

Research Article

The Influence Of Flexible Working Arrangements – Working From Home And Telecommuting On Working Performance, Mediated By Motivation And Work-Life Balance

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Abstract

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a vast number of workforces have been forced to work from home in flexible working arrangements (FWA). The implementation of such policy has never been performed on a massive scale and has given a unique opportunity for research endeavor on the topic, especially how it relates to performance. This paper investigates the impact of flexible working arrangements towards performance, with motivation and work-life balance as mediating variables. This situation is considerably interesting to be studied comprehensively, especially how the FWA policies (particularly telecommuting or WFH) affect work motivation, work-life balance, and employees' work performance in Indonesia, especially during this unparalleled pandemic. A Convenient sampling designed deemed to be appropriate for this study as majority of the workforce adopted the policy of working from home due to the pandemic. This study also adopted the analysis of PLS – SEM for hypothesis testing. From a total of 232 respondents, who met the criteria to respond to 45 questions, the

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researchers managed to analyze and conclude the three hypotheses that need to be proven. First, attitudes towards FWA (especially WFH and telecommuting) during the Covid-19 pandemic positively and significantly affects employee's performance in achieving targets set by the company. Second, work motivation acts as a moderator in the correlation of FWA policy attitudes and work performance. Third, work-life balance acts as a moderator to attitudes toward FWA policies and work performance.

Keywords: *flexible working arrangements, working from home, work performance, work motivation, work-life balance, Covid-19*

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, which began at the end of 2019 and lasted through 2020, took everybody off guard globally. The Indonesian government even declared this pandemic as a national disaster, which introduced numerous regulations that explicitly asked the public to carry out health protocols and work from home (WFH). This work system itself is not an unusual concept. For decades it is commonly known as Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA), where there is flexibility in working, which is no longer being limited by certain working hours or performed in a specific workplace. Working can be conducted anytime and anywhere.

Research conducted in developing countries has provided an overview of the relationship between FWA and organizational performance. As stated by Mungania, Waiganjo, and Kihoro (2016), the consideration of FWA to workers can substantially impact their organizational efficiency in the banking industry. It is also reinforced by Wassem (2017), who argued that flexible working hours have a significant influence on increasing organizational productivity. Other research conducted by Oludayo et al. (2019) in the banking industry has also identified that if organizations support employees by creating a comfortable work-life balance for employees, it will motivate them to deliver better performance.

Numerous studies have further explored the relationship between FWA with several variables such as turnover intentions, work engagement, psychological health related to anxiety or depression, level of attendance/absenteeism, work productivity, increased company profitability, job satisfaction, etc. Timms et al. (2015) discovered a reversed association between the use of FWA and employees' job participation. In this research, there are no results demonstrating consistency between the implementation of FWA and work engagement. However, Timms et al. (2015) realized that the results of the study were strongly influenced by external factors that could not have been predicted, such as the Global Financial Crisis in Australia in September 2008. At that time, there was a massive reduction of human power, up to 150,000 workers. Hence, these findings might produce bias whether the involvement of employees was purely due to implementation of FWA or fear of being dismissed during the crisis. Other surveys were also performed to determine the correlation of flexible working hours to employees' satisfaction and employees' retention rate or turnover. Al-Kasasbeh (2016) indicated that the perception of workers in organizations is reasonably high regarding satisfaction in working for an organization implementing flexible working

hours, especially on incentives and compensation received, promotion, and opportunities in decision making.

However, slightly different findings argued by Klindzic & Maric (2019) establish that FWA is primarily in the form of employer-driven (such as working on weekends, working shifts, working overtime, etc.), almost always has a negative impact when it comes to organizational performance. Meanwhile, FWA is considered beneficial for employees (employee-driven) such as working from home, working part-time, compacted working week, flexi-time, etc., was believed to have a positive influence on organizational performance. Research conducted by Avgoustaki and Bessa (2019) examined how the effect of FWA when centered on workers and also in companies associated with an increase in work effort. Their research found that the implementation of FWA, centered on workers, resulted in a negative relationship because the FWA policy was taken for granted by workers and was not considered the company's "good intention". And interestingly, the adoption of company-centered FWA also produced a negative relationship.

