Chapter 14: Flexible Work Schedules
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Chapter 14: Flexible Work Scheduling

“Flextime has made our work force more efficient and more focused while they are working. It is a step backwards to go back to rock solid hours. As long as an employee is getting the job done, they should be treated like an adult.” Hernreich, (2008)

Flexible work schedules such as flextime, telework, or compressed work weeks, are examples of increasing variation in the timing and duration of work hours, and the location of work. While standard work schedules have traditionally been the norm in organizations; growing numbers of employers are experimenting with a wide range of flexible work schedules at the same time as they are transforming employment systems and work processes across time zones and cultures. The increasing proliferation of flexible and more varied work schedules for organizational members is not only a U.S., but a global employment phenomenon (Jacobs, Gerson, & Gornick, 2004). National country studies from the U.S. to Australia estimate that only about half of employees work a standard fixed daytime work schedule five days a week (Golden, 2001; Watson, Buchanan, Campbell and Briggs, 2003). As the opening statement suggests, when implemented with both employer and employee interests in mind, flexible work schedules can increase efficiency, work focus, and empower individuals to self-manage work time (Halpern, 2005; Kossek, 2005).

Flexible work schedules are an increasingly important issue for Industrial-Organizational (I-O) psychology as they reflect the adaptation of human resource practices to the changing nature of work, such as the shift in the labor force to be increasingly diverse in work time availability and the dramatic change in the design of work systems in response to a 24-7 global economy. Accordingly, many new challenges are created for I-O psychologists. For example, how can we rigorously assess the benefits of flexible work schedules for individuals and
organizations? When and how should flexible work schedules be used to attract and retain an increasingly diverse work force? What are strategies for managing and socializing talent when people are working many different schedules across different time zones with little face-to-face interaction? What are the best selection tools to identify individuals who will work well in jobs involving global teams with constant technological interaction over a 24-7 period? What is the design of training programs to help supervisors coordinate and motivate employees who have many different schedules? How can high performance cultures be created and contributions accurately assessed when employees have less face-time at work? What are effective coaching programs to reduce work-life conflicts for virtual workers who have simultaneous access to work and life demands? When are flexible work schedules effective as organizational development interventions to reduce job stress and improve productivity and when do they increase stress? These are just some of the pertinent questions regarding flexible work schedules that pose new issues for the field of I-O psychology to investigate.

What we found in our review is that scholars have been more successful in answering the first two research questions on the potential benefits of flexible work schedules, and who desires them, than in clarifying how to ensure successful implementation and adaptation of human resource systems and organizational cultures (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Our chapter is organized as follows: 1) flexible work schedules overview; 2) relevant theories, 3) measurement challenges and cross cutting characteristics of what makes a flexible schedule “flexible,” 4) individual and organizational outcomes; and 5) future research and directions.

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES OVERVIEW

Below we give a brief overview of the history, organizational rationale and types of flexible work schedules.
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History of Flexible Work Schedules

Historically, prior to the U.S. industrialization period of the mid-1800’s, most workers were either farmers or self-employed, thus determining their own work schedules (Ronen, 1981). Then standardized employer-set work schedules, with work carried out away from the home or a personal business, started appearing as large factories spread with industrialization. A “traditional full-time schedule” was assumed to be a forty-hour week where employees worked an eight-hour day over five days a week with fixed starting and stopping times (Avery & Zabel, 2001). Scholar Hunnicutt (1996) describes an important historical development that occurred in December 1930. In order to create jobs for laid off workers during the Great Depression, the W.K. Kellogg Company, the largest manufacturer of cereal in the world, altered the standard of an 8-hour day conducted over three shifts, substituting four six-hour shifts. Employee morale increased due to more leisure time, accidents reduced, and the price per unit of production declined as employees worked more productively (Avery & Zabel, 2001). The program was publicized as a national model, supported by many stakeholders from government to labor to business. Although the company briefly went back to offering only 8-hour shifts, due to World War II exigencies, over the next several decades, the firm began to offer both 6-hour or 8-hour shifts. Hunnicutt (1996, p. 106) noted the “feminization of shorter hours,” as women were the biggest supporters and users opting for the 6-hour day. Except for men near retirement or disabled workers, most men continued to work the 8-hour day. During an economic downturn in the 1980s, in order to reduce headcount and benefits costs, Kellogg’s ended the 6-hour day, but the flexible work schedule corporate experiment had occurred. The notion of “flexible work schedules” had developed, as primarily serving the needs of women and noncore workers. The 6-hour day initiative provides an important historical remnant for 21st century organizations, as
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Flexible work scheduling has gradually become mainstreamed allowing for growing employee discretion over at least some aspects of work scheduling.

**Growth of Flexible Work Schedules**

Taking a macro-organizational perspective, labor market, cost, environmental and technological forces are driving flexible work schedule growth, making them vital for employer adoption. *Demographic labor market shifts* create a workforce that increasingly needs and values flexibility. Statistics show an explosive growth in the number of individuals who must ensure family responsibilities are managed while they are at work. While we cite U.S. statistics here, these trends are mirrored around the world. Since 1975 to present, the labor force participation of U.S. women with children under 18 years age has increased from 47% to 78% (Kossek, 2006). Nearly 40% of all professionals and managers who work at major U.S. companies are now women, many who simultaneously juggle caregiving (Bond et al., 2002). The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 83% of U.S. families are dual earners or single parents with children under 18 years at home. A third of all workers (equally men and women) provide elder care (Bond et al, 2002). Fifty percent of all children will live in a single parent family before reaching 18 years (Cohen, 2002). Fathers play a greater role in caregiving and value flexibility more than those of previous generations (Pleck, 1997). Millennials, the current generation of workers entering the workforce, take a more balanced approach to work than previous generations (Deal, 2007).

*Product and labor cost savings* are also driving growth. The adoption of contingent and part-time work schedules, and temporary extra shifts, allows employers to expand and contract workforce size and employment at will in response to variation in product demand, economic uncertainty, and new market developments in the global economy (see also Vol. 2,
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Chapter 20 by George and Ng on Nonstandard Workers’ Schedules and outcomes, this Handbook. Globalization and rising consumer demand, and the high costs of shutting down continuous processing manufacturing systems mandate 24-7 operations with production and service delivery around the clock for many firms. A cross-national sample of firms shows that the information technology sector is at the forefront of having a flexible mobile often off-shored workforce, which enables firms to quickly hire staff, form partnerships and develop a customer base around the globe (Landry, Mahesh & Hartman, 2005; MacEachen, Polzer & Clarke, 2008).

Contingent work schedules reduce labor costs. Companies typically have a two-tiered work force: a core and a noncore group. One group is full-time employees who have better health care and pension benefits and some job security. The other is a contingent work group with less favorable benefits and hours, who can be easily laid off to quickly reduce labor costs. This ability to reduce headcount through a contingent contract is especially critical in the European Union (EU) where it is increasingly difficult to lay off regular workers without legally mandated employment severance, which can take months to negotiate (Mery, 2009).

Telework reduces office costs due to more efficient facility management and space use (Karnowski & White, 2002). One review summarizing costs savings noted that IBM saved over $75 million in annual real estate costs, while the General Services Administration had major reductions in office energy costs (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). A study by Robèrt and Börjesson (2006) found significant reductions in rental costs from introducing flexible offices and telecommuting at Nacka Stran, a Swedish telecom. Yet some scholars warn that the employer cost savings may be at worker expense, as shifting operations to workers’ homes increases home office costs (Davenport & Pearlson, 1998)
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Flexible schedules help employers support the *environment*, and cut workers’ fuel costs at the same time. After gas prices spiked to over $4 a gallon in the U.S., Oklahoma and Kentucky adopted state-sponsored telework and flextime programs specifically designed to help workers save on fuel. Utah mandated a 4-day workweek for 17,000 state employees, about 80% of the state workforce (Kossek, 2008). Teleworking and four day work weeks or delayed schedule starts reduce traffic congestion, fuel consumption, and air and noise pollution (Balepur, Varma, & Mokhtarian, 1998). Unproductive time spent in traffic is reduced by allowing individuals to commute during offpeak times. Empirical evidence of these effects is mixed. Studies by Bernardo and Ben-Akiva (1996) and Mokhtarian (1998) relying on mathematical models to simulate and estimate the favorable environmental impacts of teleworking found little or no positive effects of teleworking on air pollution reduction. Yet a study by Henderson and Motihtarian (1996) found that having neighborhood telework centers cut motor vehicle transmissions by half, and also improved time spent working, performance, and job satisfaction.

*Technological changes* in the way work is structured due to the growth in use of electronic computer and voice tools have made work more portable, facilitating employee’s abilities to work anywhere, anytime, and anyplace. More employers have become comfortable with flexibility as technological tools enhance the ability to electronically monitor employee productivity (Venkatesh and Johnson, 2002).

**Types of Flexible Work Schedules: When, Where, How Much, and Continuity**

Current descriptions of flexible work schedules all build on the concept of employee scheduling discretion, thus enabling employees to have some choice to determine how long, when, or where they are engaged in work for various time periods (e.g., days, weeks, or seasons). This discretion affects how an individual experiences his/her working time in relation to
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nonworking time, such as time spent on leisure and domestic activities from caregiving to household labor to relaxation (Fagan, 2001). Evans, Kunda, and Barley (2004) define flexible work schedules as allowing employees to determine when they start and stop work hours, how many hours they work, which days or shifts they work, or where they work. Rau (2003) defines flexible work schedules as alternative work options enabling work to be conducted outside the temporal or spatial boundaries of a “standard” work day. Taken together, these definitions provide several organizing criteria.

Types of flexible work schedules can be organized into four design criteria: 1) flexibility in \textit{when} one works, such as the timing of work; 2) flexibility in \textit{where} one works, such as the location or place of work; 3) flexibility in \textit{how much} one works, such as the amount of work or workload; and 4) flexibility in the \textit{continuity} of work, such as short- and long-term breaks in work activity and time off. These design criteria can be overlapping and used in various combinations to create hybrid flexible work arrangements. Drawing on Kossek and Van Dyne (2008), Table 1 gives an overview of these schedule types, which are discussed below. Most of the I-O literature focuses on flexible work schedules used by employee choice, which has generally had a positive connotation for employee well-being, particularly when used by individuals to reduce work-life conflicts. We also note a related research stream exists in the sociology and poverty literatures on nonstandard schedules (c.f. Presser, 2003), which generally has a negative connotation for worker well-being, particularly when used not by choice by lower wage or hourly workers (e.g., shift work), temporary workers (e.g., contingent work), or professionals feeling compelled to overwork (e.g., work excessive hours or during leisure time).

\textbf{Flexibility in the Timing of Work}
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The most common flexible work schedules relate to the timing of work. These consist of flextime which is the most common, compressed work week, shift work, and contingent work.

*Flextime*

Flextime originated in Germany in the 1970s, and although it quickly spread across Western and Northern Europe, the U.S. was slower to adopt, particularly in the private sector (Avery & Zabel, 2001). Under flextime, employees have the discretion to vary the times they arrive and leave work, within management parameters, to meet their personal needs (Avery & Zabel, 2001). Flextime schedules have a predetermined range of times in which employees can arrive (e.g., 6 to 10 AM) and leave (e.g., 3 to 7 PM), with a core band in between work starting and stopping times when all employee must be present (e.g., 10 AM to 3 PM). Having core hours helps managers with the coordination of meetings and supervision (Van Dyne, Kossek & Lobel, 2008). Flextime policies sometimes incorporate daily carryover, where employees can vary their work schedules in regards to daily time spent at work, as long as they spend a predetermined set amount of weekly time at work (e.g., 40 hours per week). Though estimates vary, about one-fourth (Golden, 2001) to nearly two-fifths (Bond, Galinsky, Thompson, & Prottas, 2002) of U.S. workers have access to flextime, up considerably from about one in ten workers in 1985 (Golden, 2001). Professional and higher level employees are more likely to have access to flextime than lower level employees. Workers in service and manufacturing jobs also have less access than jobs in other industries (Kossek and Distelberg, 2009).

