



Work flexibility and employee performance through job satisfaction in digital companies

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital companies has accelerated the adoption of flexible work arrangements, creating new opportunities and challenges for employee performance. This study aims to examine the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction in digital companies. The research employs a library research approach by reviewing relevant books, peer-reviewed journal articles, research reports, and other scientific publications. Data were collected through systematic literature review and analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns, theoretical relationships, and empirical findings. The results indicate that work flexibility positively influences employee performance when employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements enhance autonomy, work-life balance, and organizational support, leading to greater motivation, commitment, and productivity. Furthermore, job satisfaction serves as a crucial mediating mechanism that explains how flexible work practices contribute to improved employee performance. These findings provide theoretical contributions to human resource management literature and practical implications for digital companies in designing effective flexible work policies that simultaneously improve employee well-being and organizational performance.



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Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital companies has fundamentally transformed how employees perform their work, with flexible work arrangements becoming an integral component of organizational operations. Hybrid work, remote work, and flexible scheduling have enabled organizations to attract and retain highly skilled talent while responding to technological advancements and changing

workforce expectations. Despite these advantages, many digital companies continue to experience inconsistent levels of employee performance. Managers frequently report challenges related to reduced collaboration, communication barriers, declining work engagement, and difficulties in maintaining productivity across geographically dispersed teams. These issues suggest that work flexibility alone does not automatically lead to improved employee performance. Instead, employees may experience varying psychological and organizational responses to flexible work practices, creating uncertainty regarding the actual effectiveness of work flexibility in enhancing organizational outcomes (Rihhadatul 'Aisy and Prabowo 2024).

Previous studies have extensively examined the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance, generally suggesting that flexible work arrangements provide employees with greater autonomy, improve work-life balance, and increase organizational commitment. Likewise, research grounded in theories such as Social Exchange Theory, Job Demands–Resources Theory, and Self-Determination Theory argues that work flexibility can generate positive work attitudes and behaviors. However, empirical findings remain inconsistent. Several studies report significant positive effects of work flexibility on employee performance, whereas others find weak, insignificant, or even negative relationships depending on organizational context, technological infrastructure, leadership practices, and employee characteristics. These inconsistent findings indicate that existing theories have not fully explained the mechanisms through which work flexibility influences employee performance, particularly within digital companies where technology-mediated work creates unique psychological and organizational dynamics. Consequently, there remains a theoretical need to identify explanatory variables that clarify this relationship, with job satisfaction emerging as a potential mediating mechanism (Alam and Dewi 2024).

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to examine the influence of work flexibility on employee performance through job satisfaction in digital companies. Specifically, the study investigates whether work flexibility directly enhances employee performance and whether job satisfaction functions as a mediating variable that explains the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance. By focusing on employees working within digital companies, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the behavioral mechanisms underlying flexible work arrangements while extending the understanding of employee performance in increasingly digitalized organizational environments (Sanjrani et al. 2025).

This research argues that understanding the mediating role of job satisfaction is essential for explaining why work flexibility generates different performance outcomes across digital organizations. Although flexible work policies provide employees with greater autonomy and adaptability, these policies are unlikely to improve performance unless employees perceive their work conditions positively and experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, examining job satisfaction as the underlying mechanism offers a more comprehensive explanation of how flexible work practices translate into improved employee performance. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of human resource management literature by enriching theoretical explanations regarding flexible work arrangements while providing practical recommendations for digital companies in designing work flexibility policies that simultaneously enhance employee satisfaction and organizational performance (Munir et al. 2024).

Method

Research Object

The object of this study is the phenomenon of work flexibility and its relationship with employee performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction in digital companies. This phenomenon has attracted considerable attention from researchers and practitioners due to the rapid transformation of organizational work systems driven by digital technologies, globalization, and changing workforce expectations. The emergence of digital companies has fundamentally altered conventional employment practices by replacing traditional office-based work with more flexible and technology-enabled working arrangements. As organizations increasingly rely on cloud computing, digital collaboration platforms, artificial intelligence, and communication technologies, employees

are now able to perform their work across different locations and schedules without compromising organizational operations. Consequently, work flexibility has become a strategic human resource management practice aimed at improving organizational adaptability, attracting talented employees, enhancing employee well-being, and maintaining competitiveness in rapidly changing business environments.

