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Human Resources & Employment Relations

**ANTECEDENTS OF EMPLOYEE USE OF FLEXTIME ARRANGEMENTS:
POLICY AVAILABILITY AND WORKPLACE SUPPORT**

A Thesis in
Human Resources & Employment Relations

by
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ABSTRACT

While the benefits of flextime arrangements are well documented, we do not know enough about which factors encourage employees to use these arrangements to their fullest extent and which factors may prohibit employees using flextime. The aims of this study are to determine the factors that affect employee use of flextime arrangements. The study investigates four kinds of policy availability—no policy, informal policy, simple formal policy, and elaborated formal policy—and their impacts on employee use of flextime. Moreover, the study examines the effect of organizational support, managerial support, and coworker support on flextime use. Finally, this study tests whether there is joint effect between policy availability and workplace support.

The results show that in organizations in which formal or informal flexible policies exist, workers use flextime arrangements more frequently. More specifically, employee use of flextime arrangements is highest in organizations that have detailed formal policies, followed by organizations with simple formal policies. It is lower for organizations that have informal policies, and lowest for organizations that lack flextime policies. Moreover, findings suggest that when there is strong organizational support, workers use flextime arrangements more than when these conditions do not exist. Finally, organizational support moderates the relationship between policy availability and flextime use. This study contributes to a better understanding of how organizational policies and work environment enhance or inhibit the employee exercise of flextime arrangements.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Advances in technology and changing global economic conditions are reconfiguring a wide spectrum of work settings. For example, an increased number of organizations have adopted flexible work arrangements such as flextime, compressed working hours, part-time hours, and telecommuting in order to attract, motivate, and retain qualified employees (Almer, Cohen, & Single, 2003; Cohen & Single, 2001; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; Rau & Hyland, 2002). The National Study of Employers (2008) reported that nearly 79% of organizations allowed some employees to periodically change their starting and quitting times; 84% allowed some employees control over their break times; and almost 50% allowed some employees to work at home occasionally.

Previous studies suggested that organizational policies designed to promote work–family integration help to increase employees’ job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and job morale while decreasing stress, absenteeism, and employee turnover (Kelly & Kalev, 2006; Scandura & Lankau, 1997; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Nevertheless, access to flexibility does not necessarily ensure its use (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2005). The extent to which employees make use of flexible options may rely on the characteristics of the work environment and the needs of individual employees. Although some studies have examined the formal policies for flexible work arrangements and the extent to which they are available, little research has been conducted regarding how these policies work in practice or regarding the consequences to employees or companies of using them. Kossek and colleagues (2005) argued that flexibility varies from employer to employer, and that any given employer is likely to be flexible in different ways and to different extents to different employees—this latter point in particular is

underexamined in the literature. What employees actually experience is also yet to be determined. Furthermore, whereas many research studies have focused on the availability of formal flextime policies, research on the use of informal flextime policies remains underdeveloped issue (Eaton, 2003; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002). Therefore, it is important to examine flexible work arrangements not only as stated policies, but also as practices implemented in the workplace. While a majority of empirical studies have adopted an integrative approach to flexible work arrangements, some researchers argue that flexible work arrangements are heterogeneous in nature (i.e., flexible in time or flexible in place) and that each should be examined distinctly (Rau & Hyland, 2002). For example, Hill and colleagues (2001) separated the temporal and spatial dimensions of flexible work arrangements: temporal flexibility gives employees control over the scheduling of their work time and over the number of hours they work, while spatial flexibility allows employees to make decisions about where they work (Hill et al., 2001; Rogier & Padgett, 2004).

The present study focuses on the temporal dimensions of flexible work arrangements, that is, on flextime. I first reviewed prior research and interviewed both management and rank and file employees to investigate cases in which flextime had not been used to the extent expected by the company. In the light of data collected from the interviews, I examined the effects of flextime policies and work environment conditions on employees' use of flextime. This study contributes to the human resource management literature in several significant ways. First, it examines not only whether organizations provide flexible work options, but it also considers which employees actually use these arrangements. The study takes into account company policies that pertain to these options and the ways in which employees tend to use them (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Second, most studies identified the presence of flexible work options as a dichotomous variable (Kossek et al., 2006). Drawing upon past work, this study conceptualizes four conditions of policy availability and therefore provides a more fine-grained analysis of flextime

arrangements. Third, an important issue for organizations considering adopting flextime, and one that has received little attention in the literature, is how different organizational contexts may affect the ways and extent to which employees use flextime (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Glass & Estes, 1997; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). As individuals' perceptions and behaviors are influenced by organizational structures and processes, it is crucial to examine how workplace features influence the ways individuals respond to work structures and company policies. This study, therefore, explores three different sources of workplace support—organizational, managerial, and coworker—that affect flextime practices. The study also explores the moderating effects between policy availability and workplace support on the use of flextime arrangements.

In this study, I collected questionnaires from 153 respondents and conducted six face-to-face interviews with employees in a variety of occupations. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regressions were used to test the study hypotheses. The results suggest that policy availability is positively related to flextime use. Specifically, employee use of flextime arrangements is highest in organizations that have detailed formal policies, followed by organizations with simple formal policies. It is lower for organizations that have informal policies, and lowest for organizations that lack flextime policies. Moreover, findings suggest that when there is strong organizational support is present, workers use flextime arrangements more than when these conditions do not exist. Finally, organizational support moderates the relationship between policy availability and flextime use. Overall, the study's findings can provide employers with a better understanding of employees' needs, therefore, benefiting employees who especially need flextime and contributing to organizations' ability to recruit and retain talented people.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Flexitime enhances the temporal flexibility of human resources by replacing the traditional 9-to-5 work schedule with a variable work schedule (Hyland, Rowsome, & Rowsome, 2005). This study focuses on several types of flexitime: (1) alternative work schedule, (2) flexible scheduling, (3) variable day schedule, and (4) compressed workweeks. *Alternative work schedules* allow employees to select starting and stopping times within a given range of hours. Once selected, the hours are fixed until an opportunity to select different starting and stopping times is provided. *Flexible scheduling* allows employees to determine or change their work schedules within fixed “core hours” based on personal needs or on a daily basis. For example, an individual could start work at 7 a.m. and finish work at 3 p.m. to accommodate an appointment. Employees working in accordance with *a variable day schedule* each have a basic work requirement of 40 hours every week; however, they can vary the number of hours they work each day within the week. Employees working *compressed workweeks* can shorten the traditional five-day workweek by working longer-than-average daily hours, though the total number of hours that they must work per week or month remains the same. These four types of flexitime are all based on a fixed number of working hours within a certain period; yet, they each provide more flexibility for an employee than does the traditional 5-day working work wherein employees are required to work eight hours per day.

Many previous studies have found that the provision of flexitime is associated with positive organizational and employee outcomes such as productivity gains, lower quit rates, higher employee morale, and improved satisfaction at work (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). However, these studies did not adequately explore the flexitime

policies as they are actually implemented in the workplace; nor did they adequately consider the consequences of their use for organizations or employees. Findings from the National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998) indicated that there is a gap in percentages between the availability of flextime (45%) and the extent to which they are actually used on an as-needed basis (25%). These figures indicate that there is a significant discrepancy between the flextime policies provided to employees and their actual use of the benefit provided under those policies. That a discrepancy exists is clear, but the reasons employees are not using flextime more fully are uncertain.

Kossek (2005) suggested that future research on organizational policies should distinguish between policy availability and actual access by employees. Further, the use of flextime may differ based on the different kinds of flextime policies (i.e., informal policies, formal policies) (Eaton, 2003). Research has already suggested that policy implementation determines the actual utilization by employees (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). While effective or ineffective promotion of a flextime policy may be related to employees' actual use of that benefit, the policy itself, the extent to which and the ways in which it is promoted, and ultimately the employees' actual use of it owe much to the nature of the social environment (Ray & Miller, 1994). Thus, I also investigate organizational, supervisory, and coworker supports as they relate to flextime policies and use.

Policy Adoption and Availability

Flextime policies are officially sanctioned programs designed to help employees integrate paid work with other important life roles, usually approved by an organization's human resources department (Eaton, 2003; Kossek, 2005). The adoption of these policies formalizes and even

legalizes employees' access to a range of organizational programs that support the use of flextime work arrangements (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Therefore, the extent to which flextime is available is likely to depend on whether or not a formal policy approving it has been adopted. In this study, I propose the following four situations to explore the availability and the adoption of organizational policies in support of flextime arrangements.

