

Workplace Flexibility and Work Performance

A Study on Materials Laboratory Employees

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Abstract

This study examined workplace flexibility and its impact on work performance among engineers and technicians in a 24/7 Materials Laboratory (MSL) of a leading electronics and semiconductor company, focusing on flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek. Grounded in workplace flexibility and organizational performance, the study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design and total population sampling involving 50 MSL employees comprising 14 engineers and 36 technicians. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire that was pre-tested and revised, and were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, t-test, p-value, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results showed that both engineers and technicians positively assessed flexible work hours and job sharing. Significant differences between the two professional groups were found for telecommuting and compressed workweek, while job sharing differed significantly by gender and telecommuting by age. Tenure significantly differentiated assessments across all four workplace flexibility dimensions. Major challenges included micromanagement, blurred work-life boundaries, onsite job requirements, limited access to personal computers, scheduling restrictions, remote supervision difficulties, unstable network connectivity, and restricted remote access. The study concludes that workplace flexibility should account for differences in employee roles and operational requirements and recommends policy review, appropriate telecommuting and scheduling options, improved technological support, mentorship, trust- and autonomy-oriented management practices, and regular employee feedback and program evaluation. The study aligns primarily with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through its emphasis on adaptable working conditions, employee well-being, productivity, organizational performance, and flexibility within a technology-oriented industry. Its sustainability impact is principally socio-economic, organizational, human resource, and institutional, supporting workforce well-being, organizational adaptability, and sustained operational performance.

Keywords: Compressed Workweek, Employee Well-Being, Flexible Work Hours, Job Sharing, Materials Laboratory, Organizational Performance, Telecommuting, Work Performance, Workplace Flexibility

1. Introduction

Workplace flexibility has become increasingly important in contemporary organizations as employees and employers adapt to changing work demands, economic pressures, and evolving approaches to work organization. It allows employees greater autonomy over when, where, and how work is performed while supporting organizational productivity and employee well-being (International Labour Organization, 2023; Soga et al., 2022). This flexibility is particularly relevant in the electronics and semiconductor industry, where organizations must maintain operational efficiency despite economic constraints and changing customer demand. In a 24/7 Materials Laboratory (MSL), workplace flexibility presents distinct considerations because engineers and technicians perform functions with different requirements for onsite presence and potential remote work. This study therefore examines workplace flexibility and its impact on work performance among MSL engineers and technicians, focusing on flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek. It also considers differences in employee assessments according to demographic characteristics, identifies challenges associated with workplace flexibility, and provides a basis for proposing enhancement programs appropriate to the laboratory setting.

Workplace flexibility refers to employees' ability to balance professional responsibilities with greater autonomy in determining when, where, and how they perform their work. The transition from rigid work structures toward more adaptable arrangements can contribute to productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational success (International Labour Organization, 2023; Soga et al., 2022). This flexibility has become particularly significant amid the global recession affecting the electronics and semiconductor industry. Organizations have adopted cost-reduction measures, including no-overtime policies and workforce reductions, in response to customer demand. Under these conditions, flexible arrangements provide organizations with alternative ways to maintain productivity and employee engagement while managing economic constraints. The present study situates workplace flexibility within a 24/7 Materials Laboratory (MSL) of a leading electronics and semiconductor company. The laboratory employs engineers and technicians whose work requirements differ, with some responsibilities requiring continuous onsite presence and others allowing partial remote work. These operational differences make it important to understand how workplace flexibility influences employee work performance.

Workplace flexibility encompasses several arrangements through which organizations can adapt work structures to employee and operational requirements. This study focuses on four dimensions: flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek. These arrangements provide different mechanisms for balancing employee needs with organizational responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements are relevant not only to employee work-life balance but also to organizational outcomes. Employees may benefit through improved job satisfaction, work-life balance, and career development, while organizations may benefit through increased innovation, agility, productivity, and employee retention. Human resource professionals can likewise use evidence regarding workplace flexibility to develop programs suited to organizational and employee needs. Within a 24/7 laboratory, however, flexibility must account for differences in work responsibilities. The operational demands placed on engineers and technicians may influence how individual arrangements can be implemented and how employees assess their effects on work performance. Examining these arrangements within the MSL therefore provides context-specific evidence concerning workplace flexibility in continuous laboratory operations.