Based on the findings of several previous studies above, there is evidence that further research about FWA still needs to be studied more comprehensively, especially in Indonesia. The outcomes on slightly different results seem to require further research in providing a clearer picture. Therefore, this study is interested in examining the impact of implementing FWA (telecommuting in particular) in Indonesia from workers' point of view, both working in companies that had implemented this policy before the pandemic and from companies that were very much obliged to implement this policy due to the pandemic (started approximately in March or June 2020). The force majeure due to pandemic causing almost everybody needs to perform WFH opens up a new area for researchers to study systematically. Specifically, how FWA policies, especially telecommuting, affect employees' work motivation, work-life balance, and efficacy in Indonesia.

This research would address these following questions: (a) Whether FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) have a positive effect on improving work performance? (b) whether work motivation have a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) towards work performance? and (c) whether work-life balance would have a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) and work performance?

Literature review

2.1 Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)

In recent times, more and more companies have started to implement flexible working arrangements (FWA) to maintain productive human capital in their companies. Aligned with Carless and Wintle (2007), companies are more appealing for potential employees when offering flexible options, such as flexible working hours, career paths, and telecommuting. A similar opinion was expressed by De Cieri et al. (2005), where policies designed to increase employee autonomy, work integration, and non-work life will be of benefit to the organization.

Essentially, FWA policy is not a new course of action, as Sullivan & Lussier (1995) indicated that flexibility in working hours already become popular in the early 1970s (Pandiangan, 2018). This is also coherent with the growth of industries that support FWA facilities, such as the co-working space industry and Internet Service Providers. According to Orel's (2019) report, facilities such as co-working spaces are supported by work-life balance. The increase of internet users that has reached 64% in 2018 (according to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association, APJII) has also made this option more available.

Simanjuntak, Mustika, and Sjabadhyni (2019) stated FWA as the option provided to employees by companies or organizations to decide their work schedules and location. It is fairly unique because, according to Oludayo et al. (2019), universally, there is no definite definition of FWA. Timms et al. (2015) specified that through FWA implementation, employees have the flexibility to manage their hours, patterns, and/or work locations responsibly and can balance demands from various domains such as work and family life. Possenried and Plantenga (2011) suggested three FWA categories, namely schedule flexibility (scheduling), location flexibility (telecommuting), and time flexibility (flexible time). For 2 (two) of the FWA categories above, it is described in detail by Allen, Golden, & Shockley (2015) as follows:

1. Telecommuting. With the assistance of technologies, workers are given the flexibility to work from other places/locations other than their regular office or workplace (for example, working from home, co-working spaces equipped with room, computer, and internet facilities).
2. Flexible time. The flexibility given by the company to employees to set working hours (when to start and finish work) outside of the fixed working hours applied by the company.

The Singapore Ministry of Community Development and Sports (2002) described telecommuting as an arrangement that enables employees to work from places that are not traditional offices, such as their homes, satellite offices, or neighborhood work centers.

Impact of FWA Implementation

Various research has been made focusing on FWA implementation impacts within companies. A study by Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard (2014) mentioned how employees' productivity is positively influenced by FWA, resulting in higher organizational profits. Additionally, Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard (2014) stated that FWA affects the increase of job satisfaction, work commitments, balanced work-life, and encourages work performance.

As being proposed by Gajendran, Harrison & Delaney (2015), although telecommuting imposes performance and social cost, it also provides significant social benefits to workers. The research found how telecommuting is linked to better tasks and contextual efficiency and contributes to a better social atmosphere for work. Moreover, results suggest that the damaging effects of telecommuting, as anticipated by managers, were not being materialized in their sampling frame.

2.2 Work Performance

In the business world, individual performance greatly affects a company's performance. However, in reality, not all companies can manage human resources appropriately to produce an effective contribution to the company (Satwika & Himam, 2014). Furthermore, Satwika & Himam (2014) defined performance as a combination of abilities and traits, effort, and support measured through the results of production or work that an individual has achieved. In relation to performance, Ningsih (2017) claimed that individuals' expertise, experience, seriousness, and time affect their ability to fulfill tasks and achieve results.

