

Influence of Flexible Work Policies on Employee Retention, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment Among Employees in Indian Organizations Today

Ayesha Khanam, Dr. Shreevamshi Naveen

Ayesha.k0270@gmail.com (MBA STUDENT), Dayananda Sagar college of Engineering- Dept of Management Studies

Nshree118@gmail.com (Associate Professor) Dayananda Sagar college of Engineering- Dept of Management Studies

Abstract - The proposed study attempts to explore the impact of Flexible Work Policies (FWP) on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Retention of the employees working in the organizations of India, with Employee Engagement being the mediating variable. With the rise of flexible working arrangements like telecommuting, hybrid work schedule, flexitime and compressed work week adopted by Indian organizations post the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to find out the effect of such policies on the attitudes of the employees and retention intention. A quantitative and cross sectional research method will be employed in the study, with a structured questionnaire survey carried out among employees from different sectors in India. The data obtained will be subjected to statistical analysis using descriptive statistics, reliability test, correlation, multiple regression and SEM to analyze the relationship among the variables considered in the study. The results of the study are anticipated to prove that the adoption of flexible work policies by the organizations increases the engagement of employees that result in better job satisfaction, commitment and retention intention of the employees, whereas the flexible work policies directly affect the three outcomes. This paper is based on Social Exchange Theory and Work/Family Border Theory and illustrates the concept of organizational flexibility being paid back in terms of positive attitudes of employees and lower intentions to leave the organization. It will be hoped that the current study will add value to the existing knowledge about human resource management by providing a comprehensive framework of relations between flexible working policies and several factors at once and give practical recommendations for Indian firms.

Key Words: Flexible Work Policies, Employee Retention, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Employee Engagement, Indian Organizations.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the rapidly changing world of work, many organizations today acknowledge the importance of human capital as the base for gaining sustainable competitive advantage. Factors like digitalization, globalization, the increasingly competitive nature of the labor market, and changing worker expectations have led to HRM becoming a strategic tool in helping organizations enhance their performance. In the context of many changes that are occurring in the contemporary workplace, one of the most significant changes concerns the way work itself is organized in terms of time, place, and schedule and has been largely influenced by the recent coronavirus outbreak as well as workers' persistent need for flexibility in working conditions.

Flexible Work Policies (FWP) are organizational practices that provide workers with flexibility in performing their duties with regard to when, where, and how they work. Such flexible work policies usually involve flexitime, telecommuting, hybrid work, compressed schedules, result-only workplaces, and part-time or job sharing. Recent studies show that flexible work policies may result in higher worker satisfaction and organizational commitment despite potentially causing work intensification at the same time.

The theoretical framework for this study hinges largely on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) positing that organizations' provision of valuable resources such as flexibility to their employees creates obligations for the employees to reciprocate in return with positive attitudes and behavior in the form of increased engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and decreased intent to leave. In addition to Social Exchange Theory, there is the Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) providing an explanation of how flexible working conditions allow employees to maintain the border between their work and family domains and thus avoid role conflict and dysfunctionality.

Finally, flexibility can be viewed as a job resource according to the JD-R (Job Demands – Resources) theory suggesting that employees' access to certain resources including autonomy,

scheduling control, and supportive human resource management contributes to their engagement at the workplace. It is known in the organizational behavior literature that engaged employees usually demonstrate high levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and low levels of turnover intention. That makes Employee Engagement a potentially important mediating variable.

Within the Indian scenario, there has been an observable, albeit inconsistent, increase in hybrid and remote working models in the post-pandemic period, especially in the IT and services industry. Additionally, there has been an increase in employee demands for flexible work arrangements in other industries. In tandem with that, certain organizations have reintroduced structured office attendance policies. Thus, there is a clear conflict of interests between the need for in-person interaction within organizations and employees' demands for flexible work arrangements, which directly impacts factors like engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and retention.

While there has been significant literature on the effect of flexible work arrangements on organizational outcomes, much of the research focuses individually on one such outcome, i.e., satisfaction, commitment, or retention. There have been very few studies, especially within the Indian context, which consider all three outcomes together along with employee engagement as a mediator. This paper aims to fill that gap by examining the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention, where Employee Engagement acts as a mediating factor.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Gap

Employee retention remains one of the most critical issues for Indian organizations, in spite of the efforts put into introducing flexible working conditions, taking care of employees' well-being and creating engagement programs. Although an increasing amount of scientific research proves the connection between the use of flexible working policy and favorable results from the side of employees, there is a number of important gaps that should be addressed in the current study.

Firstly, the majority of the researches examine the relation between flexible work arrangements and only one organizational variable such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment or turnover intention. Moreover, results of the conducted studies are inconsistent because although some studies prove the positive connection between flexible work practices and the increase in job satisfaction and organizational

commitment, others reveal the paradoxical increase in work intensification amid these positive emotions and, finally, the third group of scientists finds the curvilinear connection between remote work practice and job satisfaction.