The first situation is when organizations explicitly do not allow employees to participate in flextime arrangements. These organizations openly reject the legitimacy of flextime which allows employees to come and go as they please (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Employees have no right to exercise flextime options, and managers have no authority to provide any flexibility to their subordinates. Change of work schedules or hours is allowed only in rare cases with the approval of senior officials. Over time, employees develop the perception that they should not take time off to take care of personal or family needs. The "not allowed" situation provides the most restricted access to flextime. Therefore, I expect that the use of flextime options is lowest when an organization officially denies flextime policies.

The second situation is when organizations provide flextime options to employees through an informal policy. For example, companies may have ad hoc flextime arrangements that are not written down in any official human resources policy (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Compared to policies which openly restrict the use of flextime options, informal policies do provide some opportunities for employees to make flextime. Employees then do not have the right to flextime; yet their immediate supervisors may allow them to make such arrangements even though it is not formal policy (Eaton, 2003). Nevertheless, informal policies give immediate supervisors a great deal of capacity to allow or disallow flextime in response to the changing demands of the workplace (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Employees' actual access to flextime options depends on the nature of the job duties and how a supervisor wants to manage his/her subordinates. Therefore, decisions relating to flextime are decentralized and oriented to problem solving and to the

performance of the organization (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). In these instances, there are some opportunities for some employees to use flextime; yet, use may be limited, with employees having less access than they might like, because the extent to which flextime is available is at the discretion of their immediate supervisors.

Finally, some organizations establish formal flextime policies in order to explicitly protect managers' discretion to grant or deny requests for flextime (Eaton, 2003; Golden, 2009). The third and fourth situations of policy availability deals with two types of formal policies that allow for flextime: those that make simple statements explicitly granting employees' request for flextime, and those that have elaborate procedures for using flextime (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). The situation of simple policies is characterized by simple rules administered by human resources departments; as such, flextime is formally available as well as the rules are appeared, however, there are just simple and limited guidelines that an individual can follow. The latter kind of policies are characterized by detailed guidelines regulated by human resources departments; as such, they provide official rules for employees to adhere to. Formal rules are ways to promise equal treatment (Golden, 2009), define expectations, and even specify the limits of authority (Selznick, 1969). If formalized policies are firmly instituted in a workplace, that all employees have access to them will come to be taken for granted and will go unquestioned. Formalization of flextime policies could enhance the legitimacy of flextime arrangements (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Employees in the organization make more use of flextime benefits than those in organizations without formal policies because they are officially protected by rules that are clearly in place (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Compared to a formal policy comprising a few simple statements, elaborate guidelines are easy to follow in a step-by-step way for employees, and there are fewer concerns about whether they are violating the policy. Employees can find ways to make the best use of company policies to their own advantages. The elaborate formal policy, therefore, makes the availability of, the legality of, and the rules related to flextime clear to all members of an

organization. Therefore, employees' use of flextime under policies with detailed guidelines can be expected to be higher than their use of flextime under policies comprising only simple and limited guidelines (Golden, 2009).

Hypothesis 1:

Policy availability is positively related to employees' use of flextime.

Specifically, employee use of flextime time arrangements will be highest in companies with formal and elaborated flextime policies, second highest in companies with formal and simple policies, third highest in companies with informal policies, and lowest in companies without these policies.

Workplace Support

The fact that an organization allows flextime does not necessarily mean that employees can actually take advantage of them (Hill et al., 2001; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). Adopting these arrangements will not guarantee that the workplace will actually support their use (Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999). Therefore, differential factors that may influence the actual use of policies should be discussed (Kossek, 2005). The social dynamics of a work environment determine whether policies in an organization are available or easy to access. And, if a supportive work environment can alleviate an individual's stress level by providing emotional support, instrumental aid, and greater flexibility in regard to or control over one's work situation (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Swanson & Power, 2001), environmental context can be expected to be a determining factor in terms of the kinds of policies created and how they are promoted and in terms of employees' access to the benefits they could bestow.

The way flextime policies are enacted such as whether they are permitted by an organization or are under a supervisor's control is related to how these policies are accepted and used (Kossek, 2005). Further, since flextime policies are typically adopted at the company level, their actual implementation in the workplace may be affected by characteristics of the supervisors and coworkers (Kossek, 2005). Previous studies have found that one of the most crucial factors inhering in the success of a flextime policy is a supportive manager (Kossek, 2005); that is, managers can provide great assistance in implementing flextime and communicating the guidelines related to them to their subordinates (Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999). Employee use of flextime benefits often depends on a managerial cooperation (Schoorman & Champagne, 1994). Coworkers' attitudes also have an influence, one that is social in nature, on the use of flextime. By enacting group norms, coworkers exert a powerful influence on each other's thoughts and behavior (Hackman, 1992). Whether an employee's decisions to access them, therefore, are influenced by the social community in which the individual is embedded. The following sections examine the effects of organizational, managerial, and coworker support.

Organizational Support

Organizational support is defined as the degree to which an organization is concerned about the thoughts, values, and well-being of its employees (Eisenburger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Perceived organizational support has been found to be related to a variety of work-related outcomes (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997). However, empirical studies related to the influence of organizational support on the use of flextime are few. Researchers suggest that both employees' viewpoints and their behavior are reciprocally related to the atmosphere in an organization (Levinson, 1965). Organizational support could be regarded as constituting a kind of approval of individuals' behavior in a workplace (Eisenberger et al.,

1997). For example, an employee who receives little support from the organization may think that the organization has little regard for his/her well-beings, and therefore decides to withdraw from the original behavior such as using flextime frequently (Casper & Buffardi, 2004). Furthermore, this result explains why some individuals are unlikely to use benefits such as flextime even though they are provided by policy. In addition, if an organization supported certain action, it simultaneously conveys a perception that the action is the organization's responsibilities and obligations (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Once employees receive this perception, they therefore may regard the action (i.e., flextime) as a routine-like organizational practice. They further may make use of the action more willfully and frequently. Based on this argument, I posit that individuals who have received more organizational support tend to use flextime more.

Hypothesis 2:

Organizational support is positively related to the extent of to which employees use flextime.

Managerial Support

Perceived managerial support is defined as the degree to which subordinates consider managers to be helpful, supportive, and reliable, and the degree to which subordinates think that managers appreciate their contributions and care about their well-being (Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006). Managerial support is generally considered to be an important factor in an employee's appraisal of a work environment (Cole et al., 2006). Thus, employees will consider their interactions with managers as an important criterion when evaluating the organization's effects on their personal well-being (Cole et al., 2006). More specifically, I propose that a high level of managerial support will increase employees' use of non-standard policies such as flextime, in part

because employees use managerial support as a cue for evaluating manager's approbation of those policies. According to prior research, the degree to which flextime are available to employees depends significantly on the immediate supervisor's attitude—to both individual employees and to the policy itself (Powell & Mainiero, 1999). Even when there is a formal policy, flextime may be available only to favored employees, and only when managers decide to allow it (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). That is, how these policies work in practice is determined primarily by managerial direction (Friedman & Johnson, 1997). Hence, supervisors have considerable influence on the effectiveness of these programs. Some managers may not be supportive of requests for flextime because their personal beliefs and past experiences make them uncomfortable with it (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Powell & Mainiero, 1999). As a result, employees may need to negotiate with their managers to make such arrangements on an as-needed basis (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Even if an organization does not have specific programs or policies, managers can offer employees flexibility by informally supporting such options (Anderson et al., 2002). According to Thompson et al. (1999), managerial support appears to influence employee decisions to use family-friendly benefits. Arguably, as individuals acquire support from others to integrate flextime, the outcomes are more desirable when individuals have the full support of their managers. Flextime may be less useful when managerial support is low.

Hypothesis 3:

Managerial support is positively related to the extent to which employees use flextime.

