

The Attitude of Flexible Work Arrangement on Academics' Job Satisfaction: The Emerging Market Case

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of academics' attitudes toward flexible work arrangements (FWA). The study has attempted to broaden the scope of FWA methods in academia by integrating educators that perceive job satisfaction as an important feature of human resource management. A quantitative approach using a non-probability sampling technique was used to collect the data and examine the impact of FWA parameters on job satisfaction for instructors who worked under FWA norms during COVID-19 at Tribhuvan University, the largest university in Nepal. The FWA parameters could take place at work, either digitally or physically, by changing the shift or schedule as needed. The study used survey data from academics from different disciplines working at Tribhuvan University, and 418 respondents who directly observed FWA behaviors during the COVID-19 epidemic served as the basis for this study. This study was conducted to ascertain whether the psychological and work-life balance in FWAs impacted employees' work satisfaction. To test the study hypothesis, the partial least squares method was used. This paper provides empirical perspectives on how the adaptation of FWAs affects satisfaction. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated to be beneficial in maintaining contentment with the balance of work and personal life. That means the universities or institutes should assess their experiences with FWA practices during COVID-19 and, as a result, re-examine and observe the best flexible job pattern for further practice in the case of an emergency. This study contributes knowledge by addressing the challenges faced by instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the study adds to our understanding by revealing that a positive attitude toward work-life balance significantly impacts a flexible work schedule during a health crisis like COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, Perception, Psychological balance, Work-life balance.

1. Introduction

With the requirement for increased exposure and job results, work pressure seems to increase employee stress, dissatisfaction, productivity, and attrition. All these results cost corporations. In this regard, flexibility in work operations would allow workers to better match their work hours as per their preferences (Cooper & Burke, 2008). In addition, globalization and e-commerce have changed work schedules. Information technology is now a part of the workplace, and the position of a workplace is becoming less important (Perez et al., 2003). As a result, it eliminated the concept of a 40 - to 48-hour workweek. Flexible work arrangement (FWA) originally meant flexible job hours and teleworking (Hill et al., 2008). Now, the FWA is used as a phrase to incorporate work choices that provide flexibility in terms of "where" the work is conducted (commonly referred to as telecommuting or flex location) and/or "when" the work is completed - sometimes referred to as flextime or scheduling flexibility (Allen et al., 2013).

Job division, flexible operational time, and telecommuting are part-time schedules that offer flexible working practices. Today, firms are embracing FWAs, including alternative working arrangements (e.g., flexible time and compressed working weeks), shift and break schedules, part-time work, job sharing, and working from home or other locations. During the COVID-19 epidemic, FWAs became crucial in distance education to overcome many hurdles to complete programs on time and prepare for final exams (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021).

The COVID-19 outbreak affected the operating model and system. Universities began offering distance education via the internet system. After experiencing a new teaching and learning environment, we saw the need for presenting and learning about a new dimension of FWAs from an academic perspective. In this connection, this study examines how attitudes toward FWAs affect job satisfaction. Job satisfaction must be understood in the organization's context, as its consequences may vary. In this context, Cole (2006) noted that FWAs varied by country and showed how much control the company or the worker had over when and how long they worked. Employee satisfaction is one of human resource management's most undisputed and highly esteemed notions. This is significant as a dependent variable and an explanatory aspect of diverse attitudes and behaviors (Brief, 1998). Greenhaus et al. (2003) defined FWAs as a balance between time, involvement, and satisfaction. Time savings and employee satisfaction are crucial issues in FWA practice. These studies showed the relevancy of FWAs for role enhancement and employee satisfaction.

Concerns have been raised about policies and debates about FWAs from the point of view of the value of working life compared to the needs of the family. To identify the gap, we surveyed to ascertain whether the psychological and work-life balance in FWAs impacted academics' job satisfaction. The study used survey data from academics from different disciplines working at Tribhuvan University, the largest university in Nepal, and its constituent campuses. In the context of this scenario, this paper raises some questions.

- a. What impact is COVID-19 having on teaching and learning strategies?
- b. How do faculties handle the difficult situations brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- c. Does the COVID-19 situation alter the psychological and work-life balance of educators?

This study sought to explore the efficacy of FWA practices in the teaching process, analyze faculty satisfaction and perceptions, and examine educators' work-life balance and psychological balance for flexible activities during the COVID-19 pandemic period to provide answers to the questions raised above.