Third, research conducted on Indian organizations has been largely focused on the information technology and IT-enabled services sectors without providing any empirical evidence about the operation of flexible work policies among other significant sectors of the Indian workforce such as banking and financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and education. Fourth, although it can be expected that employee engagement is strategically placed at the core of the relationship between flexible work policies and employees' attitudes and behaviors, the number of empirical investigations on the role of employee engagement in this relationship has been surprisingly small in Indian context.

Thus, the present research aims at addressing these research gaps through studying the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention in different sectors of Indian organizations with Employee Engagement being considered as a mediator within one theoretical framework.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study intends to adopt Social Exchange Theory, Work/Family Border Theory, and Job Demands-Resources model to provide an exhaustive perspective regarding the impact of Flexible Work Policies on employees' outcomes in India. The research objectives of this study are, therefore, as follows:

- To assess the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Employee Engagement.
- To evaluate the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Job Satisfaction.
- To assess the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Organizational Commitment.
- To determine the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Employee Retention.
- To assess the impact of Employee Engagement on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention.
- To analyze the connection between Job Satisfaction and Employee Retention and

between Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention.

- To assess the mediating role of Employee Engagement in the relationship between Flexible Work Policies and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention.

1.4 Significance and Scope of the Study

This research adds value to both the academic field and managerial practice. In terms of theory development, it expands upon Social Exchange Theory and Work/Family Border Theory by including Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention as part of one integrated framework, where Job Demands-Resources model is proposed as the means through which flexibility is supposed to promote employee engagement.

In terms of practical relevance, this research aims at providing empirical evidence that would help HR managers, organizational leaders, and policymakers to develop flexible work arrangements, employee engagement programs, and retention programs specifically tailored for the Indian organizational environment. This would allow organizations to decrease voluntary turnover, improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

This research is restricted to Indian employees from various organizations representing several sectors including IT, banking and financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, education, consulting, and other services. Five constructs form the basis of this research: Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention. The research adopts a quantitative methodology using structured questionnaires and statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, correlation, regression, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

1.5 Structure of the Paper

The paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 covers the research background, reviews the research context, states the research problem and research gap, states the research objectives, and explains the significance, scope, and structure of the research.

Chapter 2 covers the theoretical and empirical literature review on Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job

Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention, and builds the conceptual framework.

Chapter 3 builds the conceptual framework and research hypotheses based on literature review and theoretical underpinning.

Chapter 4 covers research methodology, which includes research design, sampling procedure, data gathering technique, measures, reliability and validity assessment, and statistical techniques to test the hypotheses.

Chapter 5 summarizes the contributions of the research, highlights the theoretical and practical implications of the research, discusses the limitations of the research, and recommends future directions for research.

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

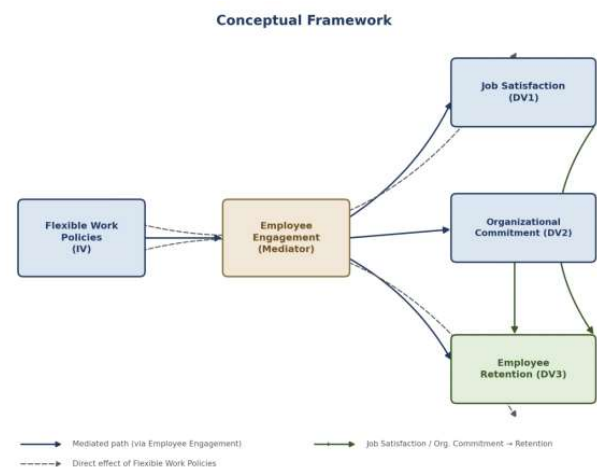


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Flexible Work Policies (FWP)

Flexible Work Policies (FWP) refer to a number of organizational policies that give employees a degree of discretion over when, where, and how the work should be done. Types of flexible work policies include flexitime (discretion over working hours in a predetermined band), telecommuting, hybrid arrangement (remote work and physical presence), compression of work week, results-only work environment, and part-time work/job-sharing. Despite flexible work policies being popular for some time now, the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus changed everything as flexible work became the major form of work that gained tremendous popularity and was no longer limited to being a benefit of Human Resource Management but rather became the standard practice.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) forms the theoretical foundation behind the concept of flexible work as it views

employment as a process of reciprocity wherein the organization gives resources valuable for employees (flexibility regarding working hours or possibility to work remotely) and in return receives positive employee work behavior and attitudes (engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and reduced intention to leave). Another relevant theory is Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) that perceives employees as “border crossers” between domains of work and family where flexibility facilitates this border crossing.

Findings from empirical research on flexible working arrangements are somewhat more complex than one may imagine from reading the simple story about how more flexibility always equates to more happiness. For example, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) discovered that professional workers using flexible working arrangements were more satisfied with their jobs and showed higher levels of organizational commitment in comparison to non-flexible workers; however, they revealed the paradox of work intensification which is associated with employees who worked fewer hours doing extra work as a sign of gratitude to the employer who provided them with flexibility opportunities; this idea is supported by Social Exchange Theory principles. Likewise, analyzing telecommuting in particular, Golden & Veiga (2005) have found out that the connection between telecommuting extent and job satisfaction is curvilinear but not linear: it increases up to a certain point, but then begins to decrease and finally reverses; such a subtle point has to be considered by Indian organizations.