*Compressed Work Week*

Under a compressed work week, an employee works a full-time schedule in fewer than five days. The most common compressed work week containing forty hours is a 4 day-10 hour schedule with a Monday or Friday off (Pierce, Newstrom, Dunham, & Barber, 1989). Another
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concept is the 9-hour work day, with one additional hour added to an 8-hour day. Known as a 9-80 schedule, this compressed work week occurs over a two week period. A key benefit of compressed work weeks is that employees can have a three-day weekend every week or every other week. Compressed work weeks are more common in North America (especially Canada) than in other parts of the world (Avery & Zabel, 2001). About 15% of U.S. employees have access to compressed work week (Bond et al., 2002). It is more common for lower level than senior employees, and in police and nursing occupations than other job families.

Shift Work

Although shift work is not always thought of as a flexible work schedule, it is a common form of nonstandard working time. It can involve evening (e.g., 3-11 PM), night (11 PM -7 AM), or weekend hours; rotating shifts (e.g., evenings one day, nights the next), or double shifts (e.g., sixteen hours) when a worker is not relieved from 24-7 operations such as in hospitals, prisons, or factories. Sometimes an employee can have a regular but nonstandard schedule, such as a set 8-hour work schedule that always takes place at night (Barnett & Hall, 2007). Some workers do choose shift work as it allows them to pursue other life pursuits during the day such as education or child care. About 15% of the U.S. labor force works nonstandard or irregular schedules, often in the service and technical industries (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005). In France, about 10% of workers work nonstandard hours, compared to 20% in other European Union (EU) countries such as Greece and the United Kingdom (Presser, 2003).

Contingent Work

Contingent work is defined as a flexible work arrangement in which an individual does not explicitly or implicitly contract for long-term employment or where minimum hours worked vary irregularly (Polivka & Nardone, 1989). Examples of contingent workers include seasonal,
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temporary in-house, or freelance workers (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). Under a contingent work schedule, the hiring of workers is based on a temporary fixed-term contract, which is in contrast to a traditional employment agreement that has an expectation of an on-going employment relationship. Integrating three commonly used government measures of contingent work: 1) whether an employee doesn’t expect a job to last more than a year; 2) whether one is self employed or an independent contractor; or 3) whether one has worked in a job less than a year and is expecting it to end within the year. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates contingent workers account for 1.8 to 4.1 percent of total employment in 2005. While usually the exception, some contingent workers prefer temporary work as it allows them to choose employers and work hours, and take extended time off (Ashford et al, 2008).

**Flexibility in the Location or Place of Work**

Another common form of flexible work schedules relates to the location or place of work. These consist of telework or flexplace, and informal teleworking often combined with nonstandard working time.

*Telework or Flexplace*

Under a telework or flexplace schedule, employees work from a location outside of their physical organizational setting. Telework or flexplace is defined as a flexible work arrangement that allows employees to access labor activities from many varied locations, typically using technologies transmitting communication and information (Pérez, Sánchez, & de Luis Carnicer, 2002). Although there are many forms of telework or flexplace, four defining types capture most of these: telecommuting, satellite offices, neighborhood work centers, and mobile workers (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Telecommuters work from home on a regular basis and may or may not use technology in their work. Employees at satellite and neighborhood work offices work
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outside the home and organization. However, employees at satellite offices are from a single organization; while employees at neighborhood work centers can be from multiple organizations, but share office space in a local suburban area rather than commute to a downtown center. Such opportunities allow employees to engage in regular interactions with work colleagues (e.g., conference calls via video feeds), while reducing the length of the commute and the need to purchase urban office space. Mobile workers are transient and typically work from multiple locations that vary depending on the customer being served. These employees are sometimes referred to as road warriors. They generally face more cognitive complexity, fatigue, and mobility than teleworkers who work virtually from a regular location (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008). Fifteen percent of U.S. employees telework at least one day a week (USBLS, 2005).

Informal Teleworking combined with Nonstandard Working Time

Besides a growth in use of formal human resource policies supporting flexible work schedules, informal flexible work schedules are a rising trend that needs to be considered when referring to teleworking. The nature of many jobs has changed to be increasingly virtual, flexible, and self-regulated with growing access to portable E-work, defined as electronic-work from Blackberries, cell phones, or laptops (Kossek and Lautsch, 2008). Work is increasingly being diffused over all hours of the day or week extending later into the night and starting earlier in the morning, and also spreading into vacations and weekends (Hamermesh, 1999). It has also spread from employer locations to our homes, and many third places from our commutes to our leisure spaces. More and more individuals are casually teleworking in planes, trains, and automobiles, or in public places like coffee shops and restaurants.

Although from a formal human resource policy perspective, these casual teleworkers would not necessarily be viewed as working on a flexible schedule. Yet this growth in informal
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flexible scheduling practice needs to be noted in I-O studies. For example, the expansion of casual telework makes studying the effects of formal telework use challenging. One quasi-experimental study found contamination of a control group of non-telework users of the formal telework policy as many of the employees who the human resource department identified as non-teleworkers were frequently informally telecommuting before or after work or on weekends to handle rising workloads (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). Pure telework control groups can be difficult to create because telework and nonstandard work hours often occur together. As Golden (2001) reports, use of telework is positively related to an employee indicating that he/she has access to flextime for when to start or stop work during the day. This exemplifies how different types of flexibility may be used in bundles.

It is also important to understand the reasons for informal flexible work schedule use, particularly for boundary blurring practices, as some support nonwork demands while others support work demands. As examples of each, a supervisor may regularly allow an employee to work from home unofficially every Friday due to daycare constraints for a newborn infant who sleeps most of the day while the parent works. Or an employee who uses email, texting, or cell phones on his or her job habitually is expected to take work phone calls and check email during unofficial working time from home (sometimes referred to as overwork).

**Flexibility in Amount of Work (Workload and Hours)**

A third form of flexible work schedules relates to the amount of work (lower workload or hours), which is also known as part-time work. After describing part time work generally, we will then discuss two growing subtypes of part time work: job sharing, and reduced-load work.

*Part-Time Work*
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Under a part-time work schedule, employees work fewer than 35 hours per week (USBLS, 2004). Part-time work is one of the most common flexible work schedules in the world, which grew after World War II to accommodate employers’ needs to cut labor costs and demographic shifts where more women were in the labor force (Tilly, 2006). There are several subtypes of part-time work, such as job sharing where two people share a job and reduced-load, or customized work arrangements where an individual’s workload is reduced in return for less pay or hours. Sometimes health benefits and pensions are not offered with these arrangements unless workers work a minimum number of hours, usually at least 50% or 75% of full-time hours, and even then benefits may be prorated. Nearly one in five U.S. workers is a permanent part-time employee. In the EU, this figure ranges from 5% in Greece to 39% in the Netherlands, with an average of 16% (Avery & Zabel, 2001).

There are two main types of part-time jobs: retention part-time jobs, where workers negotiate part-time as a retention strategy (such as job sharing and reduced load work); and secondary labor market part-time jobs, where employees who prefer full-time work take these jobs as a way to enter the labor force (Tilly, 2006.)

*Job Sharing*

Under a job sharing schedule, two employees voluntarily share work responsibilities where each works less than full-time (Christensen & Staines, 1990). Sometimes job sharers have complementary skills, with each performing a different aspect of a full-time job, such as one person focusing on the human resource aspects and the other on the financial duties (Kossek & Lee, 2005). In other cases, the job sharers split parts of a single full-time job and operate as one. Here there must be considerable trust and coordination between employees. Sometimes these jobs are designed to have some overlap of a few extra hours or a common day to ensure tradeoffs
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are done smoothly. Still in other cases, the job sharers might perform two completely different part-time jobs but together their work hours add up to a single full-time employee equivalent (FTE) of work hours (Pierce, Newstrom, Dunham, & Barber, 1989).

Customized or Reduced-Load Work

U.S. companies have tremendous latitude to decide what are expected weekly hours for exempt professionals (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). The U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) only regulates overtime pay for nonexempt workers who work more than 40 hours per week. Consequently, professionals and managers habitually can work much longer hours than what the FLSA considers to be a full-time week for nonexempt workers. With work hours increasing, terms such as “part-time” and “full-time” have shifted in meaning to be more loosely coupled in terms of their link to actual work hours, particularly for professional exempt workers who can work up to 60 or 70 hours a week with no overtime paid (Williams & Calvert, 2002).

One reason for growing work hours of exempt employees is professionals are socialized to work “as long as it takes to get the job done.” Working long hours and spending face time at work is construed as commitment and a performance proxy (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). With recent layoffs and staffing reductions, professionals face rising workloads and may fear job loss if they work less. Given lengthening time demands for professional work, reduced-load or customized work has arisen as a new variant of part-time work developed for professional and managerial jobs. Growing numbers of individuals want to work in a profession, but not the 50 or 60 hour work week that many full-time professionals are socialized to work (Hill, Märtinson, Ferris & Baker, 2004). Under reduced-load schedules, employees undergo a reduction in work hours or load and take a pay cut. For example, if the normal load for a research scientist at a pharmaceutical company is 4 research projects, an individual working 75% load would be
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assigned 3 projects instead of 4 and take a 25% pay cut (Kossek & Lee, 2008). Most reduced-load work arrangements are unique in design and tailored based on an agreement to reduce hours or workload that is made between a specific supervisor and employee. One study of nearly 80 reduced-load workers found professionals customized their working time to an average of 31.9 hours per week with a range of 20 to 55 hours (Lee, MacDermid, & Buck, 2000). Even though 55 hours may seem excessive, for some professional jobs such as at the Vice President or Director level of a major corporation, it can still be socially and practically viewed as involving a workload reduction. Finally, phased retirement is another example of reduced-load work, where full time employees are allowed to gradually reduce their workloads and hours before retirement.

Flexibility to Allow for Short-Term Breaks in Employment or Time Off

Receiving considerable less attention than other flexible work schedules are part-year work, sabbaticals, vacations, and leaves. These flexible work arrangements allow for short-term breaks in employment without losing one’s job. These are increasingly important flexible work schedule forms as they enable individuals to maintain their relationships with their employers, yet have a break from work responsibilities. These breaks help individuals to engage in renewal, undergo new skill development, travel, conduct military service, attend to caregiving, health demands, or prevent burnout.

Sabbaticals

Under a flexible work arrangement that allows sabbaticals, employees take a prolonged paid time away from work and expect to return to their same jobs at the end of the sabbatical (Etzion, 2003; UIOVPAA, 1996). Sabbaticals are traditionally linked to universities and academic positions as a means to allow for skill enhancement or renewal after heavy teaching loads or administrative work. Although less available in the private sector and often distributed
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on a case by case basis to higher performing employees, sabbaticals have increasingly been adopted by many Fortune 1000 corporations such as Apple Computers, McDonald’s Corp., Segal, American Express, and Du Pont Co (UIOVPA, 1996).

Leaves, Vacation, and Flex-Leaves

Under a flexible work arrangement that allows for leaves of absence, employees are allowed to be absent from work or work duty for a set period of time in order to handle domestic or personal needs. This absence can range from a few minutes (e.g., intermittent leave), or hours, off during the work day to several weeks, months, or longer (Ivanovic & Collin, 2006). Leaves can be paid or unpaid and granted for many reasons including military or religious demands, training for a marathon, adoption, short-term disability, maternity, paternity, foster care, caring for a sick child or relative, or educational purposes (Galinsky et al., 2004).

