



A Descriptive Study of Work-life Integration on Full-time Employees Implementing Flexible Working Arrangements

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Highlights

- Successful implementation of flexible working arrangements is influenced by the employees ability to integrate work and life.
- The ability to integrate work and life has been proven to be crucial in a flexible working arrangement.
- High WLI (Work-Life Integration) levels showed reduced mental health; high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.
- Indonesian employees who are implementing flexible working arrangements prioritize the quality of their work lives over the quality of their personal lives.
- Certain age groups are more suitable to adapt to a flexible working arrangement.

Abstract

Flexibility in the workplace is one of the big changes we have seen in the post-pandemic world of work. Unfortunately, this new system is still poorly understood. As suggested by the spillover theory, one of the consequences is that the boundary between work and personal life will be a blur. Hence, the exploration of this issue is essential to be explored to help organisations to implement favourable policies accordingly. The aim of this study is to explore work-life integration (WLI) on full time employees implementing flexible working arrangement (FWA). This study utilised a quantitative approach, in which an online questionnaire using the Work-Life Boundary Enactment Scale was sent to 122 full-time employees, aged 21-50 years old, who are actively implementing FWA. Work-life integration levels were evaluated by age groups, genders, length of FWA implantation, work from office frequency. Among 122 respondents, 109 were eligible for data processing. Overall, the result indicated that the level of WLI for full-time employees implementing FWA was average ($M=4.14$). Though it is worth noting that the work-to-life segmentation ($M=4.55$) is higher than life-to-work ($M= 3.73$). Furthermore, we found that for work-to-life segmentation was higher for Gen Y, employees who have been implementing FWA for > 1 year, and who go into work for <1 day, 2 days, 4 days per week. On the other hand, the significant findings we found in the other segmentation was that Gen X and employees who had WFO frequency for 1 day/week had low Life to Work levels. These results are hoped to give organisations a better understanding on employee's WLI to more effectively implement FWA.

Keywords: Work-life Integration; Flexible Working arrangements; Employees

INTRODUCTION

In this modernized world, individual differences are paid more attention. Things have gradually changed to be less restrictive and enabled more autonomy. This phenomenon doesn't exclude the world of work, especially those who work in corporate offices. Office work is closely related to fixed working hours and being physically present in the office. Usually, working hours start from 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays; depending on each company's policy. However, relatively new companies have started to adopt a more flexible working system, namely flexible working arrangement (FWA). FWA includes employees who are free to choose the time, place, and duration they are involved in matters related to work (Hill et al, 2008). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 supported this system to be implemented in order to maintain employee performance when limited by physical distancing. Studies examining this topic have also significantly increased in 2020.

FWA has a correlation with increased level of engagement and performance as studied by Conradie and Klerk in their study among South Africans software developers in 2019. This is supported by Weideman and Hofmeyr's (2020) study who found that FWA has a positive influence on employee engagement. Employee engagement is important because it is positively impacting organizational performance (Tanveer et al., 2020). Another study by Aziz et al. (2022) also found that FWA has a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction and productivity. Choi's (2019) study adds the effect of FWA on turnover, which found that lower voluntary turnover is found in organizations that support FWA for their employees. As such, FWA is crucial in influencing the company's performance, growth, and future.

Since the end of 2022, the pandemic has gotten better. Consequently, workers have been physically present in their office during work hours unlike how they previously implemented full work from home system during the pandemic. In that period of change, lots of workers and companies ended up implementing FWA as their work system to smoothen the adaptation process. When it was implemented, the boundary between work and life started to be difficult to see. It's further supported by the spillover theory which explains how emotions, attitudes, behaviors, and feelings from a person's professional and personal life can go beyond each domain's border (Staines, 1980). Unlike work-life balance which separates one's professional and personal life, work-life integration (WLI) combines them (Fallon-O'Leary, 2021). Thus, work-life integration becomes a more relevant construct to describe today's workers.