This paper was organized in a set order. The introduction section presents the background and the key issues in job satisfaction in academia. The literature review, along with the conceptual framework and

hypotheses, provides an overall concept and developmental research in this arena. The methodology presents the research design, sampling, and data collection procedures. It incorporates the characteristics of the respondents. It also presents the data's validity and reliability for the subsequent process. The results section provides the findings with a focus on the hypotheses. The discussion section compares the results to some of the most recent work. The conclusion section states the purpose of the research based on the findings and suggests the study's significance. At last, the section on limitations and avenues for future research clarifies the limitations associated with the study and provides some insights for future research.

2. Literature Review

This paper is anchored on job characteristics and self-determination theory. The theory underlying Hackman and Oldham (1980) stated job traits model is that the work itself is crucial to employee motivation. For illustration, a tedious and repetitive job reduces the motivation to work effectively, whereas a rigorous one boosts enthusiasm. In this context, according to the self-determination concept, the desire for autonomy – control over one's life course — is a driving factor behind the desire for freedom, a more comprehensive range of possibilities, and optional functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As the tasks are to be completed in a private, informal setting, too many options or liberty may lead to monotony. Therefore, employees choose FWAs to be more creative, relieve stress and tension, and, most importantly, maintain a balance of work and non-work activities.

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) and their benefits

Previous studies have shown that FWAs have many implications and benefits for people, businesses, and society. Because they give employers a chance to assign workers and their time according to the type of work that has to be done, flexible working arrangements are beneficial for attaining a more effective use of human resources (HR) (Berkery et al., 2017). It is used to find and keep talented workers who are more satisfied and productive. Several companies are implementing flexible working arrangements with Results-Only Work Environments (ROWE) to ensure that workers finish their work and take full responsibility for achieving the desired results. This arrangement is explained by the goal of allowing individuals to concentrate on their production rather than their physical presence in the office. Employee work outcomes are frequently the result of specific inputs. Employee performance and productivity are examples of how employee outcomes are expressed. It can be summarized as human efforts to produce more with fewer resource inputs to benefit as many people as possible. According to the European Productivity Council, "productivity is a state of mind." It is a mindset of advancement and continuous enhancement of what already exists. The ongoing adaptation of economic and social life to shifting circumstances is what it is. Applying new strategies and tactics requires constant effort. It is confidence in human advancement. The idea of productivity acknowledges how different elements interact during work. The output or results obtained may be attributed to various inputs or resources in the form of varied productivity ratios. Each individual's productivity proportion is influenced by several important factors (Bain, 1982). One of the variables is inner contentment and willingness to work, which are achievable only when one performs their job satisfactorily and is adaptable.

The flexibility of work arrangements and satisfaction

Flexible job arrangements, such as flextime and decreased workweeks, may enable employees to enhance their lives from outside work, which is associated with greater job satisfaction and fewer plans to quit the job (McNall et al., 2009). Similarly, De Menezes and Kelliher (2011) noted that HRM strategies that promote staff flexibility might boost productivity and innovation, which could ultimately result in increased financial performance, which can take the form of increased profitability. Job satisfaction has two effects: lower turnover intentions and improved financial performance. Additionally, Beauregard and Henry (2009) observed that organizational commitment, decreased turnover intentions, and greater job

satisfaction merely hold true if staff members believe that flexibility may be used to give them more control over the passage of time. Employees don't want to be bound by control because of this. As technology advances, work has become simpler because it can now be done anytime, anywhere. Due to cloud technology, people can access their organization's server, share documents, and respond to e-mails from anywhere (Spreitzer et al., 2017). All of this technology and gadgetry is enabling new levels of working methods in which people can handle jobs whenever and wherever they want.

Challenges in academia during the COVID-19 pandemic

Belhaj et al. (2022) noted that COVID-19 impacted every sector of the global economy, including education, and universities are finding it difficult to deal with the epidemic. COVID-19 brought about an economic shock, issues with livelihood, hunger, unemployment, and criminal activity. Here in Nepal, academic institutions use the FWAs during pandemics. Academia struggled to thrive during COVID; employees were compelled to work irregular hours not out of choice but due to a lack of other options. Most flexible arrangement policies were developed from the employer's perspective, who wanted to save costs and reduce labor requirements. In some cases, private-sector academic institutions used FWAs to dismiss employees during a lockdown and avoid paying wages and salaries to staff members. Very few employers have given their employees one-time financial and credit support (Upadhyaya, 2020). In this situation, several firms saw FWA as a solution for effective work practices with minimal compensation instead of an individual's job satisfaction.