One of the most common leaves is maternity leave. The U.S. is somewhat unique among industrialized countries in that it does not offer mandated publicly paid leave. Employers have no legal obligation to offer paid leaves, specifically for maternity or child care (Stebbins, 2001). Consequently, less than fifty percent of employed women in the U.S. receive paid leave during the first 12 weeks after the birth of a child. Only 7% of employers provide paid paternity leave of any duration (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2001). In contrast, in Canada, employees may take job-protected maternity leave with full or partial pay for up to a year. In the EU, mothers are provided fourteen weeks paid leave, which can be extended with additional partial paid parental leave if fathers also use the leave to share in caregiving (Kelly, 2006).

The U.S. does have the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor (1993) as a federally mandated law requiring employers with 50 or more part- or full-time employees to provide unpaid leave and time off from work up to
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twelve weeks in any twelve month period for the birth or adoption of a child, for an employee’s serious health condition, or to care for a spouse, parent, minor, or disabled child who has a serious health condition. The FMLA requires employers to continue employee health care insurance coverage during the leave and to provide the same or an equivalent position from which the employee held before the leave. Studies show some employers do not publicize the FMLA very effectively, and often resist implementation (Baum, 2006).

Increasingly, companies are combining vacation time with leaves and sick time to create a paid time off leave bank, where employees can use the time off in increments in whatever combination of time off they would like. Unfortunately, this approach can sometimes mean that employees use their leave time for domestic and caregiving needs and end up not having time left to take vacation to provide for personal leisure, work recovery, or their own illness. Some employees, particularly professionals with heavy workloads and long hours, typically do not take all of their vacation they could officially take under the policy and lose these days off. Many companies have adopted a “use it or lose it policy,” as firms will not let employees carry over paid vacation as a way to minimize future labor cost liability, yet they do not reduce workloads preventing employees from being able to actually use all their vacation days. Even with a “use it or lose it” penalty, in a bad economy where layoffs are occurring and time at work is viewed as commitment, workers are reluctant to use all their vacation. In contrast, in EU countries, at least a month of annual vacation is common.

Part-Year Work

Under a part-year work arrangement, workers are typically employed to fulfill seasonal or short-term needs. This enables organizations to maintain flexible and short-term staffing (Drucker, White, Hegewich, & Maynbe, 1996). Some professions attract high-level talent by
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offering seasonal flexibility in annual scheduling, such as academic, teaching, and tourism jobs. Other industries hire seasonal migrant workers, such as in construction and agricultural jobs, or offer part year employment to handle variation in customer seasonal demand (e.g., holiday retail jobs, tax accounting firms, ski resorts, etc.).

Section Summary

As noted in the preceding review, a flexible work schedule allows employee flexibility in one or more of the design criteria: when, where, how much, or the continuity of work. While these design features of different types of flexibility are a good start, most studies are very descriptive, which makes studying flexible work schedules in an integrative and theoretical manner not as easy as it first appears.

THEORIES RELEVANT TO FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

Below we review emerging several theoretical perspectives relevant to the study of flexible work schedules. They are psychological control, motivation, and work-family conflict perspectives, of which boundary theory is a subset. A growing body of research has been shown that using flexible work schedules leads to greater perceptions of control, lower work-family conflict, and lower intention to turnover. Seminal research is also being done on the motivational and boundary management literature effects of flexibility work schedule use, and some of the ideas below are speculative where noted.

Psychological Job Control Theory

Researchers (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1995; Karasek & Theorell, 1990) have long pointed to the importance of having high perceptions of job control and support for individual well-being. Key constructs pertinent to flexible work schedules based on job control theory include: perceptions of job control over work hours and perceived job autonomy. A key assumption of the
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literature on flexible work schedules is using them relates positively to employee perceptions of job control over scheduling and increased job autonomy in job design. However, not all studies assess whether use of flexible work schedules does indeed relate to greater perceptions of control and autonomy. Control is a concept from the demand-control model of work stress. It is defined as the decision latitude employees have over their job tasks (Karasek, 1979). The demand-control model posits positive relationships between worker job demands and the ability to control how and when one performs a job, such as when and how they carry out tasks (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). It is assumed that a job with high demands and low control will lead to stress; however, if an individual in the same high demand job perceives high control, he/she will experience lower strain (Gronlund, 2007). Flexible work schedules are an intervention that could enable greater control by providing tangible and psychological resources to enhance well-being.

Although traditionally job control refers to employees’ perceptions of control over how work is done (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), more recently, Kelly and Moen (2007) and Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006) extend the notion of job control to refer to control over when and where people work, in addition to control over how work is done. While Kelly and Moen found that perceptions of increased control over the timing and place of work among professionals who work at a corporate headquarters was related to decreased work-family conflict; Kossek and colleagues’ study of teleworkers did not find that use of flexibility necessarily led to more control or lower work-family conflict. An explanation for the lack of positive results for teleworkers may be that they were stigmatized for working in a different way. An additional explanation is their workloads and pace of work were excessive and therefore mere use of flexibility did not lead to greater control. It is likely that the type of flexible schedule used may differentially relate to control perceptions, which in turn may moderate
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individual and organizational outcomes. Nearly all the studies reviewed below measured employee perceptions of schedule control and not actual control over schedules.

Implications of Flexibility over Timing of Work for Control

Employee use of flextime and compressed work weeks allow workers to have increased control in order to be able to integrate personal role demands with work role demands. Using flextime as an example, by being able to control the timing of the starting or stopping of work schedules, an employee can restructure work hours at each end of the day to deal with nonwork demands, such as a late babysitter, the need to attend a school conference, get a car fixed, or go to the doctor without having to miss an entire day of work. In the case of a compressed work week (e.g. 4-10s), control over the timing of nonwork demands is increased as an employee is able to schedule appointments and other nonwork activities during the regularly scheduled fifth day off. Absenteeism is lowered for users of both flextime and compressed work week due to this ability to cluster personal appointments during employee-controlled nonworking time.

Reviews of shift work suggest its effects are less positive for control (cf Presser, 2003). Studies show working a night shift and especially rotating shifts or a swing shift, even when by choice, is generally bad for health due to disruption of sleep patterns. Often there is less control over the ability to develop an established sleep schedule. One reason for this, is even if night shift workers always have a regular time off during the day to hypothetically sleep, this may be when other family members (e.g., spouses or children) may be awake. Consequently, the employee does not get a full period of rest, as he/she may shorten sleep schedules in order to be involved in daytime domestic life. It is important to note that shift work, in relation to population census representation, tends to be disproportionately delegated to low income and minority workers (Presser, 1999). Despite these concerns, particularly for night work, shift work allows
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some employees to have greater control over their ability to participate in other meaningful
nonwork roles, such as child care, attend school events, volunteer, or earn a pay differential.

Regarding control linkages to contingent work, individuals working this schedule have a
means to be able to control which days or times of the year he/she works in order to be able to
take breaks from work when needed, such as to attend school or care for a sick child (e.g., a
substitute teacher or an on call per diem nurse). But many contingent workers work a contingent
schedule as a first step to garnering full-time employment. In this case, working a contingent
schedule may not increase perceptions of control – quite the opposite, as the employee often
experiences job insecurity or underemployment. In order for use to lead to greater control, one
must assess whether an individual prefers contingent work.

Implications of Flexibility over Place of Work for Control

In a nationwide sample of several hundred salaried professional workers and managers in
the financial services and computer industries, Kossek and Lautsch (2009) found that being a
formal user of a corporate telework policy was correlated with significantly higher perceptions of
personal job control ($r = .31$), but higher schedule irregularity ($r = .12$). They also found that
individuals who reported that they had a higher volume of “portable E work,” defined as work
that was portable electronic work that could be performed away from the main office, reported
significantly higher place mobility ($r = .22$). These individuals were more likely to be working in
multiple places, such as one day on an airplane and with customers the next. Thus, use of
telework has the tradeoffs of increased control over location, but less control over hours.

Implications of Part-Time Work for Control

When individuals use part-time work schedules, they will have increased perceptions of
control coupled with decreased demands, since workload is reduced. Karasek and Theorell
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(1990) would argue that this type of situation leads to the most beneficial outcomes for workers. However, when the opportunity is not presented as an option, such as the case with involuntary part-time work (when the worker prefers full-time hours and pay), the sense of control is diminished. While many high income workers wish to cut back hours and can often afford to do so, low income workers may face under-employment or forced part-time work, which they may not desire due to the need for income and health care benefits. Research suggests part-time workers are sometimes less likely to get promoted, while women and the elderly are more likely to work in part-time jobs in order to combine caregiving and other life demands (Hammer & Barbera, 1997). In some European Union (EU) countries, there is a concern that part-time work is leading to lower control because hours of pay are being cut, though workloads are not. This phenomenon is referred to as work-intensification where individuals are working fewer hours yet expected to complete the same amount of workload in less time.

Implications of Short-Term Breaks for Control

Research on work recovery substantiates the importance of giving workers autonomy to control when they take breaks from work for mental and physical health (Sonnentag, 2001). Control over time away from work counteracts job stress and helps to maintain a person’s well-being. Spelten, Smith, Barton, and Folkard (1995) demonstrated that worker well-being significantly increased with each additional day off from work. Psychological detachment theory suggests that resources necessary for work can then be recuperated during off-job time so that recovery can occur (Sonnentag, 2001). In one unpublished cross-national study (Davidson, Eden, & Westman, 2004), sixteen faculty members reported their level of job stress prior to and after sabbatical, compared to a larger matched control group who were not on leave during the...
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same time period. Those who were on sabbatical reported very small effect size improvements in perceptions of control, positive affect, and life satisfaction.

Regarding the effects of vacations, there is very little rigorous research (e.g., studies using quasi-experimental repeated measures). However, in one meta-analysis of only seven studies, findings suggest that although vacation has positive effects on health and well-being, the effects were modest, $d = .43$, and soon fade out after work resumption ($d = -.38$; Bloom, Compier, Guerts, Weerth, Taria, & Sonnentag, 2009).

Motivation and Work-Family Perspectives

Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory holds that individuals are more likely to be motivated to exert effort to perform for valued goals they think they can achieve. Under a motivation theoretical perspective, flexible work schedule users are assumed to be more likely to exhibit higher performance because they would have greater resources (e.g., more time, more support), which would enable them to perceive greater expectancy that they can perform both work and family roles well (Kossek & Misra, 2008; See also this Handbook, Vol. 3, Chapter 1 by Diefendorff and Chalender; Vol. 3, Chapter 16 by Hammer and Zimmerman on Quality of Work Life). A key issue to measure is the degree to which perceptions of effort to perform are increased because of use of flexible work schedules. Studies would also measure the degree to which individuals perceive reduced constraints to performing well and increased expectancy to stay in the labor force because of the increased access and use to flexible work schedules. Workers who are able to access and use flexible work schedule supports they value, therefore, may be more likely to have higher effort–performance linkages because they will be more likely to believe they can perform both work and family roles well. Research does indeed show that workers individuals may engage in higher extra-role performance when flexibility is available. Lambert (2000) found that employees with access to work-family benefits were more likely to exhibit higher organizational citizenship behaviors.
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Work-Family and Boundary Linkages

A work-family perspective on flexible work scheduling theorizes that these schedules would reduce work-family conflict, defined as when one role interferes with the performance of another role. Use of flexible schedules could also have the potential to increase work-family enrichment, the degree to which resources or skills or knowledge in one role (e.g., work) enhance the other (e.g., family), since users would have greater involvement in both work and family roles. Regarding the latter, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggest that resources in one domain will spillover and impact resources in another domain leading to positive spillover. They believe that increased flexibility will have a positive impact not only in the work role, but also in the family role, via positive spillover. For example, by using a flexible work schedule, a worker will have more positive well-being on the job and at home since they will experience fewer conflicts. This increased positive mood in each domain, in turn, will cross-transfer, and enhance the overall quality of accumulated role experiences at work and home.

