

Revisiting Flexible Work: Untangling the Roles of Work–Family Conflict, Organisational Support, and Gender Attitudes in Women’s Work Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how flexible work arrangements influence women’s work engagement, with work–family conflict as a mediating mechanism and perceived organisational support and gender role attitudes as key contextual factors. The study is based on the understanding that women’s participation in employment is influenced not only by workplace policies but also by family responsibilities and prevailing social expectations. Using a quantitative research design, the study tested the proposed relationships among flexible work arrangements, work–family conflict, perceived organisational support, gender role attitudes, and women’s work engagement through structural equation modelling. The results indicate that flexible work arrangements significantly reduce work–family conflict and positively contribute to women’s work engagement. Work–family conflict was found to negatively affect women’s work engagement and to mediate the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work engagement, as well as between perceived organisational support and work engagement. Perceived organisational support also significantly lowered work–family conflict, while gender role attitudes had a significant negative effect on women’s work engagement and moderated the relationship between work–family conflict and work engagement. The study concludes that enhancing women’s work engagement requires an integrated approach involving flexible workplace practices, stronger organisational support, and initiatives aimed at reducing restrictive gender norms.

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INTRODUCTION

The involvement of women in the workforce is one of the crucial factors of economic growth, social development, and gender equality. Nevertheless, even with the rise in the level of female education, the participation of women in the workforce is relatively low, especially in developing countries, including Pakistan *Women, Business and the Law Report* (2023). The barriers to women joining and maintaining employment in the workforce are still identified as structural, rigid institutions at the workplace, and socio-cultural expectations (Fernández, 2023).

Over the past few years, the issue of flexible work arrangements (FWA), such as remote work, hybrid arrangements, and flexible schedules, has now been given much attention as one of the tools for enhancing work-life balance. Such practices have become more common since the post-pandemic workplace has allowed new opportunities for women to strike a balance between work and home (Allen et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2023). The empirical research indicates that flexible work options may lead to higher job satisfaction, less stress, and higher retention rates among female employees (Chung et al., 2022; Fuller & Hirsh, 2023). Nonetheless, the success of FWA in growing the participation of women in the workforce does not apply in all circumstances and has a number of contextual influences.

Work-family conflict (WFC) is one of the main problems concerning working women that occurs when the demands of work and family cannot be reconciled. WFC is positively correlated with high stress levels, burnout, and lack of workforce participation (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). Although flexible work arrangements have been suggested as a solution, their effects are usually mediated by the fact that they have the power to lessen such conflict (Allen et al., 2023).

Moreover, perceived organisational support (POS) is crucial in determining employees' experiences. Having a more positive organisational support perception helps employees handle work and family with reduced conflict and enhanced work outcomes (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Flexible work policies can not bring desired benefits unless they are properly supported.

Moreover, gender role attitudes (GRA) also play a great role in determining the involvement of women in the labour market. Caregiving and household tasks are traditionally attributed to women and do not allow them to participate in the economy (Maqsood, 2024). It is stressed in recent research that, despite the presence of positive work policies, restrictive gender norms may compromise their effect (Bredtmann et al., 2022; Gangl & Ziefle, 2023).

Problem Statement

Despite improvements in women's education and increasing organisational attention to flexible work practices, women continue to face difficulties in sustaining meaningful engagement in paid employment, particularly in developing-country contexts such as Pakistan. Women often remain responsible for a disproportionate share of household and caregiving duties, while workplace structures may still be insufficiently responsive to these competing demands. As a result, the availability of employment opportunities does not necessarily translate into sustained enthusiasm, involvement, and engagement at work (Allen et al., 2023; Chung et al., 2022).

Flexible work arrangements have increasingly been promoted as a means of helping employees manage competing work and family responsibilities. However, the availability of flexibility alone may not be sufficient to improve women's work engagement. Its effectiveness may depend on whether flexible work actually reduces work–family conflict, whether employees perceive sufficient organisational support, and whether prevailing gender role attitudes continue to place stronger domestic expectations on women. These organisational and socio-cultural conditions may therefore determine whether flexible work arrangements translate into more positive work experiences for women (Fernández, 2023).

