

Flexible Work Arrangements and Their Impact on Employee Productivity and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have shifted from peripheral employee benefits to a central element of contemporary human resource strategy. Yet the conditions under which flexibility translates into stronger productivity and organizational attachment remain theoretically and empirically contested. This study develops and tests an integrative model in which perceived FWA quality predicts employee productivity and organizational commitment directly and indirectly through work-life balance, while supervisor support serves as a contextual boundary condition. Drawing on social exchange theory, conservation of resources theory, and boundary theory, the model was evaluated using a simulated cross-sectional employee dataset ($N = 428$) designed to demonstrate a complete advanced analysis protocol. The measurement model exhibited strong fit ($\chi^2 = 272.49$, $df = 220$, $CFI = .989$, $TLI = .987$, $RMSEA = .024$, $SRMR = .030$), with satisfactory reliability and convergent/discriminant validity. Structural estimates indicated that FWAs were positively associated with productivity ($\beta = .309$, $p < .001$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .260$, $p < .001$) after accounting for work-life balance, supervisor support, and demographic controls. Work-life balance partially mediated both relationships; bootstrapped indirect effects were .098 for productivity (95% CI [.045, .154]) and .117 for commitment (95% CI [.066, .169]). Supervisor support strengthened the FWA-productivity relationship ($\beta_{\text{interaction}} = .097$, $p = .024$) but did not significantly moderate the commitment relationship. The findings esource-and-reciprocity mechanism: flexibility appears most consequential when it improves employees' ability to manage work and non-work demands and is reinforced by supportive line management. Implications are offered for HR policy design, performance management, manager capability, and flexible-work governance.

Keywords: flexible work arrangements; hybrid work; employee productivity; organizational commitment; work-life balance; supervisor support; structural equation modeling

1. Introduction

Flexible work arrangements have become a defining feature of the contemporary employment relationship. Advances in digital collaboration, changing employee expectations, geographically dispersed teams, and the normalization of hybrid work have accelerated organizational experimentation with flexibility in both time and place. FWAs commonly

include flextime, hybrid schedules, remote work, compressed workweeks, and employee discretion over when or where regular work is performed. Their strategic importance extends beyond convenience: flexibility can shape employer attractiveness, access to talent, retention, inclusion, employee well-being, real-estate utilization, and the architecture of performance management. Recent evidence has therefore moved the debate from whether flexible work is possible to how organizations can design it so that employee and organizational interests are jointly served. The productivity consequences of FWAs are not self-evident. Flexibility can remove commuting time, enable concentration during individually optimal hours, reduce interruptions, and give employees greater control over the allocation of cognitive and temporal resources. Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2021), for example, documented a productivity gain when patent examiners moved from work-from-home to work-from-anywhere arrangements, suggesting that geographic flexibility can improve output without a corresponding deterioration in quality. A large randomized hybrid-work trial by Bloom, Han, and Liang (2024) similarly found that working from home two days per week reduced attrition and did not damage performance. At the same time, flexibility can create coordination frictions, digital overload, social isolation, boundary blurring, and work intensification. Kelliher and Anderson (2010) showed that employees using flexible practices may reciprocate perceived benefits by increasing effort, but this can coexist with intensified work. Thus, the same policy may enhance productivity for one employee or team while creating hidden costs for another. Organizational commitment is equally central to the HRM case for flexibility. Commitment reflects the psychological attachment that binds employees to an organization and influences willingness to remain, invest effort, and identify with organizational goals. Flexible arrangements can signal trust, concern for employees' broader lives, and organizational responsiveness, thereby strengthening the social exchange relationship. Meta-analytic evidence supports this view. Harrop, Jiang, and Overall (2026) synthesized 113 studies involving 88,618 participants and found that FWAs were positively related to organizational commitment, with combined temporal and spatial flexibility often producing more favorable outcomes than either dimension alone. Çivilidağ and Durmaz (2026), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of 38 studies from 19 countries, reported positive associations between FWAs and both work-life balance and organizational commitment. These findings indicate that flexibility is not merely an operational design choice; it can function as a symbolic and relational HR practice.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Flexible work arrangements as a strategic HR practice