At the broader level, workplace flexibility reflects the continuing transition from traditional work structures toward arrangements that provide greater autonomy regarding when and where employees work. Such arrangements have become increasingly relevant as organizations respond to changing economic and operational environments. Within the electronics and semiconductor industry, the global recession has intensified pressures to control operating costs while sustaining productivity. Measures such as restrictions on overtime and workforce reductions illustrate the need to balance resource limitations with continuing operational requirements. Workplace flexibility consequently represents one approach through which organizations may maintain employee engagement and performance under constrained conditions. At the organizational level, these concerns are particularly relevant to the MSL because it operates continuously. Engineers and technicians must fulfill responsibilities that differ in their requirements for physical presence and work scheduling. The study consequently concentrates on MSL employees who had at least one year of tenure, were currently employed, maintained regular attendance, and were proficient in the survey language during the 2023 study period. Its findings are limited to the MSL and do not extend to other departments or organizations or address the financial implications of workplace flexibility programs.

The study is grounded in two foundational constructs: workplace flexibility and organizational performance. Contemporary workplace-flexibility research emphasizes that flexible arrangements can support productivity, autonomy, and work-life balance when they are appropriately designed and matched to employee and organizational needs (International Labour Organization, 2023; Soga et al., 2022). Organizational performance, meanwhile, concerns the efficiency and effectiveness with which an organization achieves its objectives through its human and material resources. Together, these constructs position workplace flexibility at both individual and

organizational levels. Flexible work arrangements may address employees' needs and well-being while simultaneously influencing productivity and broader institutional outcomes. Within this conceptual basis, the study examines employees' assessments of flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek and their impact on work performance. It further considers whether assessments of workplace flexibility differ according to gender, age, and tenure.

Although workplace flexibility offers potential benefits to employees and organizations, its application in a 24/7 Materials Laboratory presents particular challenges. Engineers and technicians have different job demands, especially regarding onsite presence and the feasibility of remote work. Consequently, flexible arrangements cannot necessarily be applied uniformly across employees and functions. The study addresses the need to understand how engineers and technicians assess workplace flexibility and its impact on work performance within this specialized operational environment. Specifically, it examines employees' demographic profiles in terms of age, gender, and tenure; their assessments of flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek; differences in these assessments according to demographic characteristics; and the challenges employees encounter in implementing workplace flexibility. The study tests the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in respondents' assessments of workplace flexibility when grouped according to gender, age, and tenure. The findings are also intended to provide a basis for developing enhancement programs to improve workplace flexibility within the MSL. By concentrating on engineers and technicians in a continuous laboratory environment, the study contributes empirical evidence on workplace flexibility in a specialized 24/7 operational setting.

The study is most directly aligned with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth because it examines workplace arrangements intended to balance employee needs, work-life considerations, productivity, and organizational performance. Flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek represent organizational approaches that may support more adaptable working conditions while allowing the organization to maintain operational performance. The study also has relevance to SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through its setting within the electronics and semiconductor industry and its consideration of organizational flexibility, innovation, and agility. Examining flexible working arrangements in a 24/7 Materials Laboratory contributes to understanding how work systems within a technology-oriented industrial environment can adapt to changing operational and workforce requirements. These alignments are principally socio-economic and organizational. The study does not directly examine environmental impacts, energy consumption, ecological outcomes, or other environmental sustainability indicators; therefore, its contribution to sustainability is appropriately centered on work arrangements, employee well-being, organizational performance, and adaptability.