One of the studies by Panatik et al. (2022) that explored this matter among higher education staff found that those with higher WLI levels showed reduced mental health; high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Another study by Wepfer et al. (2017) focusing specifically on work-to-life integration enactment among German-speaking countries found that the more people bring work-related matters to life, the more they're exhausted and show low levels of work-life balance. When compared to those studies, the differences lie in the type of working arrangement, domicile, and context (this study is not limited by field of work). Other than that, despite the existence of those studies, there still hasn't been much research done studying WLI. Especially in Indonesia and on workers who applied FWA as their working system. Therefore, this study aims to give a descriptive analysis on work-life integration levels of workers who implement flexible working arrangements. This research was conducted with hopes to assist companies or workers in making strategies or policies so that FWA can be implemented more effectively. Apart from that, it is also hoped to help further studies which might learn more about its effect on other constructs, evaluation of its application, and so on.

METHOD

Study design

This is a descriptive study using a non-experimental quantitative method. The sampling technique used is non probability sampling with a convenience sampling category. In convenience sampling the participants are not given a limit to be representative, but still meet certain criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). Data collection was done by distributing online questionnaires using Google Form through social media (Instagram, Linked-In, etc.) and personal contacts. Data was collected for around three weeks from early April 2023. The questionnaire consists of five sections, namely (1) opening and informed consent, (2) participant's demographic information (such as name, age, gender, work durations, personal contact, and WFO (Work From Office) frequency), (3) items for the first dimension, (4) items for the second dimension, and (5) closing.

Participant

The study involved a total of 109 participants from originally 122 respondents. We excluded the remaining 13 respondents because they answered all questions with the same answer, currently working for more than four days a week, or didn't give their consent. Inclusion criteria includes full-time employees who implement a flexible working arrangement in their company. Participants consisted of men and women with ages ranging from 21 to 50 years old, which is divided into three generation groups based on the theory from Putra (2016). Generation X consists of people who were born in 1960-1980 (43-62 years old), generation Y in 1980-1995 (28-42 years old), and generation Z in 1995-2010 (13-27 years old). In addition, we also divide participants based on their work duration, into less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, and more than a year. Participants in this research are also classified into 5 different WFO frequencies, which are less than a day/week, a day/week, 2 days/week, 3 days/week, and 4 days/week.

Instruments

In this study, employees' level of work-life integration will be measured using the Work-Life Boundary Enactment Scale prepared by Wepfer et al. (2017). The purpose of this instrument is to measure how people currently manage the boundaries of their professional life and personal life. It's a combination of 16 positive and negative items divided into two dimensions, namely work-to-life integration and life-to-work integration with 8 items in each dimension. The work-to-life dimension measures how much a person involves their professional life to their personal life. On the other hand, the life-to-work dimension measures how much a person involves their personal life into their professional life. Participants will answer by choosing one of the seven Likert scales of polar statements, where they feel closest to reflect their behavior. Scoring technique includes adding up all the scores from two dimensions together. The higher the score, the higher the level of one's WLI (Work-Life Integration). Possible total score ranges from 16 to 112 points. As all items from this scale are polar statements, each likert scale from 1 to 7 shows statements that ranges from most unfavorable to most favorable to the dimension measured. This instrument of the Work-Life Boundary Enactment Scale prepared by Wepfer et al. (2017) that is adapted to Indonesian citizens and used in this study showed the Cronbach's alpha with a score of 0.789, indicating an adequate reliability level.

The first dimension's example items are as such, "I never work from home (1) - I often work from home (7)", "I never think about work matters during my time off (1) - I often think about work matters during my time off (7)", and "I never talk about work with people from outside of work (1) - I often talk about work with people from outside of work (7)". While the second

dimension's example items being "I have no personal items at my workplace (1) - I have many personal items at my workplace (7)", "I never talk about my nonwork life at work (1) - I talk a lot about my nonwork life at work (7)", and "At work I behave completely different than at home (1) - At work I behave the same way as at home (7)".

Procedure

This study begins with finding a phenomenon that is new and currently going on, then finding a variable that can best fit the phenomenon. After that, the researchers search for an instrument that can measure the variable and then construct the questionnaire using Google Form. And then, the questionnaire is then distributed to a considerable number of respondents for them to fill. This study used a convenience sampling technique, so respondents are mostly people around researchers who fit the inclusion criteria. The data is then collected, filtered for eligibility in Google Sheets, and processed in SPSS. The results are then analyzed and discussed to finally be concluded.