Flexible work arrangements can be defined as conditions that provide employees with discretion over the temporal and/or spatial boundaries of regular paid work. This conceptualization distinguishes flexibility from simply working fewer hours and from supplemental after-hours work. Temporal flexibility concerns when work is performed; spatial flexibility concerns where it is performed. Contemporary hybrid systems frequently combine both dimensions. Prasadula, N. (2026) emphasize that availability and actual use should also be distinguished because the perceived option to use flexibility can itself communicate organizational support even when an employee does not exercise it continuously. From a strategic HRM perspective, FWAs operate at multiple levels. At the employee level they provide autonomy, reduce commuting constraints, and create opportunities for individualized work routines. At the team level they alter coordination rhythms, communication channels, visibility, and shared norms. At the organizational level they influence talent-market reach, office design, employment value propositions, and retention economics. Accordingly, an FWA cannot be evaluated only by the number of remote days or flexible hours. Quality depends on predictability, employee control, fairness, technological support, role suitability, and managerial implementation. A nominally flexible policy paired with constant digital surveillance or unpredictable after-hours demands can leave employees with less, rather than more, experienced control. Research evidence supports this duality. Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) meta-analysis of 46 studies involving 12,883 employees found generally beneficial associations of telecommuting with perceived autonomy, job satisfaction, performance, and turnover intentions, while also showing that effects varied with telecommuting intensity and relational factors. Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2021) later demonstrated that remote-work effectiveness depends on work design conditions, including social support, job autonomy, workload, monitoring, and self-discipline. Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, and Vrontis (2022) similarly argued that remote-work flexibility is more likely to improve organizational performance when reinforced by appropriate organizational policy and top-management support. These findings imply that HR architecture and managerial behavior are inseparable from the consequences attributed to flexibility itself.

2.2 Social exchange theory and reciprocity

Social exchange theory explains employment as an ongoing exchange of material and socioemotional resources. When employees perceive that the organization provides valued support, trust, and discretion, they are more likely to reciprocate through favorable attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). FWAs can be interpreted as a particularly salient exchange resource because they affect employees' daily control over time, place, family responsibilities, and recovery. Their availability may also signal that the organization trusts employees to deliver outcomes without continuous physical presence. The reciprocity mechanism is relevant to both focal outcomes. Employees may respond to valued flexibility by protecting performance, exerting discretionary effort, or reorganizing work to demonstrate that trust is warranted. Kelliher and Anderson (2010) explicitly linked flexible working to intensified effort through a reciprocity process. At the same time, employees may strengthen affective attachment because flexibility communicates that the organization recognizes them as whole persons rather than solely as labor inputs. The social exchange lens therefore predicts positive FWA relationships with employee productivity and organizational commitment, while also cautioning that reciprocity can become unhealthy if flexibility implicitly requires employees to be continuously available.

2.3 Conservation of resources theory and work-life balance

COR theory proposes that individuals seek to obtain, protect, and build valued resources such as time, energy, autonomy, social support, and psychological capacity (Hobfoll, 1989). Resource loss is disproportionately stressful, whereas resource gains can initiate positive gain spirals. FWAs can function as job resources by enabling employees to reduce commuting time, align demanding tasks with periods of high concentration, respond to non-work responsibilities, and exercise control over boundary transitions. When these benefits occur, employees may preserve energy that can be reinvested in task performance and in the employment relationship. Work-life balance captures the perceived compatibility and effective management of work and non-work roles. It is not equivalent to working less; rather, it reflects whether individuals can allocate attention and resources across domains without chronic interference. Flexibility should improve balance when employees possess meaningful control and can set workable boundaries. However, the same spatial permeability that enables role coordination can also increase interruptions and extend work into personal time. Wang et al. (2021) showed that work-home interference is a key challenge in remote work and that work design resources influence the severity of such challenges. The mediation logic of the present model is therefore conditional in a conceptual sense: FWAs are expected to create favorable outcomes partly because they improve resource allocation across life domains, not merely because an employee works away from the office.