The study contributes primarily to socio-economic, organizational, human resource, and institutional sustainability by examining how workplace flexibility can support employees while maintaining organizational performance. For employees, flexible arrangements may improve job satisfaction, work-life balance, and career development. For employers, understanding the effectiveness and challenges of these arrangements can inform strategies intended to enhance productivity, innovation, agility, and employee retention. From a human resource and institutional perspective, the findings can provide practical guidance for developing workplace flexibility programs that recognize differences in employee characteristics and job requirements. This is particularly relevant in a 24/7 laboratory, where organizational sustainability depends on maintaining continuous operations while responding appropriately to the differing work demands of engineers and technicians. The study also contributes to the sustainability of knowledge and organizational practice by providing empirical evidence concerning workplace flexibility in laboratory and continuous-operation environments. Future researchers may use this evidence to extend research on flexible work arrangements in other specialized settings. Overall, the study connects employee well-being, organizational adaptability, workforce management, and sustained operational performance, demonstrating the multidisciplinary relevance of workplace flexibility to sustainable organizational practices.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the respondents and summarize their perceptions of workplace flexibility, while inferential statistics were applied to test the hypotheses and determine significant differences based on the collected data.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Materials Laboratory (MSL) of a leading electronics and semiconductor company. The specific geographic location of the company was not identified in the manuscript.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents comprised 50 Materials Laboratory (MSL) employee, consisting of 14 engineers and 36 technicians. Eligible respondents had at least one year of service, were currently employed, maintained regular attendance during the preceding three months, and were proficient in the survey language.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used total population sampling by including all 50 eligible MSL employees, representing the entire identified population. The sample consisted of all 14 engineers and 36 technicians. The manuscript also identifies purposive sampling as the technique applied to both professional groups.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering instrument. The first part collected demographic information, while the second assessed workplace flexibility across four dimensions using a five-point Likert scale: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Moderately Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree. The third part identified the challenges encountered by the respondents. The questionnaire was pre-tested with ten Materials Laboratory (MSL) employees and revised based on the results. The revised instrument was subsequently submitted to the researcher's adviser for final validation.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Formal permission to conduct the survey was requested from the senior management of the Materials Laboratory (MSL). The questionnaires were then distributed to all 50 respondents and retrieved after completion. The responses were checked, classified, tabulated, and analyzed according to the research design.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the respondents' demographic profiles and the challenges they encountered. Weighted mean and standard deviation were applied to determine respondents' perceptions of the workplace flexibility dimensions. The t-test and p-value were used to assess significant differences between engineers and technicians when grouped according to technical profession and gender, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine significant differences according to age and tenure. The alpha level of significance was set at 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondent Profile and Assessment of Workplace Flexibility

3.1.1 Demographic Profile of Engineers and Technicians

The MSL workforce was predominantly female, representing 80% of all respondents. Among engineers, 57% (n=8) were female and 43% (n=6) were male, while technicians were 89% (n=32) female and 11% (n=4) male. Engineers were generally younger, with 57% (n=8) aged 21–30, whereas 56% (n=20) of technicians were aged 41–50. Engineers also had shorter tenure, with 43% (n=6) having 1–3 years of service, while 61% (n=22) of technicians had served for 10 years or more. These findings indicate clear demographic differences between the two professional groups. Engineers represented a younger and shorter-tenured cohort, while technicians had greater institutional experience. These differences provide relevant context for understanding variations in perceptions of workplace flexibility, particularly because tenure emerged as an important differentiating factor across the flexibility dimensions.

3.1.2 Flexible Work Hours

Engineers (WM = 4.23, SD = 1.06) and technicians (WM = 4.16, SD = 0.82) both agreed with flexible work hours. Engineers reported particularly favorable perceptions of accessibility (WM = 4.57) and impact on performance (WM = 4.43), while technicians rated impact on performance (WM = 4.43) and collaboration (WM = 4.22) highly. Overall, both groups perceived flexible work hours positively in terms of adaptability, accessibility, autonomy, collaboration, and performance. The positive perceptions of flexible work hours are consistent with recent evidence that well-designed flexible working-time arrangements can support work-life balance, engagement, and performance (International Labour Organization, 2023; Soga et al., 2022). The findings suggest that flexible scheduling can accommodate employee needs while supporting performance across both engineer and technician roles.

3.1.3 Job Sharing

Both professional groups positively assessed job sharing, with engineers obtaining an overall weighted mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.76) and technicians 4.30 (SD = 0.78). Engineers rated compatibility highest (WM = 4.57), while technicians rated communication highest (WM = 4.44). Both groups also agreed that job sharing supported workload distribution, job satisfaction, and work performance. These comparable perceptions are consistent with recent literature emphasizing that flexible work arrangements can support work-life balance when access, coordination, and implementation are appropriately designed (International Labour Organization, 2023; Chung &

van der Horst, 2023). At the same time, effective job sharing requires attention to implementation challenges, particularly the coordination and management of shared responsibilities (Bernardo & de Guzman, 2023). The local findings of Bernardo (2023) and de Guzman (2023) similarly affirm that job sharing benefits both employees and employers in the Philippine context.