Data Analysis

In the research conducted, the data collected was analyzed using IBM SPSS version 25. The data obtained from the Google Form that has been filled out by the participants is inputted into Google Sheets to be filtered and then coded. After that, the filtered and coded data is entered into IBM SPSS version 25. This study begins with conducting a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to see the distribution of data. After that, the researcher continues with conducting a descriptive analysis that resulted in the average score of WLI and average scores of each dimension. Next, the researcher calculated the data based on the demographic information, namely gender, generations, length of FWA (Flexible Working Arrangement) implementation, and frequency of WFO (Work From Office) in a week, then analyzed the result. The researchers also did a reliability analysis to search for Cronbach's alpha value of the instrument using our 109 participants' data.

RESULT

Participant's characteristics

As depicted in Table 1 below, participants' demographic data consists of gender, age, length of FWA implementation, and WFO (Work From Office) frequency. The majority of participants consisted of females (62.38%), people from generation Z age 21-27 years old (43.12%), people who have been implementing FWA for more than a year (71.56%), and employees who come into the office two times a week (46.79%), followed by three times a week (30.28%).

Table 1.
Demographic Data

		N	Percentage	SD
Gender	Male	41	37.62%	0.85
	Female	68	62.38%	0.78
	Total	109	100%	
Age	Gen X	19	17.43%	0.79
	Gen Y	43	39.45%	0.74
	Gen Z	47	43.12%	0.82
	Total	109	100%	0.81
Length of FWA Implementation	< 6 months	6	5.50%	0.74
	6 months - 1 year	25	22.94%	0.76
	> 1 year	78	71.56%	0.82
	Total	109	100%	0.81
WFO Frequency	< 1 day/week	3	2.75%	1.14
	1 day/week	15	13.76%	0.52
	2 days/week	51	46.79%	0.76
	3 days/week	33	30.28%	0.82
	4 days/week	7	6.42%	1.4
	Total	109	100%	0.80

Data analysis

The result of the data analysis is adjusted to the aim of this study, which is to give a descriptive analysis on WLI (Work-Life Integration) levels on workers who are currently implementing FWA. Firstly, the researcher conducted a normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov to test whether the data is normally distributed or not. Normality test was carried out with SPSS application and the result stated that the data has a significant value .200 ($p = .200$) with sig. value $> .05$ or $p > .05$. So, it's concluded that the data in this study were normally distributed.

Table 2.
Descriptives Statistics

	N	Mean	Min	Max	Category
Total WLI	109	4.14	2.13	6.19	Medium
Work to Life	109	4.55	1.75	6.50	High
Life to Work	109	3.73	1.50	6.13	Medium
Valid N	109				

Based on Table 2, it was found that the level of Work Life Integration in this study is in the medium category ($M = 4.14$). The minimum score of WLI was 2.13, while the maximum was 6.19 as shown in the table. Even though the level of WLI in this study is in the medium category, the segmentations of WLI were found in the different categories. Work to life segmentation was found in the high category ($M = 4.55$), while the life to work segmentation was medium ($M = 3.73$).

Table 3.
Mean Hypothetic Categorization

Mean Hypothetic	Category
$X \leq 2.5$	Very Low
$2.5 < X \leq 3.5$	Low
$3.5 < X \leq 4.5$	Medium
$4.5 < X \leq 5.5$	High
$X > 5.5$	Very High

Categorization is based on hypothetical mean. Hypothetical mean can be found by computing the mean and range of this data. In this study, we divided the categorization into five categories: very high, high, medium, low, and very low. The hypothetical mean can be seen in the Result of categorization seen in Table 3.

