine the perceptions of employees, line managers and Human Resource Managers in Qatar, following the implementation of flexible working arrangements, mainly remote working in context of COVID-19 Pandemic. Since the study was concerned with subjective aspects of employee productivity and work life balance, it was important to capture the real-life experiences of employees themselves. Secondary data was also collected for an in-depth understanding about the subject and were collected from various research papers, journals and websites.

3.1 Study Hypothesis

The following table lists the main hypothesis that was developed during this study.

Table 2. List of Proposed Hypotheses

H#	Hypothesis
H1	Flexible Working Arrangement has a positive relationship with employee retention.
H2	Flexible Working Arrangement has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing of employees.
H3	Flexible Working Arrangement have a negative relationship with social well-being of employees.
H4	Flexible Working Arrangement has a positive relationship with physical wellbeing of employees.
H5	Flexible Working Arrangement positively influence employee productivity.
H6	Flexible Working Arrangement is positively related to attaining good work life balance.
H7	Flexible Working Arrangement is facilitated by advance technology.
H8	Employee Job type is significantly related to uptake of Flexible Working Arrangement.

3.2 Research Design

The key objective of this paper is to comprehend the perception of flexible working arrangement in Qatar in context of COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative research is the most appropriate for this study. Therefore, apart from collection of primary data; plenty of secondary data was used to understand the history of flexible working arrangement, on how it is implemented in other countries and what was its impact.

3.3. Sample Selection and Data Collection Method

Since flexible working arrangements is not a very popular way of working in this country, primary data collection was used. This allowed to understand the perceptions of employees working in Qatar and how flexible working arrangements impacted them directly. Secondary data was used by referring to plenty of research papers, journals, articles and websites related to this topic.

Primary data was collected by quantitative and qualitative approaches in English language only. A case study approach and survey method, respectively, were selected to allow evaluations and observations. Web-based survey was used for data collection through Google Survey Form questionnaire. This tool enables to develop surveys with various types of questions and analyze them after distribution. The data results collected were exported to Excel and then transmitted to SPSS for further analyses.

English, being the universal language; was used as the medium in the survey. The link of the survey was shared through emails and social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, hard copies could not be distributed. The actual number of distributions is not clear because it was shared in social media platform and how many were forwarded by the participants is

also unknown.

The consent form was displayed prior to getting appointment for the interview from the management as well as before proceeding with the online survey for employees. The consent form provided a brief about the study and ensured utmost confidentiality and anonymous participation. Please refer to Appendix A for the consent form.

3.4. Study Sample

The study focused on employees who were legally working in Qatar. This included the citizens and residents of the country. The questionnaire was developed with closed end questions and considered all areas stated in the literature review. Demographic information was also included in the questionnaire. It was distributed through online platforms. After avoiding incomplete data from respondents, a total of 167 data was generated. The interviews were done with employees holding managerial positions. It was conducted with 25 individuals; virtually through Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

3.5. Survey Construction

The Survey research is the method of collecting data by questioning individuals either on paper, in person, by phone or online. This survey was done in the form of primary research where data was acquired using first-hand information from its source. It is used to collect the real emotions, viewpoints, and beliefs of respondents. The collection can be as big or small of a group according to the researcher, the research topic and the circumstances.

Surveys are of various types and the most common one includes questionnaire and interviews, consisting of polls, opinions, multiple choice questions, etc. These questionnaires are sent across through online or in person drop-offs. Interviews are on

a more personal level as it can happen over the phone or face-face or online. Developing a survey requires clear scrutiny like using easy and understandable wording, question sequence, formatting and so on because of the impact it can create on the participant and the results that must be derived out of it. Businesses, academicians, and government use surveys for their own purposes. Governments conduct research to learn more about the citizens and serve them better whereas businesses wish to learn more about customer behavior and experiences through surveys. This would help them to create products as per customer needs, develop better marketing skills and target the right people. Academicians use surveys to gain a better insight on the topic of the research as well as to collect data for better analysis.

Quantitative Method: Employee Survey through Questionnaire

In this paper, the survey was developed according to the subject. It was reviewed by the professor and the Research Ethics Board of Qatar University. The type of questions included in this survey are demographic questions, multiple choice, and Likert scaling questions.

Primary data was collected from employees working in Qatar. A survey of 167 employees were taken to measure their perception towards implementing flexible working arrangements in Qatar.

The sequence of the questionnaire started with demographic details, questions about working arrangements and range of attitudes towards the organization and flexible working arrangements.

Five Point Likert Scale was used with respondents which helps to indicate their agreement or disagreement (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) on subjective measures of job satisfaction, career preference and career self-management

stress and organizational commitment. Objective measures about the effect of their working pattern on their work-life balance, quantity of work, stress levels, participation in teamwork were asked. The full survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Kindly Refer to Appendix B for the questionnaire used in this study:

Table 3. Five-Point Likert Scale used in the Questionnaire

Value	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Qualitative Method: Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews with Managers

The case study is based on a real time experiences of managers and their perceptions on remote working arrangements that was enforced in Qatar as a part of precautionary measure to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Such a working arrangement is very novel in Qatar and most of the Gulf countries.

A Series of semi- structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 accessible individuals who held managerial positions, with the inclusion of 3 Human Resource managers. The accessible companies were Qatar Museums, Hamad Medical Corporation, Qatar Foundation, and Gomo safer Travels. Due to the pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually through modern electronic means such as Zoom, and Microsoft Teams and they provided full consent to participate. The interviews

lasted for 30 mins to 45 mins each and were recorded digitally.

These interviews were conducted to get a deeper understanding about the remote working experience and management perception from various organizations. Focus group interviews were avoided as this would not serve the purpose of gaining a clear understanding from less dominant individuals and may be a barrier to get the anticipated rich data.

3.6 Data Sources

Primary data; as discussed above; was collected through surveys and interviews. Secondary data was gathered from broad research through journals, previous studies, articles, and websites.

3.7 Validity of the Questionnaire

The study and the questionnaire were reviewed and approved by the QU-IRB Committee to ensure the essential ethical practices. The Committee has approved the interview questions as well as the survey questionnaire as it met all the ethical requirements. The Approval reference number is QU-IRB 1345-EA/20.

3.8 Questionnaire Reliability

The questionnaire's reliability was measured by calculating Cronbach's alpha method. This mainly helps to measure reliability of Likert scale questions for internal consistency.

This method is also commonly used for scale type questions and measures reliability or internal consistency. Table No.7 shows the Cronbach's alpha which 0.63 and indicates moderate consistency level within the specified sample.

3.9 Statistical Methods

The data collected from the survey provided conceptions to categorize the results.

IBM SPSS Statistics 26 was used to determine the following statistical tools:

1. Cronbach's Alpha: To test the reliability and scaling purposes
2. Descriptive Statistical Tool: To measure the central tendency (mean), frequency, percentage, and dispersion (standard deviation).
3. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient: To measure the significance level and correlation coefficient of the variables to understand the level to which they were linearly associated.
4. Linear Regression: To determine the direct and indirect impact of respective dependent and independent variables.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

What the reader has to keep in mind is that the report is of qualitative nature and the data collected was from primary sources which was depended mainly on the range of experiences and viewpoints of individuals who participated in the survey and interviews, and thus quantifying the results may be approximate.

4.1 Sample Profile

To control the accuracy and ensure validity for the research, the following demographic and career information were also included in the analyses. After removing the participants who did not complete the survey, a total of 167 participants were confirmed out of which 52.7% were males and 47.3% were females. All participants were individuals working in Qatar.