Coworker Support

Coworker support is another source that may help an employee to get the most benefit from organizational policies. Support from coworkers can be emotional (Thompson & Cavallaro, 2006) and/or instrumental (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000). Coworkers can get advice and emotional support from each other in regard to work and personal problems. If the support were focused on helping an individual cope with competing personal demands, coworker support would alleviate the perceived pressure at work (Beehr et al., 2000). There are only a few findings, which are inconsistent, related to coworker support and workplace outcomes (i.e., stress level, emotional exhaustion) (Thompson & Cavallaro, 2006); however, according to Casper and Buffardi (2004), coworker support can be regarded as a psychological mechanism that influences individuals' behavior. According to Hackman (1992), by enacting group norms coworkers exert a powerful influence on each other. This influence could affect the actions and behavior strategies of people in the same workplace. More specifically, even when flextime is available, changing work schedules is still uncomfortable in many settings. For example, the an employee who uses a flextime benefit conferred by a policy may be regarded by other employees as signaling nonconformity, and such flextime may create exceptions for only certain employees in a workplace. This may contribute to feelings of inequity among other coworkers, especially for those who have to follow regular work hours (Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999). Therefore, individuals may be willing to use organizational policies such as flextime if they perceive a great deal of support from their coworkers. Otherwise, coworkers might constitute obstacles to the full use of flextime.

Hypothesis 4:

Coworker support is positively related to the extent to which employees use flextime.

The Moderating Effect between Policy Availability and Workplace Support

One advantage of flextime policies is that employees have the legal basis to decide how to practice flextime in reality. However, if the work environment discourages employees from accessing those policies, these advantages might be reduced. In other words, even if employees can use flextime in a workplace, those employees with less workplace support may be less inclined to request flextime than those who have a more workplace support. Beyond these direct effects, how workplace support influences the relationship between policy availability and the use of flextime is uncertain. I suggest that policy availability and workplace support jointly affect the frequency with which employees use flextime.

Flextime policies are typically adopted at the organizational level (Kossek, 2005). And, those organizations that have more formalized flextime policies can be expected to be more likely to encourage employees to use flextime to a high degree. While all employees do not take advantage of such arrangements on a daily basis, those who regularly use flextime policies are likely to have experienced affirmative organizational cues that encourage flextime use. According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), organizational support makes employees believe that the actions provided by the organization is the organization's obligation to aid employees as well as the organization's prospect to fulfill employees' needs. Furthermore, if the action was an organizational policy, this action should make an extraordinary contribution to employees' assessment of the usefulness of that policy. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that employees have heightened motivation to make best use of organizational policies and exercise flextime work options, when the organization provides full support to employee wellbeing.

Similarly, the relationship between policy availability and actual usage may also depend on managerial endorsement and support (Friedman & Johnson, 1997; Kossek, 2005). Managers interact with employees on a day-to-day basis; and they are in positions of authority such that

they have a direct impact on employees' behaviors (whether the employees use flextime arrangements or not). More than conveying opinions by situational cues and reinforcement, managers can explicitly express their thoughts and even use rewards and punishment to elicit desirable employee behaviors. A number of organizations reported that the actual practice of formal programs which adopted at an organizational level was according as a case-by-case situation (Anderson et al., 2002). In fact, the actual practice was determined mainly on managers' discretion on those programs (Friedman & Johnson, 1997). This finding reveals that employees may feel that an organizational practice become more useful if managers acted in a proper way toward that practice. Thus, no matter what kind of flextime arrangements a worker has access to, I propose that managerial support will interactively play a role in determining their behavior of using flextime eventually.

Furthermore, when at work, employees are embedded in a social community in which their coworkers play an important role (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). In a study of various communication patterns, supervisor and coworker relationships are strongly affiliated with a worker's behavior in an organization (Scott, Connaughton, Diaz-Saenz, & Maguire et al., 1999). That is, an employee's behavior might be easily influenced by other coworkers' attitudes. Even if there is a formal policy for using flextime, a person might feel comfortable to use it if his/her coworkers' reveal a positive attitude toward someone else' using flextime arrangement. In contrast, if coworkers put a negative attitude on using flextime, even there is a formal policy; an employee may decrease the intention to access flextime. It is because people generally would tend to avoid the actions that might contribute bad perceptions in someone else's mind. These arguments are in line with a majority of my interviewees' opinion. For example, one employee at a large research university indicated that coworkers' perceptions and attitudes were an influential factor in her decision to use flextime:

“I think that’s still the perception in the workplace is that just because you’re working different hours. The perception among other employees could be you are not working as hard or you’re kind of slacking off. I mean I certainly wouldn’t want that to be my reputation. I wouldn’t want people to think that I’m not working as hard just because I’m working at the different arrangement.”

Coworkers’ attitudes and perceptions apparently account for a big issue for employees’ decision of whether taking use of flextime or not. Hence, combine with a formal policy, employees’ flextime use may increase if they got coworker support at the same time.

In conclusion, as individuals acquire support from related parties as noted above to integrate flextime arrangements, the outcomes may be more desirable. When support in the workplace is high, either from the organization, managers, or coworkers, the relationship between policy availability and flextime use will be stronger. In contrast, the effect of policy availability on flextime use is weaker when there is a lack of workplace support. Hence, I posit that workplace support moderates the relationships between policy availability and the use of flextime.

Hypothesis 5:

Organizational support will moderate the relationship between policy availability and the extent to which employees use flextime. Specifically, policy availability will have a stronger positive relationship with the flextime use of employees with high organizational support than with those with low organizational support.

Hypothesis 6:

Managerial support will moderate the relationship between policy availability and the extent to which employees use flextime. Specifically, policy availability will have a stronger positive relationship with the use of flextime for employees with high managerial support than with those with low managerial support.

Hypothesis 7:

Coworker support will moderate the relationship between policy availability and the extent to which employees use flextime. Specifically, policy availability will have a stronger positive relationship with the flextime use of employees with high coworker support than with those with low coworker support.

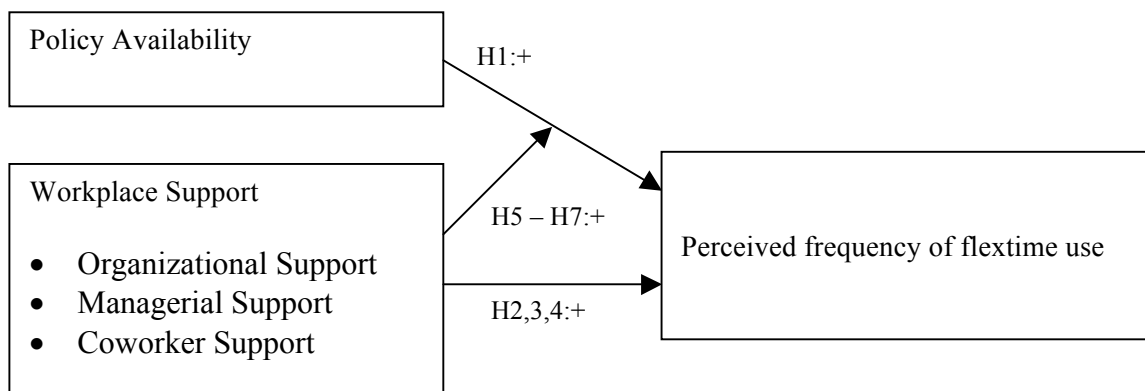


Figure 2-1. Conceptual Model.

Chapter 3

Methods

Research Design and Sample

The goal of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of employees' flextime use and how to improve employees' actual access to flextime. To develop a feasible questionnaire, I interviewed employees (with and without flextime in their company) to gain their thoughts on these organizational policies (see Appendix A). Using their feedback, I developed a survey instrument assessing constructs drawn from the existing literature.

Table3-1. Interview Data Collection.

Name	Principle responsibilities	Industry	Location	Research activities	Minutes of field work
1. P. D.	Coordinate the admissions (online programs)	University	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	20
2. M. W.	Assistant	Automobile	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	15
3. N. T.	Benefit, security (COBRA) judges	Government	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	20
4. A. P.	Dispatching Billing, pay roll, insurance records (HR), vehicle	Taxi company	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	15
5. L. P.	Supervise, assistant to the dean, HR staff	University	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	25

6. H. D.	Contract specialist	Retail	State College, PA	Face-to-face interview	30
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In order to obtain respondents from a variety of work contexts and ages, I recruited respondents from Penn State University as well as exploring individual friendship and family networks in the United States. All respondents received the same questions about their attitudes toward flextime. Tools included an in-person paper-based survey and an online questionnaire using a survey website (e.g., my3q.com). For the paper-based survey, a convenience sampling strategy was used to obtain subjects employed at the Pennsylvania State University. Internet-based surveys have advantages such as reducing costs, saving time, and increasing opportunities to access varied populations (Wright, 2005). However, it is noted that online surveys may lead to methodological problems such as doubtful information (Dillman, 2000; Stanton, 1998) and self-selection bias (Stanton, 1998; Thompson, Surface, Martin, & Sanders, 2003; Wittmer, Colman, & Katzman, 1999).