Flexible schedules are nearly the norm in higher education since academics can select them according to their preferences and availability (Du Plessis, 2019; Ukwoma & Ngulube, 2021). With the assessment of flexible working hours and systems, it is possible to see that practices for flexible working arrangements are beneficial if they are focused on the needs of employees and the organization's long-term viability. The requirement for work that may be performed independently with flexible arrangements rather than the typical 9-to-5 job schedule is emerging in most jobs. These investigations are necessary for future reference for other organizations, given that the notion of FWAs is being considered in contemporary organizations to retain the most talented employees by allowing them to balance their work and personal responsibilities through job satisfaction.

From another perspective, Frone (2003) indicated that FWAs include work-life conflict and work-life facilitation, which correspond to role conflict and enhancement. This method is suitable for measuring FWAs because it provides conceptually-based balance measures that dig into the numerous components of flexible work options. These criteria contribute to the overall evaluation of a person's role-related responsibilities and achievements (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). In this way, the FWAs helped employees balance their work and personal lives better, and both management and employees embraced the adjustments. However, different issues are yet to be identified in the Nepalese context. As a result, research into FWA and academics' job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic era is required. As a result, the following relationship was hypothesized between work-life balance and psychological balance within flexible job arrangement practices:

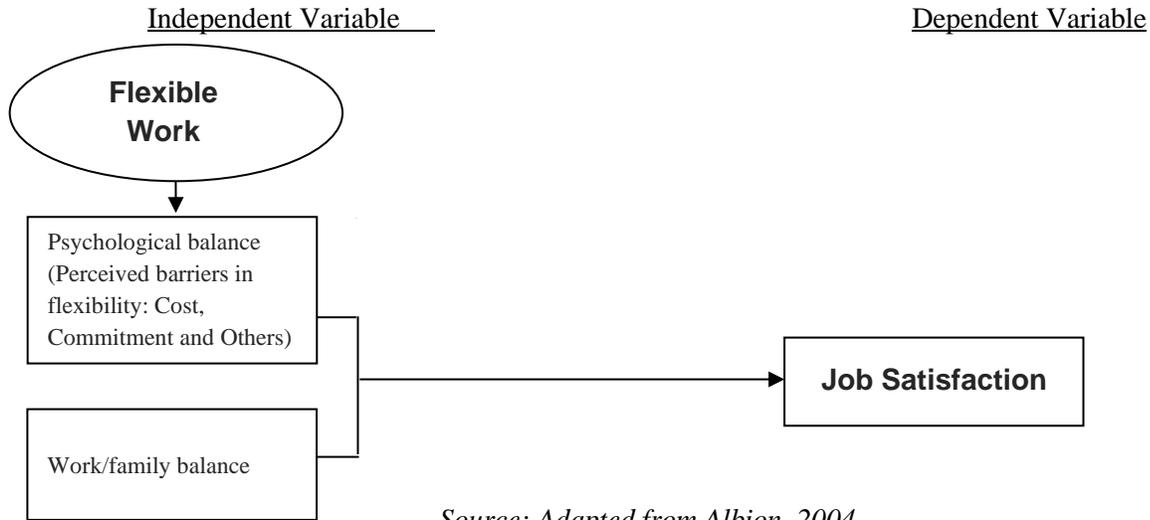


Fig.1: Conceptual framework of flexible job arrangements and job satisfaction

Subsequently, the relationship between demographic, attitude toward flexible job arrangements, and satisfaction were hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): Attitudes towards flexible work arrangements positively relate to perceptions of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis H_{1a}: Attitude towards psychological balance positively relates to perceptions of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis H_{1b}: Attitude towards work-life balance positively relates to perceptions of job satisfaction.