2.4 Boundary theory and the importance of managerial context

Boundary theory focuses on how individuals construct and cross boundaries between roles (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Temporal and spatial flexibility can make boundaries more permeable, allowing smoother transitions between work and non-work responsibilities. Whether this permeability is beneficial depends on an individual's preferences, job demands, and the behavioral expectations embedded in the local work unit. Employees with schedule autonomy but constant meeting demands may possess formal flexibility without practical boundary control. Conversely, teams with explicit coordination windows and protected focus periods can preserve responsiveness while retaining flexibility.

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1 Flexible work arrangements and employee productivity

FWAs can improve productivity through several mutually reinforcing channels. Employees can select environments with fewer interruptions, reduce nonproductive commuting, and align concentration-intensive work with preferred hours. Autonomy may also stimulate intrinsic motivation and ownership of outcomes. Evidence from work-from-anywhere and hybrid experiments supports the possibility of neutral-to-positive productivity effects when flexibility is well designed (Bloom et al., 2024; Choudhury et al., 2021). Nonetheless, productivity gains are not automatic: coordination costs, isolation, role ambiguity, and digital fatigue can offset them. The present study focuses on perceived FWA quality rather than mere remote-work intensity and therefore expects a positive net association.

H1: Flexible work arrangements are positively associated with employee productivity.

3.2 Flexible work arrangements and organizational commitment

When flexibility is perceived as valuable, fair, and usable, it communicates organizational trust and concern, which should strengthen commitment through reciprocal attachment. Flexibility also reduces the attractiveness of leaving when equivalent discretion is uncertain in alternative employment. Meta-analytic evidence consistently identifies favorable associations between FWAs and organizational commitment, although effect sizes vary by arrangement type and context (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2026; Prasadula, N., 2026).

H2: Flexible work arrangements are positively associated with organizational commitment.

3.3 Work-life balance as a mediator

A key limitation of direct-effect arguments is that they do not specify what employees gain from flexibility. COR and boundary theories suggest that improved work-life balance is one such gain. Flexible schedules and locations can increase control over transitions between domains, help employees manage caring and personal responsibilities, and conserve time and energy. Better balance can subsequently support productivity by reducing distraction and strain and can strengthen commitment by associating the organization with a more sustainable employment experience. Recent meta-analytic evidence reports a substantial positive relationship between FWAs and work-life balance, making mediation theoretically plausible rather than merely statistical (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2026).

H3: Flexible work arrangements are positively associated with work-life balance.

H4a: Work-life balance mediates the positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee productivity.

H4b: Work-life balance mediates the positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and organizational commitment.

3.4 Supervisor support as a moderator

Formal flexibility policies are enacted through day-to-day managerial practices. Supervisor support can provide coordination resources, psychological safety, realistic response expectations, and equitable access to information. These resources should make it easier for employees to use flexibility productively and to interpret it as legitimate rather than risky. A supportive manager may therefore amplify the performance return to flexibility and strengthen its attitudinal benefits. Because organizational commitment is shaped by both supervisor and organization-level signals, the moderation effect may be stronger for productivity than for commitment.

H5a: Supervisor support positively moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee productivity, such that the relationship is stronger at higher levels of supervisor support.

H5b: Supervisor support positively moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and organizational commitment, such that the relationship is stronger at higher levels of supervisor support.