All participants were currently employed by an organization and were over 18 years old. I sent out 121 questionnaires in person and received 98 questionnaires from paper-based survey. Combine with online survey, a total number of 153 usable questionnaires were collected. The response rate for the paper-based survey is 81.0%. Ninety-eight respondents returned the questionnaire in person, while 55 completed the survey online. In my sample, 40 (26.1%) were male. Seventy-seven (50.3%) had one or more children and the average number of dependents was 0.42 person per respondent. Thirty-six (23.5%) were currently students at a university. In regard to their commuting time from home to work, 18 (11.8%) were within walking distance, 71 (46.4%) spent no more than half an hour commuting, 52 (34.0%) spent half to an hour commuting, 12 (7.8%) spent more than an hour commuting. I performed a set of t-tests to

compare the characteristics of respondents who completed the paper-based questionnaires with those who completed the web-based questionnaires (see Table 3-2). People who took online survey tended to report higher workload than people who took paper-based survey. For other variables, the results suggest that there is no statistical difference between these two subsamples.

Table3-2. Survey Sources Comparisons and T-test Results.

Variables	All respondents		Paper-based questionnaires		Online surveys		T-test	
	Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.	Mean	Std.	t-value	p-value
Male	0.2614	0.4409	0.2245	0.4194	0.3273	0.4735	-1.34	0.183
#of children under 18	0.4248	0.7407	0.4388	0.7331	0.400	0.760	0.31	0.760
# of dependents	0.5490	0.9028	0.6224	0.9472	0.418	0.809	1.41	0.161
Commute time	2.3791	0.7948	2.3673	0.8045	2.400	0.784	-0.25	0.807
Workload	40.150	9.732	39.22	10.69	41.81	7.53	-1.77	0.079
Students?	0.2353	0.4256	0.2551	0.4382	0.2000	0.4037	0.79	0.434
Sample size		153		98		55		--

Measures (also see Appendix B)

Dependent Variables

Perceptual measurement was used to calculate the extent of the respondents' flextime use. Respondents were asked to subjectively describe the extent to which they use flextime using a five-point scale that ranged from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very frequently).

Independent Variables

I identified four types of policy availability: 1 = do not allow, 2 = an informal policy, 3 = a simple formal policy and 4 = an elaborate formal policy. Respondents were asked to evaluate the availability of administrative policies regarding "alternative work schedule," "flex scheduling," "variable day schedule," and "compressed workweek" in their places of employment.

Organizational support was assessed using eight items from a survey developed by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997) ($r=0.86$). Items were developed to measure concerns, cares, and well-beings provided by the work organization. Respondents indicated the extent of their agreement using a 5-point scale.

Managerial support was measured using four items derived from the work of Cole, Bruch, and Vogel (2006) ($r=0.86$). Items indicate general managerial support such as the manager's active concern for employees' feelings, whether the manager provides support for the employees when working, whether help is available from the manager, and whether the manager could be relied on. A 5-point scale was used to measure each item.

Five items were modified to measure coworker support based on questions developed by Thompson and Cavallaro (2006) ($r=0.82$). The items were designed to evaluate the role of

coworkers, coworkers' response to other employees, and whether coworkers are helpful to other employees. All the items are scaled from 1 to 5.

Control Variables

Number of children under 18. People's housework time is very sensitive to their family roles. That is, having more children and other relatives in the household increases housework hours (Silver & Goldscheider, 1994) and decreases the ability to allocate time to other activities. Studies reveal that flextime are beneficial, especially for people with heavy family responsibilities (Silver & Goldscheider, 1994). One study suggested that flextime can be viewed as part of a psychological contract for employees who have family responsibilities (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). This means that people who have the responsibility of caring for dependents are more likely to build up an exchange agreement with their organization in order to use flextime. Therefore, I assessed the subjects' number of children under 18 as a control variable.

Commuting time. One factor that people frequently address for the benefit of using flextime related to traffic issues. Given traffic jams at peak hours, it often takes considerable time for employees to travel from home to work. Because it enables employees to come to work early and leaving early, flexible scheduling can help them save time that would otherwise be spent sitting in traffic. Although prior research does not have included empirical studies on this issue, an interview with one employee who uses flex scheduling can support this statement:

“It (flextime) was really nice especially working in the city because with traffic like trying get out the traffic jams.... Having a flexible time is a kind of like if you running late it's ok.”

As a result, I regard commuting time as a control variable. To evaluate commuting time, I categorized it into four categories: 1 = walking distance, 2 = no more than half an hour commuting time, 3 = half an hour to an hour commuting time, and 4 = more than an hour commuting time.

Workload. In general, the level of an employee's workload outside the home significantly reduces the number of hours he/she spends on a personal life (Silver & Goldscheider, 1994). The basic idea of flextime is that employees can set their own working time and deal with personal demands as needed. However, employees with heavier workloads may have fewer opportunities to set their own hours because they are actually at work most of the time. Based on this idea, I addressed working hours as a control variable. Workload was determined by asking how many hours per week respondents spent on their jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employees who work in excess of 32 hours per week are full-time, and those who work in excess of 40 hours per week are regarded as working overtime. Therefore, working hours were coded by a three-level scale, such that 1 = 15 to 32 hours worked per week, 2 = 32 to 40 hours worked per week, and 3 = over 40 hours worked per week.

Telecommuting. Telecommuting is a practice that allows employees to work at home or at another offsite location (Hill et al., 2001; Rogier & Padgett, 2004). As well as or instead of flextime, it is also common for organizations to adopt telecommuting in order to attract, motivate, and retain qualified employees (Almer et al., 2003; Cohen & Single, 2001; Rau & Hyland, 2002). In 2008, the National Study of Employers reported that almost 50% allow some employees to work at home occasionally. Telecommuting could be considered a substitute for flextime. Therefore, I regard it as a control variable. It was assessed by asking how often they use telecommuting.

Data Analysis

First I examined the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables. Descriptive statistics showed the correlations between independent variables and dependent variables. I then used multiple regressions to show how variance in the dependent variable can be explained by a set of independent variables and the interaction terms, over and above the control variables. I used the centering to mean strategy in order to test the moderating effect between policy availability and workplace support. This method makes interpretations of the partial coefficients on the independent variables more meaningful and helps to reduce multicollinearity concerns (Judd, Kenny, & McClelland, 2001).

Chapter 4

Result

Table4-1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all the variables included in this study. The average workload was over 40 hours per week. Correlational analyses showed that policy availability, organizational support, and managerial support were significantly ($p < 0.05$) positively correlated with employees' perceived use of flextime. This provides preliminary support for Hypothesis 1, which suggests that policy availability plays an important role in employees' actual flextime use as well as in their perception of flextime use in an organization. Hypotheses 2 and 3 are also preliminarily supported. That is, organizational support and managerial support are positively related to employees' actual use and perceived use of flextime. This may be because support from these two sources allows employees to have more access to flextime. Therefore, employees also perceive that they use more when there is sufficient support from the organization and manager.

Table-4-1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix.

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Use	7.9477	3.55741				
2. # of Children under 18	0.4248	0.74067	0.158			
3. Commute time	2.3791	0.79477	-0.042	-0.018		
4. Workload	2.2680	0.64895	-0.091	0.076	0.184*	
5. Telecommuting	2.0458	1.17171	0.187*	0.061	0.114	-0.144
6. Policy Availability	8.6013	3.45905	0.241**	-0.162*	0.136	0.501**
7. Organizational Support	3.5852	0.68869	0.308**	-0.028	-0.240**	0.021
8. Managerial Support	3.5637	0.86342	0.251**	-0.012	-0.154	0.098
9. Coworker Support	3.9686	0.62159	0.115	-0.165*	0.014	0.110
	5	6	7	8		
6. Policy Availability	-0.237**					
7. Organizational Support	-0.063	-0.024				
8. Managerial Support	0.110	0.126	0.512**			
9. Coworker Support	-0.273	0.033	0.498**	0.298**		

1. Sample size: 153 observations.

2. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test the hypotheses, a series of regression analyses was conducted. Table 4-2 presents the results by using eight regression models. Models 1 included control variables: number of children under 18 years old, commute time from home to work, workload, and telecommuting. Policy availability was added to Models 2; organizational support, managerial support, and coworker support were added to Models 3. Models 4 included the moderation effects.

In Models 1, telecommuting has a positive effect on perceived use of flextime. As a group, the control variables account for a fair amount of variance in both perceived use of flextime ($R^2 = 0.118$).