Table 4. Participants Demography

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	88	52.7%
Female	79	47.3%
Age		
20 to 30	32	19.2%
31 to 40	102	61.6%
41 to 50	25	15%
51 to 60	8	4.2%
Qualifications		
Master's degree	77	46.1%
Bachelor's degree	75	44.9%
Diploma	7	4.2%
PHD	5	3%
Professional Certificate	3	1.8%
Highschool only	0	0%

Table 5. Participants' Career Information

Career Information	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Organization		
Non-Profit Organization	16	9.6%
Private Sector	51	30.5%
Public Sector	93	55.7%
Multinational Organizations	7	4.2%
No. of years with the current employer		
Less than a year	23	13.8%
1 to 5 Years	58	34.7%
6 to 10 years	58	34.7%
10 years & above	28	16.8%
Motivating factor to select a job		
Remuneration	31	18.6%
Good Work Life Balance	63	37.7%
Career Development Opportunities	44	26.3%
Reputation of the company	14	18.4%
Location	2	1.2%
Others	13	7.8%
Reasons to like the current employer		
Comfortable leave policies	9	5.4%
Convenient working hours	31	18.6%
Career Development Opportunities	34	20.4%
Supportive Line Manager & Team	40	24%
Remuneration & benefits	24	14.4%
Positive Office environment	29	17.4%
No. of Working Hours in a week		
0 to 20 hours	7	4.2%
20 to 40 hours	67	40.1%
40 to 50 hours	76	45.5%
Above 50 hours	17	10.2%
No. of Working days in a week		
5	137	82%
6	23	13.8%
7	3	1.8%
Less than 5	4	2.4%

Choice of Flexible Working Arrangements

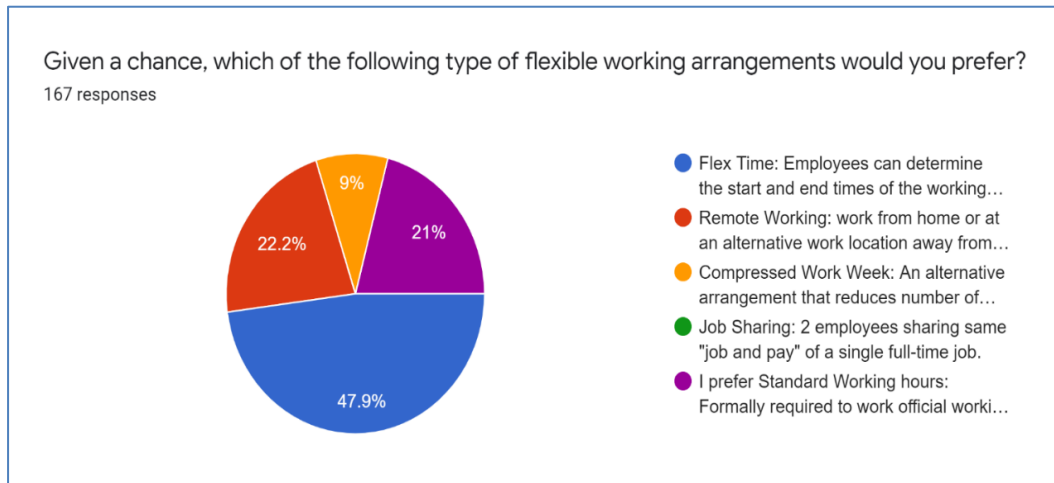


Figure 9. Preference for type of Flexible Working Arrangements

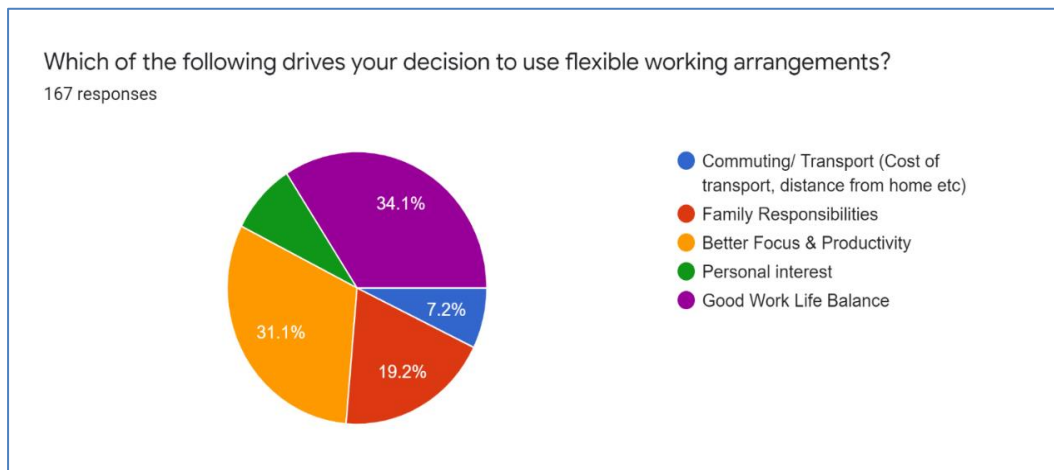


Figure 10. Driving force to use Flexible Working Arrangements

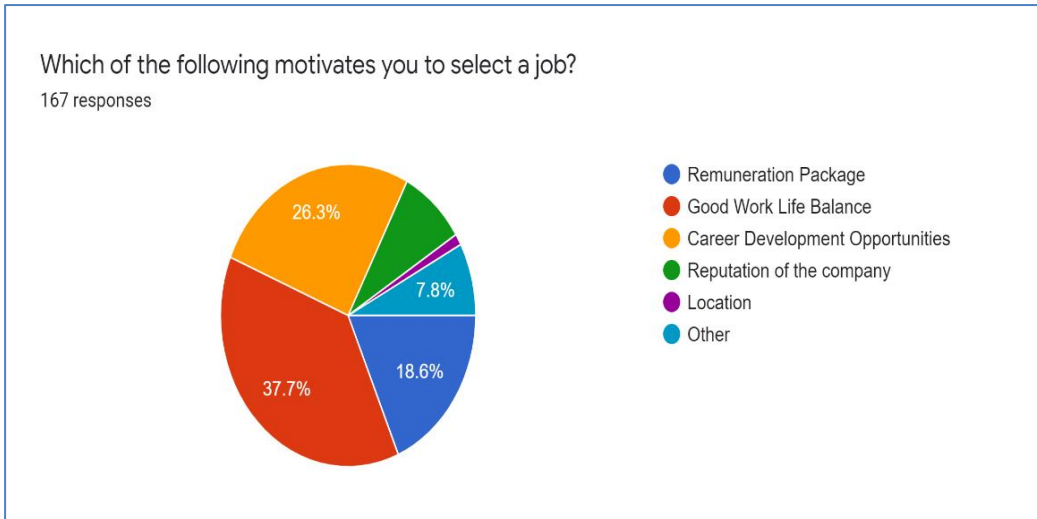


Figure 11. Motivating Factor for Job Selection

Table 6. Participants Family Status

Family Status	Frequency	Percentage
Relationship Status		
Married	117	70.1%
Single	46	27.5%
Divorced/ Separated	4	2.4%
Number of Dependents		
2 to 3	77	46%
None	46	27.5%
More than 3	26	15.6%
One	18	10.8%

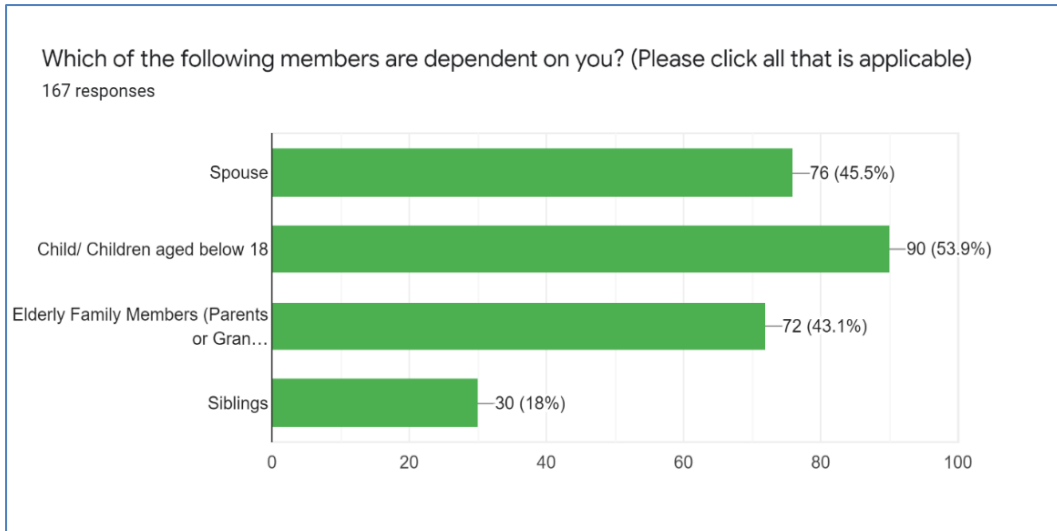


Figure 12. Dependent Category

4.2 Validity and Reliability

The reliability test scores were implied in numerical terms as a coefficient. The coefficient degree was 0.63 which indicates a moderate level of consistency and reliability. The following table shows the Cronbach's alpha for all the hypothesis developed:

Table 7. Reliability Scores

Hypothesis	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
H1	0.815	0.819	5
H2	0.779	0.783	2
H3	0.608	0.611	3
H4	0.810	0.810	2
H5	0.300	0.298	3
H6	0.805	0.816	3
H7	-0.628	-0.655	2
H8	0.315	0.313	3

The value is negative due to a negative average covariance among items. This violates reliability model assumptions.

