

# The Impact of Flexible Work on the Productivity at Telecommunications Sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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**Abstract:**

This research aims to study the relation between flexible working arrangement and productivity in the telecommunication sector in madina region in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and disclose the impact of such arrangement on the productivity of the employer productivity. Knowing that FWA become more on demand in the market, especially after covid-19 period were both employees and employers had to experience such arrangement.

In addition to the literature review, a survey for a reasonable number of employees working in the same sector in madina region to examine the relation were SPSS statistical tool used.

The survey has revealed that there was a significant impact of the flexible work (time flexible, task share, part time work, and remote work) on the productivity. The survey also shows that flexible working arrangement does increase the employer productivity significantly.

**Key words:**

Flexible working arrangement, flexible working hours, support personnel, management support and the type of work or employment, part time, task sharing, job satisfaction, productivity.

## الملخص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة العلاقة بين إجراءات العمل المرن والإنتاجية في قطاع الاتصالات في منطقة المدينة المنورة في المملكة العربية السعودية وإظهار الأثر لمثل هذه الإجراءات على إنتاجية الموظف والمنشأة. خاصة بعد زيادة شعبية إجراءات العمل المرن في سوق العمل بعد فترة كوفيد-19 والتي أختبر خلالها الموظفون والمنشآت إجراءات العمل المرن. بالإضافة إلى الدراسات السابقة، تم عمل استبانة لعدد معقول من موظفين هذا القطاع في منطقة المدينة المنورة لفحص هذه العلاقة وتم استخدام إحدى تقنيات الإحصاء (SPSS) لمعرفة النتائج. هذه الدراسة والاستبانة قد أظهرت أن لإجراءات العمل المرن (الوقت المرن، مشاركة الأعمال، العمل الجزئي، العمل عن بعد) أثر كبير على الإنتاجية. كما أظهرت أن إجراءات العمل المرن ترفع كلا من إنتاجية الموظف والشركات بشكل كبير.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** إجراءات العمل المرن، ساعات العمل المرن، دعم الخصوصية، الدعم الإداري، نوع العمل، الدوام الجزئي، مشاركة المهام، الرضا الوظيفي، الإنتاجية.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Recently the concept of flexible work has gained a lot of attention from academicians and practitioners as a solution to various issues face the employees and the employer as well. Flexibility has been raised by the employees in different sectors and it has been implemented by few giant companies around the world.

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it was recently introduced for the first time in 2018 and found this system has many advantages for both employees and employer as well such as work life balance, reduce the labor attendance rate, reduce vacation days, reduce the sickness rate and increase the productivity (Maren Tream,2020). With the availability of advanced technologies, the work/non-work boundaries seem have diminished with the passage of time (Lewis et al., 2009). The implementation of flexibility of working in Europe in both private and public sectors has led to balance between work and family responsibility thus the staffs have more suitable time to care about their families (De Roure, 1995).

The aim of this research is to identify the impact of flexible work on productivity at telecommunication in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



### 1.1: Research problem

Work flexibility was relatively a new concept in the east; however, it had gained broader recognition in the west thus some great west's organizations applied this approach in their organizational culture which gained a positive effect on their productivities (Ansari, Chimani, Baloch& Bukhari,2015). Therefore the aim of this research is to find-out the impact of work flexibility by its all types on the productivity.

### 1.2 Research Importance

Work flexibility is a key motivator for pursuing a different job or organizations (Casper and Buffardi, 2004). flexibility became more on demand since both organization and employees had experience during covid-19 period (Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson, 2020). Moreover, retention and turnover are strongly associated with the degree of work flexibility thus all these factors will reflect positively on productivity.

### 1.3 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to study and examine the impact of flexible work on productivity at telecommunications sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Research aims to study the relation between the flexible of working arrangement and the productivity (Whealhy,2017).

#### 1.4 Research Hypothesis

What is the extent impact of the work flexibility on productivity at the telecommunications sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

#### 1.5 Research Limitation:

##### a) Objective Boundaries

The research sample will target deliberately a range of (218) employees from the telecommunications sector in Madinah Region 2023, where the total original community are (500) employees.

##### b) Temporal Limits

The survey was conducted from March 2023 to April 2023.

##### c) Spatial Limits

The study was conducted at the telecommunications sector in Madinah Region.