Studies are beginning to investigate how use of different types of flexibility may lead to lower work-family conflict or higher enrichment. For example, use of some types of work schedule flexibility (such as part-time work) may lead to lower work-family conflict than others (such as telework). The latter flexible work schedule simply reshuffles work tasks in location from work to home, but does not reduce workload. For example, although Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006) reported a positive relationship \( (r = .31) \) between being a teleworker and perceptions of flexible job control, they found no relationship between being a teleworker and lower work-to-family conflict. After controlling for marital status, gender, and having dependents, the study found that the more teleworkers perceived higher job control, the lower family-to-work conflict \( (\beta = -.27) \) as long as they engaged in a boundary management strategy where they did not try to multitask or manage family activities while working.
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This finding leads us to discussion of boundary theory, which relates to work-family spillover theories. Boundary theory is based on the idea that individuals construct mental, physical, and emotional fences between roles, such as work and family (Ashforth, 2001). Individuals vary in the degree to which they prefer to segment work and family roles, while others do not care if work crosses into home and are integrators (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Flexible work schedules affect employee perceived ability to control boundaries between work and home, such as the degree to which the timing and location of work or family roles are flexible and permeable (Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2005). They can facilitate a boundary management strategy enabling individuals to manage work-family role synthesis in ways that fit with personal values regarding segmentation and integration and role investments (Kossek, Noe & DeMarr, 1999). It is important for researchers to consider how variation in preferences for segmentation to integration of work-nonwork boundaries, also known as “flexstyles” moderate attraction to and the effects of using different types of flexible schedules (Kossek and Lautsch, 2008). For example, a study by Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas, (2005) found that the degree of congruence between an individual’s values for segmentation and the availability of flextime policies enabling restructuring of work and family roles to support segmentation moderated key job attitudes. Individuals who more strongly valued segmentation between work and family roles were more committed to their jobs, the more they had access to flextime, compared to those who more strongly valued role integration, even after controlling for many key demographics (e.g., gender).

It is clear that the effect of using a flexible work schedule on boundaries varies by schedule type. Let’s turn to telework as an example, since telework is a flexible schedule that most heavily blurs the physical boundary between work and home. Teleworkers, by definition are more likely to integrate work-family roles and experience higher work-family conflict than
other flexibility forms such as part-time work which allows for a boundary management strategy supporting higher work-family separation. Learning to separate work and family roles requires new socialization of work and family task enactment for teleworkers. There is often growing job and family creep – seepage of the responsibilities of one role in to the other (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008). Golden (2001) reports that individuals using technological tools such as laptops and cell phone tend to have longer work days. They also report a greater difficulty with escaping or breaking away from work psychologically. They also may have more role transitions, switching back more frequently between work tasks and home tasks which leads to process losses due to increased switching costs from greater number of role transitions (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008). Consequently, while users of telework may hold positive perceptions of higher psychological control over schedule flexibility, this benefit may be offset by teleworkers’ lesser ability to separate boundaries. Lower work-family boundary separation leads to a greater propensity to take on additional work (e.g., substituting commuting time for job tasks) or non-work responsibilities (e.g., trying to do the laundry at the same time as working), resulting in an increase in total life workload and work-family conflict (Kossek and Lautsch, 2008).

Section Summary

The preceding section has shown that use and availability of flexible work schedules relates to perceptions of job control, motivation, and perceptions of work-family conflict and boundary-blurring. In the next section, we review key measurement challenges, which we integrate with this discussion of relevant theoretical constructs to identify cross-cutting characteristics across schedules.

PERSISTANT MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Measurement Challenges
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Our review identified the need to 1) differentiate between measures of formal flexibility policies and flexibility in job design; and 2) clarify measurement of availability and use and level and degree of diffusion within the firm, to better compare prevalence, take-up, and impact.

Formal Policy or Informal Job Characteristic?

The literature ranges from being very fragmented where studies examine flexible work schedules separately, using no common theoretical thread or dimensions comparing their design (Rau, 2003) to very general where employees or employers respond to an index listing a wide number of programs available. For example, researchers might ask a general question such as whether one had access to a “flexible schedule” or “workplace flexibility” without specifying the type of flexible schedule. This vagueness is problematic as it is difficult to know if the worker had access to flexibility in timing, workload reduction, for example, or a formal program versus a flexible job design component.

This ambiguity leads to a bifurcation in the flexible work schedule literature. One stream mainly conceives of flexible work schedules as a job design feature that refers to an individual’s perceived level of job autonomy over work schedule flexibility (e.g., Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan, 2008). Flexibility control is seen as a job characteristic. Respondents typically use Likert scales to assess the degree of perceived flexibility control concerning the timing and time of their work (cf. Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002). Scholars refer to this construct as perceived flexibility control or control over work time (Kelly et al, 2008; Kossek et al., 2006).

The main other research stream views flexible work schedules as involving a formal human resource policy or informal supervisory approved work practice. Typically, measurement is conducted in dichotomous terms. A job was defined as either flexible or not based on use of a policy or practice. If an individual was a user of a flexible schedule, it was assumed he/she had
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autonomy, regardless of whether the use of the policy or practice actually led to increased flexibility control or effectiveness. (For a review, see Kelly et al., 2008).

Clarifying Flexibility Use and Access Within and Across Firms

Many studies also confound policy availability and actual use, whether the flexible schedule is a formal Human Resource policy available across the firm, or an idiosyncratic informal supervisor practice. Clarifying these issues is very important in studying relationships between antecedents and outcomes. For example, should a firm be considered as offering flexible work schedules if it is offered to only, in the minimum, one employee (any employee) on an exception basis, or only to some employee groups such as high talent professionals, but not lower wage workers?

Clarifying levels of analysis in measurement within the firm is also confusing. For example, a firm can be listed in a national survey as having a policy, but there can be wide variation within the firm at the business unit or work unit level in the degree to which a practice is available, depending on an employee’s supervisor or occupation. Given these trends, it is not surprising that reports on flexible schedules significantly differ between employees and employers. Employers typically focus on policy adoption and overstate availability. Employees, on the other hand, often focus on perceived barriers to use such as lack of communication and cultural and supervisor support (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). If flexible schedules are available on paper but go underused because the organizational culture doesn’t support them, so users are afraid that they may not be promoted, or worse could lose their jobs, does a firm really offer flexible work schedules? Below we draw on these gaps in measurement accuracy and the previous review of relevant theoretical constructs in order to identify common characteristics that differentiate the offering of flexible work schedules. We identify key themes that must be
assessed when evaluating flexible work schedules to ensure they are flexible in more than just name only, in order to improve measurement of antecedents and outcomes across types.

**Definition and Cross-Cutting Themes: What Makes a Flexible Work Schedule “Flexible”?**

Assuming that the flexible work schedule policy involves *flexibility related to one of the four main work schedule types: timing, location, workload amount, or continuity of employment hours*; we drew on the preceding review of relevant theory and measurement challenges to identify the following criteria that should be used in any study to assess flexible work schedules.

To what extent does the flexible work schedule involve 1) a recognized human Resource policy or practice sanctioning work schedule flexibility; and 2) job design characteristics fostering greater perceived job control over work scheduling?

The first criterion is that the flexible work schedule should involve both 1) a human resource policy or practice; and have some link to 2) job design characteristics fostering high perceptions of increased autonomy over when, where, how much or the continuity of work. Ideally, a formal flexible policy always would be well-linked and supported by informal supervisory practice. However, policy and practice are not always tightly coupled. If the policy just exists on paper and only in principle, use may be restricted. Under this situation, the schedule will not be experienced by an employee as increasing perceptions of job autonomy or control over the work schedule. To be considered a flexible work schedule, the schedule must enable employees to have some perceived autonomy to control or customize one or more of these schedule criteria to meet personal preferences.

To what extent does the culture support use of flexible work schedules, so there is a relatively low gap between availability and use by those who desire a flexible work schedule?
Secondly, the organizational culture must support a majority of workers and managers perceiving the schedule as readily available. If the schedule is only an informal practice that individual workers request on a case by case basis from supervisors who may vary in support, there may be wide variation in equity in how the schedule is administered, which has implications for whether positive outcomes occur. We do not believe that a firm should be considered as having adopted flexible work schedules, if it is not a recognized practice that many workers can request. In some firms, managers only permit access to select higher performing workers and try to keep the schedule from being known as a work option. Ad hoc “secret” deal-making between individual employee and employer or I-Deals, on exceptional basis (cf. Rousseau, 2007) can occur, which would be outside the scope of this review.

*To what extent is use employee initiated and perceived as voluntary?*

The third attribute is the use of the flexible schedule must be employee initiated and enable the workers to have some choice as to whether to use the schedule. This distinction is important as voluntary flexibility may be more likely to be psychologically beneficial for the worker such as perceptions of increased job control and well-being, than in cases of involuntary flexibility where use is forced by the employer. Measuring “voluntariness” can be tricky as many professionals are socialized to work long hours and highly identify with the work role and may use flexibility to work long hours, even if their employer does not require them to do so.

*To what extent is use of flexible work schedules determined by mutuality in the employment relationship to benefit both employees and employers?*

Fourth, flexible schedule use emanates from some mutuality between employer and employee in the power to influence the scheduling of working hours. This criterion helps distinguish a flexible worker from the growing numbers of self-employed workers. Although
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self-employed workers could be considered as having a flexible schedule, they are outside the boundaries of this review, which focuses on individuals who regularly work for an employer and are considered an employee. The assumption that use of the flexible work schedule leads to positive outcomes for both employee and employer is an important indicator of mutuality in the power relationship and a balance in accrued benefits from flexible work schedules.

To what extent is the schedule socially constructed as “psychologically different” from a standard schedule in terms of boundary blurring?

Fifth, the work schedule is viewed as being psychologically different from a standard work schedule, particularly in terms of what are considered “standard norms for the number of hours spent at work, continuity of employment or “normal relationships regarding the degree of boundary blurring or separation of work and nonwork relationships. This criterion is based on growing evidence that the definition of “flexible work schedules” has a social construction component. Those working on a flexible work schedule are seen as working something “other” than a regular schedule that a majority of workers use (Ashford, George, & Blatt, 2008; Cappelli, 1999). Given this social or normative aspect of flexibility, the meaning of “flexible work schedules” may shift over time in societal culture and across firms, as they become more prevalent. What is considered a flexible work schedule may vary by organizational and national culture, type of job, or the prevailing work rules of the employer. For example, teleworking may be the standard for an Information Technology (IT) firm, but unusual in a manufacturing firm. Flexibility may refer to not only the schedule of work hours, but take on social meaning as an attribute ascribed to an employee working in a non-normative manner. The individual is labeled “flexible worker.”

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULE OUTCOMES
Flexible Work Schedules

Any summary of outcomes of flexible schedules must be introduced with the caveat that more research needs to be done to isolate the specific effects of various types of flexible schedules with better measures that address the measurement and definitional issues noted in the previous sections. Drawing on selected studies, Table 2 shows a summary of main outcomes with effect sizes for selected citations. We summarize general trends shown in the table below.

**General Employer Outcomes**

The I-O literature suggests there are two main benefit categories from flexible work schedules for the organization. The first is increased workforce attraction and retention, effort, quality and productivity, which leads to higher job satisfaction, engagement, extra role effort, commitment, higher workforce quality from a larger applicant pool, and lower turnover of talent. The second main employer benefit is cost savings from the ability to attract and retain a motivated work force, as well as a lowering of rates of dysfunctional employee behaviors, such as absenteeism, turnover, or accidents (Halpern, 2005; Kelly et al., 2009; Kossek, 2006; Kossek & Hammer, 2008). Employers may also have savings in compensation costs as some employees may be willing to tradeoff wages for greater leisure time off from work.