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Correlation test was performed to check the linear relationship between eight determinants stated in the study. Following results were obtained, from the table below and it could be concluded that, all the determinants remain significant by 0.01 level with the strongest correlation as 0.63.

Table 8. Correlations

		Avg Non	Avg H1	Avg H2	Avg H3	Avg H4	Avg H5	Avg H6	Avg H7	Avg H8
Pearson	AvgNon	1.000	0.428	0.139	0.216	0.123	0.381	0.181	0.181	0.306
Correlation	AvgH1	0.428	1.000	0.147	0.174	0.159	0.328	0.158	0.268	0.441
	AvgH2	0.139	0.147	1.000	0.663	-0.092	0.125	-0.128	0.537	-0.009
	AvgH3	0.216	0.174	0.663	1.000	-0.145	0.103	-0.156	0.508	0.069
	AvgH4	0.123	0.159	-0.092	-0.145	1.000	0.410	0.721	0.156	0.482
	AvgH5	0.381	0.328	0.125	0.103	0.410	1.000	0.526	0.338	0.485
	AvgH6	0.181	0.158	-0.128	-0.156	0.721	0.526	1.000	0.182	0.503
	AvgH7	0.181	0.268	0.537	0.508	0.156	0.338	0.182	1.000	0.202
	AvgH8	0.306	0.441	-0.009	0.069	0.482	0.485	0.503	0.202	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	AvgNon		0.000	0.037	0.003	0.056	0.000	0.010	0.010	0.000
	AvgH1	0.000		0.029	0.012	0.020	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.000
	AvgH2	0.037	0.029		0.000	0.117	0.054	0.050	0.000	0.456
	AvgH3	0.003	0.012	0.000		0.031	0.093	0.022	0.000	0.188
	AvgH4	0.056	0.020	0.117	0.031		0.000	0.000	0.022	0.000
	AvgH5	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.093	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	AvgH6	0.010	0.021	0.050	0.022	0.000	0.000		0.009	0.000
	AvgH7	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.000	0.009		0.004
	AvgH8	0.000	0.000	0.456	0.188	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	

4.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is used to build a statistical model reflecting the relationship between the values of dependent and independent variables. Here we used stepwise method to measure the regression analysis. Outlier criteria was set to 3 standard deviations to ensure more accuracy.

Table 9. Coefficients of the Model

Model				Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.488	0.208		11.975	0.000
	AvgH1	0.358	0.059	0.428	6.075	0.000
2	(Constant)	1.588	0.312		5.090	0.000
	AvgH1	0.284	0.060	0.339	4.728	0.000
	AvgH5	0.299	0.080	0.270	3.760	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: AvgNon

The R Value measures the correlation between dependent and independent variables. It varies from -1 to 1 with a negative signal which represents a negative slope. On the other hand, R², is used to measure line fitness to data and determines the percentage of the variation. This value increases with the increased number of predictors in the model. Its value may fit anywhere between 0 and 1 with a value of 1 indicating all points lying on the line, i.e. a perfect fit. Hence, the bigger the R² value, the better is the fit. The adjusted R² adjusts R for the sample size and number of independent variables. It varies between 0 and 1. A value of 1 indicates a perfect fit, i.e. the model correctly predicts the dependent variable. Finally, the standard error of the estimate refers to the variability of observed dependent variable values from those of independent variables. Increased clustering of data makes the standard error more significant and vice versa. Hence, it measures accuracy of predictions made by the

model.

Now comes the time to test the regression assumptions. Firstly, the normal predicted probability (P-P) plot appeared linear (see Figure 13). While, the histogram of residuals appeared normally distributed with minor skewness (see Figure 14), and the normal P-P plot appeared with no drastic deviation (see Figure 13). Third, the residual plots showed no considerable difference in distributing data for different X values. For example, there was no very tight distribution of data on one side of the plot and wide distribution on the other side (see Figure 15). Lastly, the independence of error, which means that successive observations are not related and is assumed to hold as the data was cross-sectional. (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). (Testing Assumptions of Linear Regression in SPSS, n.d.).