Existing research has frequently examined flexible work arrangements, work–family conflict, organisational support, and gender-related attitudes separately, while comparatively limited attention has been given to how these factors operate together in shaping women's work engagement. In particular, greater clarity is needed regarding the mediating role of work–family conflict and the moderating roles of perceived organisational support and gender role attitudes. This gap is especially important in developing-country settings, where workplace practices and socio-cultural expectations may operate simultaneously. Therefore, an integrated examination of these organisational and socio-cultural factors is needed to better understand the conditions that shape women's work engagement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine women's employment outcomes through both organisational and socio-cultural perspectives. By incorporating workplace flexibility, work–family pressures, organisational support, and gender-related attitudes, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape women's experiences in employment.

Contribution of the Study

This research contributes to the literature in some significant ways. First, it offers a cohesive model that explores the effect of flexible work arrangements on women's work engagement through the mediating effect of work–family conflict. Although these relationships have been studied individually in the past, this study combines the two in one study.

Second, the research assumes the role of perceived organisational support, which acts as a moderating factor, emphasising the organisational environment and its impact on the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements in alleviating work–family conflict.

Third, the research incorporates gender role attitudes as an important socio-cultural moderator through which traditional beliefs may directly influence women's work engagement and intensify the adverse effect of work–family conflict.

Lastly, the study provides empirical evidence from a developing-country setting regarding how organisational and cultural variables interact to shape women's work engagement. This offers real-life implications for policymakers and institutions that seek to develop more effective and inclusive workplace policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's employment outcomes are influenced by a combination of workplace conditions, family responsibilities, and socio-cultural expectations. While women have made gains in education and employment in many countries, the pace of their participation and involvement in paid employment is still affected by their traditional gender roles, work–family tensions and organisational cultures. These challenges are especially significant in developing-country contexts, where the forms of the workplace and social norms are functioning in parallel and influencing women's work experiences (Fernández, 2023; Nair, 2025). Therefore, the study of women's work engagement needs to be examined in the context of organisational factors, including workplace flexibility and organisational support, and family factors, including stress from family and gender role attitudes.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Work–Family Conflict

Flexible work arrangements are the practices that give employees flexibility in when, where, and how work is carried out. These can involve flexible hours, working from home, hybrid work, compressed working weeks and starting and

finishing times. This is especially applicable for work and family responsibilities for employees who are coordinating work and family responsibilities with significant responsibilities. Flexible working practices can help to decrease the incompatibility between work and family requests in the workplace by allowing workers more flexibility in when and where work happens.

Past studies suggest that workplace flexibility can benefit the work–family interface by diminishing rigidity in the work schedule and enabling workers to better accommodate competing demands outside of work. Yucel and Fan (2023) consider flexible working practices as a factor that can lower work–family conflict and improve psychological well-being, and point out that flexible working arrangements that are part of a supportive organisational culture can lower work–family conflict. Previous studies also indicate that flexibility may be a means to better balance work and non-work needs (Shockley & Allen, 2007). The results suggest that increased flexibility in work hours and workplaces may decrease the conflict between work and family. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H1: Flexible work arrangements have a significant negative effect on work–family conflict.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Women's Work Engagement

Women's work engagement could also be directly affected by flexible working. Work engagement is a positive psychological state in relation to work that is characterised by enthusiasm, energy, involvement, and willingness to invest in the job (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Flexible working arrangements can enhance this engagement by allowing workers to have more control over their work conditions and can help to alleviate the pressure of a fixed schedule.

There is evidence that flexible working arrangements may be linked to greater job satisfaction, retention and better work-related outcomes, especially for employees who must shoulder significant non-work demands (Chung et al., 2022; Fuller & Hirsh, 2023). What Wang et al. (2023) also show is that providing effective remote and flexible work options can enhance employee experiences if properly designed and managed. If women are likely to be the ones who still face high workloads at home and for caregiving, they might be able to maintain their motivation and participation in work activities with better working hours and working space arrangements. Hence, it is expected that the flexible working arrangements will have a positive effect on women's work engagement.