3.1.4 Telecommuting

Telecommuting produced a marked difference between the two groups. Engineers agreed with telecommuting arrangements (WM = 4.14, SD = 1.07), whereas technicians disagreed (WM = 2.22, SD = 0.75). Engineers reported positive assessments of technology support, work-life balance, productivity, collaboration, and job satisfaction, while technicians disagreed across these indicators. The difference reflects the onsite nature of technicians' laboratory responsibilities, which limits opportunities for remote work. This finding is consistent with recent reviews showing that the effects of remote work depend on job characteristics, voluntariness, work setting, and the extent to which tasks can be performed away from the workplace (Hackney et al., 2022; Ferrara et al., 2022). The work environment may also influence the relationship between telecommuting and employee performance, indicating that the effectiveness of telecommuting depends partly on the conditions under which employees perform their work (Onyeka, 2023). Evidence also indicates that autonomy and work-life balance can shape perceived performance under teleworking arrangements (Metselaar et al., 2023).

3.1.5 Compressed Workweek

Engineers agreed with compressed workweek arrangements (WM = 3.71, SD = 1.08), whereas technicians disagreed (WM = 2.38, SD = 0.65). Engineers agreed with schedule flexibility, workload management, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, although they only moderately agreed regarding fatigue levels. Technicians disagreed across all assessed indicators. The difference reflects role-specific scheduling constraints. Engineers can manage workloads within defined project cycles, whereas technicians are assigned to continuous laboratory operations that restrict the adoption of fixed compressed schedules. This finding is consistent with recent evidence showing that compressed workweeks can improve work-life balance and employee satisfaction, but outcomes depend on implementation conditions, job demands, and organizational context (Spicer & Lyons, 2022; Munyon et al., 2023).

3.2 Differences in Workplace Flexibility Assessments

3.2.1 Differences by Technical Profession

No significant differences between engineers and technicians were found for flexible work hours ($t = -0.28$, $p = 0.39$) or job sharing ($t = 0.89$, $p = 0.19$). In contrast, telecommuting ($t = 11.82$, $p < 0.0001$) and compressed workweek ($t = 8.41$, $p < 0.0001$) showed highly significant differences. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for telecommuting and compressed workweek but not for flexible work hours and job sharing. The significant differences in telecommuting and compressed workweek reinforce the role-based constraints observed in the descriptive results. Technicians' continuous onsite responsibilities restrict their participation in arrangements that depend on remote work or fixed compressed schedules. This is consistent with recent evidence that telework outcomes vary according to task characteristics and work context (Hackney et al., 2022; Ferrara et al., 2022), while compressed-workweek outcomes depend on implementation conditions and organizational requirements (Spicer & Lyons, 2022; Munyon et al., 2023).

3.2.2 Differences by Gender

Job sharing was the only flexibility dimension that significantly differed according to gender ($t = 1.96$, $p = 0.03$). Flexible work hours ($t = 0.93$, $p = 0.18$), telecommuting ($t = -0.94$, $p = 0.17$), and compressed workweek ($t = -0.67$, $p = 0.25$) showed no significant gender differences. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected only for job sharing. The findings indicate that gender differentiated perceptions of job sharing but not the other three flexibility dimensions. The manuscript does not provide a literature-based interpretation specifically explaining this gender difference; therefore, no additional explanation or citation is introduced.

3.2.3 Differences by Age

Age significantly differentiated perceptions only of telecommuting ($f = 9.40$, $p = 0.0002$). Flexible work hours ($f = 2.50$, $p = 0.09$), job sharing ($f = 2.83$, $p = 0.06$), and compressed workweek ($f = 0.33$, $p = 0.72$) did not significantly differ across age groups. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected for telecommuting but retained for the other dimensions. The findings indicate that respondents of different ages varied significantly in their perceptions of telecommuting, whereas their assessments of flexible work hours, job sharing, and compressed workweek remained statistically comparable. The manuscript does not provide a separate literature-based explanation for the significant age difference; thus, the interpretation is limited to the reported statistical finding.

