Review Article

Implementing Workplace Flexibility – A Conceptual Literature

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Abstract - COVID-19 has changed many industries' approach to workplace management. Organizations are embracing flexible work arrangements to enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention in response to the evolving workforce dynamics and technological advancements. Many studies have revealed that organizations implementing remote workplace management have attracted top talent. This paper delves into the multifaceted strategies essential for effectively implementing flexible work policies across diverse organizational settings and the impact of implementing a Flexible Workplace on HR. Drawing from current research and best practices, the study underscores the significance of aligning employee preference with organizational objectives while navigating the complexities of remote work structures. Effective communication, providing training and support, leveraging the right tools, and regular evaluation and adjustment are the key components of implementing remote workplace management. This article also highlights the impact and challenges of organizations implementing flexible workplace management.

Keywords - Workforce management, Remote work, Implementation strategy, Human resource management, Hybrid work, information technology.

1. Introduction

COVID–19 has changed the way organizations implement workplace management. Remote work and Hybrid work are the two common types of workplace management that evolved post-Covid. According to McKinsey, there was a 49% rise in implementation of remote work during the pandemic [1]. Post Covid, the concept of the workplace is undergoing a profound transformation. With the change in technology, demographics, and the expectations from the workforce, the traditional notion of requiring a static physical environment is evolving into a more fluid and adaptable concept known as the flexible workplace. This evolution is empowering employees with the freedom to choose when, where, and how they work. The implementation of remote and hybrid work has been reflected in the many research articles.

In this article – we will talk about three aspects of Flexible Workplace Management in particular – First, Implementation Strategy, we will talk about all the different components needed to implement flexible workforce management. Second, will talk about the impact of flexible workplace management both from an organization and employee perspective. And finally, we will talk about the challenges in implementing flexible workforce management. The study aims to analyze the impact of flexible workplaces in the three areas listed. One limitation of the study is due to the nature of the data that will be used in the paper; data collected is not based on the primary study by the researcher; rather, it was data that has been readily available in different research papers and articles.

2. Literature Review

According to the American Heritage Time Use Study (AHTUS), the number of full work-from-home days was less than 0.5% of total workdays. According to the American Time Use Study (ATUS), the percentage was around 7% before 2019. During Covid – 19, it peaked at 61.5 percent. [2].

Year	Percentage of Remote Work to Total Full Days
1965	0.4
1975	0.6
1985	4.8
1995	2.2
2005	3.4
2015	6.8
2019-20	61.5

Flexible workplace can greatly increase employee productivity. A flexible workplace helps decrease commute time and spend more time getting things done. It also helps to increase employees' work-life balance and in turn, helps organization to retain the top talent [3].

Employers have great advantages of implementing Flexible workforce management – Increased Productivity, Diverse Talent Pool, and Reduced Turnover [4].

Flexible workplace implementation has its own challenges and barriers – A few of them include Performance Management, employee work-life balance, and impact on Human Resource Management for an organization. Most previous literature discusses the common challenges; this article includes the impact of additional challenges in an organization. Based on the impact and challenges, the future of the Flexible Workplace can be significantly high or low depending on whether we can tackle the challenges.
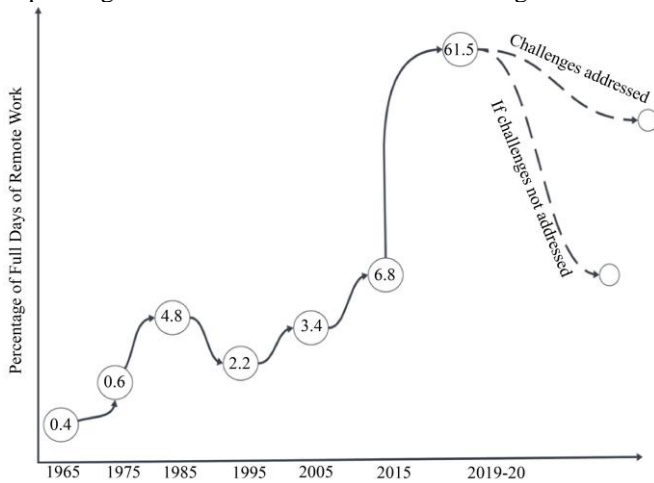

Fig. 1 Evolution of flexibility in workplace

3. Implementation Strategy

This section covers the right strategy for implementing a flexible workplace at an organization. Several components make up the strategy.

3.1. Flexible Workplace Type

Identify the right type of Flexible workplace. It is important to pick the right one as it can have an impact on both employees and the organization. For instance, picking remote work can help organizations save money by cutting the need for real estate, but it can have an impact on employees' mental health. Some common types of Flexible Workplaces are Remote Work and Hybrid Work.

3.2. Training and Guidelines

Once the right type is picked, employers must provide employees with the right training and guidelines to help them understand how the entire program works. Ensuring employees feel that these programs are built to support them is important.