Relationship between FWA and Work Performance

Various researchers have been interested in probing the relationship between FWA and performance. They have presented different results, one of which is the research of De Menezes & Kelliher (2011), indicating that FWA has both direct and indirect contribution on individuals and/or organizational performance improvements, positively impacting the business (Baptiste, 2008; O'Reilly, 2008; Verbakel and DiPrete, 2008). Similarly, Ortega (2009) found that FWA and performance are positively associated. Avgoustaki & Bessa (2019) acknowledged that employees working flexible hours tend to work more intensively and longer compared to employees with regular working hours, hence positively impacting their performance. Furthermore, Wulandari and Liestiwati (2016) concluded that flexi-time positively and substantially affected employees' performance at P.T. Pertamina's Head Office

and stated that greater employee flexibility resulted in greater performance and vice versa. Another study discovered how FWA and increased performance, as well as satisfaction and employee retention, are positively related (Al-Kasasbeh, 2016). Contrary to those studies, Kattenbach, Demerouti & Nachreiner (2010) found no significant influence between the two dimensions of the structure of flexible working times, namely time-autonomy and time-restrictions on performance. Wulandari & Liestiawati (2016) further argued that FWA has a negative effect on performance due to disruption of communication and cooperation between work partners working at different times. From the above explanation, the first hypothesis is developed as follows:

H1: FWA policies have a positive effect on improving work performance

2.3 Work Motivation

Motivation is defined as the reason to generate enthusiasm or impetus to work for an individual or group to achieve goals. In the business context, work motivation is a condition that encourages employees to achieve goals that are relevant to company goals. Permana (2010) posited that a person tends to work more enthusiastically when he is satisfied with his job, and this feeling of satisfaction further increases the potential for achieving high productivity and work motivation. Employees' productivity is determined by motivation, job satisfaction, level of stress, physical work environments, compensations, job design, economic, technical, and behavioral factors (Ningsih, 2017). Furthermore, Mills et al. (2006) mentioned that job motivation refers to individuals' intention to exert optimum efficiency on their tasks to gain success in the work role. Furthermore, Talukder and Saif (2014) quantified several factors that can motivate people in the workplace, including rewards, job characteristics, salary, work environment, appreciation, training and growth, job security, performance appraisal, promotion, and leadership.

The Effect of Motivation in mediating the Effect of FWA on Performance

Several studies have sought to understand how the relationship between FWA and employee motivation and whether it has a negative impact or vice versa. Pandiangan (2018) found that the implementation of flexible working hours to drivers is noticeably effective; they feel comfortable and enjoy work, resulting in productivity, enthusiasm, and work motivation increase. Avgoustaki & Bessa (2019) highlighted that flexibility is an inducement given by companies or organizations, as part of social exchange, to increase motivation and performance. Whereas Stavrou and Ierodiakonou (2016) discovered that workers with a fervent sense of ownership lean on exhibiting low motivation and interest, as well as presenting reciprocal attitudes.

Another study analyzing the indirect relationship between FWA and work motivation was carried out by Berkery et al. (2017) using the profitability approach. It was explained that when modeling the link of human resource management practices, FWA and performance, they are meant to increase the commitments and motivations of employees, further affecting the individual and organizational performance. It is determined that intrinsic motivation drives work autonomy and quality, and employees with high intrinsic motivation will have a positive association (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2011). Therefore, the second hypothesis that will be analyzed is as follows:

H2: Work motivation has a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies and work performance

2.3 Work-Life Balance

An effective method used by organizations in enabling an improved balanced work-life is through the use of FWA. Work-life balance is the state of attraction (balance) of two demands, i.e., work and personal life (Lockwood, 2003). Work-life balance can be referred to as flexible work agreement (FWA) that allows parents or non-parents to benefit these agreements in balancing their work and personal commitments (Redmond, Valiulis & Drew, 2006). A similar definition is presented by Parkes & Langford (2008), suggesting individual's ability to fulfill commitments of work and family. Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) provided a more detailed concept of balanced work-family, consisting of three components: time balance (equal time between work and family roles), commitment balance (equal psychological involvement in work and family roles), and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family roles).