In a similar vein, Allen, Golden, and Shockley’s (2015) meta-analytic review indicated that telecommuting can lead to a variety of positive effects, such as higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance, although the impact of telecommuting on the above factors would depend on the manner in which the practice is structured and executed. Bloom, Liang, Roberts, and Ying’s (2015) field experiments conducted at a large Chinese firm revealed that telecommuters performed better and were more satisfied with their jobs compared to office-based workers, with turnover rates of home workers decreasing significantly compared to those of office-based workers – providing a rare example of causal link between flexibility and retention outcomes. Specifically in regards to retention, Choi (2020) conducted a longitudinal study of the United States federal workforce and found that access to flexible work arrangements resulted in higher levels of employee retention over time, while Kumar, Sarkar, and Chahar (2021)’s systematic review indicated that flexible work

arrangements played a meaningful part in promoting work-life integration, an antecedent of retention.

In India too, the latest research has concentrated mainly on the information technology industry, which has seen the fastest growth in hybrid models. A systematic review of hybrid working culture in the IT industry in Karnataka revealed that flexible practices had a strong association with employees’ engagement and productivity (Vanitha & Shailashri, 2023), whereas new research in India on hybrid work environment adopted Meyer and Allen’s commitment model to analyze the influence of hybrid arrangement on affective, continuance, and normative commitment of employees (Kaur Gujral, 2025). Despite this, surprisingly little research in India has been conducted so far on flexible work practices across a variety of industries, or on testing engagement as a mediator in linking flexibility to various outcomes – the research gap that is being addressed in this study.

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement refers to a major construct in Human Resource Management which signifies the extent to which an individual is invested mentally, emotionally, and physically into his/her role in the organization. Engaged employees are generally energetic, motivated, and prepared to make extra efforts beyond the scope of formal job duties, while disengaged employees are not productive and prone to leave the organization.

The construct was originally conceptualized by Kahn (1990) who defined engagement as “the harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles, which is characterized by the physical, cognitive, and emotional absorption in the task.” According to Kahn, there are three necessary preconditions to the occurrence of engagement: meaning, psychological safety, and psychological availability. In turn, the three dimensions of engagement were defined in the work of Schaufeli et al. (2002) who used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to operationally define engagement as consisting of vigor (energy and resilience), dedication (significance and enthusiasm regarding one’s job), and absorption (engrossment in the work).

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) can be seen as a useful theoretical approach connecting flexible work policies and engagement because it suggests that the availability of resources such as job autonomy, scheduling flexibility, supervisor support, and geographic and temporal flexibility creates the motivational

mechanism that increases engagement, which in turn boosts performance and reduces burnout and turnover. Flexible work policies can be regarded as one of job resources that contribute to the availability of one's self as identified by Kahn (1990).

Research shows empirically that engaged employees perform better, show greater organizational citizenship behaviors, and have low absenteeism and turnover intentions. In the case of India, hybrid and flexible work policies have been linked to employee engagement outcomes among IT professionals, where well-developed and supported hybrid work policies lead to better engagement levels than poorly developed ones or ones that lack flexibility (Vanitha & Shailashri, 2023). With the above evidence, Employee Engagement is studied as the mediating variable in this research where Flexible Work Policies are likely to affect Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention.

2.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is one of the most studied variables in organizational behavior and refers to a pleasant emotion experienced by individuals due to their job and work experience. This construct is influenced by both intrinsic (such as autonomy, meaningfulness, and recognition) and extrinsic (such as pay, work environment, and flexibility in the schedule) factors and has been explained in numerous ways in organizational literature, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies hygiene factors that avoid job dissatisfaction and motivators that make employees satisfied, and Locke's definition of job satisfaction as an emotion caused by appraisals of one's job experience.

Flexible work policies are expected to increase job satisfaction of workers by increasing their perception of control over how work life and personal life can be balanced in a manner that is consistent with Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000). The research findings support this argument in general. For example, Kelliher and Anderson (2010) discovered that the use of flexible working policies among employees increased their job satisfaction compared to other employees who did not apply such policies. Golden and Veiga (2005) discovered that the level of telecommuting increases job satisfaction only to certain levels; beyond this, the increase becomes negative due to reduced interaction among professionals.

For Indian firms designing hybrid work policies, this finding is important as it suggests that the aim should not be to maximize flexibility offered but to create flexible work policies which ensure adequate interaction in the workplace while providing

employees with some measure of control over their work schedule. In this study, job satisfaction will be investigated not only as the effect of application of flexible work policies and engagement of employees but also as an antecedent of employee retention.

2.4 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as the degree of an employee's psychological bonding with and identification to their employer organization, and it has long been understood as a very important determinant of an individual's level of retention, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. It has been defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) in terms of three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment of and identification with an organization); continuance commitment (the costs associated with leaving the organization as perceived by the employee); and normative commitment (employee's obligation to stay with the organization).