## 1.6 Literature Review

Joyce, Pabayo , Critchley and Bambra (2010) , they evaluated the effects (benefits and harms) of flexible working interventions on the physical, mental and general health and wellbeing of employees and their families by searching over many books websites and came out by that flexible working interventions that increase worker control and choice (such as self-scheduling or gradual/partial retirement) are likely to have a positive effect on health outcomes.

Saleh & Hussein (2010), their aim was to give a clear idea of the flexible working hours which leads to improve working and living conditions that conducting in the University of Mosul by using survey method applied over 150 employees of the University of Mosul which came up by Theoretical studies have proven that the applying of flexible working hours in developed countries contributed successfully to addressing the phenomenon of absence, reducing vacations, etc. thus recommend to expanding the use of flexible working hours for male and female employees to facilitate the conditions of life.

Golden (2011), they studied the impact of working hours on productivity and performance using previous research by examining the relation between working time and different aspects recommending to set the policy on the national level to implement the flexible working time arrangement to gain positive affect.

Ahmed, Idris and Hashim (2013), they Studied the relationship between Flexible Working Hours and employees' motivation using survey method thus they got results indicated that the implementation of flexible working hours shows a significant impact to the employees' motivation thus this study recommends to enhance the effectiveness of the working system.

Al-Habil and K. El-Rjoudi (2013), Their paper aimed to highlight the concept of flexibility at the work place, by investigating the impact of five types of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) on workers' productivity in the

Information and Communication Technology sector in the Gaza by collecting 178 employees' feedback through a survey questionnaire and came out by that flexible work arrangements had a positive impact on workers' productivity since 65.68% of the employees rated this item positively. The study recommended that ICT companies should raise the awareness of the management and staff about the importance of FWAs programs and its significant effect on employees' productivity.

Ansari, Chimani, Baloch & Bukhari (2015), their aim of this research was to find out the impact of Work Life Balance on the productivity of employees using survey distributed among the bankers who typically work 9-10 hours a day then concludes that work life balance has great association with employee productivity thus Organization and managers both need to spread awareness about all work-life balance practices and implement them carefully to retain their important assets of company.

Lbser (2016), he studies and test the impact of the flexible working on employees' satisfaction on workers in information and communication technology sector by questionnaire for workers in information and communication technology sector at Jijel.

Wheatley (2017), he Studied how can flexible working arrangement help to balance work, life needs and improve the employee's satisfaction by Logit Regression and Resolution thus they recommend facilitating by choice implementation of flexible working arrangement and improve the quality of reduced working hours available options.

John (2017), he Studied the relation between the implementation of flexible working hours and the organization productivity using Extensive study and examine of past relevant studies thus recommend HR to implement after considering the different factors as it helps to improve both organization and employee's productivity.

Bydén (2017), his aim was to investigate the relationship between flexible working arrangements and the perceived stress levels of employees using survey method then he came-up the result of the questionnaire provides support for the main hypothesis (H1), which states that flexible work arrangement increases the psychological well-being (i.e., decreases the stress levels). Thus, suggesting that the level of control the employee has on their work situation is an important factor in determining their work-related wellbeing.

Aziz-Ur-Rehman& Siddiqui (2019), Their aim of this research is to identify the relationship of flexible working arrangements with work-life balance and job satisfaction of employees of public universities in Karachi using survey over nine different public universities then they found the results indicate that flexible working arrangements have an impact on each of the dependent variables such as work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Ab. Wahab (2020), he examined the impact of chasing productivity demands on worker well-being and firm performance in manufacturing firms in Malaysia by collecting 213 workers feedback through a survey questionnaire and came out by flexible work arrangements play a significant role in moderating the relationship between chasing productivity demands and well-being as well as firm performance thus it is recommended to provides more flexible work arrangements to workers.

Austin-Egole, Stella, Iheriohanma and Nwokorie (2020), Their study highlighted the various forms and general principles of flexible working arrangements and their effect on employee performance by using library research involving analytical discussion of secondary data and came out by organization should imbibe employee-driven flexible work arrangements as they have been shown to help employees balance their work-life and this positively affects their abilities.

Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2020), they Studied the relation between remote work implementation and productivity using analysis of examiner personnel data, experiment on data on patents and patent application-

level, and natural experiment thus they found that the employee productivity greatly improved when they can work from anywhere.