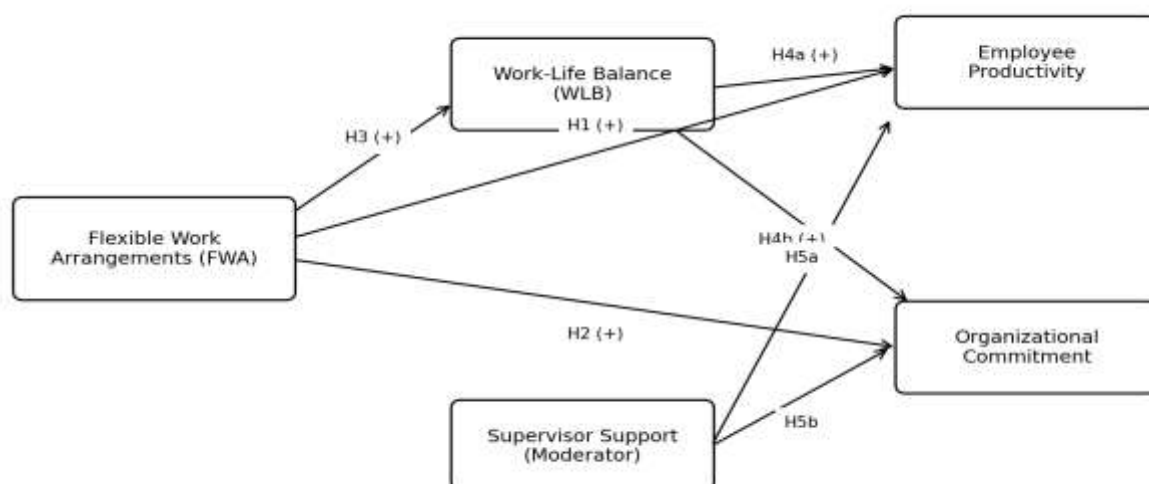


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design and analytical demonstration

The proposed empirical design is a quantitative, cross-sectional employee survey suitable for organizations that offer at least one form of schedule or location flexibility. The unit of analysis is the individual employee. A multi-industry sample is recommended because flexibility is implemented differently across occupations and sectors; role suitability should therefore be documented and controlled where possible. The ideal field protocol would use stratified or purposive sampling across organizations with explicit inclusion criteria such as a minimum of six months of organizational tenure and current access to, or experience with, flexible work practices.

For this complete article demonstration, no original participant dataset was available. Accordingly, a reproducible simulated dataset of 428 employee cases was generated to approximate plausible service-sector survey distributions. The synthetic sample includes IT/ITES, banking and financial services, education, healthcare, and other services, and incorporates hybrid, flexible on-site schedule, and primarily remote work patterns. The simulated dataset was generated from a prespecified latent-variable structure in which FWA quality influenced work-life balance and both focal outcomes, with supervisor support contributing directly and as an interaction term. Item responses were discretized to five-point Likert categories. This approach allows all tables, diagnostics, and inferential procedures to be demonstrated coherently, but the numerical results are not evidence about a real population and must not be represented as field findings.

4.2 Measures

All focal constructs were operationalized as multi-item reflective scales using five-point response formats (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). In a real study, validated scales should be adopted with permission where required, and wording should be adapted only after content-validity review and pilot testing. The FWA scale contained five indicators capturing perceived control over work time and location, practical usability of flexibility, predictability, and fit with job requirements. Example content includes perceived discretion to adjust when work is completed and the extent to which employees can use flexibility without harming work responsibilities.

Employee productivity was represented by five indicators emphasizing task completion, quality, efficiency, focus, and ability to meet performance expectations. Organizational commitment was represented by five indicators reflecting psychological attachment, pride, identification, and intention to maintain the organizational relationship. Work-life balance used four indicators assessing perceived compatibility between work and personal responsibilities, boundary control, and sufficient capacity to meet important non-work needs. Supervisor support used four indicators focused on managerial understanding, responsiveness, fair treatment of flexible workers, and support for effective coordination.

Age, organizational tenure, gender, and managerial status were included as demographic controls in the regressions because they can correlate with both access to flexibility and work outcomes. In applied research, control variables should be theory-driven rather than included mechanically. Sector, occupation, work-mode intensity, caregiving status, and organizational size are potentially important additional controls when sampling across heterogeneous settings.

4.3 Data-analysis strategy

The analytical sequence was designed to minimize the risk of drawing structural conclusions from a weak measurement model. First, data were screened for range violations, missingness, univariate dispersion, and multicollinearity. Second, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity was evaluated through standardized loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using interconstruct correlations, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Third, a five-factor confirmatory measurement model was evaluated using χ^2 , comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Fourth, the hypothesized structural relationships were estimated with standardized composite scores and heteroskedasticity-consistent (HC3) standard errors. Fifth, indirect effects through work-life balance were tested with 3,000 bootstrap resamples. Finally, supervisor-support moderation was evaluated by mean-centering standardized FWA and support variables, entering their interaction, and probing conditional slopes at -1 SD, the mean, and +1 SD of support.