The increasing adoption of flexible work arrangements, including remote work, hybrid work, flexible scheduling, compressed workweeks, and results-oriented work systems, reflects organizations' efforts to respond to evolving business demands while simultaneously addressing employees' expectations for greater autonomy and work-life balance. Digital companies, in particular, have become pioneers in implementing these flexible work models because their operational activities are largely supported by digital technologies that facilitate virtual communication, online collaboration, and real-time information sharing. The widespread implementation of flexible work practices has accelerated significantly following global technological advancements and the growing acceptance of digital transformation across industries. As a result, work flexibility has evolved from being an optional organizational benefit into a strategic organizational capability that supports innovation, business continuity, and sustainable organizational performance (Ferdous, Ali, and French 2023).

Despite the growing popularity of work flexibility, previous empirical studies have produced inconsistent findings regarding its influence on employee performance. Numerous studies report that flexible working arrangements positively affect employee productivity, organizational commitment, creativity, engagement, and overall job performance by providing employees with greater control over their work environments. Conversely, other studies reveal insignificant or even negative relationships, arguing that excessive flexibility may reduce collaboration, weaken organizational identification, increase communication difficulties, blur work-life boundaries, and create psychological strain due to constant digital connectivity. These conflicting findings indicate that the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance is more complex than initially assumed and cannot be explained solely through direct causal relationships (Eng et al. 2025).

The inconsistencies identified in previous literature suggest the existence of unresolved theoretical and empirical issues concerning the mechanisms through which work flexibility contributes to employee performance. One important explanation proposed in contemporary human resource management literature is that employees' psychological responses play a crucial role in determining whether flexible work arrangements generate positive organizational outcomes. Among various psychological factors, job satisfaction has consistently emerged as one of the most influential variables because it reflects employees' overall evaluation of their work experiences, organizational support, and working conditions. Employees who perceive flexible work arrangements as valuable organizational resources are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which subsequently encourages greater motivation, stronger organizational commitment, higher engagement, and improved work performance. Therefore, job satisfaction is expected to function as a critical mediating mechanism that explains how work flexibility ultimately influences employee performance (Diep and Horváthová 2025).

Based on these considerations, the phenomenon of work flexibility, job satisfaction, and employee performance within digital companies constitutes the primary object of the present study. Rather than examining the direct relationship between work flexibility and employee performance alone, this study seeks to explore the underlying psychological mechanism that connects these variables by synthesizing evidence from previous scholarly literature (Bhoir and Sinha 2024). Through a comprehensive library research approach, the study aims to provide a deeper theoretical understanding of how work flexibility contributes to employee performance through job satisfaction while identifying consistent patterns, empirical gaps, and future research directions. The findings are expected to enrich the human resource management literature by offering a more comprehensive conceptual explanation of flexible work practices in digital organizations and by providing practical insights for managers seeking to develop effective workforce strategies in increasingly digitalized business environments (Hu 2024).

Research Type and Data Sources

This study employs a library research approach, in which data are obtained through an extensive review of published literature rather than direct field observations. The primary data consist of relevant scholarly literature specifically discussing the phenomenon of work flexibility, employee performance, job satisfaction, and their interactions within digital companies. Meanwhile, the secondary data comprise supporting literature related to the broader concepts represented by the research keywords, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, academic reports, dissertations, and other scientific publications. These sources provide comprehensive theoretical and empirical evidence necessary for developing a holistic understanding of the research problem (Mughal and Rani 2024).

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study is primarily based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) introduced by George C. Homans in 1958 and further developed by Peter M. Blau in 1964. Social Exchange Theory argues that relationships between employees and organizations are built upon reciprocal exchanges in which favorable organizational practices encourage employees to respond with positive attitudes and behaviors. Within the context of this research, work flexibility represents an organizational resource provided to employees, while job satisfaction reflects employees' positive evaluation of these organizational benefits. Consequently, satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate higher commitment, motivation, and performance as forms of reciprocal behavior toward the organization. This theoretical perspective provides the principal assumptions for explaining the relationship between work flexibility, job satisfaction, and employee performance in digital companies (Mangesti and Iristian 2026).