Within the past decades, work-life balance has been essential for companies and employees, and contributes to the increase of employees' productivity and positively affecting the performance of the organization (Guthrie, 2012). Wulandari and Liestiawati (2016) acknowledged how flexible work arrangement facilitates balanced work-life, with many companies implementing it. However, due to a measurement tool to determine work-life balance was designed in 2001 by Fisher, there are limited scientific research with proofs.

The Effect of Work-Life Balance Mediation on the Effect of FWA on Work Performance

Several researches were referred to better understand the relation between work-life balance and performance. Pandiangan (2018) indicated that employees' performance is significantly linked to work-life balance, therefore employees with high work-life balance tend to perform better. Kamau et al. (2013) also found a positive correlation between work-life balance and performance. Furthermore, Maurya et al. (2015) discovered how significantly effective work-

life balance is toward job satisfaction and work performance. One the contrary, Wulandari and Liestiawati (2016) discovered that flexitime had little impact on employees’ work-life balance at PT. Pertamina's Head Office. However, work-life balance is found to be positively and significantly effective toward employees’ performance. This result is also obtained when work-life balance is regarded as an interfering variable with a positive yet insignificant relation to employee efficiency. Additionally, Franksiska & Bomba (2018) with a special research aim for women, showed that the existence of flexible working hours’ arrangements in a company, can indeed provide a balance in the arrangements between life and work. However, contradictory results by Ronda, Ollo-Lopez, and Goni-Legaz, (2016) suggested that flexibility essentially caused an increase in working time, which in turn causing a decrease and insignificant effect towards work-life balance. Hence, the following is the third hypothesis to be evaluated:

H3: Work-Life Balance has a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) and work performance

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Model

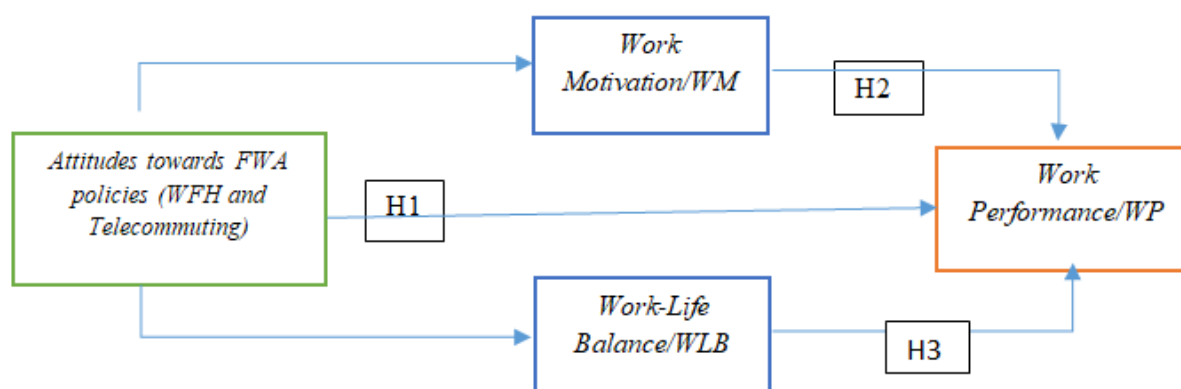


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

This study incorporates the theoretical framework from previously mentioned literature reviews, with variables such as FWA as independent variables, work performance as the dependent variable and work motivation and work-life balance as mediating variable 1 and 2, as depicted in Figure 1 above.