Several diagnostics supplemented hypothesis testing. Harman's single-factor diagnostic was reported as a limited check on common-method concentration, while recognizing that it cannot establish the absence of common-method bias. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were examined for multicollinearity. Robustness was evaluated by comparing direct-effect and full models, using HC3 standard errors, inspecting whether mediation confidence intervals excluded zero, and determining whether interaction conclusions were stable when demographic controls were included. A stronger field study should additionally use procedural remedies such as temporal separation, multi-source productivity measures, marker variables, and/or a latent common-method factor where theoretically and statistically defensible.

5. Results

5.1 sample profile

Table 1. sample characteristics (N = 428)

Characteristic	Value
Gender: Female	211 (49.3%)
Gender: Male	217 (50.7%)
Managerial role	138 (32.2%)
Non-managerial role	290 (67.8%)
Age (years)	M = 35.9, SD = 8.3
Organizational tenure (years)	M = 8.9, SD = 4.6
Sector: IT/ITES	106 (24.8%)
Sector: Other services	97 (22.7%)
Sector: Banking & financial services	94 (22.0%)
Sector: Education	81 (18.9%)
Sector: Healthcare	50 (11.7%)
Work mode: Hybrid	231 (54.0%)
Work mode: Flexible schedule/on-site	121 (28.3%)
Work mode: Primarily remote	76 (17.8%)

Interpretation : The dataset represented a heterogeneous service-sector workforce. The mean age was approximately 36 years, with a mix of managerial and non-managerial employees and three flexible-work patterns. These distributions are not intended to reproduce a particular organization; they provide a realistic structure for demonstrating multivariate analysis across employees with different flexibility experiences.

5.2 Reliability, convergent validity, and measurement quality

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and measurement quality

Construct	Items	M	SD	α	CR	AVE	Loading range
Flexible work arrangements	5	3.14	1.14	0.862	0.901	0.647	0.751-0.843
Work-life balance	4	3.13	1.16	0.846	0.897	0.686	0.796-0.867
Supervisor support	4	3.14	1.15	0.844	0.896	0.683	0.805-0.845

Construct	Items	M	SD	α	CR	AVE	Loading range
Employee productivity	5	3.13	1.13	0.862	0.901	0.646	0.769-0.825
Organizational commitment	5	3.12	1.11	0.861	0.901	0.645	0.773-0.824

Interpretation : All five constructs demonstrated strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .844 to .862 and composite reliability values were approximately .896 to .901, exceeding conventional adequacy thresholds. AVE values ranged from .645 to .686, indicating that each construct captured more than half of the variance in its indicators. Standardized item loadings were also consistently substantial, supporting convergent validity. Taken together, these diagnostics suggest that the structural relationships were not being estimated from poorly measured constructs. The five-factor measurement model provided an excellent fit to the covariance structure: $\chi^2(220) = 272.49$, CFI = 0.989, TLI = 0.987, RMSEA = 0.024, and SRMR = 0.030. The fit pattern supports empirical distinction among FWA quality, work-life balance, supervisor support, productivity, and organizational commitment. The first unrotated factor in a Harman diagnostic accounted for 34.5% of item variance, below a majority of total variance. This result is only a screening indicator and should not be interpreted as proof that common-method variance is absent.

Table 3. Correlations and Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
Flexible work arrangements	(0.804)				
Work-life balance	0.544	(0.828)			
Supervisor support	0.293	0.368	(0.826)		
Employee productivity	0.440	0.405	0.281	(0.804)	
Organizational commitment	0.458	0.459	0.399	0.334	(0.803)

Interpretation : Diagonal values in parentheses are square roots of AVE; lower-diagonal values are Pearson correlations. All focal correlations shown in the lower triangle are positive. The square root of AVE for every construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, which supports the Fornell-Larcker criterion. HTMT values were also below conservative concern levels; the maximum pairwise HTMT value was 0.637.