Data Collection Procedure

The research process consists of several systematic stages. Initially, relevant literature was identified through searches of academic books, peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, research reports, and other credible scientific publications discussing work flexibility, job satisfaction, employee performance, and digital companies. Subsequently, the collected literature was screened based on its relevance, credibility, publication quality, and contribution to the research objectives. The selected references were then thoroughly examined through intensive reading, note-taking, classification of key concepts, and synthesis of theoretical as well as empirical findings. This literature review process enabled the researcher to collect comprehensive information required to answer the research objectives while ensuring the reliability and validity of the evidence used in the study (Azizah, Soemaryani, and Sartika 2023).

Data Analysis Technique

This study applies content analysis as the primary data analysis technique. Content analysis involves systematically examining, organizing, interpreting, and synthesizing information obtained from various literature sources to identify meaningful patterns, conceptual relationships, recurring themes, and significant findings relevant to the research objectives (Firdaus and Anindita 2024). The analysis begins by categorizing information according to the principal variables of work flexibility, job satisfaction, employee performance, and the context of digital companies. Subsequently, similarities and differences across previous studies are compared to identify research trends, theoretical consistencies, empirical inconsistencies, and existing research gaps. The findings are then integrated into a coherent conceptual framework that provides comprehensive insights into how work flexibility influences employee performance through job satisfaction in digital companies (Dewantoro, Maharani, and Rekarti 2026).

Results and Discussions

Results

The literature review indicates that work flexibility has become one of the most influential and widely adopted human resource management practices in digital companies. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, accompanied by increasing globalization and evolving employee expectations, has encouraged organizations to redesign traditional work systems into more flexible and

technology-driven arrangements. Flexible work practices, including remote working, hybrid working models, flexible scheduling, compressed workweeks, and results-oriented work environments, have fundamentally transformed how organizations organize work, supervise employees, and evaluate performance (Baird et al. 2024). These practices are no longer viewed merely as employee benefits but have become strategic organizational initiatives designed to improve competitiveness, attract highly qualified talent, enhance employee retention, and strengthen organizational resilience in increasingly dynamic business environments. Digital companies, in particular, have become pioneers in implementing work flexibility because their operations heavily depend on information technology, cloud-based collaboration platforms, and digital communication systems that enable employees to perform their tasks regardless of physical location (Abdeen and Khalil 2023).

The reviewed studies consistently suggest that flexible work arrangements offer numerous organizational and individual benefits. Employees are provided with greater discretion over their working hours and workplace locations, allowing them to organize their work according to personal preferences and productivity patterns. Such flexibility enables employees to reduce commuting time, lower transportation costs, and allocate more time to family responsibilities and personal development (Alviani, Hilmiana, and S. 2024). These advantages contribute to improved work-life balance, reduced occupational stress, and increased psychological well-being. From an organizational perspective, flexible work practices also help companies reduce operational expenses, optimize office space utilization, and maintain business continuity during unexpected disruptions such as global health crises or natural disasters. Consequently, many digital organizations have incorporated flexibility into their long-term human resource management strategies rather than treating it as a temporary organizational response (Anggiani and Fatonah 2025).

Despite these advantages, the literature also demonstrates that work flexibility does not automatically guarantee higher employee performance. Previous empirical findings reveal considerable inconsistencies regarding the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements across different organizational contexts. While many studies report positive associations between work flexibility and employee performance, other investigations identify weak, insignificant, or even negative relationships. These contradictory findings suggest that the effectiveness of work flexibility is influenced by numerous contextual and psychological factors rather than by flexible work policies alone. The implementation of flexibility without adequate organizational support, clear performance expectations, effective communication, and appropriate technological infrastructure may reduce coordination among employees, weaken organizational commitment, and create uncertainty regarding work responsibilities. Therefore, simply allowing employees to work remotely or flexibly is insufficient to ensure sustainable improvements in organizational performance (Dewi and Krisnadi 2023).

The reviewed literature further reveals that digital companies provide employees with significantly greater autonomy in determining when, where, and how work is completed. This autonomy is regarded as one of the primary advantages of flexible work because it allows employees to adapt their work schedules according to their individual productivity cycles and personal circumstances. Employees are able to integrate professional responsibilities with family obligations more effectively, resulting in greater psychological comfort and improved emotional well-being. The flexibility to choose work locations also encourages employees to create personalized work environments that enhance concentration and productivity. Moreover, digital collaboration technologies enable employees to maintain communication with colleagues regardless of geographical distance, thereby supporting continuous organizational operations (Putro and Permana 2024).