H2: Flexible work arrangements have a significant positive effect on women's work engagement.

Gender Role Attitudes and Women's Work Engagement

Gender role attitudes refer to beliefs regarding the roles that men and women are expected to perform within the household, workplace, and wider society. Traditional gender role attitudes commonly assign primary responsibility for domestic and caregiving activities to women while positioning men as the principal earners. Such expectations may influence women's ability and willingness to maintain strong involvement in paid employment.

Existing evidence indicates that traditional gender norms can discourage women's economic participation by reinforcing expectations that women should prioritise household and caregiving duties over occupational responsibilities. Boakye-Yiadom and Nketiah-Amponsah (2022) identify gender norms as an important influence on female labour participation, while Gangl and Ziefle (2023) emphasise the relationship between gender expectations and labour-market outcomes. Similarly, Nair (2025) suggest that traditional gender attitudes can continue to restrict women's employment outcomes even where educational and occupational opportunities are available. In South Asian contexts, these social expectations may be especially influential because women frequently face simultaneous expectations concerning paid work and domestic responsibilities Maqsood (2024). Accordingly, stronger traditional gender role attitudes are expected to undermine women's psychological involvement in employment.

H3: Gender role attitudes have a significant negative effect on women's work engagement.

Moderating Role of Gender Role Attitudes

Work–family conflict does not necessarily affect all women to the same extent because the social environment in which work and family responsibilities are experienced may differ. Traditional gender role attitudes may intensify the consequences of work–family conflict because women operating in more traditional social environments are likely to experience greater expectations to prioritise family responsibilities over employment.

Research on gender norms indicates that traditional beliefs regarding women's domestic responsibilities may restrict women's labour-market involvement and reinforce unequal distributions of household and caregiving work (Gangl & Ziefle, 2023; Maqsood, 2024). At the same time, work–family conflict arises when demands from employment interfere with responsibilities within the family domain. When traditional gender expectations are stronger, women experiencing such conflict may face greater pressure to reduce their involvement in employment rather than family responsibilities. Although the cited studies

do not directly test the precise interaction proposed in the present model, their combined findings provide a basis for expecting gender role attitudes to condition the effect of work–family conflict on women’s work engagement. Therefore:

H4: Gender role attitudes significantly moderate the relationship between work–family conflict and women’s work engagement.

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Work–Family Conflict

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), POS is related to the extent of employees’ feelings of being valued by their organisation, acknowledged for their work, and cared for. For working women especially, organisational support may be crucial as they have to balance work and family duties. Workplace resources, seeking help and handling competing demands of roles may be more possible for those who believe their organisation is supportive, rather than risk a negative outcome.

Recent studies have shown that POS is related to better employee well-being and better work-related outcomes (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Perceived organisational support is seen as having a negative relationship with work–family conflict, indicating that a supportive organisational climate may help to alleviate the conflict between work and family, as reported by (Andrade et al., 2022). Moreover, work–family conflict is another key pathway that connects organisational support to employee outcomes. The combined results indicate that women who feel their companies support them more are likely to report fewer work/family conflicts.

H5: Perceived organisational support has a significant negative effect on work–family conflict.

Moderating Role of Perceived Organisational Support

Flexible work options may not necessarily reduce work–family conflict. Their effectiveness can rely on the employees’ perception of whether their organisation actually values and facilitates flexibility. However, a formal flex policy can be a disadvantage if employees think that flexing may lead to a negative career outcome, that their manager will not approve, or that they will not be accepted within the organisation.

Although the benefits of flexible working arrangements can be maximised if they are undertaken within an organisation that is supportive of flexible working. Likewise, the role of organisational support in influencing employees’ experience and well-being has been highlighted by Caesens and Stinglhamber (2023); Kurtessis et al. (2017). The results indicate that POS can foster a context that

facilitates employees' willingness to take advantage of flexible work options for balancing competing demands. While there is no direct literature to support the specific moderation hypothesised in the present model, the literature cited does suggest that the impact of workplace flexibility on work–family conflict is partly moderated by the organisational environment. Therefore:

H6: Perceived organisational support significantly moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work–family conflict.