Flexible work policies are posited to enhance organizational commitment, especially its affective dimension, because they represent a signal of the trustworthiness of an organization and care about their employees' well-being — something that is supposed to be reciprocated, according to Social Exchange Theory, with identification with and loyalty to the organization. Research done in this area by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) showed higher levels of organizational commitment in professional workers who use flexible working schemes compared to those without them, and more recent studies from India have applied Meyer and Allen's model to hybrid work environment and looked into how it affects all three commitment dimensions among Indians (Kaur Gujral, 2025).

However, on the other hand, it is also emphasized that the commitment-enhancing effects of flexibility do not operate automatically, as the intensification of work, professionalism, and inconsistencies in implementation across teams can undermine the organizational commitment that should have been enhanced through flexibility in the first place. This implies that the link between flexible work practices and organizational commitment is to some extent mediated by employee engagement because engagement can be viewed as an indicator of the extent to which employees have turned flexibility into psychological commitment to their work – an issue explicitly examined in the current study.

2.5 Employee Retention

Employee retention is defined as an organization's ability to retain its valuable employees over time, and constitutes one of the key issues in human resources management because of high expenses connected with turnover. Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht (2017) note that, in their extensive review of 100 years of turnover literature, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceptions of organizational support were found to be among the most consistent and strong predictors of an employee's decision to either stay with an organization or leave it.

The connection between flexible work policies and retention has gained increasing empirical attention. Choi (2020) showed that having flexible work arrangements positively affected employee retention, based on longitudinal data from the US federal workforce. Field-experiment evidence from Bloom et al. (2015), in turn, shows that there was a significant reduction in attrition rates among remote-working employees compared to their office-working colleagues, providing causal evidence that flexible work can have a positive effect on turnover. Systematic review of literature by Kumar, Sarkar, and Chahar (2021) also shows that flexible work allows for proper integration of work and life, which helps maintain long-term organizational membership.

Recent industry comments on India's situation show that poor implementation of hybrid work policies may increase attrition risk; moreover, there is increasing evidence that the majority of workers in India prefer hybrid over fully office-based work arrangements, which directly influences organizational attractiveness as an employer. On that basis, in the present research, retention is identified as a final outcome variable that is influenced directly by flexible work policies and employee engagement, and indirectly by job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

2.6 Relationship Among Variables, Research Gap, and Conceptual Synthesis

As the preceding review demonstrates, Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention are closely interrelated constructs that, taken together, help explain how organizations build a stable and committed workforce. Consistent with Social Exchange Theory, employees who perceive that their organization has extended valued flexibility are theorized to reciprocate through greater engagement, more positive job attitudes, and a stronger intention to remain. Consistent with Work/Family Border Theory, this flexibility operates in part by helping employees manage the borders between their work and

personal lives, while the Job Demands–Resources model explains how such flexibility functions as a job resource that fuels engagement specifically.

At the same time, the literature reviewed above also cautions against an overly simplistic view of flexibility as a universal positive: work intensification, curvilinear satisfaction effects at very high levels of remote work, and uneven implementation across sectors all suggest that the pathway from flexibility to retention is neither automatic nor uniform. Despite the volume of research on these individual relationships, comparatively few studies particularly within India have examined Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention together within a single integrated framework, and fewer still have done so across multiple industry sectors rather than the IT sector alone. This research gap forms the basis of the present study and motivates its aim of analyzing the combined and mediated influence of Flexible Work Policies on employee outcomes among Indian organizations.

Table 2.1: Summary of Reviewed Literature

Author(s) & Year	Study Title	Key Finding Relevant to This Study
Blau (1964)	Exchange and Power in Social Life	Established Social Exchange Theory, proposing that employees reciprocate valued organizational resources with positive attitudes and behaviors.
Clark (2000)	Work/Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Family Balance	Introduced Work/Family Border Theory, explaining how individuals manage borders between work and family domains, informing the

		design of flexible arrangements.
Kahn (1990)	Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work	Proposed that meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability are essential conditions for employee engagement.
Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker (2002)	The Measurement of Engagement and Burnout	Defined employee engagement through vigor, dedication, and absorption, providing the widely used UWES measurement framework.
Bakker & Demerouti (2007)	The Job Demands–Resources Model: State of the Art	Found that job resources, including autonomy and flexibility, significantly enhance employee engagement and reduce burnout.
Golden & Veiga (2005)	The Impact of Extent of Telecommuting on Job Satisfaction	Found a curvilinear relationship between the extent of telecommuting and job satisfaction, rising then declining at high

		levels of remote work.
Kelliher & Anderson (2010)	Doing More with Less? Flexible Working Practices and the Intensification of Work	Found flexible workers report higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, alongside a paradoxical rise in work intensification.
Meyer & Allen (1991)	A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment	Proposed affective, continuance, and normative commitment as distinct components of organizational commitment.
Allen, Golden, & Shockley (2015)	How Effective Is Telecommuting? Assessing the Status of Our Scientific Findings	Meta-analytic review confirming telecommuting's association with job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, contingent on implementation.
Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying (2015)	Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment	Field experiment finding improved performance, higher job satisfaction, and substantially reduced attrition among employees