Given these trends, employers who offer flexible work scheduling to support work-life demands may have a competitive advantage in external recruitment and internal retention. Evidence does suggest that having flexibility policies does increase the size and quality of the applicant pool (Clifton & Shepard, 2004). Some workers with unique skills such as high talent professionals or in jobs with higher turnover (such as nursing, service jobs) can exert workforce leverage to entice employers to offer flexible schedules or impose preferred administrative structures (such as flexible hours) on their organization (Barringer & Milkovich, 1998). Flexible work schedules also enable the development of internal labor markets to retain workers, by
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making it more unattractive for employees to leave the firm, as it raises opportunity costs of looking for similar alternative employment (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006). This has potential cost savings for employers as resources and time are not devoted to constantly recruiting and training new workers, who are likely to be not as productive as experienced workers.

From the employer perspective besides the positive productivity effects noted, there are possible countervailing negative effects that simultaneously must be taken into account in more studies. These may include increased administrative costs and complexity of having to manage what can be increasingly varied schedules to ensure coverage and coordination for client interactions (Van Dyne et al., 2008). Costs also may be incurred if investments are not made to train supervisors to learn new ways to supervise, communicate with, manage and measure the performance of a work force that is more dispersed in time at work. Cross-training and greater teamwork also may be needed to encourage workers to learn each others’ jobs and self-coordinate schedules to implement flexible work schedules in ways that considers implications for work group efficiency, as opposed to only individual self-interests.

Measuring cost reductions is also tricky, as they may occur indirectly, particularly through variables that are important pathways for employee well-being. For example, the relationship between flexible work schedules, turnover, and absenteeism may be mediated via lower job stress, work-family conflict, or higher work engagement. Nevertheless, the effect sizes shown in the table help one conclude that there is a positive relationship between the availability of flexible work schedules and organizational attachment. For example, Allen (2001) found modest positive relationships with organization commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Lowering job stress also can positively affect health care costs by lowering blood pressure and reducing negative health behaviors such as alcohol or drug abuse or overeating (cf.
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Harris and Fennell, 1988). Yet the effects of flexible work schedule use may be lagged, as it may take several months or years before these effects show up on the bottom line.

**Employee Outcomes**

For the *individual*, a main benefit from using flexible work schedules or having greater access to schedule flexibility relates to increased *well-being, lower stress, and health*. A second main benefit is *higher focus, satisfaction, and role quality experiences both in job and nonwork roles*. One likely pathway between flexible schedule use and higher well-being, assuming workload is held constant, is lower work-family conflict, which in turn relates to lower job and life satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Better person-job fit may also ensure, as restructuring work schedules to better fit nonwork demands allows an individual more time to devote to other roles outside of work such as time to exercise, see friends, or be involved in the community.

Assessing benefits from flexible work schedule use for work and family roles is likely to be reciprocal, iterative and can operate via many complex pathways. An example comes from a study, which although it did not examine formal flexible schedules, did research workload perceptions over time. Higher negative work affect related to negative home affect ($\beta = .15$), while higher workload related to negative home affect ($\beta = .04$; Ilies, Schwind, Wagner, Johnson, DeRue, & Ilgen, 2007). Thus, more positive relationships between work and family roles also may occur in part because higher role quality experiences may ensue at work and at home, making one feel roles are more complementary and not always at odds. Individuals also may be able to perform better at work and family roles due to positive capitalization of affect and mood transfer between both domains (Ilies et al., 2007) and a higher ability to focus on each role.

Just as with employer outcomes, when assessing individual outcomes, there are some countervailing factors that must be considered before concluding that the overall effects of work
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schedule flexibility are positive. For example, if employees are not able to use flexible work schedules that best meet their personal time demands, or if they experience career penalties from using flexibility, the benefits of these schedules will be lessened at best, or worse yet, could become negative. We’ve noted that in many firms while use of flexibility is officially allowed, users are sometimes stigmatized by the organizational culture as being seen as less committed to the firm, or not as mainstream workers (Kossek & Lee, 2005). They may face a backlash such as lower raises, fewer promotions, or be the first to be laid off in a downturn (Golden, 2008). Few studies have actually quantified these costs and linked them to actual flexible work schedule use.

Individuals also may experience increased cognitive complexity from using some flexible work schedule types such as telecommuting. This results in more switching costs from increased frequency of role transitions and higher process losses (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008). For example, individuals can be constantly moving between work roles such as working on a lap top to multitasking on domestic roles such as supervising a child’s homework or doing the laundry. Telecommuters also face the temptation of overwork and increased work-family conflict, burnout, and role overload from having work or domestic chores constantly available to them all the time. Telecommuters may then be tempted to simply try to take on more work and home tasks simultaneously. Negative mood transfers from work may also be brought into the home more easily, as well as the reverse.

Many of the outcomes from using flexible work schedules may be moderated by employee demographic, psychological, or job background. For example, if access to flexible work schedules is viewed as a workplace intervention, then it will have the most important impact on outcomes for individuals who are most in need of flexible schedules as help or support. Thus, workers with extremely long commutes may be more likely to benefit from
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teleworking than those who live close to the office. Or employees who have higher work family conflict such as those with young children may receive greater benefit from flextime to enable them to take them to doctor or school appointments than someone who has fewer domestic demands to manage during the work week (cf. Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner & Zimmerman, 2009). Thus, flexible work schedule studies must identify the relevant population most likely to benefit from a specific flexible work schedule type when assessing outcomes, but few do. Cross level work group and organizational moderators also may be critical when assessing individual outcomes. For example, if you use flexible work schedules in a company with an unsupportive work group or organizational culture, the positive effects at the individual level may weaken.

Overview of Outcomes by Schedule Type

Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman (1999) conducted a meta-analysis that compared effects across schedule types summarizing 24 years of research (1973-1997). While it was not always clear whether studies were measuring use or access, they found that access to flexible work schedules positively relates to higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism. Compressed work schedules resulted in higher supervisor ratings of performance. A later meta-analysis by Byron (2005) found that schedule flexibility was negatively related to perceptions of work-to-family conflict ($\rho = -.30$) and family-to-work conflict ($\rho = -.17$). These relationships were moderated by sample parental status (work-to-family conflict, $r = -.72$) and the percent the sample was female (work-to-family conflict, $r = .10$; family-to-work conflict, $r = -.63$).

Drawing on data from the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce, Halpern (2005) found that the greater number of time-flexible policies an organization offers, the greater the organizational cost savings from lower absenteeism by less “missed time at work, fewer days late for work or left early, and the failure to meet deadlines” (Halpern, 2005, p. 162).
Future research should build on this study to isolate the effect sizes from use of the specific types of flexibility in relation to absenteeism or deadlines missed.

Richman and colleagues (2008) drew on a consulting firm’s sample of fifteen Fortune companies part of a Work Family Directions study. They found an incremental effect size of eight percent of the variance in employee engagement linked to employee perceptions of perceived flexibility and a nine percent increase in the variance in engagement explained by the presence of family supportive policies. This study has the strength that it is one of the few we found that included measures of both formal (e.g., policies) and perceptions of informal flexibility. An area for improvement is that both of the measures used were one item measures, which are less reliable and too general to identify the source of cultural support or type of flexibility. The items were “Do you have flexibility or not?” and “Or have supportive policies or not?”

Symbolic Outcomes: Availability of Flexibility as Perceived Organizational support

A study by Eaton (2003) examined work-family policies of seven biopharmaceutical firms in a single state. Based on a sample of 463 employees, Eaton estimated the availability of workplace flexibility via an index of seven flexibility practices (flextime, part-time jobs, flex place, job sharing, compressed work weeks, unpaid personal leave, and sick leave to care for ill children). Eaton found that availability of formal and informal policies, perceptions of one’s ability to use policies, and degree of control over flexibility ($R^2 = .06$) were all significant predictors of perceived productivity and organizational commitment, after controlling for multiple individual employee variables (e.g., age, education, tenure, company size). No gender moderating effects were found indicating that men and women benefit from flexibility.
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In a study that investigated the role of family supportive organizational perceptions including many flexible work schedules Allen (2001) used a sample of 522 employees from a variety of settings (technology firm, utility company, women’s professional business association). Allen found that benefits offered (flextime, compressed work week, flexplace, part-time work, and a variety of dependent care supports) were significant predictors of lower work-family conflict, higher job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions, after controlling for a number of variables (e.g., salary, race, tenure). However, when adding family supportive organizational perceptions, each of the multiple regressions resulted in a change in $R^2$ between .15 and .24. This suggests both perceived cultural support for the family role may be more important for favorable work attitudes than mere availability of flexibility.

Hammer, Neal, Newsome, Brockwood, and Colton (2005) found a positive relationship ($\beta = .16$) between use of alternative work schedules and work-family conflict for women. They argued that a potential reason for this non-favorable outcome was that the schedules enabled the women in their study to engage in more non-work related responsibilities as opposed to using the increased control and time to lower stress and strain outcomes. A study drawback is that the type of alternative work schedules used is not delineated, as use was dummy coded so it is not clear what type of flexible schedule was being used.

Moderators of Outcomes Comparing Flextime to Flexplace

A recent study by Shockley and Allen (2007) employed greater measurement precision and examination of moderators than many previous studies on linkages between flextime use and lower work-family conflict. Using a highly educated sample of women with an employed spouse, and/or at least one child living at home, results suggest that flextime was more highly related to lower work-to-family conflict than to family-to-work conflict. This relationship was
stronger for flextime than telework. When controlling for age, marital status, work hours, and parental status, flextime and family responsibility accounted for 9% of the variance in work-to-family conflict. Family responsibility moderated the relationship between both access to flextime and work-to-family conflict ($\beta = -1.33, \Delta R^2 = .05$) and family-to-work conflict ($\beta = -1.47, \Delta R^2 = .06$). It is also important to note, that when perceptions of family supportive organizational policy availability was considered, the relationship between flextime and work-family conflict became insignificant. Perceptions of family supportive organizational policies accounted for over a fourth (26%) of the variance in work-to-family conflict and 14% of the variance in family-to-work conflict, after controlling for the demographics noted above. These findings suggest that it’s not necessarily mere access to schedule flexibility that matters, but perceptions of how family supportive the organization is that really drive the direct effects to work-family conflict.

Family Outcomes Related to Shift Work

Rarely are family measures related to scheduling assessed in management and I-O studies. An exception is an interesting study on shift work conducted by Barnett, Gareis, and Brennan (2008). While most studies focus on negative outcomes of shift work, Barnett focused on when shift work can be positive by fitting with workers preferences for scheduling. Using a sample of 55 dual-earner families with children between 8 and 14, Barnett and colleagues (2008) examined the within-couple relationships between the wife’s work and the spouse’s work-family conflict, psychological distress, and marital-role quality. The most robust finding of this study was that the wife’s shift work was significantly related to her work-family conflict, but not the husbands’ level of work-family-conflict. Those who worked evening shifts reported greater work-family conflict than those who worked day shifts. The wife’s shift work by hours also was significantly related to the wife’s level of psychological distress. Interestingly, only the
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interaction between shift work and hours was significant, as shift work and hours worked had no direct effects. The authors found that wives who worked day shifts had no variation in psychological distress; meanwhile, those who worked evenings reported higher distress with fewer work hours.

Outcomes Related to Workload Flexibility

Hill, Märtinson, Ferris, and Baker (2004) sought to better understand how reduced-load work affects perceptions of work-family balance. Using survey data from nearly 700 professionals from the 1996 IBM Work and Life Issues Survey in the U.S. they compared mothers of preschool children to their full-time counterparts. These part-time or reduced load employees worked on average 47% fewer hours and reported 41% lower income than the full-time group. Hill and colleagues found that reduced hours were positively related to work-family balance ($r = .47$) but not career opportunity ($r = -.02$). Likewise, when controlling for occupational level, family income, age, and job flexibility, reduced-hours were again positively related to work-family balance ($\Delta R^2 = .09$) but not career opportunity ($\Delta R^2 = .01$). The mean annual family salary was $100,568 for reduced-load workers, while the mean for their full-time counterparts was $120,590, suggesting these were relatively high earners who may be more likely to afford the income loss from working part time than those in lower paying jobs.