In order to test Hypothesis 1, I included policy availability in Models 2. As predicted, policy availability has a positive effect on perceived usage (0.323, $p < 0.01$) of flextime. These results verify that the extent of usage is higher when there policies were already in place. This also suggests that employees use flextime more when the policies are more available. In particular, the more formalized the policy is, the higher the employees' usage is. Therefore, these results provide strong support for Hypotheses 1.

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 predicted that workplace support—organizational support, managerial support, and coworker support—are positively associated with the use of flextime. To test these hypotheses, I added organizational support, managerial support, and coworker support in Model 3. The effect of policy availability remains positive and significant. Hypothesis 2 predicts that organizational support would increase the use of flextime. The result indicates that organizational support has a positive relationship with perceived flextime use (1.612, $p < 0.01$). Hypothesis 2, therefore, was partially supported. Hypothesis 3 predicts that managerial support would increase the use of flextime. The effect on perceived flextime use is not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Coworker support is not significantly related to

perceived flextime use as well. As a result, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Overall, the addition of the work environment factors to the model increased the variance explained in perceived use ($\Delta R^2 = 0.060$).

Finally, I examined the moderating effects between policy availability and three sources of support on flextime use in Model 4. The addition of the interactions between policy availability and support factors increased the variance explained respectively ($\Delta R^2 = 0.053$). In explanations of the use of flextime, organizational support has a significant moderating effect (0.455, $p < 0.01$) on the relationship between policy availability and the amount of perceived usage. That is, the higher the level of organizational support, the stronger the relationship between policy availability and perceived use. Using points one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the means of each variable, I plotted the interaction in Figure 4-1. As an organization provides more support, the perceived use of flextime will increase accordingly. However, coworker support (-0.347, $p < 0.1$) also would moderate the relationship between policy availability and the actual flextime use such that the lower the coworker support, the stronger the relationship. Figure 4-2 illustrates this interaction effect. In Model 5, I further took out the non-significant interaction terms to verify the moderating effect from organizational support. The result shows that even taking out other non-significant factors, the interaction term of policy availability and organizational support is still highly significant. This, further indicates that the moderating effect from organizational support is strong and consistent. In conclusion, Hypothesis 5 was supported, but Hypotheses 6 and 7 were not supported.

Table4-2. Regression Models and Moderation Effects.

Independent Variables	Perceived Usage				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
# of children under 18	0.611 (0.370)	0.862** (0.355)	0.830** (0.349)	0.867** (0.341)	0.855** (0.338)
Commute time	-0.174 (0.348)	-0.273 (0.330)	-0.256 (0.320)	-0.027 (0.314)	-0.086 (0.314)
Workload	-0.560 (0.426)	-0.796* (0.408)	-0.385 (0.411)	-0.556 (0.399)	-0.559 (0.402)
Telecommuting	1.534*** (0.360)	1.596*** (0.341)	1.528*** (0.342)	1.308*** (0.336)	1.319*** (0.337)
Policy Availability		0.323*** (0.076)	0.321*** (0.075)	0.360*** (0.075)	0.374*** (0.074)
Organizational Support			1.612*** (0.479)	1.275*** (0.475)	1.474*** (0.464)
Managerial Support			-0.033 (0.350)	0.288 (0.380)	0.251 (0.350)
Coworker Support			-0.385 (0.478)	-0.257 (0.531)	0.146 (0.491)
PA*OrgSup				0.455*** (0.124)	0.371*** (0.115)
PA*MngSup				-0.014 (0.121)	
PA*CowSup				-0.347 (0.182)*	
Constant	9.113*** (1.183)	6.986*** (1.228)	1.917 (2.202)	8.733*** (1.337)	8.850*** (1.081)
Adjusted-R2	0.118	0.209	0.269	0.322	0.314
Sample Size	153				

1. *Significant at .10 level; **Significant at .05 level; ***Significant at .01 level.

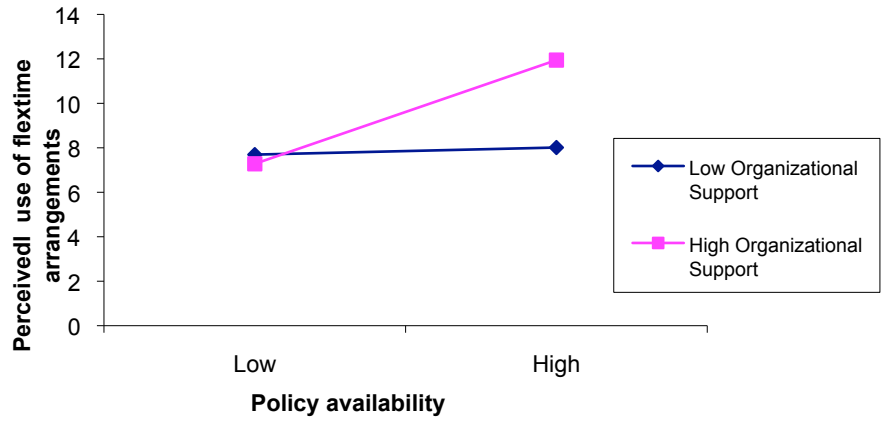


Figure4-1. Interaction between Organizational Support and Policy Availability in Predicting Perceived Use of Flextime.

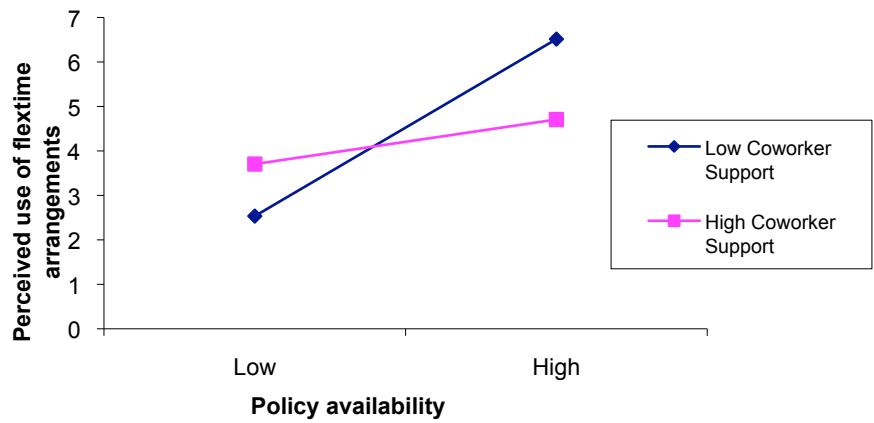


Figure4-2. Interaction between Coworker Support and Policy Availability in Predicting Perceived Use of Flextime.

Finally, I conducted a set of exploratory analyses to test the effects of policy availability and workplace support on each specific flextime arrangement. Table 4-3 presents the result. Model 1 includes all independent variables over and above the control variables. However, policy availability was separated into four specific categories. Models 2, 3, 4, and 5 individually added the moderation effects from the four different kinds of flextime policies. The statistical results show outcomes that are similar to those presented by the multiple regression models above. Organizational support has the primary influence on perceived use of all the four flextime arrangements. The moderation effect also reveals similar results as investigating the four flextime arrangements together. Organizational support has a significant moderating effect on each distinct policy type, which indicates that my results are consistent whether each flextime arrangement are investigated together or separately. Moreover, managerial support as well as coworker support may moderate the relationship within some specific flextime arrangements. This suggests that managerial support and coworker support may act as moderators regarding to certain kinds of flextime arrangement. But the exact relationships between each flextime arrangement and their moderating factors are still unsure which needs further research to illustrate.

Table4-3. Regression Models and Moderation Effects for Each Arrangement.