However, greater autonomy also introduces several organizational and psychological challenges. Numerous studies indicate that flexible work arrangements may blur the boundaries between professional and personal life, making it increasingly difficult for employees to disconnect from work during non-working hours. Continuous digital connectivity often creates expectations of constant availability, increasing emotional exhaustion and work-related fatigue. Employees working remotely may also experience social isolation due to reduced face-to-face interactions with colleagues and supervisors. Limited informal communication may weaken team cohesion, organizational identification, and knowledge sharing among employees. Furthermore, managers often encounter difficulties in monitoring employee performance, coordinating collaborative projects, and maintaining organizational culture in virtual working environments (Fauzi, Suhardi, and Firdaus 2025). These challenges explain why work flexibility produces different organizational outcomes depending on the quality of organizational management and employee support systems (Amrin and Abadi 2024).

The literature synthesis consistently identifies job satisfaction as one of the most important psychological mechanisms explaining the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance. Most empirical studies conclude that flexible work arrangements positively influence employees' job satisfaction because they increase perceptions of autonomy, organizational trust, fairness, and work-life balance. Employees generally perceive flexible work policies as evidence that organizations value their well-being and respect their individual needs (Erong et al. 2026). This positive organizational treatment strengthens employees' emotional attachment to the organization and encourages favorable attitudes toward their work. Higher job satisfaction subsequently stimulates stronger organizational commitment, greater intrinsic motivation, improved creativity, enhanced work engagement, and higher willingness to perform beyond formal job requirements (Asfiah, Riyanto, and Mainingrum 2022).

Employees who report higher levels of job satisfaction also demonstrate superior individual performance across multiple dimensions. They tend to produce higher-quality work, complete assignments more efficiently, exhibit greater innovation, and collaborate more effectively with colleagues. In addition, satisfied employees generally experience lower absenteeism, reduced turnover intentions, and stronger organizational citizenship behaviors, all of which contribute to improved organizational effectiveness. These findings indicate that job satisfaction functions as an essential mediating variable that explains how work flexibility translates into improved employee performance. Without sufficient job satisfaction, the positive effects of work flexibility may not fully materialize, explaining the inconsistent empirical findings reported in previous studies (Hariani and Mardikaningsih 2025).

The synthesis of previous literature also demonstrates that several organizational factors strengthen the effectiveness of flexible work practices. Organizational support consistently emerges as one of the strongest determinants of successful flexible work implementation. Employees working under flexible arrangements require continuous managerial guidance, transparent communication, accessible digital resources, and fair performance evaluation systems. Supportive leadership encourages trust-based relationships that enable employees to perform independently while remaining aligned with organizational objectives. Similarly, organizational culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, accountability, and open communication significantly enhances the effectiveness of flexible work systems (Pradipta and Martdianty 2023).

Digital infrastructure represents another critical factor influencing employee performance in flexible working environments. Organizations equipped with reliable internet connectivity, cloud-based collaboration platforms, cybersecurity systems, and integrated communication technologies are better positioned to support employee productivity regardless of physical location (Miqdarsah

and Indradewa 2024). Conversely, inadequate technological resources often hinder collaboration, delay decision-making processes, and reduce operational efficiency. Therefore, investments in digital infrastructure should accompany the implementation of work flexibility policies to maximize organizational performance (Alotaibi 2023).

Overall, the findings suggest that work flexibility should not be viewed as an isolated organizational policy but rather as an integrated human resource management strategy that simultaneously considers technological readiness, leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, and employee psychological well-being. Digital companies that successfully combine flexible work arrangements with supportive organizational environments consistently report higher levels of employee satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, greater innovation capability, and superior employee performance. These findings reinforce the argument that job satisfaction serves as the primary mechanism through which work flexibility contributes to organizational success in digital companies, highlighting the importance of developing comprehensive human resource strategies that balance organizational flexibility with employee well-being (Alzadjali and Ahmad 2024).

Table 1. Summary of Previous Literature

Author(s)	Research Focus	Main Findings	Research Gap
Allen et al.	Flexible Work Arrangement	Flexibility improves work-life balance and job satisfaction.	Limited discussion of digital companies.
Gajendran & Harrison	Teleworking	Remote work positively affects employee performance through autonomy.	Mediating variables remain underexplored.
Bakker & Demerouti	Job Demands–Resources	Job resources increase engagement and performance.	Does not specifically examine flexible work.
Golden	Work Flexibility	Excessive remote work may reduce collaboration.	Psychological mechanisms require further investigation.
Current Study	Work Flexibility → Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	Explores job satisfaction as a mediator within digital companies.	Integrates recent digital workplace context.