3. Methodology

Data collection

The oldest and largest university in Nepal, Tribhuvan University, has 61 constituent campuses, 1,084 associated institutions, and around 8,000 teaching staff members spread out across the nation (University Grant Commission, 2016). The respondents to this survey were those with flexible work schedules during COVID-19 in academia. All faculties from Tribhuvan University involved in their work per the practices of FWAs were included in the study's population. Such involvement in the workplace could involve physically or electronically changing the shift or time as needed. The survey was available from May 5 to May 20, 2021, for a period of fifteen days. During the COVID-19 pandemic, psychological balance, work-life balance, job satisfaction responses as well as impressions of the evolving nature of online education methods were noted. The study's main emphasis, however, was on how participants were exposed to the reality of FWA and how delighted they were with their psychological and physical well-being.

Stage one: Interview findings

For the screening of concepts and phenomena for the quantitative survey, ten faculties that adapted FWA practices during the COVID-19 epidemic were selected using snowball sampling. A close interview with 10 faculty members was undertaken as a pilot study just before the mass survey. Four of the academics were from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, while six were outside the Kathmandu valley. All

responders have questioned the stress they experienced as a result of the pandemic and emergency situation in Nepal.

Stage Two: Survey and analysis

Based on the first-stage interviews with representatives from different faculties, a survey was done with the academics who were teaching FWA-based classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, 418 academics took part in the survey, which was cross-sectional and took place during the time of the pandemic and emergency situation. During COVID-19, respondents were asked about their experiences with policies and practices for the FWAs. A cover letter promising confidentiality was included with each survey. In the first section, respondents were questioned about their details, such as age, gender, marital status, degree of education, position at work, tenure, or experience. The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents' impressions of factors influencing FWAs and job satisfaction.

Research design and methods

This study used a descriptive and causal-comparative research design. Information on the perception of FWA and job satisfaction was gathered using primary data. The study's population included all Tribhuvan University faculties with flexible work schedules across all participating firms. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed to teachers working in different institutions, 418 were returned. Therefore, 418 faculty members from various institutions who directly observed FWA behaviors during the COVID-19 epidemic served as the basis for this study. Table 1 presents the demographic features of the sample.

Table 1 Demographic features of the sample

Attribute	Characteristics	N	%
Gender	Male	244	58.4
	Female	174	41.6
Age	Below 25	57	13.1
	25-35	246	58.9
	35-45	102	24.4
	45 to above	13	3.1
Marital Status	Not married	128	30.6
	Married	289	69.1
Duration of service	Below 1 year	65	15.6
	1-5 year	217	51.9
	5-10 year	68	16.3
	Above 10 years	68	16.3
Education	Undergraduate	9	2.2
	Graduate	197	47.1
	Postgraduate	212	50.7

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were male (58.4 %; n = 244). It was interesting to notice that a high proportion of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 35, while a smaller proportion were 45 or older. In terms of organizational tenure, 15.6 % (n = 65) had less than 1 year of experience; 51.9 % (n = 217) of individuals had 1 to 5 years of experience; 16.3 % (n = 68) had 5 to 10 years of experience; and 16.3 % (n = 68) had more than 10 years of experience in their present profession. More than the majority of the employees in Table 1 have held their current position for between one and five years.

Measures and instrumentation

FWAs are defined as employer-provided benefits that permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday (Lambert et al., 2008). The FWA questionnaire was adapted to assess attitudes and barriers to the use of FWAs that encompass work-life balance and include psychological barriers in terms of three barriers. Three barrier factors were found: those related to the opinions of others in the workplace (barriers—others), those related to the financial and career costs of flexible job options (barriers—costs), and those related to people's feelings of disconnection or commitment toward the workplace (barriers—job commitment).

To determine the respondents and gather the responses, a purposeful sampling strategy was used. The instrument utilized to assess the degree of flexibility and satisfaction present in the work practices under examination was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire statement is displayed in Table 2, in which items indicated with an (R) were scored in reverse. All responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree." Responses were graded on a five-point scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. High scores showed positive sentiments regarding the use of FW arrangements.