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Organizational Support	1.530*** (0.476)	1.211** (0.478)	1.384*** (0.470)	1.313*** (0.467)	1.257*** (0.470)
Managerial Support	0.089 (0.355)	0.055 (0.379)	0.263 (0.384)	0.429 (0.378)	0.640* (0.370)
Coworker Support	-0.381 (0.479)	-0.225 (0.495)	-0.283 (0.540)	-0.166 (0.515)	-0.598 (0.523)
A. Alternative Work Schedule	-0.293 (0.381)	-0.157 (0.377)	-0.197 (0.373)	-0.186 (0.373)	-0.380 (0.369)
B. Flex Scheduling	0.262 (0.451)	0.268 (0.444)	0.372 (0.450)	0.110 (0.443)	0.164 (0.433)
C. Variable Day Schedule	1.144** (0.466)	1.092** (0.469)	1.088** (0.464)	1.347*** (0.472)	1.197*** (0.450)
D. Compressed Workweek	-0.009 (0.297)	0.141 (0.304)	-0.009 (0.370)	-0.044 (0.301)	0.045 (0.285)
A*OrgSup		1.501*** (0.514)			
A*MngSup		-0.915** (0.434)			
A*CowSup		-0.656 (0.568)			
B*OrgSup			1.311*** (0.409)		
B*MngSup			0.023 (0.396)		
B*CowSup			-0.976* (0.583)		
C*OrgSup				1.300*** (0.400)	
C*MngSup				0.206 (0.387)	
C*CowSup				-0.818 (0.548)	
D*OrgSup					1.156*** (0.399)
D*MngSup					0.689* (0.379)
D*CowSup					-1.581** (0.629)
Adjusted-R ²	0.282	0.315	0.320	0.329	0.344

1. Sample size: 153 observations.

2. *Significant at .10 level; **Significant at .05 level; ***Significant at .01 level.

3. Control variables including number of children under 18, commuting time, workload, and telecommuting.

In summary, the findings provide the empirical support for the effect of policy availability and workplace support on employees' use of flextime. As predicted, the higher degree of policy availability, say, the more formalized of the flextime policies, the more frequently employees may use those arrangements. Regarding to workplace support, the empirical findings suggest that only organizational support plays a significantly crucial role in employees' flextime usage. Although most people believe that managerial support may be an influential factor, it was not found as a significant factor to predict employees' flextime usage. While it is reasonable to argue that the supervisors have the primary authority for allowing and disallowing employees to use flextime arrangements, managerial support may not have such a consistent, over-arching impact as organizational support does as the result shown. Coworker support also has no significant impact on flextime usage. The moderating effect between policy availability and workplace support reveals that organizational support has a dominant moderating effect. Not only by looking at the four flextime arrangements together but also by looking at the four flextime separately reveal the same result that organizational support positively moderate between policy availability and flextime usage. However, managerial support does not act as a moderator between policy availability and flextime usage. In the moderating model, effect form organizational support is more far-reaching compared to managerial support as well. Besides, coworker support, in an opposite way with my prediction, has a significantly negatively moderating effect with the use of flextime.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study was designed to determine whether and to what extent policy availability as well as support from a number of potentially important and diverse workplace sources affect employees' flextime use. I used a framework from flexibility enactment (Kossek et al., 2005) to advance the literature on flextime policies—particularly employees' use of them. In particular, this study examined policy availability and sources of support affecting employees' use of four kinds of widely used flextime arrangements. Using qualitative and quantitative data, I developed a model for maximizing flextime use by integrating a formal policy and workplace support.

This study presented three main findings. First, the study identified the differential effects of adopting different types of policies. My result indicates that employee use of flextime arrangements is highest in organizations that have detailed formal policies, followed by organizations with simple formal policies. It is lower for organizations that have informal policies, and lowest for organizations that lack flextime policies.

Second, although the kind of policy in place determined the extent of flextime use, setting a place in place is not enough to encourage the use of flextime. Organizational support exerts a strong and significant influence on employees' use of flextime. Although prior research believes that managerial support is actually much more powerful regarding to an employee's access to flextime, the non-significant of managerial support is in fact explainable. When workers use flextime, managerial support may be considerably more influential. It is because the primary responsibility for allowing and disallowing employees to use flextime arrangements lies with workers' direct supervisors. However, organizational support is perceived as being on a higher level and is more far-reaching than is managerial support; in fact, it has more influence on

employees' perceptions than managerial support does. Eisenberger and colleagues (2002), though, suggested that employees implicitly perceive the level and nature of organizational support for a policy from their manager's actions and responses; this is at least in part because managers generally act as spokespersons for their organization. This implies that in a worker's perception, managerial support is easily absorbed into organizational support. It is for these reasons that this study presents results that differ slightly in regard to actual use and perceived use.

Third, as predicted, organizational support acted as a moderator between policy availability and employees' actual flextime use. Nevertheless, the moderating effect from managerial support was not significant. The reason why managerial support did not act as a moderator might result from employees' feeling of managers' role. They might think managers belong to the organization, therefore, managers' behavior reflects what the organization wants them to behave. Thus, organizational support has more power than managerial support in moderating between policy availability and employees' flextime use. Coworker support is also revealed as a moderator between policy availability and the extent of perceived flextime use. However, the moderating effect from coworker support is in an opposite way as predicted. The higher the level of coworker support, the less employees use flextime. This could be because when employees receive strong support from coworkers, they simultaneously subject to the heavy influence of group norms (Hackman, 1992). Employees may not perceive their coworkers as providing essential support or as being a serious obstacle. However, the level of coworker support may have a direct influence on the behavior of employees who are actually using flextime, For example, employees may feel too embarrassed to use flextime frequently, if they perceive that their coworkers are monitoring their comings and goings. Thus, as coworker support increases, it may mean that employees experiencing such have less courage to use a policy that allows for non-regular working terms. Another explanation is that a high level of coworker support means

that employees people are receiving strong emotional support; thus, the need to use flexitime will be less urgent.

Limitation

Findings of this study are limited for several reasons. First, this study is limited because of the cross-sectional nature of its data. While I was able to empirically test the association between study variables, this study does not allow for causal inferences. Future research could collect the independent variables and dependent variable with a longitudinal design that would have the ability to verify the causal relationship.

Second, this study primarily focused on the four flexitime arrangements. When calculating flexitime usage, I added the total number of perceived use by the four types of arrangements. That means, the numerical number of usage represented an employee's taking use of any kind of flexitime arrangements rather than one specific flexitime arrangement. However, different types of flexitime may contribute to different levels of accessibility. For example, if an employee want to condense the workday from the original five days a week to only four days a week, the goal may harder to achieve compared to just shift the working time on a daily bases. This way, that employee might need stronger support from the direct manager. Nevertheless, testing the separate model for each flexitime arrangement is impractical in this research sue to the limited sample size. How workplace support affects on specific type of flexitime arrangement is uncertain. Therefore, future research could aim at categorizing different type of flexitime arrangements and investigating the most effective factors for them.

Third, although this study shows organizational support acts as a important effect both in predicting the extent to flexitime usage and moderating flexitime usage with policy availability, the

effects from managerial support and coworker support still cannot be ruled out. The lack of statistically significant results may be caused by the fact that work place support was conceptualized and measured from a general view. That is, the workplace I measured is general support rather than specific support on flextime. The results might be different if the study focus on managerial support and coworker support specifically on flextime arrangements. This is another spectrum that future research can work on.

A final limitation relates to respondents' self-report measures in the survey. This may contribute to common method variance and systematic bias. Besides, the use of convenience sampling strategy and the use of online surveys result in difficulty in generalizing the findings to a broader population. In addition, the study is limited due to its sample size. While I separated the whole sample into four different policy administration situations, the sample size in certain groups became really small. A larger sample size would have allowed for more statistical power and therefore more flexibility in testing the hypotheses.

Future Research

Future research could focus on establishing a longitudinal study for establishing causal inferences. In addition, future research could endeavor to use only self-reported data on flextime use. Accessing to flextime arrangements has more symbolic than tangible effects (Kossek et al., 2005). Some other unmeasured variables or variables that are hard to quantify such as job types, work cultures, and industries may matter in reducing flextime use than access alone. More research is needed to examine how well specific flextime arrangements and policies are working to benefit employees. Future research could also focus on the factors that influence the degree to

which new kinds of flextime arrangements are accepted by managers and organizations (Kossek et al., 2005).

Although this study separated flextime arrangements into different types, investigating them separately is a difficult proposition. Greater understanding is needed in the extent and effects of different types of flextime arrangements. Future research could use a larger sample size such that we can look at the impact of the three sources of support separately to determine the moderation effect of each on flextime use. Finally, little research has examined the way flextime policies are enacted (Kossek, 2005). Whether the flextime arrangements are universal in a workplace or are more closely connected linked to aspects such as specific departmental needs, supervisor bias, and changing company needs is also relevant to how flextime use accepted and used. Future research, then, could usefully focus more on this point and examine how to promote organizational and managerial support for flextime as well as how to use flextime arrangements effectively.