Abdullatif (2021), she studied the impact of working from home during Covid-19 on females' productivity in Jordan by interviewing females working in different sectors thus she came up by the flexibility of working hours was found to have a significant impact on females' productivity especially those who have infants and toddlers.

### 1.7 Research Methodology

In this research descript method was used by doing a survey over a sample of telecommunication sectors employees in Madinah region with the aid of SPSS technology analytical tool. The survey was prepared with a reference to a previous study was conducted in a similar subject (AGBANU, I. I., TSETIM, J. T., & SULEMAN, A. , 2023). In addition to the use of the historical as we have experience in such situation during Covid-19 pandemic and literature review.

## Chapter 2: Flexible work

Traditional work specifies working hours per day that the employee performs throughout the working days, which may not be commensurate with work pressures and the urgent needs for additional hours during some occasions. That is why a work system was adopted that enables the entrepreneur and the employee to determine the number of working hours that suit both parties, which is what has been called flexible work.

This innovative system enables companies and employees to agree on an actual hourly wage for each task, so that the worker can work hours that suit his capabilities, diligence and interests, and protects the employer himself from a long-term contract that may not actually suit his needs in different seasons. This method is called “Flexitime” and it is one of the most popular ways to raise productivity and provide more job opportunities more effectively. Marn (2023, Jan 9)

### 2.1 Legislation of the flexible work system law in the Kingdom

The Kingdom was proactive, as usual, in finding appropriate legislation and laws to provide a platform for flexible work that guarantees the rights of both parties, as the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development put in place the regulation of flexible work in response to a package of royal decrees regulating work. Marn (2023, Jan 9)

### 2.2 The most important details included in the organization:

- 1-Not obliging the employer to compensate for annual leaves and occasions or end-of-service remuneration.
- 2-Not subjecting the worker to a probationary period.
- 3-Calculating hourly work and paying monthly wages.

4-Working hours for one employer do not exceed 95 hours per month.

5-The worker has the right to approve or reject his request for work.

### **2.3 Flexible work is limited to Saudis only.**

Age groups younger than 18 years old and older than 65 years old are not allowed to register in the flexible work system. The employer does not compensate workers for paid holidays such as annual, sick or anniversaries. Worker is required to accumulate at least 168 hours of flexible work in order to calculate a month of subscription in the annuity branch.



## Chapter 3: Productivity

The Productivity is defined as the relationship or ratio between outputs and inputs over a period of time. Which is the labor productivity that defined most simply in terms of homogenous physical output per unit of labor input. (Sharpe, A., & Fard, S. M., 2022)

According to the techno-economic approach, the concepts of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness are distinguished. Many researchers have claimed that in defining productivity, the basic concept of productivity should be seen as separate from its sister concepts, but for investigating services, the concept should again be widened (Vuorinen et al., 1998; Johnston and Jones, 2004).

Pritchard (1995) distinguished three categories for definitions concerning productivity:

- (1) The techno-economic approach, i.e., productivity as an efficiency measure (output/input)
- (2) Productivity as a combination of efficiency and effectiveness
- (3) A wide approach that contains everything that makes an organization function better

### 3.1 Relation between Flexible work arrangement and Productivity

Flexible work arrangement (FWA) has a significant and positive impact the employees' perceived productivity, quality of work and organization commitment. Also, it was confirmed that happiness which a result of FWA plays a mediating role in the relationship between FWA and employees' outcomes. In addition, it allows employees to manage their personal and professional lives with ease using their preferred work method. Thus, for sure this type of work promotes the employee satisfaction. (Hashmi, M. A., Al Ghaithi, A., & Sartawi, K., 2021).

## Chapter 4: Field Results and Proposal Analysis

The objective of the analysis of primary data collected from survey is to answer our research questions which include finding out how the flexible working arrangement affect the productivity in the telecommunications sector in Madinah region in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Table 1: demographic characteristics**

Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	194	89
	Female	24	11
Age	From 18 - 29	48	22
	From 30 - 39	104	47.7
	40 years or more	66	30.3
Education Level	High school	22	10.1
	Bachelor	151	69.3
	Postgraduate	40	18.3
	PhD	5	2.3
Working Experience (years)	Less than 5 years	43	19.7
	From 5 - 9 years	45	20.6
	From 10 - 20 years	99	45.4
	More than 20 years	31	14.2
Marital Status	Single	48	22
	Married	170	78