Table 4. Structural regression results with HC3 robust standard errors

Path	β	SE	t	p
FWA $\rightarrow$ Work-life balance	0.482	0.040	12.07	<.001
FWA $\rightarrow$ Productivity (total/direct model)	0.396	0.043	9.13	<.001
FWA $\rightarrow$ Commitment (total/direct model)	0.372	0.044	8.55	<.001
FWA $\rightarrow$ Productivity (with mediator)	0.309	0.050	6.16	<.001
Work-life balance $\rightarrow$ Productivity	0.202	0.054	3.72	<.001
Supervisor support $\rightarrow$ Productivity	0.120	0.047	2.54	0.011
FWA $\times$ Support $\rightarrow$ Productivity	0.097	0.043	2.25	0.024
FWA $\rightarrow$ Commitment (with mediator)	0.260	0.050	5.24	<.001
Work-life balance $\rightarrow$ Commitment	0.243	0.051	4.72	<.001

Path	β	SE	t	p
Supervisor support $\rightarrow$ Commitment	0.238	0.043	5.48	<.001
FWA $\times$ Support $\rightarrow$ Commitment	0.041	0.042	0.96	0.338

Interpretation : Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive FWA-productivity relationship. In the model controlling for age, tenure, gender, managerial status, and supervisor support, FWA quality significantly predicted productivity ($\beta = .396$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .225$). When work-life balance and the interaction term were added, the FWA coefficient remained positive and significant ($\beta = .309$, $p < .001$), indicating a substantial direct association beyond the mediator. The full productivity model explained 25.7% of outcome variance. H1 was therefore supported in the data. Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive FWA-commitment relationship. FWA quality significantly predicted commitment in the direct model ($\beta = .372$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .287$). In the full model, the coefficient remained significant ($\beta = .260$, $p < .001$), while work-life balance ($\beta = .243$, $p < .001$) and supervisor support ($\beta = .238$, $p < .001$) were also positive predictors. The full commitment model explained 32.5% of variance. H2 was supported. Hypothesis 3 proposed that FWAs would improve work-life balance. The estimated FWA effect was strong and positive ($\beta = .482$, $p < .001$) after controls and supervisor support were included, and the model explained 36.3% of work-life-balance variance. This result supports the resource mechanism underlying H3 and provides the first link required for the proposed mediation effects.

5.3 Bootstrapped mediation analysis

Table 5. Bootstrapped indirect effects (3,000 resamples)

Indirect pathway	Effect	95% bootstrap CI	Inference
FWA $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ Productivity	0.098	[0.045, 0.154]	Supported
FWA $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ Organizational commitment	0.117	[0.066, 0.169]	Supported

Interpretation : The indirect effect of FWAs on productivity through work-life balance was .098, with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval from .045 to .154. Because the interval excluded zero, H4a was supported. The corresponding indirect effect for organizational commitment was .117, 95% CI [.066, .169], supporting H4b. In both cases the direct FWA path remained statistically significant after work-life balance was entered, indicating partial rather than full mediation. Substantively, the pattern implies that flexibility may influence outcomes through two routes: a boundary/resource route that improves employees' perceived balance and a residual direct route potentially reflecting autonomy, trust, reduced commuting, or other unmeasured mechanisms.

5.4 Moderation by supervisor support

Table 6. Conditional FWA slopes predicting productivity

Supervisor-support level	Conditional β	SE	p
Low support (-1 SD)	0.213	0.065	0.001
Mean support	0.309	0.050	<.001
High support (+1 SD)	0.406	0.067	<.001

Interpretation : The FWA $\times$ supervisor-support interaction was positive and statistically significant for productivity ($\beta = .097$, $p = .024$). Simple-slope analysis showed that the positive relationship between FWA quality and productivity increased from $\beta = .213$ at low supervisor support to $\beta = .406$ at high supervisor support. H5a was therefore supported. Figure 2 s the interaction: flexibility was beneficial across the observed support range, but its predicted productivity return was notably larger in a supportive managerial context.