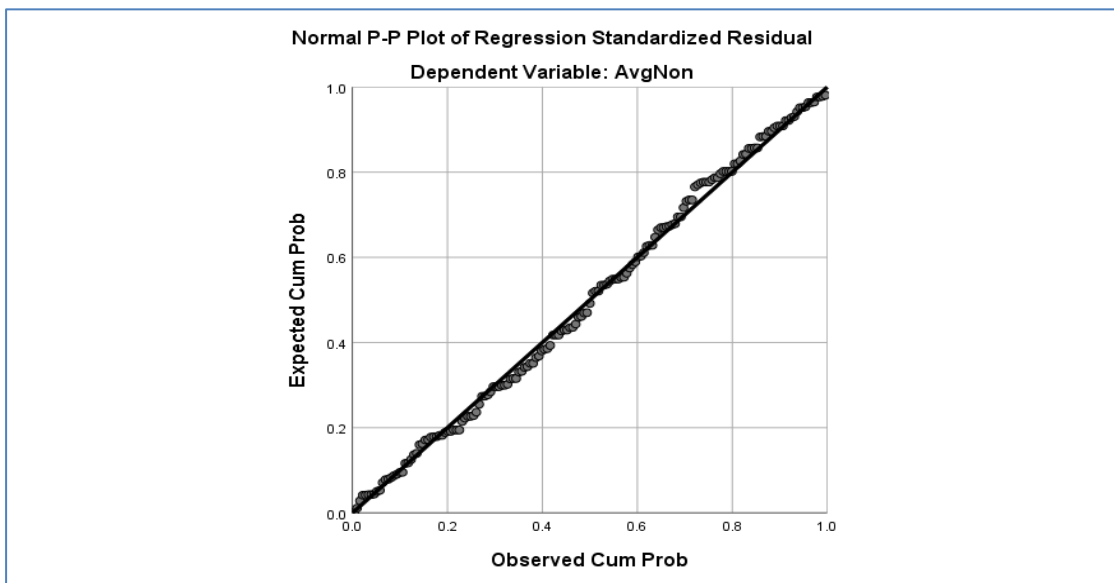


Figure 13. Observed Cum Prob

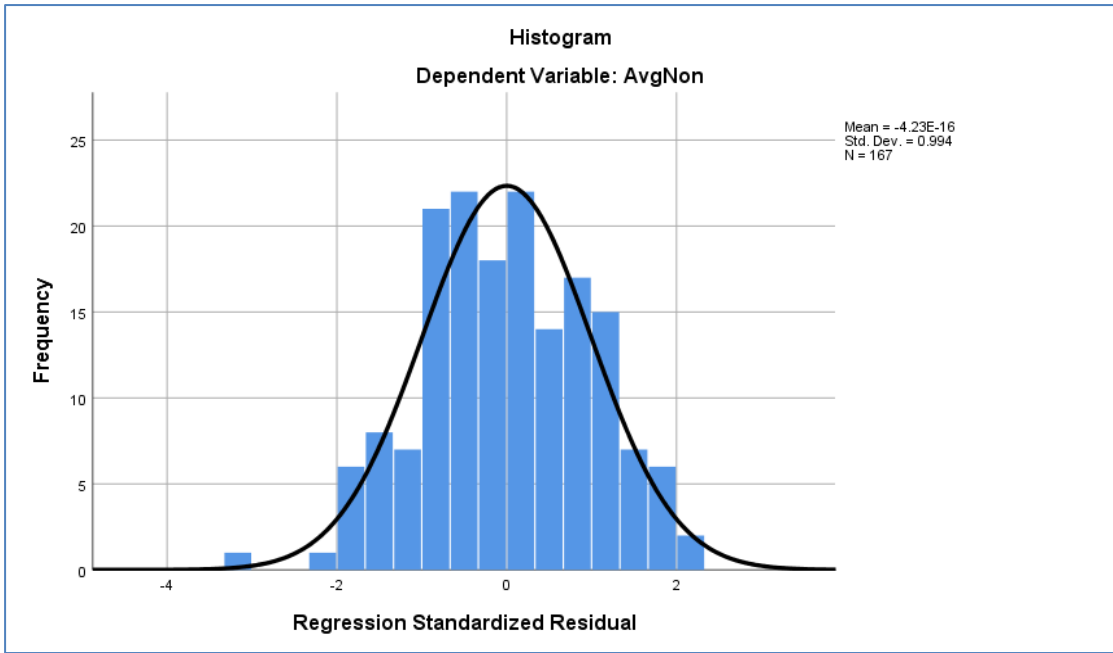


Figure 14. Regression Standardized Residual

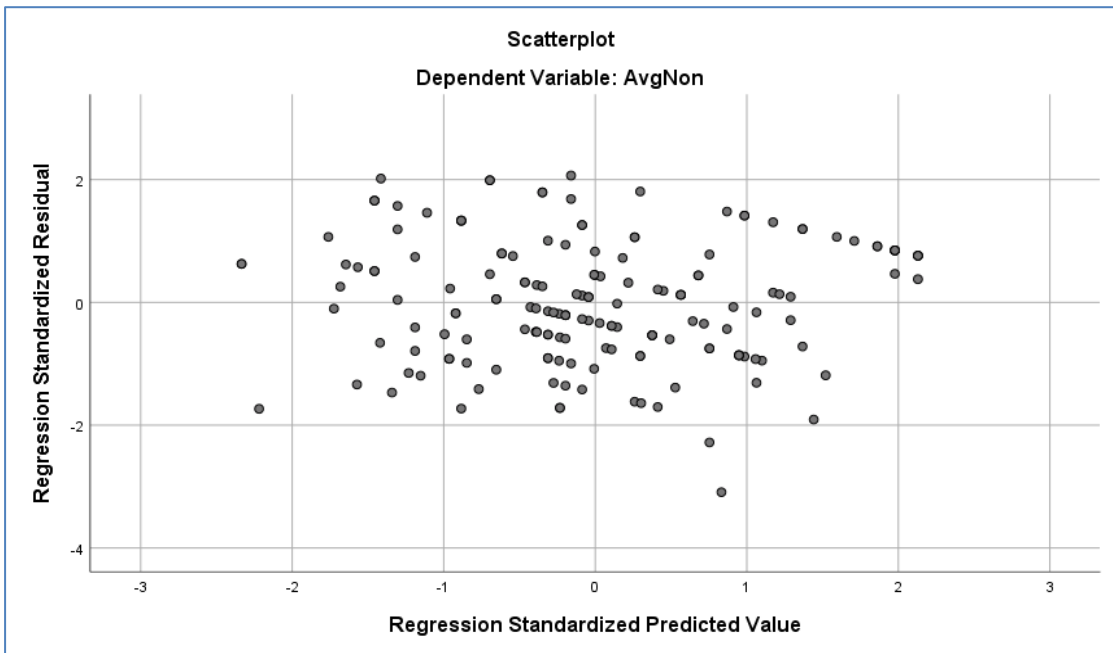


Figure 15. Regression Standardized Predicted Value

4.5 Descriptive Statistics and Measure

The factors contributing to the dimensions of flexible working arrangements are represented by the items used in this survey. This paper tries to study the effect of flexible working arrangements on employees and the factors that help to facilitate the approach. The means and standard deviations were calculated for the set of items included in each variable. The following classification was adopted while using the Likert scale.

Table 10. Mean Scale and Criteria

Mean	Criteria
1.00 – 2.33	Low Agreement with statement
2.33 - 3.66	Moderate Agreement with statement
3.66 – 5.00	High Agreement with statement

Descriptive statistics were calculated for each set of items. The data in the table below exhibits that most of the independent variables are perceived with high agreement statement among respondents and some of them indicate that there is a moderate agreement. The high value supports the hypothesis developed.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for Variables of the Hypothesis

H1	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N	Missing N
H1	3.4790	1.12923	167	0
VAR00003	3.7246	1.03937	167	0
VAR00004	3.4970	1.14004	167	0
VAR00005	3.6467	1.27098	167	0
VAR00006	2.7246	1.30183	167	0
VAR00007	2.4371	1.27792	167	0
VAR00008	2.5210	1.11311	167	0
VAR00009	3.1737	1.26101	167	0
VAR00010	2.9521	1.16582	167	0
VAR00011	3.1677	1.24015	167	0
VAR00012	4.0359	1.01727	167	0
VAR00013	4.1557	1.03537	167	0
VAR00014	3.9641	1.00536	167	0
VAR00015	4.1078	1.00619	167	0
VAR00016	3.4850	1.11861	167	0
VAR00017	4.2395	0.91315	167	0
VAR00018	3.8383	1.17359	167	0
VAR00019	4.1198	0.93656	167	0
VAR00020	4.3832	0.88315	167	0
VAR00021	2.0180	1.13792	167	0
VAR00022	3.6647	1.20546	167	0
VAR00023	4.2455	0.92141	167	0
VAR00024	3.4072	1.20818	167	0

The second dimension analyzed was the Dependent variables as shown in the following Table.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	2.8400	4.5029	3.7096	0.37256	167
Std. Predicted Value	-2.334	2.129	0.000	1.000	167
Standard Error of Predicted Value	0.052	0.146	0.084	0.024	167
Adjusted Predicted Value	2.8235	4.4944	3.7088	0.37203	167
Residual	-2.01968	1.35006	0.00000	0.64937	167
Std. Residual	-3.091	2.066	0.000	0.994	167
Stud. Residual	-3.107	2.073	0.001	1.003	167
Deleted Residual	-2.04059	1.37633	0.00077	0.66120	167
Stud. Deleted Residual	-3.193	2.095	0.000	1.008	167
Mahal. Distance	0.057	7.316	1.988	1.667	167
Cook's Distance	0.000	0.063	0.006	0.009	167
Centered Leverage Value	0.000	0.044	0.012	0.010	167

a. Dependent Variable: AvgNon

Finally, the descriptive statistics of all means of the item contained in the survey under each dimension. The estimates are indicated in the following table.

Table 13. Descriptive Analyses

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AvgNon	3.7096	0.74865	167
AvgH1	3.4144	0.89485	167
AvgH2	2.4790	1.08433	167
AvgH3	3.0978	0.91566	167
AvgH4	4.0958	0.94093	167
AvgH5	3.8523	0.67426	167
AvgH6	4.0659	0.86059	167
AvgH7	3.2006	0.62830	167
AvgH8	3.7725	0.72726	167

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Table 14. A snapshot of the analytical results of the hypothesis

H#	Hypothesis	Result
H1	FWA has a positive relationship with employee retention.	H1 is accepted
H2	FWA has a positive relationship with psychological wellbeing of employees.	H2 is accepted
H3	FWA has a negative relationship with social well-being of employees.	H3 is rejected
H4	FWA has a positive relationship with physical wellbeing of employees.	H4 is accepted
H5	FWA positively influence employee productivity.	H5 is accepted
H6	FWA is positively related to attaining good work life balance.	H6 is accepted
H7	FWA is facilitated by advance technology.	H7 is accepted
H8	Employee Job type is significantly related to uptake of FWA	H8 is accepted

The results from this study exhibits that flexible working arrangement is a great non-monetary benefit that will help to reduce employee turnover. When an organization focuses on employee well-being, it gives an impression that employees are cared for and this in turn promotes loyalty and sincerity towards the organization. A happy and healthy employee is one of the biggest assets of an organization as they create a competitive edge for the organization making it the employer of choice. This confirms the hypothesis that flexible working arrangement is positively related to employee retention.