#### 4.1 Demographic characteristics

The results showed there were 218 participants most of them 89% male, and 11% female, the majority aged from 30 – 39 years, 20.3% aged 40 years or more, 22% from 18 – 29 years, most of them 69.3% had bachelor, 18.3% postgraduate, 10.1% high school, 2.3% PhD, the majority 45.4% had working experience from 10 – 20 years, 20.6% from 5 – 9 years, 19.7% less than 5 years, 14.2% more than 20 years, and 78% were married, 22% single

Figure 1: Number of participants per gender

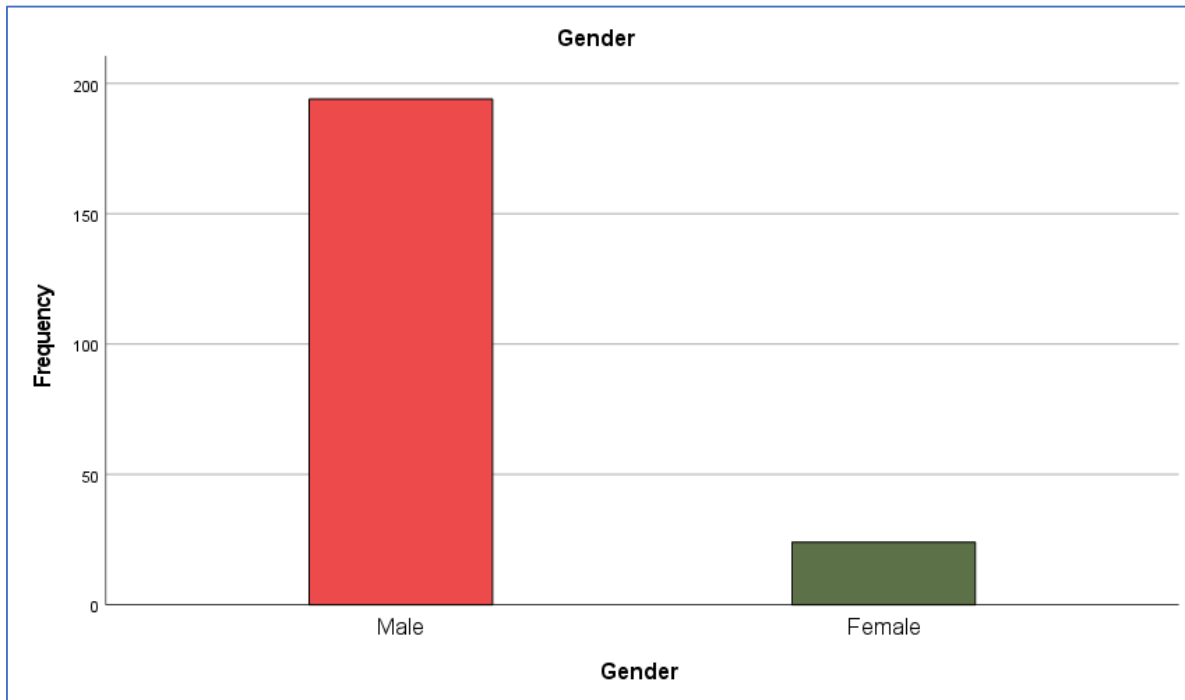


Figure 2: Number of participants per Age

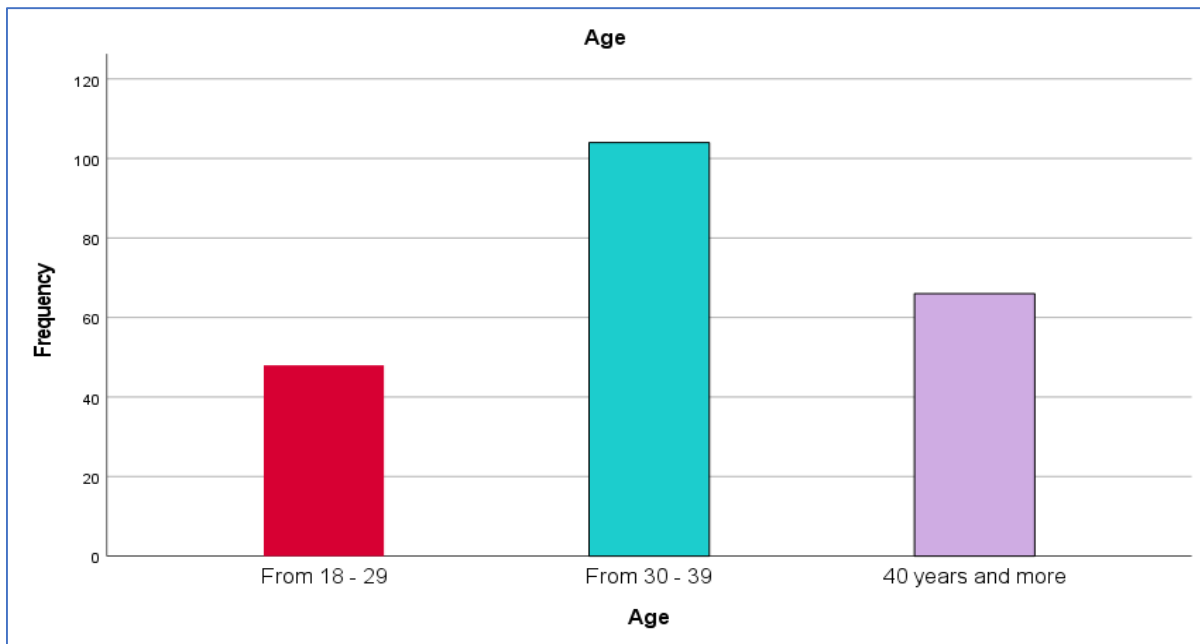


Figure 3: Number of participants per Education level

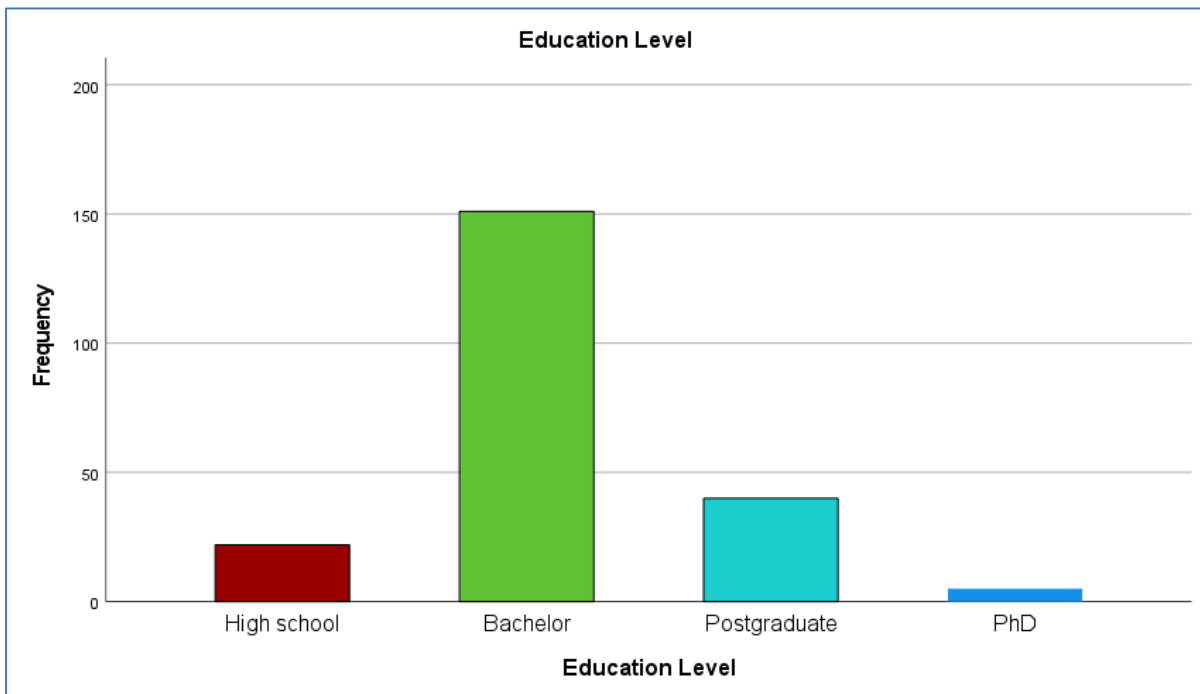
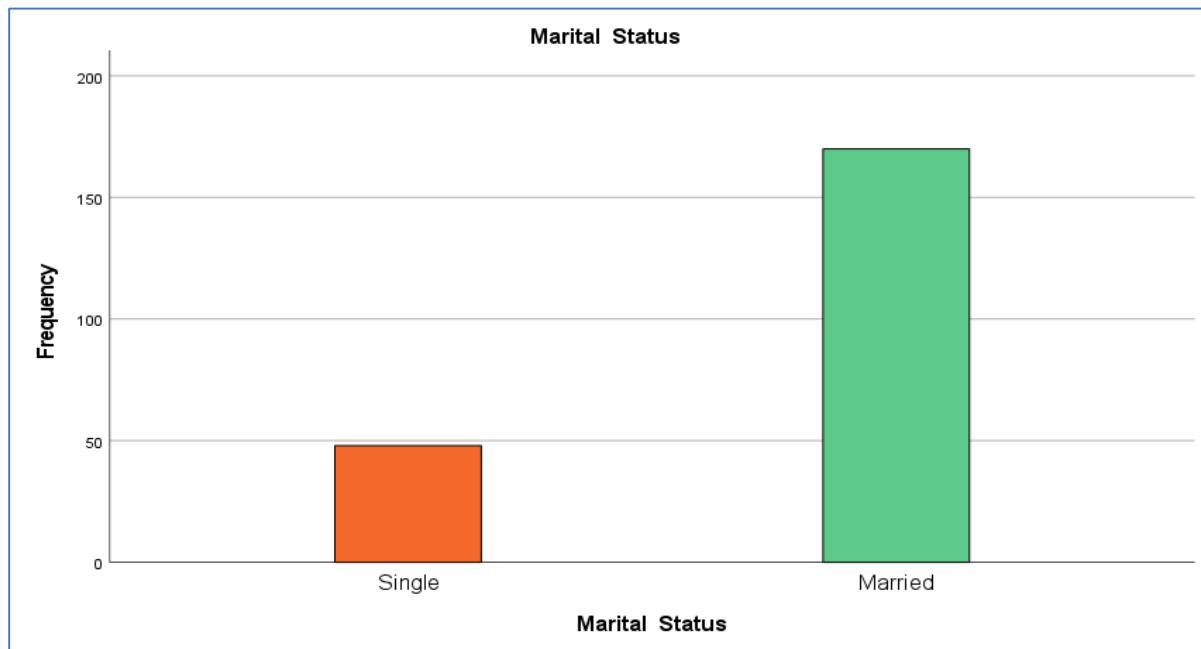