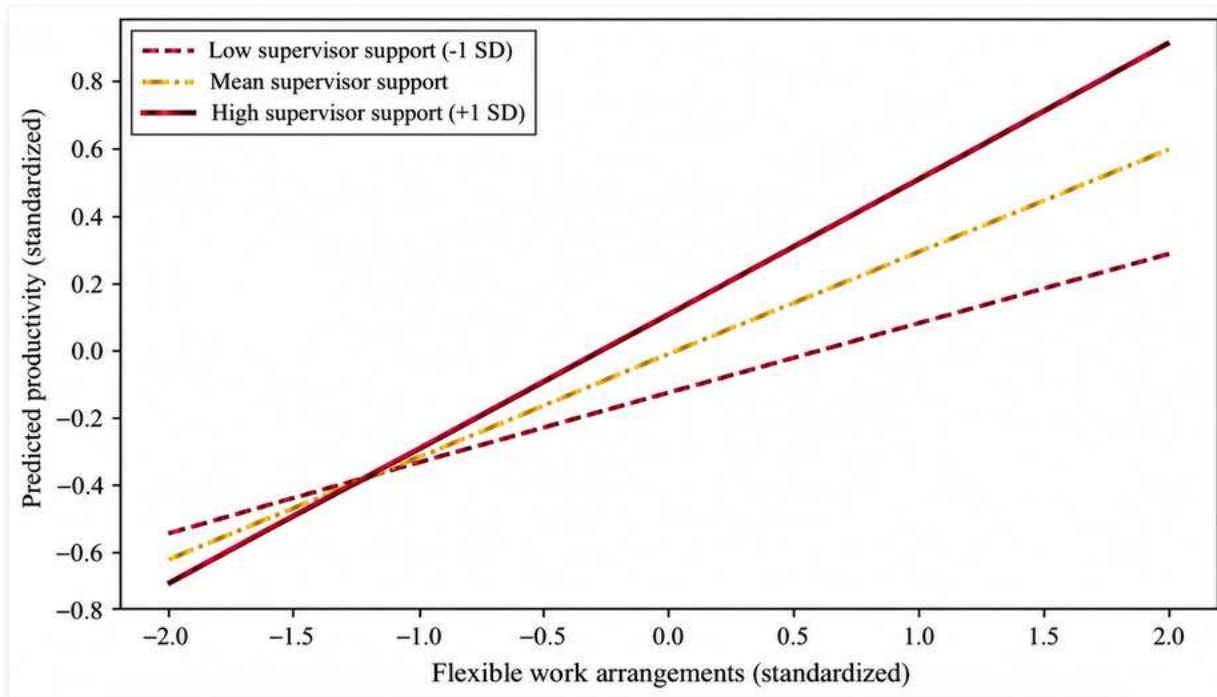


Figure 2. Supervisor support moderating the FWA-productivity relationship.

Interpretation : For organizational commitment, the interaction coefficient was positive but not statistically significant ($\beta = .041$, $p = .338$). Thus, H5b was not supported. The non-significant moderation does not imply that supervisor support is unimportant: support had a strong positive main effect on commitment. Rather, in this model the commitment benefit associated with FWAs did not differ reliably by support level after work-life balance and other covariates were considered. One interpretation is that employees may attribute flexible-work policy to the organization broadly, whereas the operational productivity consequences of flexibility are more dependent on local managerial implementation.

5.5 Diagnostics and robustness checks

Multicollinearity did not appear problematic. The maximum VIF among predictors in the full models was 2.17, well below levels typically associated with unstable coefficient estimates. HC3 robust standard errors were used to reduce sensitivity to heteroskedasticity. The principal conclusions were consistent across direct and full models: FWA coefficients remained positive after demographic controls, supervisor support, and work-life balance were introduced. Both mediation confidence intervals excluded zero, while only the productivity interaction reached conventional significance. These patterns reduce the likelihood that the principal conclusions are artifacts of one particular model specification within the simulated dataset.

6. Discussion

The integrated results support the central proposition that the quality of flexible work arrangements matters for both what employees produce and how strongly they remain psychologically attached to the organization. The positive FWA-productivity relationship is consistent with the view that discretion can enable employees to organize work around task requirements, concentration preferences, and non-work demands. Importantly, the relationship remained significant after work-life balance was included. This suggests that the productivity value of flexibility is not reducible to work-life convenience; autonomy, reduced commuting, lower office distraction, trust, and self-regulation may represent additional pathways. The commitment result complements recent meta-analytic evidence. Prasadula, N. (2026) found that FWAs are associated with favorable job attitudes including organizational commitment, while a positive pooled relationship between flexibility and commitment across multiple countries. The present conceptual model explains this pattern through a social exchange process. A usable FWA represents a valued organizational resource and a signal that the employer recognizes individual needs. Employees may reciprocate that treatment by strengthening identification, loyalty, and willingness to remain. This mechanism is especially plausible when access is perceived as equitable and does not carry career penalties. Work-life balance emerged as a substantive mediator for both outcomes. This is theoretically important because it shifts attention from the physical location of work to the

employee's ability to manage resources across domains. A remote-work policy that produces constant interruption, meeting overload, or after-hours availability may score high on spatial flexibility yet fail to improve balance. Conversely, an employee may work primarily on-site but experience high temporal flexibility and excellent boundary control. HR researchers and practitioners should therefore measure experienced control, predictability, and boundary quality rather than treating remote-work frequency as a complete proxy for flexibility. The moderation findings sharpen the managerial interpretation.