Contribution

Previous research on flextime arrangements has focused more on whether or not an employee can access to them instead of on the extent of flextime use. A company may allow flextime policies; however, these policies may not truly benefit workers in the way intended (Still & Strang, 2003). In this research, I sought to bridge the gap between policy availability and employees' actual use of those policies. Further, I categorized policy availability into four types to investigate the extent to which each encouraged or discouraged flextime use. This work supplements the to-date inadequate examination of informal flextime policies in the literature (Kossek et al., 2006; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Unlike prior research, this study focused on

employees' actual use of flextime. An abundance of research has investigated how to increase ideal organizational outcomes by using flexible work arrangements. However, the factors that influence actual usage at the employee level are also important. To more narrowly approach the subject matter, I focused mainly on four common flextime arrangements rather than on a broad range of flexible arrangements. This approach is consistent with the opinion stated by Kossek et al. (2005) that future research should further examine the relationship of employees with different forms of flextime arrangements and their enactment.

The study incorporated suggestions from prior research that address other situational constraints in the work environment, and it considered the relationship between certain job characteristics and flextime use. Hence, the study contributes to a more comprehensive picture of how flextime actually works in practice. Therefore, the results offer insight to companies considering implementing flextime arrangements and those examining the efficacy of existing policies. If organizations deal with all of these factors well, they can design their policies to provide maximum advantage to all their employees in accordance with the demands of different job types. In addition, managers clearly play a crucial role in employees' actual use of flextime (Kossek et al., 2005). Therefore, the wisdom of providing managers with training on managing and providing more support to employees in regard to flextime arrangements is clear according to my findings. Finally, this study illustrates that flextime arrangements depend on a number of factors, all of which must be addressed if respective policies are to function effectively in organizations.

Implication

Many studies have demonstrated that using flextime arrangements influence positive organizational outcomes and enhance employee work outcomes. This study sheds light on how to effectively increase the usage of flextime arrangement in a workplace and improve the effectiveness of those implemented arrangements. Hence, there are immediate practical implications of this research for companies especially for those off flextime arrangements.

For companies, the findings are important because more and more organizations have started to adopt some flextime arrangements in recent years. However, some firms only regard these arrangements as a kind of additional benefit that could somehow help out the employees, keep employees' retention, or even attract new employees. As a result of using flextime may cause some employees are out of office within the traditional office hours which may contribute inconvenience for other employees, many companies do not put too much emphasis on the accessibility of those arrangements. This further diminishes the employees' usage of flextime arrangements. Moreover, companies cannot get the benefits such as increasing employees' productivity and enhancing employees' commitment and morale from flextime arrangements even they have adopted them.

To solve this problem and increase the usage of flextime arrangements, a major finding from this study puts that a formal flextime policy could be provided at an organizational level. For employees, formal flextime policy is an explicit guarantee for them to access flextime arrangements whenever they need. If there is a detail guideline for them to adhere to, their usage of flextime will be ensured. In addition, managers may get a better idea on accepting or denying employees' flextime requests. Formalized policy therefore could be both protect employee and direct managers. It also will likely promote more equity in access flextime (Golden, 2009). Moreover, it makes an organization's administration process on those beneficial arrangements

smoother and more successful. Theoretically, this finding ensure the viewpoint of access to flexibility does not necessarily ensure its use, different degree of policy availability will also have different impact on flextime usage. Hence, it conceptualizes the flextime literature more in the policy sphere.

In this study, most of the subjects responded in the open-ended questions regarding to their use of flextime is highly relevant to whether they get support from their work environment. Thus, other than providing formalized policy, it is also important for organizations to disclose their position in supporting these arrangements. The finding suggests that the support from the organization is extraordinarily important. Even there has been a policy already; employees may withdraw from using flextime without organizational support. Therefore, the organization's attitude may play a crucial role regarding to flextime arrangements. Once organizations decide to take advantages and benefits by providing flextime to their employees, they might first be careful about the attitude they reveal when addressing flextime. Otherwise, flextime may not contribute as much good as they thought.

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Appendix A

Interview Transcripts

Employees' Viewpoints

01. Does your organization provide flextime arrangements?

P. D.: *It's rare (to provide flextime) but I think the opportunity is there. I would want to look at definitely in the future.*

N. T.: *Organization actually provides it (flextime arrangements). We just have to be there during the core hours and then we could come and go. Whenever we have specific meetings outside the core hours we should be there, otherwise it's flexible.*

L. P.: *Mine has to have flexible. Because there's time I need to stay late for some reason or another, to take care things, and some of the projects, there's a lot of deadlines, some stuff like that that I may need to flex my hours.*

I normally work 8 to 5. There're times that I might be here till 8 or 9 o'clock, there might be sometimes I leave at 4:30 in the afternoon. I try to keep it that I'm here from 8 to 5.

02. Do you think your manager helps or impedes you to use flextime arrangements?

P. D.: *To be honestly, I don't know (manager helps or impedes the use of flextime arrangements). I'm just pursuing that right now. So in my opinion, because of the department that I work in, being that labor focus, I think that I would probably have a much easier time than somebody who maybe works in like college of education or the engineering department or something that because of the subject matter of the department. I think they're much more open to the idea of flextime.*

I think the hurdle I'm going to precede is HR, like the college. If there is something going on in the department that has to do with like hiring, hours, or whatever, HR usually has to prove that. I think my supervisor would be 100% Ok with that, I just don't know if the policies of HR would allow that. So that's something we have to kind of ... see.

L. P.: She (manager) helps me. She really lets me organize my own time because she knows I'll get the job done.

H. D.: What they do is they generally will leave it up to the department managers. So if you have a department manager who is more flexible, then you're going to more likely to have that flexibility. When I have a very rigid boss, there's no flexibility.

She (manager) seems to help. She encourages me to leave on time depending on the workload. I wouldn't say she hinders.

03. How do you think about flextime arrangements?

P. D.: I think it's beneficial for both parties, most definitely. Especially if dealing with customers. As we all know customers are students. We all know that not everybody is available during the workday that 9-5. So when they really need to get things done, they're maybe thinking about going to grads school. They (students) need to call ask questions. If they don't have time during the workday, what are they going to call after work? But if I'm working in odd hours, maybe evenings or whatever then that's going to be beneficial for the department because somebody's going to be here to answer the phone. But it's also going to be beneficial for me because I can do the things I need to do whether raising the family or whatever it is.

M. W.: I think it (flextime arrangement) is beneficial. I think it maximize the opportunities for employees to contribute productive to company but also maintain something that is important to them which is the ability to care up personal issue and items.

N. T.: *It's beneficial, and it was really nice especially working in the city because with traffic issue. A lot of time I got stuck in traffic, leave early on Friday to home. If I had to get there in certain hours the day, having a flexible time is a kind of like if you running late it's ok. I think it is very beneficial. And I think it brings in more like work-life balance because you're able to take the time off you do life things that kind of stuff but you still get your work done.*

It makes nice cause you don't distress about using like vacation days or trying to arrange times off that kind of stuff when you actually need to do things and I think definitely, like down the road, like a family with kids, I mean it's really come a hand be them that you can arrange your schedule.

A. P.: *It's (flextime arrangements) actually really perfect. I can do my job anytime I want to because I don't actually have any contact to other people. If I need to deal with the insurance company, I just send them a fax, which can be done anytime. The role regulation is on the website, so it's very easy.*

L. P.: *I think they (flextime arrangements) are wonderful. I mean I really think they're benefit to the staffs, especially in the time period where you might not be able to give them a raise or more money, time is very important to people, so if you can give them flextime work schedule, then that can help make them happy or make their lives easier.*

H. D.: *I think it (flextime arrangement) is very helpful. Because it gives me the opportunity to be able to continue to further my education, and then the thinking like planning family, many people who is just reasoning to have children, it gives the opportunity to have things happen, life happens. I think that it really takes advantages to account life happens, so that you know you can show and you can still accomplish your job as well.*

04. What are the factors trigger you to use/not to use flextime arrangements?

P. D.: *Family. Your partner might not have the same work schedule as you. Childcare is extremely expensive, so if you have the flexibility to stay at home with your child, and when you working, your husband can stay at home. I mean it just like, I mean you can be that.*

I would say the only thing that would deter me from something like that would be ... like coworkers, "she's on flextime, so she doesn't put much work in" I think that's still the perception in the workplace is that just because you're working different hours. I think the perception among other employees could be you are not working as hard or you're kind of slacking off. I mean I certainly wouldn't want that to be my reputation. I wouldn't want people to think that I'm not working as hard just because I'm working at the different arrangement.