Figure 4: Number of participants per number of years Working Experience



Figure 5: Number of participants per Marital Status



## 4.2 Reliability

The researcher verified the stability of the study's questionnaire through the test of Alpha Cronbach's coefficient, as follows:

**Table 2: Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire**

No	Domains	No. items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Work flexibility	15	0.747
2	Productivity	5	0.699
3	The questionnaire	20	0.812

The results showed the Cronbach's Alpha between was between 0.699 and 0.747, and the general reliability was 0.812, which mean that the tool of the study (questionnaire) has good reliability, and we can rely on it.

## 4.3 Flexible Work

**Table 3: response about the flexible time**

No	Items	Yes	No	Mean	SD
1	My job does not have rigid start and end times.	121	97	1.44	0.50
		56%	44%		
2	My job requires me to work for certain number of hours per day/week	44	174	1.80	0.40
		20%	80%		
3	My job gives me the flexibility to choose my start and end times by fulfilling the mandatory core hours	88	130	1.60	0.49
		40%	60%		

4	My job allows me to leave an hour earlier if I can cover it up on another working day in that week	103	115	1.53	0.50
		47%	53%		
	Flexible time			1.59	0.30

The results showed the flexible time level was high with mean 1.59, about the ranking of the items were, the highest was (My job requires me to work for certain number of hours per day/week) with mean 1.80, followed by (My job gives me the flexibility to choose my start and end times by fulfilling the mandatory core hours) with mean 1.60, followed by (My job allows me to leave an hour earlier if I can cover it up on another working day in that week) with mean 1.53, followed by (My job does not have rigid start and end times.) with mean 1.44

**Table 4: Mean range of Likert scale**

Mean range	Scale	Interpretation
1 – 1.8	1	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	2	Low
2.61 – 3.40	3	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	4	High
4.21 - 5	5	Very high