7. Theoretical Implications

The study integrates three theories that are often applied separately. Social exchange theory explains why employees may reciprocate flexibility through effort and commitment; COR theory explains how flexibility can preserve or build time, energy, and autonomy; boundary theory explains how temporal and spatial discretion changes transitions between work and non-work roles. Together, these perspectives show that flexibility is simultaneously a relational signal, a resource, and a boundary-management mechanism. A complete HRM theory of flexible work must account for all three. The mediation model clarifies why an FWA-outcome association may disappear or reverse in some settings. If an arrangement is formally flexible but does not improve work-life balance or other resources, the pathway to favorable outcomes is weakened. This suggests that future studies should distinguish policy availability, utilization, perceived quality, and experienced resource gains. Theoretical models should also examine alternative mediators such as perceived autonomy, organizational support, commuting recovery, engagement, and psychological detachment.

8. Practical Implications for HR Managers

The results suggest that organizations should treat flexibility as a designed work system rather than a simple entitlement or location rule. Four practical priorities follow.

- Design for experienced control, not symbolic flexibility. Policies should specify where employees have genuine discretion, which coordination windows are fixed, how exceptions are handled, and how role requirements affect eligibility.
- Train line managers to lead flexible teams. Manager capability should include outcome-based performance management, inclusive meeting practices, workload calibration, asynchronous communication, equitable access to information, and early identification of isolation or boundary overload.
- Measure the mechanism as well as the outcome. HR dashboards should track work-life balance, boundary control, supervisor support, workload, and flexibility stigma alongside productivity, engagement, commitment, absence, and turnover. This enables diagnosis when a policy is not producing the expected value.
- Avoid proximity bias and hidden penalties. Promotion, development, high-visibility assignments, and performance ratings should be audited by work pattern. Employees are unlikely to treat flexibility as supportive if using it creates a perceived career cost.

9. Limitations and Future Research

The most important limitation of the present manuscript is that its numerical analyses are based on a simulated dataset created to demonstrate an advanced, internally coherent analytical workflow. The coefficients, confidence intervals, and fit indices cannot be generalized to employees, organizations, industries, or countries. Before empirical submission, researchers must collect real data, document sampling and ethics procedures, verify scale permissions, and re-estimate every reported statistic. The theoretical framework and reporting structure can be retained, but empirical claims must reflect actual observations. Even with sophisticated SEM, mediation and moderation estimates from one-wave data do not establish temporal order. Longitudinal research should measure FWA access and use before mediators and outcomes, while experimental or quasi-experimental designs can more directly assess causality. Policy introductions, return-to-office changes, staggered hybrid adoption, or team-level flexibility pilots offer promising natural experiments.

10. Conclusion

Flexible work arrangements are now part of the infrastructure of modern HRM, but their value depends on how they are experienced and implemented. The integrated model developed in this paper indicates that flexibility can be associated with higher employee productivity and stronger organizational commitment, partly because it improves

work-life balance. The results also highlight the importance of supervisor support in converting flexibility into productivity. Flexibility therefore should not be reduced to a debate about office versus home. It is a question of autonomy, resources, boundaries, managerial capability, coordination, and trust. For HR leaders, the implication is clear: the most effective flexible-work systems are likely to combine employee discretion with explicit team norms, supportive managers, fair access, and outcome-based performance management. For researchers, the next step is to test these mechanisms with longitudinal, multisource, and quasi-experimental data across diverse institutional settings. When such evidence is available, the debate can move beyond simplistic claims that flexibility is inherently good or bad toward a more precise understanding of when, why, and for whom it creates sustainable value.

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