Table 4.
Work Life Integration

		N	Mean Empiric	Category
Gender	Male	41	4.18	Medium
	Female	68	4.11	Medium
Age	Gen X	19	3.73	Medium
	Gen Y	43	4.22	Medium
	Gen Z	47	4.23	Medium
Length of FWA Implementation	< 6 months	6	4.11	Medium
	6 months - 1 year	25	3.94	Medium
	> 1 year	78	4.21	Medium
WFO Frequency	< 1 day/week	3	4.37	Medium
	1 day/week	15	3.97	Medium
	2 days/week	51	4.13	Medium
	3 days/week	33	4.17	Medium
	4 days/week	7	4.33	Medium

Based on the data on Table 4, all means are categorized as medium when compared to hypothetical mean, which ranges from 3.73 to 4.37 (medium category ranges from 3.5 to 4.5). The level of Work Life Integration on Full-time Employees who implement Flexible Working Arrangement based on their Gender, Age Group, Length of FWA Implementation, and WFO Frequency are in Medium Category. There are no significant differences between all the mean empirics in the data shown.

Table 5.
Work to Life Segmentation

		N	Mean Empiric	Category
Gender	Male	41	4.62	High
	Female	68	4.52	High
Age	Gen X	19	4.19	Medium
	Gen Y	43	4.77	High
	Gen Z	47	4.50	Medium
Length of FWA Implementation	< 6 months	6	4.50	Medium
	6 months - 1 year	25	4.33	Medium

	> 1 year	78	4.63	High
WFO Frequency	< 1 day/week	3	4.70	High
	1 day/week	15	4.47	Medium
	2 days/week	51	4.57	High
	3 days/week	33	4.50	Medium
	4 days/week	7	4.80	High

In the study, both male and female had High Work to Life Segmentation. However, it was found that Gen Y, employees who had work duration for > 1 year, and who WFO for <1 day, 2 days, 4 days per week had higher Work to Life Segmentation than the other groups in their categorization.

Table 6.
Life to Work Segmentation

		N	Mean Empiric	Category
Gender	Male	41	3.75	Medium
	Female	68	3.71	Medium
Age	Gen X	19	3.26	Low
	Gen Y	43	3.68	Medium
	Gen Z	47	3.96	Medium
Length of FWA Implementation	< 6 months	6	3.73	Medium
	6 months - 1 year	25	3.55	Medium
	> 1 year	78	3.78	Medium
WFO Frequency	< 1 day/week	3	4.04	Medium
	1 day/week	15	3.47	Low
	2 days/week	51	3.69	Medium
	3 days/week	33	3.85	Medium
	4 days/week	7	3.75	Medium

In the study both male and female had Medium Life to Work segmentation. Most of the categories are medium in Age, Length of FWA Implementation, and WFO Frequency. However, it was found that Gen X and employees who had WFO frequency for 1 day/week had low Life to Work segmentation.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we aimed to explore Work-Life Integration (WLI) on full time employees implementing Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA). The boundaries between work and life are blurring together and this new working culture needs to be explored further to help various organizations make the best policies for their employees. Overall, the result indicated that the level of WLI for full-time employees implementing FWA was average. Though it is worth noting that this isn't a result of an average balance of work-to-life and life-to-work segmentations. The differences suggest that in a mission of balancing work and life, employees are prioritizing quality of their working life rather than the quality of lifestyles.

Significant findings were found in the results of our work-to-life segmentation. Employees that have been working for more than a year ($M=4.63$) are more likely to take home their work-related matters. This group of participants could be described as seniors in implementing FWA. They have been implementing this system the longest and are more attuned with how they should integrate their life and work. Compared to other working schemes, FWA is most difficult to coordinate (Hopkins, 2023). When it comes to where they work and when, employees have a great amount of liberty to choose what works best for them. As stated by Bulger (2007), integration indicates how employees are able to balance their work and personal life. Not having the skills to be able to integrate the two restricts their thinking, feeling and behaviors in work and life. It is crucial that employees and companies implementing FWA discover the proper strategy to enhance their productivity. Based on the results of our study, it seems that employees are finding integrating work into their life an important aspect to keep the level of productivity needed in the company.

Furthermore, we found that employees from Gen Y ($M=4.77$) are the most likely to bring work related matters home. Referring to the views of Carmichael (2016), this generation has a martyr-like attitude in the workplace. This is consistent with our findings, where it seems that this generation are more willing to sacrifice benefits or integrate work related matters in their personal time to look like a more competent employee. This generation also is seen as being very ambitious, motivated, and entrepreneurial (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). These characteristics make them want to be seen as competent, fueled by the pure ambition of advancing their career path. Furthermore, this generation highly values flexibility in the workplace, hence why they don't hesitate integrating their work and life. Not only do they value flexibility, but they are far more than capable in adjusting and handling challenging tasks. This is due to this generation's experience in higher education, where it has been proven that compared to earlier generations their education system had a larger amount of stress (Shaw, Fairhurst, 2008). As we mentioned before, integrating work and life is crucial to the FWA system. The results of this study, entails that Gen Y is the most equipped to implement FWA, being the most flexible compared to the other age groups.