		working from home.
Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht (2017)	One Hundred Years of Employee Turnover Theory and Research	Identified job satisfaction and organizational commitment as major determinants of employee retention across a century of research.
Choi (2020)	Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Retention: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Federal Workforce	Found that access to flexible work arrangements was associated with improved employee retention over time.
Kumar, Sarkar, & Chahar (2021)	A Systematic Review of Work-Life Integration and Role of Flexible Work Arrangements	Concluded that flexible work arrangements support work-life integration, a recognized antecedent of retention.
Vanitha & Shailashri (2023)	Impact of Hybrid Work Culture on Employee Job Engagement and Productivity	Found hybrid work arrangements closely linked to employee engagement and productivity among Indian IT professionals.
Kaur Gujral (2025)	From Flexibility to Fulfilment: Hybrid Work Environment and	Applied Meyer and Allen's commitment model to hybrid work, finding hybrid

	Employee Commitment	arrangements shape affective, continuance, and normative commitment.
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On the whole, the aforementioned literature reveals the positive influence of flexible work policies on employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention, while simultaneously stressing that these effects are conditional upon certain factors related to the way of implementation of flexibility. While all of these relations have been studied separately, there is very little research on how they can be viewed through the lens of an integrated theoretical framework considering the impact of employee engagement as well, especially in different industrial sectors of the Indian economy. This gap in the literature is the starting point for the current research

3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Hypothesis Development

This study is based on the theoretical perspectives of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000), and Job Demands/Job Resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) in order to state that individuals who find greater flexibility in their work, both in terms of time and place will reciprocate this by engaging better, having more positive attitude towards their job and higher intentions to stay with their organization. Flexible Work Policies (FWP) is the independent variable, Employee Engagement (EE) is the mediating variable, and Job Satisfaction (JS), Organizational Commitment (OC) and Employee Retention (ER) are the dependent variables of this study. In addition to being dependent variables, Job Satisfaction (JS) and Organizational Commitment (OC) are also expected to be the antecedents of Employee Retention (ER).

Previous research generally supports the notion that there is a positive relationship between flexible work practices and engagement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010; Golden & Veiga, 2005; Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2015) and that engagement plays the role of the mediator in this process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Based on the literature review provided in Chapter 2, the following hypotheses are formed:

H1: Flexible Work Policies have a significant positive influence on Employee Engagement.

H2: Employee Engagement has a significant positive influence on Job Satisfaction.

H3: Employee Engagement has a significant positive influence on Organizational Commitment.

H4: Employee Engagement has a significant positive influence on Employee Retention.

H5: Flexible Work Policies have a significant direct positive influence on Job Satisfaction.

H6: Flexible Work Policies have a significant direct positive influence on Organizational Commitment.

H7: Flexible Work Policies have a significant direct positive influence on Employee Retention.

H8: Job Satisfaction has a significant positive influence on Employee Retention.

H9: Organizational Commitment has a significant positive influence on Employee Retention.

Collectively, the proposed hypotheses examine both the direct and indirect (mediated) effects of Flexible Work Policies on employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention, together with the sequential influence of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on retention, within the context of Indian organizations.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

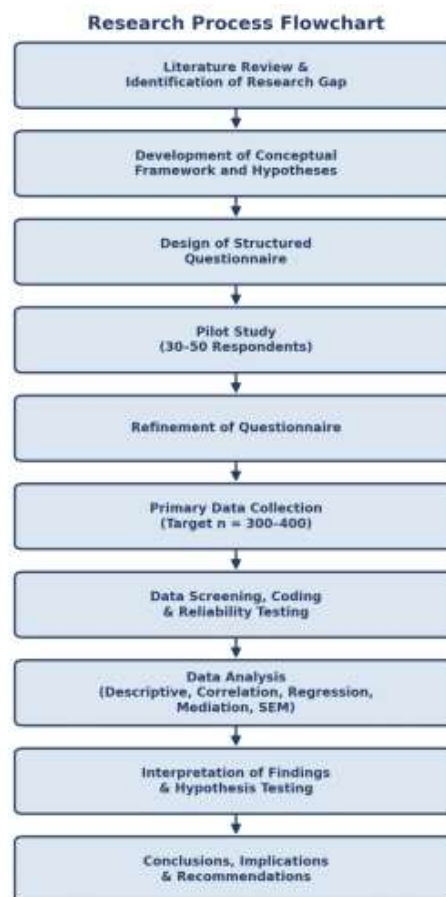


Figure 2: Research Process Flowchart

4.1 Research Philosophy

By research philosophy, we mean the belief system and assumptions behind data collection, analysis and interpretation processes, which guide researchers in making methodological decisions to help them achieve their goals.