When employees have the flexibility to work and have an autonomy in their work, they tend to be more stress free which in turn increases productivity, makes them more result oriented and satisfied. They also have more time for their personal life which reduces anxiety. Therefore, flexible working arrangements is significantly related to employee satisfaction and productivity, because such an arrangement allows employees to perform their duties in a stress free, comfortable and peaceful space,

which in turn can elevate staff motivation level. Thus, H2 and H5 are confirmed that flexible working arrangement is positively related to psychological well-being and influences employee productivity.

When employees work longer hours or do not have flexibility in their work schedules, they do not have time for fitness and healthy food. Especially in today's world where lot of corporate jobs are very sedentary, employees movement is very minimal and if there is no proper fitness, they tend to gain lot of weight or health issues such as stress, imbalances in blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol to name a few. With flexible working arrangements, they can manage time for fitness and arranging healthier meals cooked at home. Thus, flexible working arrangements allow employees to manage their time for their health and well-being which confirms H4 that FWA is positively related to physical well-being.

With advanced technology, the use of smart phones and social media is majorly trending in today's world and the concept of anytime, anyplace, anywhere working style is more applicable than the traditional work practices. Modern businesses today can operate in a 24/7 environment with the help of technology such as speed connectivity, remote access, and electronic communication tools such as MS Teams or Zoom. This has in turn given increased flexibility and responsiveness to people's professional and personal lives. The millennials and the following generations rely more on social media to stay in touch with their families, peers or friends more than meeting face-to-face. Thus, it does not really matter to them if they do not meet their colleagues daily at office, because, the whole world is running on technological communications now. Thus, hypothesis H3, which says FWA is negatively related to social well-being is rejected and this also confirms Hypothesis H7 which says FWA is facilitated by advance technology.

When employees can achieve a fine balance between their professional and personal lives, they become more productive. Around 34.1% employees selected work life balance as the main reasons for wanting to have flexible working arrangements and for around 37.7% employees, the main motivation to select a job was Work Life Balance. The work-life balance is mainly chosen by people who have families, specially care for children. For example, staff can have a good mealtime break, or arrange for children's school transport. When such basic but important needs are fulfilled, employees feel very stress free. The study also indicates that flexible working arrangement can provide a positive impact to married employees, especially those who are parents. Cook (1992) states that the obligation towards children on their education and safety are more secure with the implementation of flexible working arrangements as working parents have good time to attend to children's needs. Thus, H6 which states that FWS is positively related to attaining good work life balance is confirmed.

Although flexible working arrangements can benefit in terms of good work life balance and productivity, it is important to identify the type of job and departments that can benefit with FWAs at the same time there is no disruptions in the workflow. Those jobs which can be disrupted with flexible working arrangements and must be onsite and on time, should not be given the access to FWAs because this can affect the smooth running of operations. Examples of such jobs are for certain medical employees, security staff and teaching staff. Jobs that can be applicable for flexible working arrangement must be identified and appropriate policies and procedures must be made to implement them correctly. For example, database administrators or software engineers. Thus, H8 which states that Employee Job type is significantly related to uptake of FWA is accepted.

Amidst all the benefits, it is highly imperative that staff who have access to flexible working arrangement should be highly ethical and must carry attributes such as discipline, an accountable and responsible attitude, commitment and trustworthiness towards their work. Without practicing these values, the implementation of flexible working arrangements can be a failure. Therefore, employees must be very cooperative towards their employers while enjoying such a benefit.

Qatar government should also monitor and study the implementation of flexible working arrangements and its effectiveness. Through this study, all issues, challenges, and complications voiced out by employees and organizations can be assessed and addressed to implement an effective policy. There should also be regular reporting system to implement improvements overtime and maintain an effective Flexible working arrangement policy throughout the nation.

CHAPTER 6: CASE STUDY

Management Perspective of Flexible Working Arrangements in Context of Covid-19 In Qatar.

- 1) Remote Working & other flexible working arrangements – A Mandatory prerequisite in Qatar: With COVID-19 pandemic, the world experienced the biggest remote working experiment. As several workplaces around the world attempted to work from home to avoid human interaction and mitigate the spread of infection, the organizations in Qatar also adopted this approach. Qatar is very novel to such working arrangements. Adopting flexible work arrangements such as remote working, compressed work weeks, working in shifts were identified as an imperative for the organizations in the country as a necessity to mitigate the spread of contagion and in line with the Government Directives. All kinds of businesses were already exploring flexible working arrangements as a highly potential option for staff with convenience and productivity gains. (Memoori.com. 2020). It was important to understand the perspectives of management on how smooth or challenging was it to manage their staff who were working under flexible working arrangements and whether it can be the changing future of work.
- 2) Management Interviews: A qualitative interview was conducted with 21 individuals holding managerial positions across diverse organizations such as Qatar Museums, Qatar Foundation, Hamad Medical Corporation and Gomosafar Travels. Everyone shared their experiences, challenges, and benefits they see in these arrangements. The common impressions what they all had was that it was important to have transparent and ongoing communications with their team members about flexible working arrangements. All roles may not be able to access flexibility all the time and it may be available in different manners depending on employees' job nature

and business requirement. Visible endorsement from senior leadership; strong support from the Human Resource Department, and having the right technology enabled managers to support flexible working requests.

- 3) Adapting to the Cultural Challenge of Change: Because, the remote working experience was an abrupt need of the hour in the country which was adopted as a measure to curb the pandemic; initially, employees and managers experienced mixed emotions, confusions and scepticism about adopting this arrangement. It was equally a challenge for the management to manage the performance of their team and know whether they were working effectively. Many were concerned about their office space security, cleanliness or confidentiality of their business information.
- 4) Common Drivers of Flexible Working Arrangements: However, as a necessity mandated by the State, organizations became more equipped with the remote working experience or other flexible working arrangements as required and everyone gradually adapted to the new normal of working style. Some of the most important and common drivers as identified among the management were:
 - I. Keeping up with future trend
 - II. Attracting future talents and retaining qualified employees
 - III. Mitigating Risks
 - IV. Improving Innovation
 - V. Improving Inclusion and Diversity of workforce such as retaining female, disabled and ageing talents.
 - VI. Higher Employee Engagement
 - VII. Cost Effective
 - VIII. Energy Sustainability
 - IX. Productive and result oriented Employees

- Employer of Choice

5) Management Strategies recommended to Implement Flexible Working as the Future Trend: With their real time experience with remote working and other flexible working arrangements during the pandemic, the management recommended the following key approaches that could enable flexible working arrangements as a future trend:

- I. Role Modelling from top management: All managers identified that the most significant element to implement flexible working arrangements in an organization is the role modelling influence from the leadership starting from the Chief Executive Officer – CEO, especially when Qatar has not traditionally worked flexibly. The support of the executives must be visible in the form of contributing their stories, posting images of them working remotely, using technology, and engaging with team members who are working flexibly. Constant and transparent communication to employees in being open to new ways of working and normalising it while maintaining efficiency is important. Develop tools and guidelines on the new work culture and place it in an intranet for easier access. Such a visibility will help employees to ease down and address the fears and insecurities about their career development which could be hindered by working flexibly. With strong leadership support; employees feel encouraged and their uptake of flexible working arrangement would increase.
- II. Leadership Support from Human Resource (HR) Department: Support from HR Department is equally supportive to convince top executives, develop clear value propositions in terms of benefits and productivity and

manage attendance administration. Having HR Department in picture can help employees to not be vulnerable if their flexible request wasn't supported by the line manager.

- III. Identifying and implementing appropriate processes and procedures: Another key step to manage flexible working arrangements across an organization is to prepare the right processes and procedures on flexible working arrangements. These procedures may be challenging and time-consuming; given that FWA is novel to the organizational culture in Qatar; however, when it is normalised, it becomes paramount to have a transparent and consistent approach with lesser managerial discretion. Policy makers along with the management must think creatively about flexibility and identify roles which can work flexibly, and those that must continue working traditionally.
- IV. Investment in Technology and systems to support flexible working arrangements: An organization must be Technology enabled for a successful and smooth functioning of flexible working arrangements. All employees must be provided access to appropriate technology that supports these arrangements. For example, laptops, remote access, reliable wi-fi access, collaboration tools such as video and audio-conferencing facilities to name a few.
- V. Change Management Trainings: When an organization implements flexible working arrangement for its employees, it is very important to train the management to manage employee performance and productivity, prepare them for flexible working conversations to ensure how individual and business needs can be achieved, managing with uncertainty; maintain

consistency and transparency in the management style to lead flexibility and inclusion across the organization. At the same time, employees must also be given training that can guide them in the transition to new working style and adapt as per the requirements. The main emphasis of these trainings must be that the measure of performance is mainly result oriented and not time spent at a job. It should show the importance of maintaining respectfulness between each colleague.