In a qualitative examination, Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, and Leiba-O’Sullivan (2002) examined the role of contextual factors in the success of 82 managers and professionals working a reduced-load work schedule. Lee and colleagues found that HR practices and policies for the reduction of work hours were quite successful with an average reduction of 18 hours per week. In regards to personal outcomes, Lee and colleagues found that 91% of respondents reported being more happy and satisfied with their work-family balance, 86% reported positive
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effects on their children and parent-child relationship, and most reported greater general well-being, less stress, feeling less worn out and more relaxed. In regards to job and career outcomes, 85% reported neutral or positive implications towards work performance, 67% liked their jobs and felt they were doing challenging and interesting work, and most were satisfied with career implications of a reduced work load. Seventy-six percent of senior managers interviewed believed that reduced-load work maintained or improved work performance; most felt that it also enhanced recruitment and retention. Lee and colleagues found that a total of fifteen contextual factors were strongly endorsed by managers and professionals as being key factors in the success of reduced load work. Individual factors included personal characteristics such as having a higher levels of work ethic, commitment, an organized and highly concentrated work style, a unique skill set in high demand, being a self-starter and interpersonally skilled, and having strong and clear personal values. Favorable job context factors related to work that allowed for higher individual autonomy or was project-oriented. Favorable work group factors included having a supportive boss, and competent and supportive direct reports. Favorable organizational factors were working for firms with an organizational culture that valued employee’s needs, saw a business need for retaining skills, and wide publicity of work-life policies and programs.

Similar results to the research cited above showing a positive relationship between working part time and lower work-family conflict and higher well being were found in a study by Rijswijk, Bekker, Rutte, and Croon (2004).

Outcomes from Short-Term Breaks and Time for Work Recovery

Collectively, outcomes from flexibility to allow breaks from work have received far less empirical and theoretical focus so our review here is more descriptive. Kramer (2001) discussed the potential benefits of workplace sabbaticals. Kramer compiled an impressive list of stories
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from individuals who opted for a sabbatical, including a former Governor of Tennessee, lawyers, clergy, high tech industry employees, educators, and even store clerks. All of the sabbatical reports reviewed by Kramer revolved around positive features such as feelings of being reenergized, reinvigorated, and refreshed. Kramer found that (1) employees enjoy their sabbaticals and feel better when they are done; (2) employees return to work with a new viewpoint and with new vigor; (3) some employees improve their skills or perform acts of social worth; (4) hiring substitutes to fill in for those on sabbatical could reduce unemployment; and (5) having a sabbatical policy gives an organization a competitive edge.

To address the limited empirical evidence examining work recovery, Totterdell and colleagues (2005) explored recovery duration based on 28 days of self-ratings, cognitive-performance tasks, and sleep diary results from a sample of 28 nurses. The longer the time allowed for recovery from the work shift, the greater the employee satisfaction on subsequent workdays. Satisfaction also was significantly higher at the end of day shifts when that shift was preceded by two rest days compared to only one. Results also showed that a number of measures (sleep, mood, and social satisfaction) were worse on the first day of rest compared to subsequent days. These results suggest that recovery from work takes time. Although the findings were not longitudinal, they do indicate that short-term breaks benefit the employee and employer.

As an extension of this work, Fritz and Sonnentag (2006) conducted a longitudinal study to explore the effects of vacation on employee performance-related outcomes and well-being. Using a working sample of 221 university employees, they found changes in effort expenditure and well-being from before to after vacation. Specifically, they noted vacation effects and partial fade-out effects. Vacation experiences (negative work reflection) contributed to well-being immediately after vacation ($\beta = .27$) and two weeks later ($\beta = .16$), after controlling for negative
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affect and well-being before vacation. Likewise, vacation experiences of negative work reflection ($\beta = .21$), relaxation ($\beta = -.13$), and nonwork hassles ($\beta = .15$) all significantly predicted self-reported effort expenditure two weeks after vacation. These results further suggest that short-term breaks in employment are beneficial to employees.

**FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

Overall, this chapter has reviewed the growing diversity in the different schedules used to organize working time from both the individual and the organizational perspectives. We have demonstrated that not all forms of schedule flexibility are the same in impacts on the individual and the organization, and that the views of the individual and the organization on the benefits and drawbacks of flexible work schedules sometimes differ. We’ve also noted that the literature on flexible work schedules is very descriptive, and needs both methodological and theoretical development. We’ve noted the need for studies to include new trends such as the growth in casual use of flexible work schedules such as checking email during nonwork hours, a social trend which must be accounted for in formal studies of flexible work schedules.

While many implications for research have already been made throughout this chapter, we close with additional suggestions regarding 1) a research agenda specifically on flexible work schedule implementation; 2) the need for I-O theory to consider how flexible work schedules impact growing heterogeneity in work experiences; 3) improving measurement and theoretical linkages; 4) support and context as moderators; 4) assessment of more varied outcomes; and 5) increased consideration of “the future of flex” as an organizational effectiveness tool.

**Implementation Research Agenda**

Clearly, research needs to move beyond whether flexible work schedules merely exist to increase understanding of the conditions under which they are effectively implemented and used.
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We also need greater insights into the variation in antecedents and outcomes and processes related to different types of flexible work schedules used by employees and organizations with varying characteristics. Toward this end, Table 3 provides a list of hypotheses on implementation issues for future research. Many of the hypotheses in this table draw on our review of criteria of what makes a work schedule “flexible.” These design criteria can also be used to create new measures to better assess implementation of flexible work arrangements.

We’ve also noted I-O constructs such as job control, valence and expectancies, work-family spillover and preferences for boundary management integration or segmentation that could be used to assess the implementation of these schedules. We believe it is critical to discuss the differential implications of different schedule types for control perceptions as a pathway to understand other outcomes. We also have pointed out that control over work time does not necessarily involve a formal program, but can relate to an aspect of job design. We would like to see more integrated studies on implementation that measure human resource policy use, organizational cultural and supervisor support of flexibility, and worker perceptions of flexible scheduling autonomy to reconcile the gap between policy and practice. We would also like to see greater inclusion of family schedule design and flexible scheduling supports in these studies too.

New I-O Theory Needed Related to Growing Heterogeneity in Work Experiences

I-O theories need to be reviewed to account for the growing heterogeneity in work schedules and arrangements. They also need to adopt a multiple stakeholder approach to determine differential impacts of flexible schedules on managers and on different types of workers and families, and communities. As the use and customization of flexible work schedules continues to grow, an increasing important issue is “When are “nonstandard hours” considered standard?” Heterogeneity in work schedules is not only likely to grow in good
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economies, but also bad. For example, during growing economic activity, they are ways to attract workers or keep-up with rising product demand; meanwhile, during an economic downturn, they are ways to retain workers when raises are limited or as an alternative to layoffs. Many organizations will need to manage blended workforces with employees working standard work schedules working side-by-side with those working flexible schedules, which can create challenges for managers in implementation (Lautsch & Kossek, 2009).

Many basic theories of work such as motivation, job satisfaction, culture and leadership, and organizational commitment, among many others, implicitly assume “standard or regular work schedule and arrangements” with some homogeneity in employment experiences and motivations. (See the following chapters for information on some of the topics noted: Vol. 3, Chapter 1, by Dieffenbordt and Chandler on “Motivating Employees; Vol. 3, Chapter 3 by Schleicher, Hansen, and Fox on “Job Attitudes and Work Values;” Vol. 3, Chapter 6 by Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey, on “Perspectives on Organizational Climate and Culture;” and, Vol. 1, Chapter 7, by Barling, Christie, and Hoption, on “Leadership.”) The reality is more employees are working in many different ways with greater heterogeneity of work schedules, which influences how people experience work attachment, work roles, and work culture. Socialization of new employees and re-socialization of existing ones will be increasingly difficult as more and more workers have varied time and work, and work at a geographical distance. Increasingly high talent employees may not necessarily look the same in how they work and act, nor will they view the work role as primary, be willing to generally restructure nonwork demands to enable one to devote primary attention and energy to working time (Kossek & Misra, 2009). (See also, Vol. 3, Chapter 2 by Bauer and Erdogan, on “Organizational Socialization: The Effective Onboarding of New Employees.)
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On the practitioner side, human resource policies, particularly for the high potential and talent workers, are currently designed to most heavily reward employees working either schedules that meet core hours set by the employer schedules, or willing to increase hours to place working time above personal or family time. Yet as noted above, growing numbers of employees simply do not work in this way. This is the way work was in the 1950s when organizations consisted primarily of men with homogenous careers and schedules (Whyte, 1956). It is not necessarily the way work schedules are enacted in the 21st century. Organizations have not fully adapted scheduling to meet the labor market, technological, and environmental shifts we discussed in this chapter. Human resource systems related to performance management, training, socialization, career development for example have not kept up with these changes nor been adapted to mesh with the flexible organization of today.

Improving Measurement and Theoretical Linkages

Our chapter has shown that one of the major limitations in the current flexible work arrangements literature is the imprecision in which flexible policies are measured. A key implication for research and practice of this chapter is it is important for I-O psychologists to improve definition and measurement of flexible work schedules, and better link measures to theoretical models. We’ve noted one area of this imprecision is the tendency for researchers to cluster or combine lists of flexible work arrangements (e.g., Allen, 2001; Casper & Harris, 2008; Stavrou, 2005), in order to create a composite score of adopted policies. This skews results toward rating larger organizations as more flexible simply because they have policies on paper. They must also measure effectiveness, access across organizational groups, mixed consequences from use, and flexibility type. In sum, we need better reporting of specific flexibility design
types, perhaps drawing on the framework in this chapter that looks at types of flexibility practices in clusters, as not all forms of flexibility are similar in processes or outcomes.

Here is an example of how flexibility type might differentially relate to outcomes comparing flextime and compressed work weeks. Though flexible work schedule practices are often implemented to benefit an organization’s workforce, various flexible schedules types differentially benefit, and potentially hinder, individual workers depending on their scheduling needs. Flextime greatly benefits an employee with parental responsibilities as they are more able to respond to these needs (e.g., daycare or school drop-off and pick-up schedule), while a compressed work week hinders this same worker’s ability to respond to these needs, by making it difficult to do pick up or drop off a child over a 10 or 12 hour day. As such, it is important to examine individual flexible work arrangements individually, as well as how combinations suppress or change outcome relationships. Key moderators such as level of caregiving should also be assessed.

As an example of how drawing on theory more closely could better inform measures, we use motivation theory as an illustration. Currently, the literature generally does not distinguish in motivational effects of different types of flexible work schedules. Studies drawing on a motivation perspective would measure variation in the degree to which employees with different employee backgrounds, value different types of flexible scheduling, and also see them as instrumental in enhancing ability to perform on the job. They should also measure the degree to which individuals have high expectancy that using flexible work schedules and accrue positive outcomes (such as low backlash and favorable work and family experiences). More research is needed to assess whether individuals who highly value flexible work schedules as a job characteristic and who use them are likely to have higher performance and a stronger relationship between use and performance linkages.
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Research drawing on motivation perspectives also would measure the degree to which different workers value different types of flexible work schedules and how different types of flexible schedules help individuals achieve important goals, both personal and work related (Kossek & Misra, 2008). It would also be important to measure the degrees to which individuals have high social identity pertaining to work and family roles, and value integrating these roles, as this may predict increased valence regarding flexible work schedule use. (See Lobel 1991, for a review of relationships between work-family role allocation and social identity.) Individuals who highly value work and family roles equally are often referred to as “dualcentric,” where two roles are both primary to social identity, and therefore individuals put high dual investment in both roles. Dualcentric individuals are more likely to value flexible work schedules, as they enable greater participation in work and family roles simultaneously.