Work–Family Conflict and Women's Work Engagement

Work–family conflict is when the requirements of work and family roles conflict with each other; that is, the requirements make it harder to be involved in one role as a result of participation in the other. This is especially important for women, as there is a continuing gender gap in domestic and caring duties even though women are in paid work.

Previous research found that the relationship between work–family conflict and outcomes has been linked to stress, burnout, less job satisfaction, less attachment to the organisation, and withdrawal outcomes (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). Yucel and Fan (2023) also propose that conflict between work and family may negatively impact employees' psychological health. When women face ongoing barriers to balancing work and family, their eagerness, drive, and ongoing participation in the labour force might diminish. In addition, the work–family conflict also has a role to play in understanding outcomes among employees. As a result, there is likely to be a direct negative relationship between higher work–family conflict and lower work engagement among women.

H7: Work–family conflict has a significant negative effect on women's work engagement.

Mediating Role of Work–Family Conflict between Flexible Work Arrangements and Women's Work Engagement

The relationship between flexible work arrangements and women's work engagement may operate partly through work–family conflict. Flexible work practices provide employees with greater control over working time and location, which may make it easier to coordinate occupational and family responsibilities. As work–family conflict decreases, employees may have more psychological and emotional resources available for their work.

Existing research indicates that flexible working arrangements can reduce work–family conflict (Yucel & Fan, 2023), while work–family conflict is associated with unfavourable employee outcomes, including stress, withdrawal, and reduced

organisational involvement (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). Taken together, these relationships suggest that one mechanism through which flexibility may improve women's work engagement is by reducing the interference between work and family roles. Thus, work–family conflict is expected to transmit part of the effect of flexible working arrangements on women's work engagement.

H8: Work–family conflict significantly mediates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and women's work engagement.

Mediating Role of Work–Family Conflict between Perceived Organisational Support and Women's Work Engagement

Perceived organisational support may also influence women's work engagement indirectly through work–family conflict. Employees who believe that their organisation values and supports them may have greater access to emotional, supervisory, and workplace resources that help them manage competing responsibilities. Such support can lessen the strain generated by work and family demands and, consequently, enable employees to maintain stronger involvement in their work.

Andrade et al. (2022) identify a negative association between perceived organisational support and work–family conflict, while the mediating role of work–family conflict in relationships between organisational support and employee outcomes. Research on organisational support more generally also associates stronger perceived support with employee well-being and favourable work outcomes (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023; Kurtessis et al., 2017). These findings indicate that organisational support may enhance women's work engagement partly because it reduces the conflict they experience between occupational and family responsibilities. Accordingly:

H9: Work–family conflict significantly mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and women's work engagement.

Integrated Research Framework

The literature reviewed shows that women's work engagement is influenced by complex organisational, family and socio-cultural circumstances and factors, and is not caused by one specific condition in the workplace. FWA might positively contribute to work engagement and, at the same time, improve work–family conflict. POS can be a factor in reducing work–family conflict, and might also influence how well flexible work practices can reduce the competing demands of the roles. Alongside this, traditional gender role attitudes can have an immediate impact on women's involvement in the Labor market and can exacerbate the

negative effects of Work–family conflict. Work–family conflict is thus a central conceptual mechanism that will link workplace conditions to work outcomes for women.

By integrating flexible work arrangements, perceived organisational support, work–family conflict, and gender role attitudes within one framework, the present study examines women’s employment experiences through both organisational and socio-cultural perspectives. This integrated approach addresses the study objective by considering how workplace practices and social expectations operate jointly in shaping women’s work engagement.