- VI. Change in Office and facilities layout: Adopting flexible working arrangements will require a complete change in the office layout and designing which will result in reducing the space and cost. For example, Activity Based Working can be one of the ways that can be considered if an organization is implementing remote working approaches. In such a set-up, individuals work in an open space and there is no workstation for anyone. This way, employees feel like taking ownership of their work management. However, there must be proper leadership advocacy and technology investment to pull the cultural transformation off.



Figure 16. Some Anecdotal from the Interviews

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In today's times, the concept of flexible working arrangement is becoming very popular and being a universal strategy used by government and private organizations as an employee benefit. A lot of management practices and attitudes, that had originated ages ago; possibly starting from the industrial revolutionary era, have been condemned in today's digital age and gig economy. Modern companies are redesigning their workplaces with more employee empowerment ideologies such as fundamental employee motivation, job satisfaction and policies that favour work life balance for its employees. Businesses have started to realize that human resource is its most important asset and maintaining a happy, healthy and productive workforce will make it easier and faster to achieve its short term and long-term goals. Thus, it is highly imperative that businesses have employee friendly policies, incentives or benefits to retain their best talents.

Researchers suggest that whatever form of flexible working arrangement is adopted; organizations can reap several benefits out of it; such as reduced staff turnover and absenteeism, increased morale and commitment; attracting and retaining qualified talents and most importantly cost saving. Therefore, it is important to edify positive awareness about flexible working arrangement to organizations specially those which are still following traditional practices.

Perhaps, considering the Qatari business environment, some traditional practices exist for good reasons. Although flexible working arrangement is more of an employee-centred approach, there may be situations in which it cannot be feasible. Thus, it is highly recommended that flexible working arrangement is to be adopted as an exception rather than the rule. After the end of COVID-19 pandemic phase; if organizations in Qatar would prefer to continue with the remote working arrangement, then the best approach will be to analyse and find the optimal combination of remote and on-site work that practically suits the

business and helps in running its operations smoothly. It is always good to efficiently and smartly utilize new trends in technology that can support flexible working arrangement while keeping the best of what has worked as always: - human contact.

The following recommendations are advised for the implementation of flexible working arrangement in an organization:

1. Define the departments and lines of businesses which will benefit from flexible working arrangement. Service departments like Finance, Customer Service, Nursing, Security etc. cannot be given this privilege due to the work nature. Develop Human Capital policies to enhance the sense of belonging and responsibility.
2. Develop appropriate KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for employees and departments.
3. Benchmarking: Study the historic trend of remote office operations in countries who practice such arrangements.
4. Positive Leadership advocacy to employees.
5. Provide appropriate change Management trainings.
6. Close monitoring of employees through performance evaluation.
7. Qatar government and banks must offer financial grants to businesses to upgrade their remote working technology.
8. Devise a strategy to develop a hybrid on both methods – remote working and onsite. Intermix both options where 1 to 2 days in a week to be kept as office days and grouping employees thus reducing human traffic.

This study also is in tandem with our Emir – His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani's Qatar National Vision 2030 (Qatar National Vision 2030, 2020) which emphasizes the due importance to the social care & protection as well as Human

Development Index. In order to ensure that these goals are totally achieved and implemented along with keeping its growth on a steady and consistent basis, it is imperative that flexible workings hours be introduced if not in all, but most of the sectors especially considering the fact that there is a substantial amount of women working now. Sectors like the education which again is an important viewpoint of Human Development Index, will need to have remote system as children are the most vulnerable to any sort of diseases or pandemics regardless. And that again in retrospect also affect another point of the nation's vision which is a healthy population.

With easier and cheaper technological means that helps in communication such as emails and low-cost e-conferencing tools, the traditional reasons for making employees travel to office every day at standard time no longer apply. Why not save travel time, office space and costs and let them work in a flexible manner and?

Since technology will be the key driver for all our future existence, flexible working arrangements should be the first step of the transitional process towards the highly complex and super technological future of tomorrow. Because our lives are moving towards being mechatronic, it is important that we put our steps towards adapting the same.

CHAPTER 8: LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Some limitations experienced during the study were as follows:

1. Access to Employees: Since; Qatar, along with the world; were facing a challenging time because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many individuals were going through an emotional turmoil in the form of illness caused by the disease, loss of jobs, loss of dear ones and travel restrictions. Because of these reasons, several individuals did not participate in the survey, although it was sent to them. I as a researcher, could not persuade them much out of courtesy and respecting the soberness of their situation. Efforts were made to approach several organizations in Qatar to let employees participate in the survey, however, was declined due to unknown reasons. The same reasons applied to accessing individuals from managerial positions, although 25 is a good number considering the situation.
2. Limited Experience: Flexible working arrangement is very novel to this part of the world and it was adopted as a necessity mandated by the State as a precautionary measure against the pandemic. Therefore, people had only limited real time experience about the subject.
3. Narrow perspective: The study was limited to individuals who were legally employed in Qatar only. It could not include women who were once working but had to leave their jobs due to childcare. Getting the perspective of this section could have given a better understanding of how much flexible working can be beneficial to the society.

Anyhow, this study can be considered as a foundation for future work. Considering that there could be possibilities of pandemic reverting again or any other calamities that could occur down the future, there comes a need to have solutions found to keep business operations run undeterred in Qatar. While technology makes remote work

and other flexible working arrangements more and more feasible; companies can embrace such a working style to fit the needs of the future generation. It is recommended to:

1. Extend the research: Future researchers can extend the study by increasing employee participants and including women who stopped working due to family care. This will give a much larger scale insight on the perceptions of flexible working arrangement.
2. Research Comparisons: Research may also be conducted with more variables and their comparisons. This is because every individual favor this approach for different reasons.
3. Extend the scope of study: Researchers may extend the scope of study on an organizational and society level

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM FOR THE SURVEY

Date _____

Dear Respondent,

We would like to invite you to participate in this research study titled **Study of Flexible Working Arrangements and Employee Perception following COVID-19 crisis in Qatar**.

The study is approved by the Qatar University Institutional Review Board with the approval number.....; If you have any questions related to ethical compliance of the study you may contact them at (QUIRB@qu.edu.qa).

With the outbreak of COVID-19, changes have occurred in work environment and the way of life for people all over the globe. As a result, many companies in Qatar have adopted changes to their working strategies in line with the rules implemented by the Qatari Government to fight against the pandemic. Many employers have temporarily adopted remote working or flexible working arrangements as a social distancing approach in order to lessen human contact as much as possible.

The purpose of this research paper is to determine the perception of employees in Qatar towards the perceived value of Flexible Working Arrangements. This study is also intended to investigate if there is a relationship between employee's organizational commitments and satisfaction with that of flexible working arrangements.

There are no associated risks or harms involved through participating in this survey. The survey should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. The information collected will be kept strictly confidential and secure, where only the researchers have access to it. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. If you would like to obtain the results of the study, you may provide your e-mail address at the end of the survey, however this is entirely optional. You may withdraw from this study at any time.

This survey is purely for academic research purposes and will not gain any direct benefit for the participants.

This survey is conducted only in English Language.

Eligibility Criteria to participate in the survey:

Inclusion Participants: The participants must mandatorily meet the following criteria:

- Citizens and Residents of Qatar who are legally employed in Qatar only.
- Employees working in Qatar who are aged 18 and above.
- Employees with English competency skills.

Exclusion Individuals: The following category of individuals do not qualify to participate for the survey.

- Unemployed citizens and residents of Qatar
- Citizens and Residents aged less than 18 years old.
- Employees working outside Qatar
- Customers
- Domestic Workers
- Non-English language speaking individuals or individuals who will not fully understand the consent form.

If you have any questions you may contact us by email.

Please indicate that you have read, understood, and voluntarily agree to participate by clicking below:

Yes No

Thank you for your valuable time.