In regards to WFO frequency, we found that employees that are going into the office 4 days a week ($M=4.80$), 2 days a week ($M=4.57$), and none at all ($M=4.70$) were more likely to take home their work-related matters. It seems these groups of employees are not hesitating to integrate their work and life. On the other hand, we found that employees who were going into the office for 1 day a week were least likely to integrate their work and life. Past research found that employees post-pandemic prefer hybrid working; they do not wish to go full WFO and lose the WFH scheme as the work process they developed during the pandemic (Hopkins, 2023). It is important to note that while hybrid working seems to be the most desired scheme by employees, it is difficult to coordinate (Hopkins, 2023). Especially one that gives full flexibility to their

employees when they want to come into the office. Through the results from Hopkins (2023), it was recommended that there should be fixed frequency to go into the office but still with flexibility for the employees to choose the day. This scheme of FWA was shown to be more effective to coordinate compared to giving full flexibility. Our results could be taken into consideration for companies that are choosing the fixed frequency for their employees to go into the office.

From the results of the Life-to-work segmentation the only significant findings was that employees from Gen X ($M = 3.26$) were the least likely to bring their life into work. Gen X is generation is used to the culture and arrangements of pre-pandemic working arrangements. Being put into a flexible working arrangement is something fairly new for them. According to Otken (2013), research has found that integrating work and life has a negative effect on this generation's happiness. This generation values balance and boundaries between work and personal life. They also prefer a work scheme that can help contribute to their families and relationships (Joyner, 2000). This fixed idea of work life balance results in their reluctance to integrate their life and work. To put it more simply these theories support our results that suggest that this generation is the least suitable to implement FWA, being the least likely to integrate their work and life.

Overall, we found that employees in Indonesia are still average in their ability to integrate work and life when implementing a FWA. There are some categories of employees that do it better but they all still need to adapt and figure out the best way to efficiently work with this new system. Employees and companies can take more into consideration the results of our study to enhance their new working system. Although, it is important to acknowledge that this study still has its limitations. Limitations are due to the small sample size and cross sectional method. Implications from this study suggest that in future studies, researchers could involve other variables specifically on how WLI impacts how employees implementing FWA perform in the workplace and their well being. Other than that researchers could also dive more into the factors and antecedents of WLI itself.

CONCLUSION

The use of a more flexible working system, known as a flexible working arrangement (FWA) by relatively new companies has increased in this digital era. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 provided support for the implementation of this system in order to preserve employee performance while constrained by physical distance. This is supported by Weideman and Hofmeyr's (2020) study who discovered that FWA had favorable influences on employee engagement. According to a different study by Aziz et al., the pandemic has significantly improved after the end of 2022. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide a descriptive analysis of the levels of work life integration of people who use FWA.

According to the study's findings and data analysis of 109 participants ranging from 21-50 years old, it was found that the boundaries between work and life became blurred. The level of WLI (Work-Life Integration) for full time employees implementing FWA was found to be average and they prioritize the quality of their work lives over the quality of their lifestyles. Employees who have been employed for more than a year were more likely to bring work-related issues home, and Gen Y ($M = 4.77$) workers were the most likely to do so. Employees who came to work four days a week, two days a week, or not at all were more likely to bring job-related issues home. The least likely to combine work and life were those employees who only attended the office one day each week. Gen X workers were the least likely to integrate work and life, and doing so had a negative impact on their happiness. However, the study's limitations include its

small sample size and cross-sectional methodology. The implications of the study suggest that the researchers can involve another variable that focuses on the impact, factors, or antecedents of WLI, such as work performance and well-being. Other than that, companies should also carefully evaluate how FWA impacts work-life integration and that further research is required to address this issue properly.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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