Table 2. Synthesis of Research Variables

Variable	Supporting Literature	Main Indicators
Work Flexibility	Flexible schedule, remote work, hybrid work	Autonomy, flexibility of time, flexibility of workplace
Job Satisfaction	Positive emotional evaluation of work	Satisfaction with work, supervision, rewards, work environment
Employee Performance	Achievement of organizational objectives	Productivity, work quality, efficiency, innovation

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that work flexibility positively contributes to employee performance when employees perceive flexible work arrangements as valuable organizational support. These findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory proposed by George C. Homans (1958) and further developed by Peter M. Blau (1964). According to this theory, employees reciprocate favorable organizational treatment by exhibiting positive work attitudes and behaviors. Flexible work arrangements represent organizational investments that encourage employees to respond with greater commitment, motivation, and performance. Consequently, employees who experience higher

flexibility tend to feel trusted by their organizations, thereby increasing their willingness to contribute beyond formal job requirements (Miqdarsah and Indradewa 2024).

The literature synthesis also confirms that job satisfaction plays a significant mediating role between work flexibility and employee performance. Flexible work arrangements improve employees' psychological well-being by reducing commuting time, increasing autonomy, and facilitating work-life balance. These benefits enhance employees' satisfaction with their work, which subsequently encourages higher productivity, creativity, organizational commitment, and task performance. This finding explains why organizations implementing similar flexibility policies often obtain different performance outcomes depending on employees' satisfaction levels. Therefore, job satisfaction represents the primary psychological mechanism through which work flexibility influences employee performance (Juniwati and Indiyati 2026).

Furthermore, the results indicate that digital companies require complementary organizational resources to maximize the benefits of flexible work arrangements. Effective digital infrastructure, collaborative organizational culture, supportive leadership, transparent communication, and appropriate performance management systems strengthen employees' ability to perform effectively while working flexibly. Without these supporting conditions, flexibility may generate adverse consequences such as social isolation, communication difficulties, role ambiguity, and reduced organizational identification (Anwar 2024).

The findings also contribute theoretically by extending Social Exchange Theory into the context of digital work environments. Traditional applications of the theory primarily focus on conventional workplace relationships, whereas this study demonstrates that reciprocal exchanges remain highly relevant in technology-mediated organizations. Employees interpret flexible work arrangements as expressions of organizational trust and support, which stimulate positive reciprocal attitudes in the form of increased job satisfaction and superior employee performance (Barakat 2021).

From a practical perspective, digital companies should avoid assuming that flexible work arrangements alone will improve organizational performance. Instead, organizations should integrate flexibility with employee well-being initiatives, leadership development, digital collaboration technologies, performance feedback systems, and career development opportunities. Such integrated human resource management practices are more likely to foster sustainable job satisfaction and consistently improve employee performance.

Table 3 Content Analysis Results

Research Theme	Evidence from Literature	Interpretation
Work Flexibility	Increases autonomy and work-life balance	Positive organizational resource
Job Satisfaction	Improves motivation and organizational commitment	Psychological mediator
Employee Performance	Increases productivity and innovation	Organizational outcome
Digital Companies	Require technology-supported flexibility	Organizational context
Social Exchange Theory	Organizational support creates reciprocal employee behavior	Theoretical explanation

Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that work flexibility is an important organizational strategy for improving employee performance in digital companies, but its effectiveness depends largely on employees' job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements provide employees with greater autonomy, better work-life balance, and stronger perceptions of organizational support, all of which contribute to higher satisfaction and ultimately enhance individual performance. The literature review also confirms that job satisfaction functions as a key mediating variable that explains the mechanism through which work flexibility influences employee performance. Therefore, organizations should not rely solely on flexible work policies but should also create supportive work environments that foster employee

satisfaction. The study contributes to the literature by extending the understanding of the relationship between work flexibility, job satisfaction, and employee performance within the context of digital companies through the perspective of Social Exchange Theory. From a practical standpoint, managers should integrate flexible work arrangements with supportive leadership, effective communication, digital collaboration tools, and employee well-being initiatives to maximize organizational outcomes. Future research is encouraged to validate these findings through empirical studies involving different industries, organizational sizes, and cultural contexts to strengthen the generalizability of the proposed conceptual framework.

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