Supervisor's Information:

Supervisors Information:

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Researcher Information:

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APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Date: _____

Dear Participant:

We would like to invite you to participate in this research study titled: **Study of Flexible Working Arrangements and Employee Perception following COVID-19 crisis in Qatar**. This study is approved by QU-IRB board under the reference number If you have any questions related to ethical compliance of the study you may contact them at QU-IRB@qu.edu.qa.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, changes have occurred in work environment and the way of life for people all over the globe. As a result, many companies in Qatar have adopted changes to their working strategies in line with the rules implemented by the Qatari Government to fight against the pandemic. Many employers have temporarily adopted remote working or flexible working arrangements as a social distancing approach in order to lessen human contact as much as possible.

The purpose of this research paper is to determine the perception of employees in Qatar towards the perceived value of Flexible Working Arrangements. This study is also intended to investigate if there is a relationship between employee's organizational commitments and satisfaction with that of flexible working arrangements.

This interview is conducted as part of the graduation research project and for the completion of requirements for a Master's Degree in Business Administration, Qatar University. The information collected will be kept strictly confidential. There are no risks associated and the information will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer questions related to the research subject. You can skip any question or withdraw from participation at any time. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes. If you would like to obtain the results of the study, you may provide your e-mail address at the end of the interview, however this is entirely optional.

This interview is purely for academic research purposes and will not gain any direct benefit for the participants.

This interview is conducted in English Language only.

Eligibility Criteria to participate in the interview:

Inclusion Participants: The participants must mandatorily meet the following criteria:

- Citizens and Residents of Qatar who are employed in Qatar.
- Employees working in Qatar who are of age 18 and above.
- Employees holding managerial/ supervisory positions.

Exclusion Individuals: The following category of individuals do not qualify to participate for the interview.

- Unemployed citizens and residents of Qatar
- Employees working outside Qatar
- Customers
- Domestic Employers

- Non-English language speaking individuals or individuals who will not fully understand the consent form.

If you have any questions, pls do not hesitate to contact me (sm1805656@qu.edu.qa, 55841852) or my project supervisor (Dr. Mohd Nishat Faisal, Professor of Management, College of Business and Economics, Qatar University, nishat786@qu.edu.qa).

Sincerely,

Samra Mahboob

I have read the above statements and have been fully informed of the procedures to be used in this project.

I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them voluntarily. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach.

- I agree to participate in this interview Yes No
- I agree to the Audio recording of my interview Yes No N/A

Signature of Participant

Date

Name & Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX C: SURVEY – ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE IN WORD FORMAT

QUANTITATIVE METHOD:

This is an Electronic Questionnaire that was sent to employees of all levels working in organizations based in Qatar.

Demographic Questions:

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

2. Age:

- 20 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 & above

3. Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced/ Separated
- Others (please specify)

4. Number of dependents children/ parents/ siblings under your care

- None
- One
- 2 to 3
- More than 3

5. Which of the following family members do you arrange for care?

- None
- Child/ children
- Elderly family members (parents/ grandparents)
- Siblings
- Family members with disabilities

6. Educational background

- Highschool
- Diploma
- Professional Certification
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate Degree

7. Type of organization you currently work in

- Non-profit (educational organizations, charitable organizations)
- Private sector, privately held

- Public/ Government sector
- Private sector, publicly traded
- Multinational organizations
- Others..... please specify

8. Type of Industry you currently work in:

- Finance & Insurance
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Healthcare
- Educational Services
- Pharmaceuticals
- Information Technology
- Travel & Tours
- Trading
- Culture & Arts
- Entertainment & Recreation
- Real Estate & Rental
- Food & Accommodation
- Consultancy
- Others(Please specify)

9. Which Job Category do you fall under:

- Top Management (CEO, COO, General Manager etc)
- Middle Management (Regional Managers, Country Managers, Executives etc)
- First Line Managers (Department Managers, Heads, Supervisors, Team Leaders)
- Support Staff (Administrators, Sales, Accountants etc)
- Professionals (Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers etc)
- Others Please specify)

10. How many years have you been with your current employer?

- Less than a year
- 0 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 10 years & above (please specify)

11. Which of the following motivates you to pick a job?

- Remuneration package
- Good Work Life Balance
- Career Development opportunities
- Reputation of the company
- Location

12. I like my current employer because:

- Comfortable leave policies
- Convenient Working hours

- Career Development Opportunities
- Supporting Line Manager & team
- Remuneration & Benefits
- Positive office environment

13. How many hours do you work in a week?

- 0-20 hours
- 20-40 hours
- 40-50 hours
- Above 50 hours

14. How many days do you work in a week?

- 5
- 6
- 7
- Less than 5
- Others: Please specify

15. Given a chance, which of the following type of flexible working arrangements would you prefer?

- **Flex Time:** Employees can determine the start and end times of the working day; without changing the total number of hours worked. (eg: for an 8 hours job, employee may start at 08:30 am instead of 07:30 am and finish at 4:30 pm instead of 3:30 pm)
- **Remote Working:** work from home or at an alternative work location away from the standard work location.
- **Compressed Work Week:** A **compressed work week** is an alternative that reduces standard 5 workday schedules to fewer numbers of days in a week. (e.g. An individual works for 10 to 12 hours for 3 days and takes 2 days off, instead of working standard schedule of 8 hours/ 5 days a week)
- **Job Sharing:** 2 person Sharing same job and pay of a single full-time job.
- **I prefer Standard Working hours:** formally required to work begin 07:30 am and end work at 3:30 pm at work location; every Sunday to Thursday. (Standard working hours may vary from organization to organization)

16. Which of the following drives your decision to use flexible working arrangements?

- Commuting/ Transport (Cost of transport, distance from home etc)
- Family Responsibilities
- Better Focus & Productivity
- Personal interest
- Others (please specify)

17. Does your current employer supply any equipment as mentioned below to enable you to use flexible working arrangements?

- Laptop
- Remote Access
- Mobile phone

- Others (please specify)

2. Participant Preference Survey

Five Point Likert Scale is used for rating:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Organizational Commitment and Perception

1. The organization considers my goals and growth potential.
2. The organization cares about employee wellbeing.
3. Help is available from my organization when I am facing a personal problem.
4. I feel like a family at my organization because of my management, team and environment.
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
6. I feel that there are limited alternatives to consider leaving this organization.
7. Leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.
8. Even if It were to my advantage, I would not leave this organization.
9. I am willing to put high amount of efforts for organization's success and is willing to undertake any duties to be able to remain here.
10. I am happy to highly recommend about this organization to others.

Five-Point Likert Questions

1. The organization considers my growth and potential.
2. The organization cares about my wellbeing
3. Help is available from my organization when I am facing a personal problem.
4. I feel like a family at my organization because of my management, team and environment.
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
6. I feel that there are limited alternatives to consider leaving this organization.
7. Leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.
8. Even if It were to my advantage, I would not leave this organization.
9. I am willing to put high amount of efforts for organization's success and is willing to undertake any duties to be able to remain here.
10. I am happy to highly recommend about this organization to others.
11. My Job Nature allows me to adopt flexi- working arrangements.
12. Flexible working arrangement is highly valuable to me as a work life benefit.
13. I feel more focused and productive with the implementation of flexi-working hours.
14. Flexible working hours allows me for better time management.
15. Flexi-working hours helps me to save more money in terms of reduced transport cost or childcare costs, as I can either work remotely or reach office at non-peak hours.

16. Advanced electronic technology helps me to manage flexible working arrangements smoothly.
17. Flexible working arrangements offer dual advantages. I can provide more care and attention to family whilst carry out my job responsibilities well.
18. Flexible working arrangements allow me to maintain good physical fitness as I have more time for practicing healthy eating patterns and regular exercise.
19. Flexible working arrangements allows me to maintain a positive mental health and reduce anxiety.
20. Higher monetary benefits are much important to me than any other benefit, including flexible working arrangements.
21. The official working hours of my workplace is convenient enough for an individual's work life balance; hence, employees don't require flexible working arrangements.
22. Flexible working arrangements will hamper my career growth as I feel an employee's physical presence is important during official working hours. For example, it may affect the business flow and my reputation when I am physically unavailable during an emergency.
23. I cannot maintain my discipline when I am scheduled on flexible working arrangements.
24. I am not psychologically connected to my workplace because of flexible working arrangements.
25. Stakeholder relations such as suppliers, customers may be affected if flexible working arrangements are followed.
26. An organization is not professional if it adopts flexible working arrangements.
27. Networking and building good relations with colleagues may get affected with flexible working arrangements.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUALITATIVE METHOD – Interview with Management

This would be either face-to-face interview or electronic interview based on the convenience of the participant. A non-disclosure agreement stating that the information received will be used for research purpose only will be provided before the interview. The main objective is to understand if management favors flexible working hour's policy.