This research employs a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that there exists an objective reality that can be observed and measured empirically using statistical methods. Being associated with quantitative methodologies, the positivist philosophy involves the employment of statistical tools by researchers to explore the relationship between variables and test hypotheses developed from theories. This research philosophy is very appropriate for this current research, which seeks to establish the relationship between Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention among Indian employees. In addition, the positivist philosophy emphasizes the adoption of highly structured

research instruments, which minimize researcher biases and enhance the validity of results through the application of correlation, regression and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

4.2 Research Approach

In this particular research, the deductive method is employed, where the existing theories and previous empirical evidences are used to formulate the hypotheses that are later proved with the help of statistical techniques. The deductive method is ideal for quantitative research due to the possibility of testing the theoretical assumptions with the empirical evidences.

The theoretical perspective of the study, based on the Social Exchange Theory, Work/Family Border Theory, and Job Demands–Resources Model, forms the basis for developing the twelve hypotheses stated in Chapter 3. With the help of the deductive method, the researcher verifies if the mentioned relationships are true in the Indian organizational context with the help of the data gathered from the employees.

4.3 Research Design

It is possible to use quantitative research to analyze the effects of Flexible Work Policies on the variables such as Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Employee Retention due to the fact that these variables are measurable through various questionnaires and their associations could be tested with the help of statistical techniques.

The use of a cross-sectional research design is necessary, where data collection is done from participants only once. Such a research method is effective for investigating employees' present attitudes towards flexibility, engagement, satisfaction, commitment and their intentions concerning retention and it is widely employed in organizational behavior and HRM research due to its convenience and cost-effective nature.

In order to collect data a structured questionnaire including closed-ended questions in a form of a five-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” will be created using validated scales from literature.

The gathered data will be analyzed with IBM SPSS in order to calculate the descriptive statistics, conduct reliability testing, correlation and regression analyses. AMOS or SmartPLS will be used for conducting structural equation modeling (SEM) of the proposed conceptual framework.

4.4 Population of the Study

The target population for this study involves employees working in different sectors of Indian organizations, such as Information Technology, Banking and Financial Services (BFSI), Manufacturing, Healthcare, Retail, Education, and Consulting/other services. This broad scope is designed to help close one of the gaps revealed in the literature review, namely that much of the previous research in India has been focused only on the IT sector.

The samples will come from different levels in the organizations, including entry-level employees, executives, supervisors, as well as middle/senior managers. They will also come from employees working under different conditions, such as working full-time in the office, hybrid work, and remote work. This will help in understanding how the influence of the policies varies depending on the level of flexibility in the workplace.

4.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is a critical stage of the research process, enabling the collection of data from a representative subset of the target population. This study employs a stratified random sampling technique, in which the population is divided into strata based on industry sector to ensure adequate representation across the sectors central to the study's scope, with respondents subsequently selected from within each sector using convenience sampling owing to practical constraints of access and voluntary participation.

Table 4.1: Sampling Distribution by Sector

Sector	Respondents
Information Technology / ITES	120
Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI)	70
Manufacturing	50
Healthcare	40
Retail, Education & Consulting / Other Services	70
Total	350

The respondents shall consist of full-time employees having stayed in their respective Indian organizations for a minimum period of six months to ensure sufficient familiarity with policies and practices of these organizations. Given the statistical methods used in this research, which include

regression, mediation, and Structural Equation Modeling, a sample size of 300–400 shall be achieved in line with the guidelines offered by Hair et al., (2022), and Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

4.6 Methods of Data Collection

Primary Data Collection

Primary data will be collected directly from employees working in Indian organizations in the sectors described in section 4.4 through structured questionnaires developed by adapting validated scales of previous literature. These structured questionnaires will be made up of two parts, namely; the first part that will collect demographic data (Age, Gender, Educational Qualification, Work Experience, Industry, Job Level, and Dominant Work Arrangement) and the second part that measures the variables (Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention) of this research using five-point Likert scale items.

The questionnaire would be administered through survey tools like Google Forms and Microsoft Forms to facilitate the involvement of participants from various organizations and geographical locations in India. The participation of employees would be purely voluntary, and before their consent, they would be made aware of the nature of the academic research being conducted.

Collection of Secondary Data

Apart from primary data, secondary data would be collected from peer-reviewed journals, books, proceedings of conferences, reports of governmental and industrial bodies and reputable academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, and Google Scholar, for generating theoretical background and analysis of findings. The amalgamation of both kinds of data collection would help to enhance the credibility and validity of the research..

4.7 Research Instrument

As this study uses a quantitative research methodology, a questionnaire is selected as the primary data collection tool by modifying the well-tested and valid scales developed in previous studies in the area of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior. Using well-tested scales improves content and construct validity while ensuring comparison with results obtained in other studies.

There are two parts in the questionnaire. In the first part demographic data such as gender, age, educational qualification, work experience, industry, designation and primary work arrangement (full-time office based, hybrid or full-time remote) is collected. The second part evaluates the five constructs of the research using a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree).

Before conducting the survey, a pilot test will be conducted among 30-50 respondents belonging to the target population to assess the clarity, understandability and appropriateness of the items used in the scale. Based on the results of the pilot study, the questionnaire will be modified. In order to measure the reliability of the items used to measure the constructs, Cronbach's Alpha will be determined. If it is more than 0.70 then the reliability is considered adequate.