3.2 Methodology

The aim of this analysis is to assess the impact of FWA on enhancing work efficiency, along with the mediating effect of employees’ work motivation and work-life balance with the correlation of FWA policies and work performance. In practice, this study was conducted in

natural conditions where intervention from the researcher is minimal. Moreover, it is carried out in the natural environment of the subject under study, such as companies or organizations that have or are implementing FWA policies, specifically WFH and telecommuting. The unit of analysis is individuals or employees in general whose companies or organizations currently practicing FWA. The time frame for this analysis is cross-sectional, whereby data will be gathered at a particular point in time.

During this study, the researchers targeted all employees working with companies or organizations currently implementing FWA policies as relevant research populations. Parameters to be observed from this population the implementation of FWA, performance, work motivation, and work-life balance. This study has no sampling frame because of the immense population size of various industries and employee backgrounds that are currently implementing FWA due to the pandemic. As for the sampling technique, non-probability sampling was selected using a convenient sampling method with screening questions before considering any data. The target sample size was taken based on Hair et al. (2014), which stated that the minimum absolute sample for factor analysis is 50, with the desired ratio of 5 observations per variable. However, due to the significant interest in the topic, larger sample size was aimed to accommodate the possibility of non-returning respondents. Data collection was performed using Google Form which was distributed during the month of August 2020. The questionnaires were distributed using several WhatsApp Group to speed up the data collection process.

This research obtained primary data through participants completing a 45-questions questionnaire, with each variable adopted from existing literature. The response uses 5 (five) Likert Scale; 1 (strongly disagree), 2(disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). The independent variable FWA questions were adapted from Giannikis and Mihail (2011). The work motivation mediation variable was modified from Gagne et al. (2010), and the question for the second mediating variable, work-life balance, adapted from Brough et al. (2014) and Haar (2014). The items containing performance, as the dependent variable, were adopted from Koopmans et al. (2014). Final data analysis was processed using Structural Equation Modeling SmartPLS 3.2.8.

Research Analysis (Findings)

Population and Sample

The study's population consists of all employees from a company that has or is currently incorporating FWA policies (WFH and telecommuting). From 252 individuals who took part in the survey, 232 participants were further analyzed.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 - Demographic Data of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	168	72.4
	Female	64	27.6
Age	20 s/d 35 years old	107	46.1
	35 s/d 50 years old	108	46.6
	> 50 years old	17	7.3
Latest Education	SMA/MK	7	3.0
	D3 (Diploma)	9	3.9
	Bachelor degree or higher	216	93.1
Current Position	Staff or equivalent	78	33.6
	Supervisor or equivalent	47	20.3
	Assistant Manager or equivalent	29	12.5
	Manager or equivalent	66	28.4
	Director or equivalent	12	5.2

The demographic data determines the main attributes that consist of gender, age, latest education and current position in the organization. These are respondents’ main attributes, as shown in Table 1.