M. W.: *I think family issues (kids), vacation, education, and just like I'm going on a holiday. What deter me would be disadvantages of face-to-face communication, what've been missed at work; you're not in the same cycle as people you work with.*

N. T.: *Traffic, doctor's appointment, any kind of appointment, play sport, a variety of different things, flextime arrangements will be really useful. But things like setting meetings. Sometimes a flex hour it was hard like you have to call somebody in California, you can't come in early and then leave early just because the time difference.*

A. P.: *My family is probably the biggest one because I want to work when everyone also is already busy like my daughter is in school or my husband is already at work. To me, if you are not using the flextime arrangement, then you don't have the kind of flexibility.*

I quitted my own job, I had a full-time job, where I was a supervisor of a department. I had the benefits, the salary, but it didn't work for me because I was missing of my daughter entire life. She would go to school in the morning, I would take her like preschool, and then by the time she got off preschool, my husband would pick her up. But I was working 3 to 11 and then she was already in bed. So I was totally seeing her for 15 min a day. So I decided I wanted to quit that job, and get my degree, and get a job that I can work around when I had planned.

L. P.: *Personal reason, like I said you have small children at school, you would want to use it if you are car pooling, or say you're taking a bus and you are on the bus schedule, that your need to transportation, or classes. And if you have a lot of different projects or programs as your responsible for that might require time later or you can be here earlier for some reasons, or even on the weekends.*

Sometimes we have events, like graduation, conferences, or things that might require staffs just stay later than normal or come in on the weekend to work, but that's not very often. We also need to deal with office coverage.

H. D.: *Obviously for doing education, changes in family life, whether children or parents are old, maybe illness, maybe you're ill and feel better in the afternoon so work in the afternoon instead for morning.*

I want to be able to go to school and finish my degree. But I need to be working for income. That was really my only option. So yeah, I definitely want to be able to use it. I think that will be great actually, for childcare, for doctor appointment or different things, that will be wonderful to use it.

But having a job that is based upon others would be a time when you won't be able to do. What I do is based on what sales people do, so by the work at the same time that the sales people work, I don't have anything to do.

05. Do you think there is any gender difference of using flextime arrangements?

M. W.: *Only I think there're children involved, and then I think females are more likely to take advantage of flextime. If not, I don't think there's any difference.*

N. T.: *It seems like females they kind of use it more cause of their role of the children like a lot of one they had to leave early to do stuffs for kids. But we did have one guy who he always*

came like at 7 in the morning and leave at 3 everyday. So, I guess it just may depend on the people. Maybe more on the female side, but not by much, like 60 to 40.

A. P.: I'm the only girl in the company. But a guy he sets his schedule that he can get home at 6 (for dinner).

H. D.: Generally the people that I know that do use it are females. I don't see any males. But I don't know why.

From employers' viewpoints:

L. P.: They give me a proposal, we talk about it cause it depends on the sense that I can work flexible schedules with them. But we have to have office coverage, so not everybody could come in at 7:30 and leave at 4. We have to have some people here till 5. So it just kind of all depends on the job they have, and what everybody else is working. I'll try to work it out.

Usually human resource allows us to do flex schedule, we don't have to do anything officially through them. It's nice cause they want to give us some way that we can help make our staffs happy and the sense that is we are not being rigid saying you must be here at 8 to 5 with 1 hour for lunch which is we're trying to work it out. Because some people are car pool, some people have to pick their kids and for drop them off.

Employees should discuss with the supervisor and prove. The policy is basically with university that they fair consider staffs nonexempt, they have to work 40 hours a week and there has to be office coverage, so within that parameter that how we can kind of set the flex schedule. Like normally if staffs want to flex their time, I allow them to work anywhere between from 7 in the morning until 5:30 at night. So they can flex their time in between that time period.

We allow "compressed workweek" sometimes in the summer where they can work for 10-hour days and have a day off. But that is only allowed during summer time because we don't have students better taking classes within our school of nursing and most of our faculties are gone. So

it's certain 2months, basically about 2 months frame with a lot of to do that if they want to. And they have to work 10 hours with a half of hour for lunch.

I would have to say it's an ad hoc policy because it actually depends on the department, how many people are there in the department, and also how people use their time. I'll try to work with them on a day-to-day basis.

H. D.: *Generally I was pretty flexible with them in terms of being allow to come and go as they need to, except for maybe during higher time like holidays like Christmas time we would get very busy, there is less flexibility during those times.*

There was no formal policy. Generally it was done mostly at store level, at the description of the manager. The reason for that is that depending on where you're located we have higher traffic, more people coming in to your store versus if you are in lower traffic area you could be more flexible.

As a manager, sometimes it would be hard. It tends to be more problems for us, especially for retail. Sometimes I had to work more to make up for them. I would also consider that if they are good employees by not grant them then lose them. If I could I would do it (give them flexibility).

Appendix B

Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

1.	Your gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
2.	Do you have children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, how old are they? _____
3.	Number of dependents (children and elderly) who you are the primary care giver	_____
4.	How much time do you regularly spend in commuting from home to work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking distance <input type="checkbox"/> No more than half an hour transporting time <input type="checkbox"/> Half to an hour transporting time <input type="checkbox"/> More than an hour transporting time
5.	On average, how many hours a week do you spend on your job?	_____ hrs/week
6.	Are you currently a student in a university?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

Section Two: Policy Availability & Administration

Now I have some questions about how the policy is actually administered in your organization. Please choose one that best suitable, for each policy or option in your organization, in all four columns below.

Not allow means company policies do not allow for flexible work arrangements in the organization. Flexible work arrangements are not available at work.

Informal policy means the policies are not official and not written down but are still available to some employees, this may include individual contracted allowances that range from person to person.

Formal & simple policy means there is a statement, written, or official policy approved by human resources department and at supervisor's discretion.

Formal & elaborate policy means formal policies with detail guidelines regulated by human resources department.

	Not allow	Informal Policy	Formal & simple policy	Formal & elaborate policy
<u>Alternative work schedule</u> This refers to the arrangement that allows a full-time employee select starting and stopping times within the flexible hours; once selected, the	1	2	3	4

hours are fixed until next selection opportunity is provided. (E. g. <i>Work from 7am to 4pm everyday for a long period.</i>)				
Flex scheduling This refers to the arrangement that a full-time employee has a basic work requirement of 8 hours in each day; an employee may select a starting and stopping time each day or change starting and stopping time daily . (E.g. <i>Choose starting and stopping time on a daily basis.</i>)	1	2	3	4
Variable day schedule This refers to the arrangement that a full-time employee has a basic work requirement of 40 hours in each week; an employee may vary the number of hours worked on a given workday within the week. (E.g. <i>Choose working hours per day, but total 40 hours per week.</i>)	1	2	3	4
Compressed workweek This refers to the arrangement that a full-time employee has a 40 hours weekly basic work requirement; however, work is scheduled for less than 5 days within a week. (E.g. <i>Work 4 days a week but have longer hours per day.</i>)	1	2	3	4
Part-time work This refers to an employee has a regular wage employment; however, has fewer hours of work than the standard full-time schedule. (E.g. <i>Work less than 8 hours per day with a regular wage.</i>)	1	2	3	4
Telecommuting This refers to the arrangement that allows a full-time employee select working at home or other offsite locations. (E.g. <i>Work at home occasionally.</i>)	1	2	3	4

Employee usage of flextime arrangements

	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally Rarely	Frequently	Very frequently
1. How often do you use alternative work schedule?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How often do you use flex scheduling?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How often do you use variable day schedule?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often do you use compressed workweek?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How often do you use part-time work?	1	2	3	4	5
6. I How often do you use telecommuting?	1	2	3	4	5

Section Three: About Your Work Environment & Task Characteristics

Please answer the following questions using a 5 point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Organizational support

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My organization cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My organization really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My organization strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.	1	2	3	4	5
6. If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My organization shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5

Managerial support

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My supervisor shows active concern for my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My supervisor provides intensive support in order to help me accomplish my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My supervisor assures us that help is available if it is needed.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I can fully rely on management.	1	2	3	4	5

Coworker support

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My coworkers help me solve job-related problems.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My coworkers create an atmosphere conducive to my work-family balance.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My coworkers are willing to listen to my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My coworkers appreciate the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My coworkers respect me.	1	2	3	4	5

Section Four: Comments

Are there any further points that you would like to make? Or specific characteristics of the flextime arrangements in your organization you think we should take into account in analyzing your answers?