#### 4.4 Task Share

Table 5: response about the tasks share

No		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1	It is possible to split my responsibilities with someone else in my workplace	74	76	41	20	7	3.87	1.08
		34%	35%	19%	9%	3%		
2	I would not mind the benefits which need to be sacrificed due to sharing my job with another person as I would get more personal time.	45	70	56	27	20	3.43	1.21
		21%	32%	26%	12%	9%		
3	It is possible to contribute more if two people are sharing the same task	86	87	28	16	1	4.11	0.92
		39%	40%	13%	7%	0%		
4	It is possible to strengthen the communication with others in a much better way if the organization allows job sharing method.	105	79	22	11	1	4.27	0.87
		48%	36%	10%	5%	0%		
	Tasks share						3.92	0.78



The results showed the tasks share level was high with mean 3.92, about the ranking of the item, the highest item was (It is possible to strengthen the communication with others in a much better way if the organization allows job sharing method.) with mean 4.27, followed by (It is possible to contribute more if two people are sharing the same task) with mean 4.11, followed by (It is possible to split my responsibilities with someone else in my workplace) with 3.87, followed by (I would not mind the benefits which need to be sacrificed due to sharing my job with another person as I would get more personal time.) with mean 3.43

#### 4.5 Part Time Work

**Table 6: response about the part time work**

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1	My company supports part time working schedule which enables them to attract external expatriates.	32	54	54	46	32	3.04	1.28
		15%	25%	25%	21%	15%		
2	I prefer to utilize part time working hours.	56	57	54	45	6	3.51	1.16
		26%	26%	25%	21%	3%		
3	Employees who are engaged in part time test that it enhances work performance.	57	60	72	24	5	3.64	1.06
		26%	28%	33%	11%	2%		
	Part time work						3.40	0.97

The results showed the part time work level was moderate with mean 3.40, about the ranking of the item, the highest item was (Employees who are engaged in part time attest that it enhances work performance.) with mean 3.64, followed by (I prefer to utilize part time working hours.) with mean 3.51, followed by (My company supports part time working schedule which enables them to attract external expatriates) with 3.04.

#### 4.6 Remote Work

**Table 7: response about the remote work**

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1	I prefer working remotely over traditional Working arrangements.	73	55	43	41	6	3.68	1.20
		33%	25%	20%	19%	3%		
2	I prefer to work remotely at least one day per month with the aid of technology.	119	69	19	9	2	4.35	0.87
		55%	32%	9%	4%	1%		
3	It can be much convenient to integrate work and life due to working remotely arrangement.	102	71	31	14	0	4.20	0.91
		47%	33%	14%	6%	0%		
4	I do not think that working remotely acts a barrier to career advancement anymore in the 21st century	96	77	32	13	0	4.17	0.89
		44%	35%	15%	6%	0%		
	Remote work						4.10	0.77

The results showed the remote work level was high with mean 4.10, about the ranking of the item, the highest item was (I prefer to work remotely at least one day per month with the aid of technology.) with mean 4.35, followed by (It can be much convenient to integrate work and life due to working remotely arrangement) with mean 4.20, followed by (I do not think that working remotely acts a barrier to career advancement anymore in the 21st century) with 4.17, followed by (I prefer working remotely over traditional working arrangements.) with mean 3.68

#### 4.7 Employer Productivity

**Table 8: response about the employer productivity**

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD
1	I am very versatile in knowledge and skills even with new technologies related to my work	106	92	0	1	1	4.50	0.59
		53%	46%	0%	1%	1%		
2	Flexibility on working motivates me to work harder.	138	61	18	1	0	4.54	0.67
		63%	28%	8%	0%	0%		
3	I always make sure I accomplish my tasks on time when I am on a flexible working arrangement.	125	72	19	2	0	4.47	0.69
		57%	33%	9%	1%	0%		
4		112	67	17	14	8	4.20	1.07

	I can come to work whenever required.	51%	31%	8%	6%	4%		
5	I always put the goals of my organization above my personal goals.	83	69	46	15	5	3.96	1.04
		38%	32%	21%	7%	2%		
	Employer productivity						4.32	0.59