Table 2 Questionnaire on flexible job arrangements

Attitude toward psychological balance (barriers)
1. I cannot manage the income reduction associated with fewer hours and flexible work alternatives. (R)
2. I am not suited to flexible work alternatives because it typically causes me to feel detached from the job. (R)
3. Working shorter hours might hinder my career advancement within the organization. (R)
4. In general, people that prefer flexible work arrangements are less committed to their roles. (R)
5. Individuals with flexible work schedules frequently miss essential work events or messages, such as meetings, training sessions, and important announcements. (R)
Attitude toward work-life balance
1. Flexible job arrangements allow me to balance my personal and social obligations.
2. I must work more flexible hours so that I am able to attend to my family duties.
3. Flexible work arrangements are necessary for me to attend family and social functions.
4. Flexible work arrangements allow me to concentrate more on my work while in work.

Source: Albion, 2004

Table 3 Job satisfaction questionnaire

Attitude toward job satisfaction
1. I believe I am compensated fairly for the job I perform.
2. The benefits I obtain do not meet my expectation. (R)
3. When I perform a good job, I earn the deserved recognition.
4. Many of our policies and procedures make it difficult to accomplish a good job.
5. I occasionally feel that my job lacks significance. (R)
6. Those who perform well on the job have a strong possibility of advancement.
7. I do not believe that my efforts are recognized. (R)
8. I feel undervalued by the firm when I consider how much they pay me. (R)
9. I frequently feel as if I'm unaware of what is happening within the organization.
10. I do not believe my efforts are appropriately rewarded. (R)
11. Required tasks are not explained thoroughly. (R)

Source: Spector, 1997

Table 3 presents eleven questionnaires with a nine-facet scale, including pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (performance-based awards), operating procedures (necessary rules and procedures), coworkers, the nature of the task, and communication that are useful to assess job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Social-demographic parameters, such as gender, age, the number of children, marital status, and organizational tenure, were also determined to be significant factors in the outcomes mentioned earlier through the literature evaluation. We, therefore, included them in our analysis.

Validity and reliability analyses for measurement scales

Validity and reliability assessments for measurement scales are displayed in Table 4. Initially, the factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was performed on two variables and 20 items. Following this, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (KMO) was performed to determine the sampling adequacy. It was performed for each variable, and the results were deemed satisfactory. In accordance with Hair and Black's (2000) recommendation, these statistical studies demonstrated that the value of factor analysis for all items representing each research construct was at least 0.4. This indicated that the items fulfilled the required validity analysis criterion.

Table 4 The result of validity and reliability analysis of measurement scales

Measure	Items	Factor Loadings	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Eigen Value	Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
FWA	9	0.571 to 0.873	0.866	2380.102, P=0.000	2.404	55.259	0.896
Job Satis.	11	0.523 to 0.889	0.907	3078.416, P=0.000	2.318	57.964	0.927

There is an acceptable standard of the KMO test value, which is 0.6, for assessing the validity of measuring scales. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant for all variables. All variables in the study had Eigen values greater than 1. Furthermore, each study variable's items exceeded factor loadings of 0.40. In addition, all study variables exceeded the acceptable reliability analysis criterion of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). These statistical findings revealed that the validity and reliability analyses of the measurement scales utilized in this study met the required standard.

4. Results and Discussions

This section provides subjective and empirical insights, followed by data analysis techniques. Here, in this section, we incorporate subjective judgment based on interviews with a few sample sets as a pilot study and objective findings from survey analysis.

Opinion about job satisfaction

Some respondents to the research survey's open-ended surveys expressed their support for the FWA. In terms of the question related to convenience and contentment, "How do you feel about flexible work practices?" Most respondents believed it was the best working practice because it helped them balance their personal and professional lives. For example, one of the faculty members who served as an assistant teacher at a college said:

...FWA helps me maintain a balance between my personal and professional lives. I experience less stress due to my flexible schedule at work. There is no need for transportation, which saves time and money.

Some university professors had the following things to say about the creative and innovative parts of the FWA:

...FWA practices enhance academics and creativity. Working independently and contributing extra effort during your flexible hours is a pleasure.

...Flexible work arrangements necessitate my invention. I have sufficient time for imaginative and creative thought...

In terms of job contentment, work-life balance, and work performance, one of the faculties representing women stated:

... Even full-time workers can set their hours, which will help them meet their family and social responsibilities.

...Flexible work hours encourage employee dedication to their task. Employees are permitted to spend time with their families. It is especially beneficial for ladies and housewives who lack the time to manage their belongings. They will feel a sense of accomplishment and perform the work correctly.