3.3. Right Tools

Employees would need the right tools to perform their roles and responsibilities. Employers must provide the right tools for employees to carry out their duties successfully.

These tools include hardware tools like computer displays web cameras and software tools like Identity Access Management. One important tool that needs to be in place is the Time Tracking tool, which helps clock in and out for hourly employees.

4.4. Pilot Launch

It would be vital for the organization to run the program for a small group of employees and managers. It would help employers get feedback from the Pilot launch and take necessary steps before the organization-wide launch.

Review and Evolve – Constantly get feedback about the program from both employees and managers. Assess the feedback and draft a strategy to implement the solutions to enhance the experience.
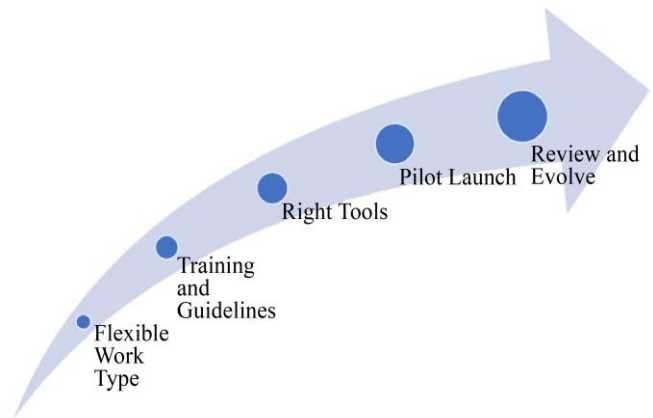

Fig. 2 Implementation strategy

4. Impact of Flexible Workplace

Most of the previous articles outline the impact of a Flexible Workplace from an organizational perspective. In this article, we will talk about the impact of a Flexible Workplace both from an employee as well as organizational perspective.

4.1. Impact on Employers/Organizations

Businesses would have a significant impact on successfully implementing a Flexible Workplace. Some of the major impacts are listed below.

4.1.1. Employee Retention and Reduced Turnovers

Effective Implementation of a Flexible Workplace can significantly impact attritions and talent retention. According to Buffer, a whopping 98% of respondents to a survey confirmed that they would like to work remotely or maybe hybrid. [5]

4.1.2. Better Talent Pool

With the implementation of a Flexible Workplace, an organization will have a better talent pool since there is no restriction on geography.

4.1.3. Increased Productivity

A flexible workplace allows employees to work remotely, allowing them more time by reducing their commute time. This, in turn, increases the productivity of the organization's employees.

4.1.4 Reduced Cost

A flexible workplace has a significant impact on an organization's financials. It saves large companies millions of dollars in terms of real estate needed to procure office space for all the employees.

4.2. Impact of Flexible Workplace on Employees

A flexible workplace has a positive impact on employees in many ways. This section talks about some of the most common impacts.

4.2.1. Increased Productivity

A flexible workplace improves employee productivity by reducing the time to commute to work and providing more time to focus. Most studies show that Flexible Workplace can significantly improve productivity.

4.2.2. Work-Life Balance

A flexible Workplace has proven to provide employees with a better work-life balance. Many organizations are adopting one of three work arrangements – Remote – allowing workers to work remotely 100% of the time, Hybrid – Allowing employees to work a part of their schedule from the office and working for the most part from the office. Having this flexibility helps the employee to balance their work and personal life accordingly.

Employee Benefits	Employee Benefits
• Increased Productivity • Work Life Balance	• Employee Retention and Reduced Turnovers • Better Talent Pool • Increased Productivity • Reduced Cost

Fig. 3 Impacts of flexibility workplace

While a Flexible workplace has many positive impacts on both employees and organizations, some challenges need to be addressed. The next section talks about the different challenges that need to be addressed in the future to increase the adoption rate of a flexible workplace.

5. Challenges of implementing Flexible Work

A flexible workplace, when implemented properly, has minimal challenges, as many would believe. If not implemented properly, an organization can experience many challenges. This section of the article talks about some of the challenges and appropriate measures to overcome them.

5.1. Impact on HR

HR is one instance that will be significantly impacted because of flexible work arrangements. From tax implications [6] to compliance and legal issues, there can be many challenges. Appropriate systems need to be procured to comply with all regulatory needs.

5.2. Team Bonding

Working in offices can help increase team bonding through regular in-person chats. This can be a problem when working remotely. Many video calling tools can help overcome these challenges in the current era. Implementing a semi-annual offsite team meet-up can help overcome this challenge as well.

5.3. Working Hours

Often, when working remotely, an employee doesn't have a hard stop on working hours and often works longer. Providing a regular schedule can help employees overcome this challenge.

6. Conclusion

Workplace flexibility fosters employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention. By offering flexibility in schedules and remote work options – companies can accommodate diverse needs, promote work-life balance, and attract top talent. Embracing flexibility also enhances resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges such as pandemics or natural disasters. Overall, prioritizing flexibility contributes to a positive organizational culture and ultimately drives success in today's dynamic work environment.

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