The results showed the employer productivity level was very high with mean 4.32, about the ranking of the item, the highest item was (Flexibility on working motivates me to work harder..) with mean 4.54, followed by (I am very versatile in knowledge and skills even with new technologies related to my work) with mean 4.50, followed by (I always make sure I accomplish my tasks on time when I am on a flexible working arrangement.) with 4.47, followed by (I can come to work whenever required..) with mean 4.20, followed by (I always put the goals of my organization above my personal goals.) with mean 3.96

#### 4.8 The impact of flexible work on the productivity

The researcher conducted multiple regression analysis between work flexible (the time flexible, tasks share, part time work, and remote work) as independent variables, and employer productivity as dependent variable

Table 9: Regression Analysis

R	0.568		
R square	0.310		
F	25.393		
P -value	< 0.001		
Coefficients			
Variables	$\beta$	t	P -value
Time flexible	0.121	2.022	0.044
Tasks share	0.26	3.962	< 0.001
Part time work	0.209	3.263	0.001
Remote work	0.222	3.678	< 0.001

The results showed the four variables (time flexible, task share, part time work, and remote work) explained 31% from the change in the employer productivity (R square = 0.31), and the model was good (F = 25.393, p-value < 0.001), the time flexible affected on the productivity by 0.121, which mean when time flexible increases by one unit, the employer productivity increases by 0.121 ( $\beta = 0.12$ ), and this effect was significant (t = 2.022, p-value = 0.044), the tasks share affected on the productivity by 0.260, which mean when tasks share increases by one unit, the employer productivity increases by 0.260 ( $\beta = 0.260$ ), and this effect was significant (t = 3.962, p-value < 0.001), the part time work affected on the productivity by 0.209, which mean when part time work increases by one unit, the employer productivity increases by 0.209 ( $\beta = 0.209$ ), and this effect was significant (t = 3.263, p-value = 0.001), the remote work affected on the productivity by 0.222, which mean when time flexible increases by one unit, the employer productivity increases by 0.222 ( $\beta = 0.222$ ), and this effect was significant (t = 3.678, p-value < 0.001).

## Conclusion

Based on our study and previous studies finding, flexible work arrangement was a significant impact of the flexible work (time flexible, task share, part time work, and remote work) on the productivity which got high value (mean = 4.3 and SD = 0.59).

Through this system, employers try to open up space for the freedom of the individual to schedule his work in accordance with his personal and family preferences and commitments. This makes him more disciplined in his work, and reduce absenteeism, work turnover, etc.

Flexible work arrangement will help the employees to balance their work-life and this will reflect positively on their abilities, interest, and zealousness towards their jobs and performance in the organization (Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie, 2020).

Thus, organizations and senior management are recommended to explore the different options and to consider applying flexible work which will increase the productivity of both employee and employer.

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جامعة الجميع الذكية

كلية الإدارة

ماجستير الإدارة

أثر العمل المرن على الإنتاجية في قطاع الاتصالات بالمملكة العربية السعودية

**The Impact of Flexible Work on the Productivity at Telecommunications Sector  
in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

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2023

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No	Items	Yes	No
6	My job does not have rigid start and end times.		
7	My job requires me to work for certain number of hours per day/week		
8	My job gives me the flexibility to choose my start and end times by fulfilling the mandatory core hours		
9	My job allows me to leave an hour earlier if I can cover it up on another working day in that week		

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10	It is possible to split my responsibilities with someone else in my workplace					
11	I would not mind the benefits which need to be sacrificed due to sharing my job with another person as I would get more personal time.					
12	It is possible to contribute more if two people are sharing the same task					
13	It is possible to strengthen the communication with others in a much better way if the organization allows job sharing method.					
14	My company supports part time working schedule which enables them to attract external expatriates.					

15	I prefer to utilize part time working hours.					
16	Employees who are engaged in part time attest that it enhances work performance.					
17	I prefer working remotely over traditional working arrangements.					
18	I prefer to work remotely at least one day per month with the aid of technology.					
19	It can be much convenient to integrate work and life due to working remotely arrangement.					
20	I do not think that working remotely acts a barrier to career advancement anymore in the 21st century					
21	I am very versatile in knowledge and skills even with new technologies related to my work					
22	Flexibility on working motivates me to work harder.					
23	I always make sure I accomplish my tasks on time when I am on a flexible working arrangement.					
24	I can come to work whenever required.					
25	I always put the goals of my organization above my personal goals.					