Questions:

1. Do you prefer standard working hours or flexible working arrangement for your team / department? Why?
2. Explain how did you manage business continuity with remote working policies following COVID-19?
3. Do you think it was a big challenge to manage work structure with remote working policies? Were you able to measure performance of your employees?
4. Will it be hard to implement flexible working arrangements in your organization when things get back to normal?
5. Do you think flexi working hours have hampered employee productivity and discipline?
6. Do you think Flexible working arrangement is favorable for an organization in terms of, profitability, and cost reduction?
7. Do you think flexible working arrangement is a great contributor to employee retention?

APPENDIX E: HYPOTHESIS TESTING

**Scale:
H1**

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized Items	No. of Items
0.815	0.819	5

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	
H1	3.4790	1.12923		
VAR00003	3.7246	1.03937	167	
VAR00004	3.4970	1.14004	167	
VAR00005	3.6467	1.27098	167	
VAR00006	2.7246	1.30183	167	

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	H1	VAR00003	VAR00004	VAR00005	VAR00006
H1	1.000	0.555	0.455	0.496	0.41
VAR00003	0.555	1.000	0.528	0.469	0.367
VAR00004	0.455	0.528	1.000	0.691	0.422
VAR00005	0.496	0.469	0.691	1.000	0.367
VAR00006	0.410	0.367	0.422	0.367	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum/Minimum	Variance	No. of Items
Item Means	3.414	2.725	3.725	1.000	1.367	0.159	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
H1	13.5928	13.640	0.612	0.406	0.777

VAR00003	13.3473	14.156	0.612	0.409	0.779
VAR00004	13.5749	13.041	0.690	0.548	0.754
VAR00005	13.4251	12.523	0.654	0.522	0.764
VAR00006	14.3473	13.662	0.484	0.244	0.819

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	No. of items
17.0719	20.019	4.47425	5

Scale: H2

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.779	0.783	2

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00007	2.4371	1.27792	167
VAR00008	2.5210	1.11311	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00007	VAR00008
VAR00007	1.000	0.644
VAR00008	0.644	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Min/Max	Variance	No. of Items
Item Means	2.479	2.437	2.521	0.084	1.034	0.004	2
Items Variances	1.436	1.239	1.633	0.394	1.318	0.078	2

Inter-Item Covariances	0.915	0.915	0.915	0.000	1.000	0.000	2
Inter-Item Correlations	0.649	0.649	0.644	0.000	1.000	0.000	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00007	2.5210	1.239	0.644	0.414	
VAR00008	2.4371	1.633	0.644	0.414	

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
4.9581	4.703	2.16865	2

Scale: H3

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.608	0.611	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00009	3.1737	1.26101	167
VAR00010	2.9521	1.16582	167
VAR00011	3.1677	1.24015	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00009	VAR00010	VAR00011
VAR00009	1.000	0.317	0.259
VAR00010	0.317	1.000	0.456
VAR00011	0.259	0.456	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	3.098	2.952	3.174	0.222	1.075	0.016	3
Item Variances	1.496	1.359	1.590	0.231	1.170	0.015	3
Inter-Item Co-variances	0.510	0.404	0.659	0.254	0.629	0.014	3
Inter-Item Correlations	0.344	0.259	0.456	0.197	1.762	0.008	3

Scale: H4

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.810	0.810	2

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00012	4.0359	1.01727	167
VAR00013	4.1557	1.03537	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00012	VAR00013
VAR00012	1.000	0.681
VAR00013	0.681	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	4.096	4.036	4.156	0.120	1.030	0.007	2
Item Variances	1.053	1.035	1.072	0.037	1.036	0.001	2
Inter-Item Co-variances	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.000	1.000	0.000	2
Inter-Item Correlations	0.681	0.681	0.681	0.000	1.000	0.000	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00012	4.1557	1.072	0.681	0.464	
VAR00013	4.0359	1.035	0.681	0.464	

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
8.1916	3.541	1.88185	2

Scale: H5

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.300	0.298	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00014	3.9641	1.00536	167
VAR00015	4.1078	1.00619	167
VAR00016	3.4850	1.11861	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00014	VAR00015	VAR00016
VAR00014	1.000	0.087	0.150
VAR00015	0.087	1.000	0.135
VAR00016	0.150	0.135	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	3.852	3.485	4.108	0.623	1.179	0.106	3
Item Variances	1.091	1.011	1.251	0.291	1.238	0.019	3
Inter-Item Co-variances	0.136	0.088	0.168	0.080	1.906	0.001	3
Inter-Item Correlations	0.124	0.087	0.150	0.062	1.714	0.001	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00014	7.5928	2.568	0.159	0.027	0.237
VAR00015	7.4491	2.598	0.148	0.023	0.259
VAR00016	8.0719	2.200	0.193	0.037	0.160

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
11.5569	4.092	2.02278	3

Scale: H6

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.805	0.816	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00017	4.2395	0.91315	167
VAR00018	3.8383	1.17359	167
VAR00019	4.1198	0.93656	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00017	VAR00018	VAR00019
VAR00017	1.000	0.509	0.664
VAR00018	0.509	1.000	0.615
VAR00019	0.664	0.615	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	4.066	3.838	4.240	0.401	1.105	0.042	3
Item Variances	1.029	0.834	1.377	0.543	1.652	0.091	3
Inter-Item Co-variances	0.596	0.545	0.676	0.131	1.241	0.004	3
Inter-Item Correlations	0.596	0.509	0.664	0.155	1.305	0.005	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00017	7.9581	3.607	0.642	0.457	0.750
VAR00018	8.3593	2.846	0.617	0.396	0.798
VAR00019	8.0778	3.301	0.731	0.544	0.660

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
12.1976	6.666	2.58177	3

Scale: H7

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items ^a	N of Items
-0.628	-0.655	2

a. The value is negative due to a negative average covariance among items. This violates reliability model assumptions. You may want to check item codings.

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00020	4.3832	0.88315	167
VAR00021	2.0180	1.13792	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00020	VAR00021
VAR00020	1.000	-0.247
VAR00021	-0.247	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	3.201	2.018	4.383	2.365	2.172	2.797	2
Item Variances	1.037	0.780	1.295	1.660	1.660	0.133	2
Inter-Item Co-variances	-0.248	-0.248	-0.248	0.000	1.000	0.000	2
Inter-Item Correlations	-0.247	-0.247	-0.247	0.000	1.000	0.000	2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00020	2.0180	1.295	-0.247	0.061	
VAR00021	4.3832	0.780	-0.247	0.061	

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
6.4012	1.579	1.25660	2

Scale: H8

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	167	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
Total		167	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.315	0.313	3

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
VAR00022	3.6647	1.20546	167
VAR00023	4.2455	0.92141	167
VAR00024	3.4072	1.20818	167

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	VAR00022	VAR00023	VAR00024
VAR00022	1.000	0.286	0.173
VAR00023	0.286	1.000	-0.063
VAR00024	0.173	-0.063	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Min	Max	Range	Max/Min	Variances	No. of Items
Item Means	3.772	3.407	4.246	0.838	1.246	0.184	3
Item Variances	1.254	0.849	1.460	0.611	1.719	0.123	3
Inter-Item Co-variances	0.166	-0.070	0.318	0.388	-4.510	0.035	3
Inter-Item Correlations	0.132	-0.063	0.286	0.349	-4.521	0.025	3

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00022	7.6527	2.168	0.321	0.118	-.130 ^a
VAR00023	7.0719	3.416	0.145	0.095	0.295
VAR00024	7.9102	2.938	0.088	0.044	0.433

a. The value is negative due to a negative average covariance among items. This violates reliability model assumptions. You may want to check item codings.

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
11.3174	4.760	2.18177	3