....One of the faculties opined that flexible work arrangements tend to be more effective, but the repetition of the task kills the thrill and reduces output.

We can evaluate subjective opinion in this context through self-determination theory, where the desire for autonomy—control over one's life course—is an underlying motivation for individuals demanding freedom, a greater variety of options, and optional functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As the tasks are to be completed in a private, informal setting, too many options or liberty may lead to monotony. On the part of employees, choosing flexible work arrangements as a means of fostering creativity, relieving pressures and tensions, and, most significantly, attempting to find a balance between work and other things.

Demographic characteristics and job satisfaction

Various demographic factors, including gender, age, marital status, job tenure, etc., were included in determining their impact on job satisfaction. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the effect of such demographic factors on job satisfaction. Table 5 depicts the association between gender, age, marital status, and tenure with job satisfaction. Using ANOVA, their effect on job satisfaction was examined as follows:

Table 5 ANOVA test of demographic profile with job satisfaction

Demography	Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	23.473	32	0.734	3.616	0.000
	Within Groups	78.096	385	0.203		
	Total	101.569	417			
Age	Between Groups	55.891	32	1.747	4.701	0.000
	Within Groups	143.049	385	0.372		
	Total	198.940	417			
Tenure	Between Groups	132.772	32	4.149	7.068	0.000
	Within Groups	226.006	385	0.587		
	Total	358.778	417			

Education	Between Groups	31.444	32	0.983	4.159	0.000
	Within Groups	90.970	385	0.236		
	Total	122.414	417			
Marital status	Between Groups	12.893	32	0.403	2.001	0.001
	Within Groups	77.521	385	0.201		
	Total	90.414	417			

Table 5, where the p-value for job satisfaction depending on all demographics is 0.00. It suggested a considerable variance in employee perceptions based on these factors. The findings in Table 5 showed that job satisfaction significantly correlated with all demographic parameters studied. Furthermore, such results disclosed that demographic factors affect the relationship between FWA and academics' job satisfaction.

Table 6 Pearson correlation and descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	FWA	Job Satisfaction
FWA	3.2182	0.72165	1	
Job Satisfaction	3.0968	0.77379	.854**	1

The findings of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis are displayed in Table 6. All variables' means were fallen between 3.0968 and 3.2182, indicating the extent of FWAs and job satisfaction. The correlation coefficients between the independent variable (FWA) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction) were less than 0.90, indicating that a severe collinearity issue did not affect the data (Hair & Black, 2000).

Regression analysis

Regression analysis was used to determine the impact of FWAs on job satisfaction. Two main factors have been shown to influence how people perceive FWAs. They are psychological balance and work-family balance. A simple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the impact of flexible arrangement features on academics' job satisfaction. This approach could evaluate the impact of independent variables on job satisfaction in terms of their magnitude and direction. Linear regressions were carried out, and the outcomes are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Model summary regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859 ^a	0.738	0.736	0.39730

Predictors: (Constant), Attitude to flexible work arrangements

According to the outcome of the regression analysis presented in Table 7, the value of R was 0.859, and the value of R square was 0.738, indicating that 73.8 % of the variation in job contentment was attributable to differences in FWAs. Hence, the model adequately explained the association between the flexible job arrangement and job satisfaction (there was a good fit).

Table 8 Analysis of flexible job arrangements on job satisfaction

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		

1	(Constant)	0.264	0.094	2.817	0.005
	FW_Psychological	0.326	0.051	6.45	0.000
	FW_Worklife	0.552	0.04	13.69	0.000

Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

In Table 8, the p-values were significant, indicating that the independent factors of FWAs explained the variance in job satisfaction significantly. This finding accepts Hypothesis 2 that attitudes toward FWAs positively relate to the perception of job satisfaction. Comparing the psychological and work-life balance outputs, both p-values were significant (less than 5 % significance level). Still, the beta value of work-life balance was more powerful than the psychological balance value. Because of this, it can be highlighted that "FWAs based on work-life balance" can make a big difference in the way people work.