Another area of imprecision we’ve noted is that many studies confound the measurement of availability and use, often only examining the availability of formal flexible work arrangements. Fortunately, surveying the literature, this seems to be a trend that some research is now rectifying by examining the unique effects of both the availability and use of flexible schedules (e.g., Casper & Harris, 2008; Parker & Allen, 2001). However, there still seems to be significant imprecision in regards to both the measurement of temporality and intensity, amount, or extent of one’s use of flexible work arrangements. For example, Kossek, Barber and Winters (1999) used survey data where single item measures assessed whether respondents had ever used alternative work schedule options, which were then coded as users versus nonusers. Casper and Harris (2008) assessed use as “don’t use,” “use occasionally,” and “use frequently” coded as 0, 1, and 2. These scores were then summed across a variety of policies to determine the amount of schedule flexibility used. Butler, Gasser, and Smart (2004) assessed a variety of flexible schedules with 5-point single items ranging from “never” to “very often” coded as 0 to 5. Collectively, these examples represent the general norm within the literature in regards to the
measurement of use, each lacking in temporal (e.g., frequency over the course of a year) and intensity (e.g., frequency over the course of a week) information. Clearly what we need to clarify is how long and how frequently does one have to use a schedule to be considered a user in order to have the schedule affect employee behaviors and attitudes. If someone can telework from home once a month or in bad weather, or have flextime when a child is sick, is that sufficient to have an impact on outcomes? Further, what happens when someone uses more than one schedule at the same time, such as flextime with telework? How does one tease out the effects of each type over time?

Overall, we need to move from studies reporting descriptive use of work schedule flexibility to measures of the extent of and effectiveness of implementation such as the hypotheses noted in Table 3. We also need to link measurement of use to workers’ perceptions of control and satisfaction. It is important for studies include measures of actual policy use and measures of the degree to which workers’ experience flexibility on the job in the same study so scholars can ascertain whether using a flexible work schedule actually enhances job autonomy perceptions. Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006) suggest that future work–family research should distinguish between descriptions of flexibility use (formal telecommuting policy user, amount of telecommuting practiced), how the individual psychologically experiences flexibility, and performance on and off the job.

**Support and Context as Moderators**

We’ve noted the importance of not only measuring availability of flexible schedule policies and practices, but the degree to which individuals’ perceive the company and supervisors are supportive of actually using flexibility without backlash. More studies need to combine measurement of policy availability and use with examination of cultural support for
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new ways of working. Several studies reported here showed interactions between formal flexible work schedule availability and use and support in relation to work-family conflict reduction.

Another area of concern moves beyond the pure measurement of use of flexible work schedules and focuses more on the implications of using flexible benefits. For example, it has been proposed that when individuals take advantage of flexible work arrangements and overtly demonstrate interest in nonwork life, they may face negative judgments regarding their lack of organizational commitment (Allen & Russell, 1999; Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996; Lobel & Kossek, 1996). Accordingly, it has been suggested that an organizational culture for acceptance and use of flexible work schedules is critical to avoid backlash from not only management but peer nonusers. For example, Breaugh and Frye (2008) found that employees who reported their supervisors as being more family supportive were more likely to use flexible work schedules; more research is needed to tease out the ordering of this relationship. In addition, future research needs to further explore organizational level and work group level cultural support of flexible work schedules, along with the potential backlash of not supportive cultures.

More studies also need to examine flexible work schedules in personal context. By this we mean that studies should not only examine the individual worker’s schedule, but also the worker in the context of other family members’ schedules, or the prevailing work group and organizational context and variable schedules. For example, we need to examine work schedules as part of a family system and investigate not only the employee’s schedules but how they mesh with those of family members. Similarly, there is a need to examine the compatibility of individual flexible schedules with co-worker, manager, and customer schedules.

It is also important for studies to state the reasons for the adoption of flexible work schedules; who controls use -- the employer or employee? Research is also needed on the degree
Flexible Work Schedules to which flexible schedules are viewed as integrated into the business context. For example, flexplace may be standard for many mobile IT workers, while very unusual for someone working in another industry. The latter may engender social backlash from use in one context but not another and studies need to be clear on workplace norms. Cross-level studies on variation in flexibility norms and preferences should be done. At the individual level, research might examine flexstyles such as psychological preferences for integration and segmentation (Kossek & Lautsch, 2008), which may shape preferences for various flexible schedules. These same proclivities could be aggregated at work group and organizational levels to understand the micro and organizational climates for work schedule flexibility, as well as unpack the factors leading to growing scheduling conflicts between workers and managers.

Cross-cultural research on flexible work scheduling is needed where studies would examine culture differences in the primacy of work to leisure, and the perceived need for managers to control workers’ behaviors. Most cross-cultural research on flexible work schedules has been at the national public policy level, such as the availability of leaves across nation states. Very little research has examined the use of flexible work schedules across national cultures at the level of the firm and these measurement challenges are discussed below.

**Clarifying Public Policy Contextual Measurement Influences in National Surveys**

Future research should aim to reduce measurement ambiguity currently found in national and international surveys in the U.S. and EU. For example, a review of three national U.S. surveys on flexible work schedules identified a lack of definitional clarity in the published literature on what is meant by “flexible work schedules” (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). The review compared the National Compensation Survey (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2007), The National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky,
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& Pruttas, 2002), and a professional association membership survey (World at Work National Survey, 2007). Wide variation was found in definitions, measures, and sampling techniques. The lack of agreement on how to study flexible work schedules is problematic because 1) it makes it difficult to compare these national surveys as one is not sure if the samples or measures are similar; and 2) it is likely there is higher measurement error in assessment as there is lots of latitude for respondents to interpret general items, making prevalence levels and empirical linkages more suspect.

Similarly, Piotet (1988) cautioned against the reliability of statistics assessing prevalence across the EU as common definitions either do not exist, or if they do exist, vary from country to country. This makes it difficult for international data on worldwide health effects of flexible work schedule use to be developed or even within country comparisons within the same firm.

As an illustration on a more global scale, there currently is no internationally accepted definition of what is a “standard” work day or schedule, which can vary by national law and culture, organizational culture, and occupation (Cappelli, 1999). Although there is wide variation in culture and legislation on flexibility and work hours, little of this variation has been considered in I-O studies of flexible work schedules. Yet these differences do matter. Take France for an example: the French work week is officially 35 hours a week (www.triplet.org). Employers can pay a fine to have lower level workers work longer hours. In France, most stores are closed on Sundays and many employees take a month long holiday in August. While an understanding of these trends, certainly makes it possible to study flexibility in France, now that France is part of the EU, it may make it more difficult to make work hour comparisons across countries, unless there is a measure of level of legislative support to discourage workers from working long or irregular hours. Even in the EU, variation exists as full-time work ranges from 35 to 39 hours.
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per week. Yet there is much more public policy support to protect workers from long hours than in the U.S.. For example, EU legislation has been passed limiting the maximum number of weekly work hours for nonexempt workers to 48 even with overtime payments (Crosby et al., 2004). Rarely are such difference considered in studies to put international work hour trends and flexible schedule use in context.

We should note that a growing trend in some nations is to actively encourage employers to support flexibility and more I-O studies should consider institutional effects on flexible work schedule adoption and use. In the U.K. and Australia, flexibility equal employment law has developed where employees have the “right to request” a flexible schedule and investigation of employer ability to accommodate. International studies of work-life will need to consider this variation in labor standards and legislation context when studying workplace flexibility from an I-O frame.

**Need for Expansion of Measurement: More and Different Types of Outcomes**

More research is needed to clarify outcomes from flexible work schedules, including the amount of flexibility used and time chronology between use, attitudes and behaviors. With the growing cost of oil, there is renewed interest in the productivity and organizational impacts of varying work schedules, but little quality research exists to inform organizations and society of the costs and benefits from multiple stakeholder perspectives (e.g., employee, employer, family, community) of different flexibility forms. We also need more research on linkages between schedule control and employee health and stress, as this is a growing societal concern. New research suggests linkages between support for flexible work schedules and health including heart rates, blood pressure, sleep quality, depressive symptoms, and physical pain (Kossek & Hammer, 2008). Such findings suggest flexibility is not just a nice thing to do to attract and
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retain workers, it also may impact longevity, and family and societal well-being. New intermediate measures of work productivity such as engagement, focus, creativity and conflicts over availability, and communication patterns should be included in outcome studies.

Certainly studies of outcomes need to be based on longitudinal quasi-experimental work with control groups. We’ve noted we found relatively few of such studies in our review. We also believe the findings that the favorable effects of using flexibility were higher for individuals with higher work-family conflict suggests that interventions might be tailored to focus on the members of the workforce who have the greater need and interest in flexible work scheduling. This is the target group most in need of workplace support and who are most immediately likely to benefit from workplace innovation in the short run. In the long run, all workers may benefit from having greater control over where, when, and how long they work over the life course.

The fact that more and more employees are spending what used to be personal time for work highlights the need for workers (especially those on a flexible work schedule) to increasingly self regulate boundaries between work and personal time (Nippert-Eng, 1996). It is also important to make sure whether the employer does not exert social pressure to increasingly restructure personal time to work particularly if workloads are too high and there are ambiguous norms about work hours (Kossek & Lee, 2008). These issues of professional work cultures that socially foster overwork and the tendency to use telework and other flexible work schedule forms as vehicles to induce employees to engage in overwork in order to manage rising workloads should be addressed. This issue is especially important during times when companies may be cutting staff in a bad economy and people may be afraid to request or use flexibility. One may ask, “Is there a minimum or optimal amount of work schedule flexibility to promote well-
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being?” and “Under what conditions does use of which types of flexible work schedules lead to
greater perceptions of schedule control?”

The Future of Flex as a Work Group and Organizational Effectiveness Tool

Studies should consider factors influencing acceptance and use, such as the importance of
need assessments to make sure policies adopted are congruent with workforce characteristics that
may wax and wane over the career and family life cycle. Researchers also should examine the
degree to which flexible work schedules are integrated with organizational and business
objectives, as well as ensuring the development of managerial support and a favorable
organizational culture or climate. We found far more research on the latter topic of support and
culture, than the former on business strategy or workforce fit or even implementation.

While polices are typically adopted at the organizational level, within firms, there is
often wide variation and organizational stratification in which different jobs, work groups, and
workforce demographics have access to schedules. Relatively little research has been done at the
work group level of analysis in particular which is critical for implementation as most policies
are implemented based on supervisory discretion. A recent review by Van Dyne, Kossek and
Lobel (2007) found that motivation and coordinating effects of flexible schedules were the main
implementation challenges at the work group level. Managers are more likely to experience
positive work group performance impacts if they are able to effectively manage coordination of
work schedules and learn how to manage equity within the work group. In order to facilitate this,
it is critical for the employer to allocate resources to train managers and employees to learn how
to work in new scheduling forms, and to monitor the effectiveness of implementation of work
schedules (Lautsch & Kossek, 2009; Kossek & Hammer, 2008).
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The National Work Family Health Network is one example of an effort to train and resocialize supervisors to help work groups and employers learn how to redesign social processes to better support employees’ schedule flexibility. This is a cross-university interdisciplinary initiative sponsored by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and began in 2005. New management training and organizational culture change interventions are being designed to increase employee control over work schedules (cf Kossek and Hammer, 2008; Moen and Kelly, 2007). The premise is that increasing supervisor and cultural support for workplace flexibility will enable employees to have more control over work schedules, reduce work-family conflicts, and ultimately improve worker health, family well-being, and organizational productivity. Conducted in over 60 work sites nationwide, the study uses a longitudinal quasi-experimental design with repeated waves of measurement of I-O outcomes, as well as measures of biodata and productivity from workers, coworkers, supervisors, and families. Overall, the study will assess the utility of increased work schedule flexibility as an effective workplace intervention to increase worker health and work productivity (www.workfamilyhealthnetwork.org). It is an example of the kind of integrative future research that is needed to improve the promise of flexible work schedules to benefit workers, employers, and society.