4.8 Measurement of Variables

The present study examines the influence of Flexible Work Policies on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention among employees in Indian organizations, with Flexible Work Policies treated as the independent variable, Employee Engagement as the mediating variable, and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention as dependent variables. Each construct is measured using standardized scales widely validated in prior empirical research, with minor wording adaptations made to suit the Indian organizational context without altering the original meaning of the items.

Table 4.2: Measurement of Variables

Construct	Dimensions	Measurement Source	Sample Item
Flexible Work Policies (Independent Variable)	Flexitime, remote/hybrid work options, compressed work week, schedule autonomy	Adapted from Golden & Veiga (2005); Kelliher & Anderson (2010)	"My organization allows me to adjust when and where I work according to my needs."
Employee Engagement (Mediator)	Vigor, Dedication, Absorption	Schaufeli et al. (2002) – Utrecht Work Engagement	"I feel energetic and enthusiastic"

		Scale (UWES)	about my work.”
Job Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)	Satisfaction with work, recognition, working conditions	Locke (1976); Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	“Overall, I am satisfied with my present job.”
Organizational Commitment (Dependent Variable)	Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment	Meyer & Allen (1991)	“I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.”
Employee Retention (Dependent Variable)	Intention to stay, loyalty	Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht (2017)	“I intend to continue working with my organization for the foreseeable future.”

These measurement scales have been widely employed in prior organizational behavior and human resource management research and have demonstrated strong reliability and validity across diverse organizational contexts. Once data collection is complete, the reliability of each construct will be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, while construct validity will be determined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

4.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two key aspects when analyzing the quality of the research instrument, since only valid and reliable data should measure the constructs of interest. Hence, before performing the analysis of the hypotheses the validity and reliability of the questionnaire will be verified.

Reliability indicates how consistently the instrument can measure the constructs of interest and it will be measured via Cronbach's Alpha, showing the internal consistency of items. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) the minimum acceptable value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70.

Validity shows how the instrument can measure the concepts it was created for. The content validity will be achieved via adaptation of the questions from the scales which have already

been proved and the assessment by the academics and HR experts. The construct validity will be tested through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), where factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) will be estimated; the convergent validity will be verified based on the CR exceeding 0.70 and the AVE exceeding 0.50; finally, the discriminant validity will be checked via Fornell-Larcker criterion.

There will be performed a pilot testing for 30-50 respondents.

4.10 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis involves converting the data collected into information which is useful for addressing the research question and hypotheses formulated. For this study, quantitative analysis tools will be applied in analyzing the relationship between Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention through use of IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS/SmartPLS software.

Data cleaning and screening to detect any missing values, duplication and outliers will be done prior to conducting analysis. The demographic characteristics of the respondents (Age, Gender, Education, Years of Experience, Industry, Position and Working Arrangement) will be analyzed using descriptive statistics. The reliability and validity of the measure will be tested using Cronbach's Alpha, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted and Discriminant Validity Test.

Pearson Correlation Analysis will be used to examine the association between the study variables while multiple regression will be used to determine predictive relationships. Mediation Analysis using bootstrapping method will be done in AMOS/SmartPLS to test the indirect relationships hypothesized in H10-H12 where Employee Engagement mediates the relationship between Flexible Work Policies and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to test the full conceptual framework, evaluating both measurement and structural models, with model fit assessed using indices such as Chi-square/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues form an integral part of ensuring that the study is done professionally and responsibly. The current study is conducted with full respect for the ethics in order to ensure that

the rights, respect, and privacy of all respondents are preserved during the research process.

Respondents' participation in the research will be on purely voluntary basis and before answering the questions they will be notified about the purpose and objective of the study. The respondent will sign an informed consent form, which will give him/her the right to withdraw from the study at any point of time without any penalties whatsoever.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents will be respected throughout the research process; any personal details of the respondents like name or employee identification number will not be collected. The data gathered will be used exclusively for academic purposes and kept confidentially. Moreover, the survey questionnaire will not include any personal issues that may create psychological stress to the respondent. Sources used in the study will be acknowledged properly.

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the research methodology used for conducting an analysis of the effect of Flexible Work Policies on Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention in Indian organizations with regards to research philosophy, research approach, research design, research population, sampling technique and sample size, data collection procedure, research tool, variables' measurements, reliability and validity processes, data analysis technique, and ethics. The research methodology chosen here helps us collect and analyze empirical data in a systematic and scientific manner. The next chapter discusses the contributions of the research study.

5. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The contribution of this research to HRM and OB literature will be substantial as the conceptual model offered in this research provides an explanation of the impact of Flexible Work Policies on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention of employees in Indian organizations with the mediating role of Employee Engagement being analyzed. Although each of these variables has been analyzed separately in previous literature, there has not been much research that analyzes all these variables together in one framework.

Specifically, the contribution of the study includes the extension of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) in

demonstrating how organizationally provided flexibility can be reciprocated by various employee attitudes and behavior, and the extension of Work/Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) in explaining how flexibility leads to improvement in work-family balance and consequently to engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and retention. The contribution of the research to Job Demands-Resources theory literature also includes empirical analysis of the role of employee engagement as a mediator between flexible work policy and three different outcomes in one model.