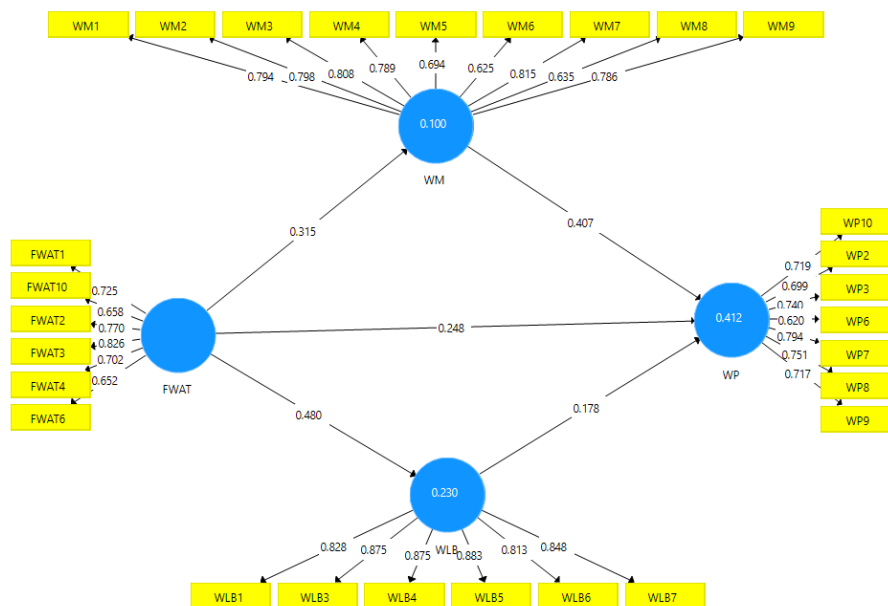


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity needs to be performed, especially involving latent variables, to minimize the possibility of multicollinearity. Discriminant Validity analysis was carried out by referring to the Fornell-Larcker criteria (M R Ab Hamid et al. 2017). As required, all values on the diagonal are higher than all non-diagonal values, which means that this model

meets the requirements of Discriminant Validity. The image shown in Figure 2 shows the structural equation of the final model.

Hypothesis Testing Results

1. Testing of Hypothesis 1

The focus of this research is the impact of FWA (WFH and telecommuting) on performance improvement. To test the predetermined hypotheses, the Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was implemented, and results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Path Coefficient - Direct and Indirect Effect

Path	Path Coeff. Original Model (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
FWAT → WLB	0.480	0.066	7.255	0.000
FWAT → WM	0.315	0.070	4.503	0.000
FWAT → WP	0.248	0.069	3.613	0.000
WLB → WP	0.178	0.067	2.641	0.008
WM → WP	0.407	0.056	7.239	0.000
FWAT → WLB → WP	0.085	0.032	2.637	0.008
FWAT → WM → WP	0.128	0.033	3.839	0.000

The mediator and dependent variables are affected by each independent variable (FWAT, WLB & WM) and are shown in Table 5, with (WLB, WM and WP) showing a statistically significant effect. As shown in table 5, the relationship between FWAT towards WP were found to be significant (t value : 3.613, p: .05), hence hypothesis 1 (FWA policies have a positive effect on improving work performance) is firmly supported.

2. Testing of Hypothesis 2

The effect of work motivation as a mediator to the relationship between FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) on work performance is a relationship that will be tested in Hypothesis 2, with the Path Coefficient results for direct and indirect effects exhibited in Table 5. To test the mediation effect in this model, a mediator analysis was carried out by referring to the A Three-Variable Non-recursive Causal Model scheme developed by Zhao, X et al. (2014), as shown in Figure 3.

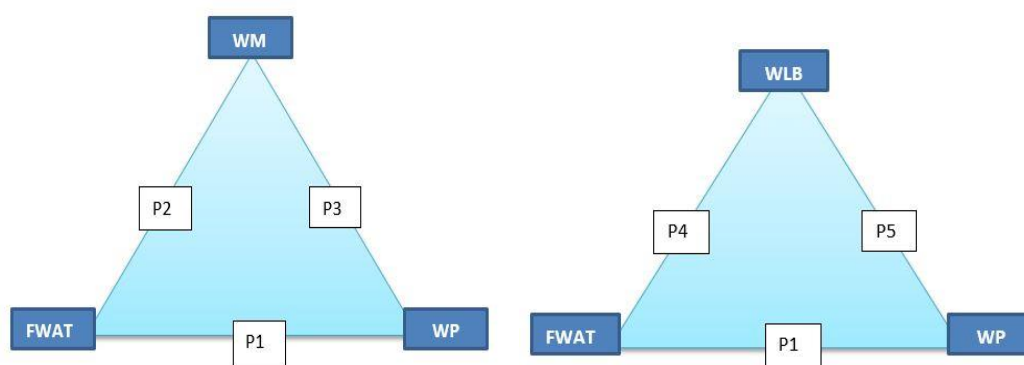


Figure 3. H2 & H3 Mediator Analysis Schematic Model

The indirect effects of P1 and P2 * P3 both indicated significant values, so P1 * P2 * P3 was calculated. Next, a positive value of P1 * P2 * P3 was achieved so that the relationship formed a complementary mediation. The existence of a mediating effect on this relationship concluded that is accepted. As shown in table 5, the direct effect (P1, t: 3.613) and the indirect effect (P2*P3; 4.503*7.239 = 32.597), both were found to be significant (p < .05). Further analysis of P1*P2*P3 with value of 117.773 had shown positive value which indicated that the relationship is a complementary/ partial mediation. This conclusive evidence showing the effect of mediation supported the 2nd hypothesis which suggest that Work motivation has a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies and work performance.