3.2.4 Differences by Tenure

Tenure significantly differentiated all four workplace flexibility dimensions. Significant differences were found for flexible work hours ($f = 14.61$, $p < 0.0001$), job sharing ($f = 10.46$, $p < 0.0001$), telecommuting ($f = 3.61$, $p = 0.01$), and compressed workweek ($f = 9.67$, $p < 0.0001$). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected across all

four dimensions. Tenure emerged as the most consistent demographic factor influencing perceptions of workplace flexibility. Longer-tenured employees, predominantly technicians, demonstrated more defined preferences and stronger responses to flexibility arrangements, consistent with recent reviews showing that flexible work outcomes vary across employees and organizational contexts (Soga et al., 2022; Hackney et al., 2022). However, longer-tenured technicians have developed established work patterns associated with the laboratory's operational requirements, making adaptation to alternative flexibility arrangements more complex.

3.3 Challenges Affecting Workplace Flexibility

Respondents identified micromanagement as the primary challenge to workplace flexibility, followed by the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life under work-from-home arrangements. Other reported barriers included technicians' inability to telecommute because of onsite responsibilities, limited access to personal computers for home use, restrictions on compressed workweeks resulting from 24/7 scheduling, difficulties in remote supervision and direct oversight, unstable network connectivity, and restricted remote access that interrupted work tasks. Micromanagement as the leading challenge echoes research on cultural barriers to workplace flexibility adoption (Malin, 2022) and emphasizes the importance of trust and autonomy within the organization. The difficulty in maintaining boundaries between professional and personal life is also consistent with recent systematic reviews identifying work-life boundary and well-being risks in home-based and flexible work arrangements (Lunde et al., 2022; Soga et al., 2022). Together, these findings show that effective workplace flexibility in the MSL is shaped by managerial practices, job requirements, scheduling constraints, and technological accessibility.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the Materials Laboratory (MSL) workforce is predominantly female, with engineers generally younger and shorter-tenured than technicians. Flexible work hours and job sharing were positively perceived by both groups, whereas telecommuting and compressed workweek were less applicable to technicians because of their continuous onsite responsibilities. Tenure was the most consistent demographic factor associated with differences in workplace flexibility perceptions. Micromanagement, blurred work-life boundaries, and limitations in technology access were also identified as major barriers to effective workplace flexibility. Overall, the findings support an enhancement program focused on time management effectiveness, productivity, employee satisfaction, and employee well-being.

HR management should consider strategies to address the workforce gender imbalance and establish mentorship programs to facilitate knowledge transfer between younger engineers and longer-tenured technicians. MSL top management should review existing policies to determine feasible telecommuting options and adjusted scheduling for technicians within the constraints of 24/7 operations. Investment in stable network connectivity, remote work devices, and virtual collaboration platforms should support flexible work arrangements, while management practices should promote trust, autonomy, and results-oriented supervision to reduce micromanagement. Regular performance reviews, employee feedback sessions, and periodic reviews of the enhancement program should also be conducted to monitor employee satisfaction, well-being, and the continuing effectiveness of workplace flexibility initiatives.

The study was limited to engineers and technicians employed in the Materials Laboratory (MSL) of a leading electronics and semiconductor company during the 2023 study period. It covered only four workplace flexibility dimensions: flexible work hours, job sharing, telecommuting, and compressed workweek. Respondents were restricted to currently employed MSL personnel with at least one year of tenure, regular attendance, and proficiency in the survey language. The study did not examine the financial implications of workplace flexibility programs and did not include employees from other departments or organizations.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for human-participant research, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, allowing participants to withdraw at any stage without consequence, and protecting participant confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data management. Because the study examined psychological well-being, all research procedures were non-invasive and implemented with appropriate measures to reduce the risk of discomfort. Participants were informed of available support services should the need arise. Furthermore, the necessary institutional approvals were obtained for the administration of the research instruments and access to relevant academic records.

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