The analysis of various Indian organizations from different industries also addresses the problem of missing context in flexible-work literature since a lot of existing flexible-work literature either has emerged from Western organizational settings or is specific only to the IT industry in India. The proposed model could serve as the base for future research that would consider more factors, such as leadership style, psychological safety, digital HRM, and work-life balance.

5.2 Implications for Practitioners and Management

Therefore, it can be expected that the results of this research will have practical implications for HR managers and organization leaders concerned with creating a situation that allows them to engage, satisfy, commit and retain their employees within Indian organizations. Within the context of the digitalization process, changing employees' expectations and increased competition for talent, the results of the study demonstrate the necessity of developing flexible work policies properly and carefully rather than increasing only the flexibility that is available to employees – since extremely high degrees of telecommuting, on the contrary, lead to reduced job satisfaction.

At the same time, the study demonstrates the importance of the mechanism of engagement that makes flexibility effective: managers should create flexible working conditions, support employees' needs and roles and provide effective communication so that employees perceive flexibility as a true resource and not as an isolating element or increased workload. Within the context of the proposed sectoral focus of the sample, the results of the research might also prove to be useful for organizations outside the IT sphere such as BFSI, manufacturing, healthcare, retail and educational organizations.

5.3 Policy Implications

In this regard, the outcomes of the study have practical policy significance for organizations, human resource managers and industry associations that aim to create flexible and sustainable work cultures. As organizations in India grapple with the challenge of meeting the demands of flexibility from employees and the preference for face-to-face collaboration among organizations, the use of evidence-based policy-making – based on the curvilinear and mediating relationship revealed by this study – could be more effective in addressing the conflicting issues than the adoption of policies based on either extreme.

On a broader scale, the findings of the study would have significance for industry associations and policy-makers while making policies for work flexibility norms outside the IT industry, where the issue is confined at present.

5.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

However, there are several important limitations in any empirical study that need to be mentioned when analyzing the obtained results. First of all, the chosen cross-sectional design implies collecting data at one particular point in time, thus failing to demonstrate causal relations between the variables; it is possible to conduct future research by using longitudinal designs in order to analyze how Flexible Work Policies and their impact changes over time. Secondly, the chosen topic and the fact that the research will be focused on Indian companies might affect the applicability of results to other countries' context.

Moreover, the utilization of self-reported questionnaires can be associated with some risks of common method bias or social desirability bias; future research could include supervisor ratings, organization records or even qualitative interviews in order to increase the validity of results. Finally, the chosen study is concentrated on the analysis of a certain set of constructs – Flexible Work Policies, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention, while many other variables can influence these connections as well.

Lastly, while this study does not consider any moderating variables, further studies could investigate if the above-discussed relationships differ based on different demographic or organizational aspects like age, gender, industry, level of employees, or public/private organizations and could also consider other developments such as use of artificial intelligence for scheduling, fully distributed teams, and changing return to office policies. Despite the above

shortcomings, this study provides a comprehensive approach towards the study of the link between flexible working policies and employee well-being in Indian organizations.

CONCLUSION

This research sheds light on the increasing relevance of Flexible Work Policies in influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors in today's Indian organizations. In view of the current process of digitalization, changing attitudes of the workforce, and growing competition for qualified personnel, the need arises for organizations to overcome conventional and inflexible forms of work organization and adopt flexible and more employee-friendly practices.

Based on Social Exchange Theory and Work/Family Border Theory, this study puts forward a theoretical proposition that flexibility is perceived by employees as an appreciated organizational resource which they return back in the form of greater engagement, positive attitudes towards work, and higher intent to stay with their employers. Another aspect discussed in this paper is the role of Employee Engagement as an intervening variable mediating the impact of flexible work practices on Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Employee Retention. It should be noted that, as shown by the examined literature, the benefits of flexibility do not come spontaneously.

This research, through its focus on cross-sectors, which goes beyond the Information Technology sector into BFSI, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and education sectors, is geared towards giving a more balanced view of the manner in which flexibility works in India compared to the information technology-specific literature reviewed in the research so far. In this way, the research hopes to offer a perspective not only in terms of theory but also practice on how companies in India can create work strategies that promote employee engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and retention in the new labor force environment. The research could also be expanded in future by adding more variables.

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BIOGRAPHY



Ayesha Khanam is an MBA student at Dayananda Sagar College of Engineering, Department of Management Studies, Bangalore, specializing in Human Resources and Business Analytics, with a strong interest in talent acquisition, HR analytics, employee engagement, and data-driven decision-making. With experience in recruitment coordination, employer branding, HR operations, and analytical research through internships and academic projects, Ayesha focuses on understanding the evolving dynamics of the workplace and the role of technology in transforming human resource practices. Her academic work emphasizes practical approaches to contemporary HR challenges, particularly in areas such as employee experience, organizational support, workforce analytics, and strategic talent management. Ayesha aims to contribute to research and industry practices that bridge the gap between human capital strategies and business outcomes, enabling organizations to build engaged, productive, and future-ready workforces.