3. Testing of Hypothesis 3

Work-life balance mediates the correlation of FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) on work performance is a relationship that would be tested in Hypothesis 3, with the Path Coefficient results for the indirect effect displayed in Table 5. Results indicated how there are significant values from the indirect effects of P1 and P4 * P5; hence further calculation for P1 * P4 * P5 was being performed. The final results show a positive value P1 * P4 * P5, which means that the relationship is complementary mediation. The existence of a mediating effect on this relationship suggested that is accepted. As shown in table 5, the direct effect (P1, t: 3.613) and the indirect effect (P4*P5; 7.255*2.641 = 19.161), both were found to be significant (p < .05). Further analysis of P1*P4*P5 with value of 69.228 had shown positive value which indicated that the relationship is a complementary/ partial mediation. This another conclusive evidence showing the effect of mediation supported the 3rd hypothesis which suggest that Work-life balance has a mediating effect on the relationship between FWA policies and work performance.

Discussion

The study's results revealed that attitudes toward FWA (particularly WFH and telecommuting) during the Coronavirus pandemic have a positive and substantial effect on employees' performance. It is similar to studies by Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014), who concluded that FWA positively employees' productivity. Interestingly, Gajendran, Harrison & Delaney (2015) determined that the implementation of FWA has a negative impact resulting in family tension. The lack of distinctions between work and home is the primary cause of work-family tensions and counterproductive behaviors. Diverse conclusions could be likely due to the various contexts of the studies concerned, especially that this study was carried out in extraordinary conditions during a global pandemic.

Avgoustaki & Bessa (2019) found that flexibility in work is an inducement given by companies or organizations as part of social exchange to increase motivation and performance. Similarly, Dysvik and Kuvaas (2011) contended how the perception of work autonomy and efficiency is positively affected by inherent motivation. Those two previous studies support the findings of this research, in which work motivation mediates the relationship between attitudes on FWA policies (especially WFH and telecommuting) towards performance. This might happen due to a pandemic situation, where employees' concern about the potential to be exposed to the virus is reduced since they can work from home and enjoy more time with family. Therefore, they are motivated to show their best abilities, despite the lack of supervision from their superiors. In addition, the working environment at home is more relaxed, not bound by certain working hours, without a competitive atmosphere with coworkers and excessive pressure, which usually happens at the office's regular work setting, which ultimately encourages employees to remain productive and maintain their performance.

Regarding the third hypothesis, Redmond, Valiulis, and Drew (2006) stated that work-life balance is a flexible work arrangement (FWA) that enables parents or non-parents to utilize this arrangement to gain balance from their professional and personal obligations. Furthermore, Maurya et al. (2015) confirmed that work-life balance has a significant impact on job satisfaction and employees' efficiency. These two studies support the finding of this study that showed the relation of FWA (particularly WFH and telecommuting) and work efficiency being facilitated by work-life balance. This was fairly possible because employees found it easier to balance their role as workers and their role in the family during the pandemic. In addition, the family environment that commonly provides positive support at home is one of the reasons affecting employee performance improvement.

Conclusion

As initially stated in this report, this study aims to determine the effects of flexible working arrangement (FWA) implementation toward employees' performance and a mediating impact on the relation of work motivation and work-life balance. This research was conducted by analyzing 232 respondents working for companies that are currently implementing FWA. This study found that employee performance inclines to increase in line with their attitude when working with Flexible Working Arrangement during the Coronavirus pandemic. This research also found that employees' work motivations and balanced work-life balance are moderated by the association of FWA and work performance.

This research was conducted in a particularly unusual crisis, which is during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Future research exploring the effect of this relationship should be conducted under normal conditions or perhaps in a non-pandemic crisis.

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