The study's findings were consistent with Russal et al. (2009), who found that working from home enables academics to handle their workload most flexibly and that working digitally is significantly related to lower levels of workplace stress. Furthermore, the finding was also consistent with that of Christopher et al. (2014), who found that having the ability to tailor their work schedule as per their demands leads to good attitudes not only in their personal lives but also in their work lives. In addition, the study found that result-oriented institutions are more open to flex work benefits since their primary focus is the final result instead of the means employed to achieve it. The majority of faculties at a university have high self-esteem and anticipate their work to be assessed objectively and impartially (Huynh & Nguyen, 2022). So, using flexible hours and emphasizing work-life balance can be used to make work more satisfying.

5. Conclusions

The findings of the study can be helpful to educational institutions that plan to adopt FWA as a future activity to improve their learning process in successfully the technology to deal with any crisis in the future. This study contributes knowledge by addressing the challenges faced by instructors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the current study contributes to replenishing the gap by contributing to the literature on FWA in teaching faculties in the university context during the pandemic. The findings of this study imply that universities should take into account their FWA practices during COVID-19 and, in light of that experience, should revisit and adhere to the best FWAs to ensure a positive impact on teaching and learning activities through content and happy faculties. Therefore, the study concludes that the FWAs support university faculties in establishing their image through professionalism, exemplary work performance, and the demonstration of professional competence in activities such as publishing scientific works, organizing seminars and conferences, and international collaboration, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Implications

Theoretical Implication

This study's main contribution was to provide light on how FWAs affect academics' satisfaction with their academic performance during the COVID-19 epidemic. This study was the first to examine academics' resilience concerning COVID-19. COVID-19 brought the institutional transformation mechanism, which altered the new shift in the educational system. It allows people to experiment with new working methods while appreciating the value of using technology in the teaching-learning process, as indicated by Fang et al. (2019). The findings of this study ascertained that both psychological balance and work-life balance in FWAs had an impact on employees' job satisfaction. While comparing the psychological and work-life balance outputs, the work-life balance was more impactful than the psychological balance. Because of this,

it can be highlighted that "FWAs based on work-life balance" can make a big difference in how people work.

As suggested by Belhaj et al. (2022), the study's findings can be helpful to an academic system that plans to adapt to a new shift in the educational system as a future activity to enhance the teaching and learning process. Such a process should successfully deal with the technology to manage a crisis in the future. This paper addresses the problems that instructors experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic as an introduction to FWA and work-life balance in university faculties amid pandemic conditions.

Practical Implication

Universities should create policies prioritizing FWAs to promote their academic welfare and assist them in managing work pressure. Higher education institutions might consider developing health and psychological support programs (Du Plessis, 2019). The findings of this study imply that universities should take into account their FWA practices during COVID-19 and, in light of that experience, should revisit and adhere to the best FWAs to ensure a positive impact on teaching and learning activities through content and happy faculties. Universities should encourage material rewards to compensate for the fatigue of academics, particularly since we know university professors are paid relatively less.

Satisfaction is crucial in academics' relationships with management and the organization's working style. Employees can benefit from FWA by using it to reduce the pressure and tensions that come with juggling work and personal obligations. Because they believe that freedom enables them to do more, employees are drawn to flexible working conditions. If tasks are manageable and completed remotely, many prefer working at home rather than moving through traffic to the office (Darley, 2017).

Yet, it has become unclear how academics will adjust to acceptable flexible employment practices and how institutions will alter their policies to deal with problems brought on by the interplay of social or family pressure and work stress. Administrators must change their policies to accommodate FWAs if they want academics to be happy in their positions. Universities should allow professors flexible schedules so that they can spend more time with their own families. With current technology, a designated faculty, proactive administration, and an education-friendly curriculum, universities must offer faculties FWA as needed.

7. Limitations and Avenues of Future Research

Certain limitations in this study must be acknowledged. Firstly, this study was based on a single source; it may have inflated the common method bias. This study captures the concept of flexible job arrangements and satisfaction; examining how often these job policies are used on various employees in diverse industries may be appealing. Secondly, this study was based on certain assumptions, as we know it is unlikely to be conducted without them (Foss & Hallerberg, 2013). It was assumed that all participants understood the questions so that they could respond honestly. Thirdly, it was assumed that all participants freely participated in this survey without pressure from peers or management. Further, Ghimire (2020) asserted that a higher level of management trust results in greater job satisfaction; further research may be important to test trust issues in the attitude of job flexibility and job satisfaction. Furthermore, understanding the relationship between administrators and academics and their perspectives is also necessary.

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