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Workplace Employee Relations Survey (1998)


Table 1. Types and Examples of Flexible Work Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Types</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility in the Timing of Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Definition:</em> Flexibility in when work occurs</td>
<td>• Flextime&lt;br&gt; • Core Days&lt;br&gt; • Results-Based Professional Work&lt;br&gt; • Contingent Work&lt;br&gt; • Rotating Shifts&lt;br&gt; • Shift Work&lt;br&gt; • Four Day Work Week&lt;br&gt; • Compressed Work Week&lt;br&gt; • Weekend, Evening, Night Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility in the Location or Place of Work</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Definition:</em> Flexibility in the location or place of where work occurs</td>
<td>• Telework or Flexplace Satellite Offices, Neighborhood Work Centers&lt;br&gt; • Required Travel or Client Office work&lt;br&gt; • Split Locations&lt;br&gt; • Informal Telework combined with Nonstandard Working Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility in Amount of work (Reduced Workload and Hours)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Definition:</em> Flexibility in the amount of work or workload</td>
<td>• Job Sharing&lt;br&gt; • Reduced Load or Customized Work&lt;br&gt; • Part-Time Work&lt;br&gt; • Temporary Layoffs&lt;br&gt; • Temporary Shutdown&lt;br&gt; • Required Reduced or Part-Time Hours&lt;br&gt; • Overtime Mandates or Limits&lt;br&gt; • Reduced Hours&lt;br&gt; • Phased Retirement&lt;br&gt; • Work-Study or Coops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility in Work Continuity (Short-Term Breaks in Employment or Time Off)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Definition:</em> Flexibility to allow for employment breaks or time off</td>
<td>• Short-Term or Long-Term Leaves (e.g., educational, travel, family, maternity, disability, military)&lt;br&gt; • Sabbaticals&lt;br&gt; • Extended or Indefinite Paid and Unpaid Leaves of Absence&lt;br&gt; • Vacation&lt;br&gt; • Sick Time or Disability Time Off&lt;br&gt; • Part Year Work&lt;br&gt; • Intermittent Leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Summary of Prevalence and Sample Outcomes from Flexible Work Arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work Schedule</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Use and Availability</th>
<th>Impact on Employee and Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Flextime</td>
<td>A flexible work schedule that allows employees to vary their work hours, within certain parameters, to better suit their needs (Ronen, 1981)</td>
<td>Used by 29 million workers (28%) in the US (USBLS, 2002)</td>
<td>Decrease in negative affect levels for women caregivers (Chesley &amp; Moen, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56% of employers offer flextime (SHRM, 2005)</td>
<td>Higher productivity ($r = .22$; Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, &amp; Neuman, 1999; see also Pierce &amp; Newstrom, 1983)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Higher satisfaction with schedule (Baltes et al., 1999).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lower absenteeism ($r = .42$; Baltes et al., 1999; see also Dalton &amp; Mesch, 1990)</td>
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<td>Lower driver stress and time urgency (Lucas &amp; Heady, 2002)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Higher job satisfaction ($r = .16$; Baltes et al., 1999; see also Orpen, 1981)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decreased turnover (Allenspach, 1975; Ralston, 1989; Ronen, 1981; Stavrou, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lower work-to-family conflict ($p = -.30$; Byron, 2005) and lower family-to-work conflict ($p = -.30$; Byron, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater family supportive organizational perceptions and supervisor support, lower turnover intentions ($r = -.11$), higher organizational commitment ($r = .16$) and job satisfaction ($r = .13$; Allen, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Compressed Work Week</td>
<td>A work schedule that allows an employee to work a full week (e.g., 40 hours) in fewer than 5 days (Pierce, Newstrom, Dunham, &amp; Barber, 1989)</td>
<td>33% of employers offer compressed work weeks (SHRM, 2005)</td>
<td>Higher supervisor rated performance ($r = .21$), higher job satisfaction ($r = .28$), and higher satisfaction with schedule ($r = .19$; Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, &amp; Neuman, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Lower absenteeism (Goodale, &amp; Aagaard, 1975; Nord &amp; Costigan, 1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower work-family conflict (Dunham, Pierce, &amp; Castaneda, 1987; Allen, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Flexible Work Schedules

2001)

Greater family supportive organizational perceptions and supervisor support, lower turnover intentions, higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, 2001)

Higher work-family conflict (Jansen, Kant, Nijhuis, Swaen, & Kristensen, 2004)

| 3)  | Shift Work | Any organization of working hours that differs from the traditional diurnal work period: work days, evenings, nights, or some form of rotating schedule (Costa, 2003) | 10.7% of workers in the US (consisting of independent contractors, on-call workers, temporary help agency workers, and workers provided by contract firms; USBLS, 2005) | Mixed: Reports of low (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998), neutral (Pearce, 1993), and high organizational commitment (McDonald & Makin, 2000) | Mixed: Reports of low (Bergman, 2002) and high job satisfaction (Galup, Saunders, Nelson, & Cerveny, 1997; McDonald & Makin, 2000) | Mixed: Low (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998) and high organizational citizenship behaviors (Pearce, 1993) | Higher levels of subjective health problems (Martens, Nijhuis, Van Boxtel, & Knottnerus, 1999) | Lower job performance (Ang & Slaughter, 2001) | Higher job-induced tension (Bernhard-Oettel, Sverke, & De Witte, 2005) |
| 4)  | Contingent Work | Any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment (Polivka & Nardone, 1989, p. 11) | 37% of employers offer telecommuting (SHRM, 2005) | Increase in personal growth for male caregivers (Chesley & Moen, 2006; marks, 1998) | Lower time-based family-to-work conflict (Lapeer & Allen, 2006) | Lower work-to-family conflict and higher family-to-work conflict (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006) |
| 5)  | Telework or Flexplace | A way of flexible working that enables workers to get access to their labor activities from different locations by the use of information and communication technologies (Pérez, Sánchez, & de Luis Carnicer, 2002, p. 733) | 44.4 million American users who performed any kind of work from home (Dieringer, 2004) | | | | | |
Flexible Work Schedules

24.1 million of American users who worked at home during business hours at least one day per month (Dieringer, 2004)

Greater family supportive organizational perceptions and supervisor support, lower work-family conflict and turnover intentions, higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, 2001)

Lower absenteism (Stavrou, 2005)

Organizational performance (Martínez-Sánchez, A., Pérez-Pérez, M., Vela-Jiménez, M. J., & de-Luis-Carnicer, 2007; Stavrou, 2005)

Lower absenteeism (Stavrou, 2005)

FLEXIBILITY IN THE AMOUNT OF WORK (WORKLOAD AND HOURS)

6) Part-Time Work

Employees who work fewer than 35 hours per week (USBLS, 2004)

A main type of flexible work arrangement in smaller businesses (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell, & MacVicar, 2007)

Unskilled, poor pay, little career possibilities, low security (Barnett, 1998; Kahne, 1985)

Lower role overload and work-to-family conflict ($\beta = .18$; Rijswijk, Bekker, Rutte, & Croon, 2004; see also Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000)

Greater family supportive organizational perceptions and supervisor support, lower work-family conflict and turnover intentions, higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, 2001)

Lower annual staff turnover (Stavrou, 2005)

No difference in job satisfaction (Lee & Johnson, 1991; McGinnis & Morrow, 1990)

Higher turnover for part-time workers and those who have temporary position (Cohen & Gadon, 1978; Feldman & Doerpinghaus, 1992; Granrose & Applebaum, 1986)

Greater flexibility in scheduling but less continuity in workflow (Olmsted & Smith, 1989)

Lower job-induced tension (Bernhard-Oettel, Sverke, & De Witte, 2005)

7) Job Sharing

A work schedule that allows two employees voluntarily share the work responsibilities of one full-time position, where each works less than full-time (Christensen & Stuines, 1998)

19% of employers offer job sharing programs (SHRM, 2005)

No difference in job satisfaction (Lee & Johnson, 1991; McGinnis & Morrow, 1990)

Higher turnover for part-time workers and those who have temporary position (Cohen & Gadon, 1978; Feldman & Doerpinghaus, 1992; Granrose & Applebaum, 1986)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexible Work Schedules</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8) Customized or Reduced-Load Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A work schedule where employees lessen their workloads through the reduction of work hours or tasks and being paid less accordingly (Meiksins &amp; Whalley, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers working in professional occupations (Hill, Märtinson, Ferris, &amp; Baker, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and professionals (Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, and Leiba-O’Sullivan, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOW FOR SHORT-TERM BREAKS IN EMPLOYMENT OR TIME OFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Sabbaticals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower burnout (Duetschman, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees enjoy their sabbaticals and feel better when they are done, some employees improve their skills or perform acts of social worth (Kramer, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Flexible Work Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10) Leaves, Vacation, and Flex-Leaves</th>
<th>A work schedule that allows employees to be absent from work or work duty (Ivanovic &amp; Collin, 2006)</th>
<th>British survey estimated 35% have parental leave (WERS, 1998)</th>
<th>Greater family supportive organizational perceptions and supervisor support, lower work-family conflict and turnover intentions, higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Allen, 2001)</th>
<th>British survey estimated 56% have paid leave (WERS, 1998)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11) Part-Year Work</td>
<td>A work arrangement where workers are generally employed to fulfill seasonal or short-term needs.</td>
<td>Seasonal work and ad hoc industries (cf. Lockyer &amp; Scholarios, 2007)</td>
<td>Disproportionately marginalized groups (i.e., women and minority ethnic groups; Conley, 2003)</td>
<td>Developing countries, and increasingly more common in developed countries (Houseman &amp; Osawa, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Predominately public administration, education, and health workers (LGMB, 1998)</td>
<td>Recruitment difficulties and skill shortages (Lockyer &amp; Scholarios, 2007)</td>
<td>Increase flexibility and reduced costs (Boyce, Ryan, Imus, &amp; Morgeson, 2007)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Findings in italics are based on groups or clusters of flexible arrangements (e.g., flextime and flexplace).
Table 3. Implementation Issues Related to Moderating Effects of Use of Flexible Work Schedules on Employee’s Work Attitudes and Behavior: Hypotheses for Future Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexible Work Schedule Design Attribute</th>
<th>Hypothesis Based on Literature Trends For Future Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employer or Employee Initiated?</td>
<td>Hypothesis 1: When use of flexible work schedules is initiated by the employee, there is a significant positive relationship between use and employee job and family satisfaction and a significant negative relationship with work turnover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Use of Flexible Work Schedules Employer or Employee Initiated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Formal Policy or Informal Practice/Job Characteristic</td>
<td>Hypothesis 2: When use of flexible work schedules leads to employee perceptions of greater control over the timing, time and amount of work, the employee will experience lower work-to-family conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the experience of using the formal flexible work schedule lead to actual employee perceptions of greater control over work hours and work load?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Policy Availability Compared to Use</td>
<td>Hypothesis 3: Flexible work schedules that are available on paper, but have low actual use by workers, will have lower influences on reducing work-family conflict, as well as lower influences on positive employee work attitude and behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the flexible work schedule have availability on paper, but lower use by workers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social Cultural Support and Use Backlash</td>
<td>Hypothesis 4: When employees initiate use of a flexible work arrangement, if using flexibility is not positively valued by the organizational culture or leads to stigmatization, the positive effects of flexible work schedules will be ameliorated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does working in different ways have strong cultural support from management and limited negative backlash from use?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Organizational Attachment Effects</td>
<td>Hypothesis 5: Flexible work schedules that are designed in ways that support positive organizational identification and attachment to the employment relationship will be most likely to lead to positive employer benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does use of the flexible work schedule affect organizational attachment and the long term employment attachment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nature of Workforce Use</td>
<td>Hypothesis 6: The more that flexible work schedules are used by employees of a wide range of demographics and workforce functions, the more that using flexibility is seen as a socially normalized way of working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are flexible work schedules used by many different types of employees in many different functions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>