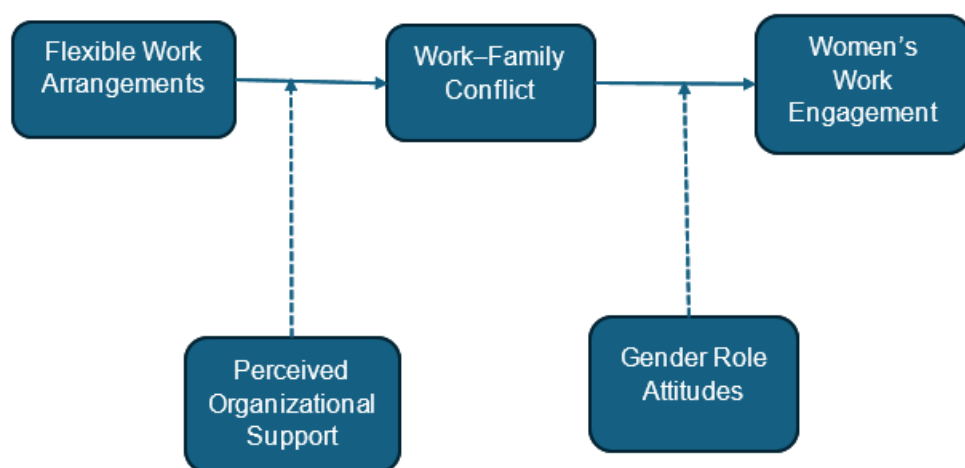


Figure 1: *Conceptual Model*

FWA (Flexible Work Arrangements): Flexibility in work hours, ability to adjust work schedule, flexibility in work location, control over start and end time, organisational support for flexibility

WFC (Work–Family Conflict): Work interferes with family life, job time affects family responsibilities, work prevents completing home tasks, job strain affects family duties, work disrupts family plans

WWE (Women’s Work Engagement): Enthusiasm toward work, energy while working, pride in work, motivation to continue working, immersion in work

POS (Perceived Organisational Support): Organisation values contribution, organisation considers employee goals and values, organisation cares about well-being, organisation provides support when needed, organisation appreciates accomplishments

GRA (Gender Role Attitudes): Women should prioritise home, men should be primary earners, women should prioritise family over career, gender roles in household responsibilities, equality in sharing responsibilities

METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed a quantitative research design in this study to examine the relationships between flexible working arrangements, work-family conflict, perceived organisational support, gender role attitudes and work engagement of women. The research is cross-sectional in nature, as the data were gathered at one point in time to establish the proposed hypotheses through statistical methods.

This study was carried out in Pakistan, and primary data were collected from working women in Pakistan. The target population consisted of women working in private sector organisations, public sector organisations, NGOs and self-employment. It was not industry- or organisation-specific – respondents were included from a range of organisational levels, in the private sector, public sector, NGO/development sector, and in the self-employment sector. The sampling frame comprised working women who were accessible, either through professional, organisational, or personal sources. This study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique for data collection from March 2025 to June 2025. The respondents were contacted via professional contacts, organisational networks and circulation of e-mail questionnaires. Women could take part if they were in paid work or self-employment, and could provide information about their work–family experiences and workplace arrangements. Incomplete questionnaires, non-working, and not meeting the target population criteria were excluded from the final analysis. There were 359 usable responses, which were retained for statistical analysis.

The structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data, and it consisted of two major parts: demographic details and measurement of the variables of the study. Constructs were measured with previously validated scales that were modified to suit the study so that the reliability and validity could be verified. The self-reported flexible work arrangements were measured by the items that were created based on the previous research on workplace flexibility, whereas the work-family conflict was measured using the scale created by Netemeyer et al. (1996). The scale was used to measure perceived organisational support, as used by Eisenberger et al. (1986), and women's work engagement was measured using items adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The measurement of gender role attitudes was based on a modified Attitudes Towards Women Scale created by Spence and Helmreich

(1978). The measurements were done on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis through Partial Least Squares (PLS) was used to analyse the collected data. There were two stages of the analysis, which were the measurement model and the structural model. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity (HTMT ratio) were used to evaluate the model's reliability and validity. Path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and R-square values were used to test the hypotheses put forward in the structural model. Further, the mediation and moderation effects were studied to learn about the indirect and interaction relationships among variables.

On balance, this methodological choice enables the thorough investigation of the direct and indirect relations, which presents a solid structure of the perception of the effects of flexible work arrangements on women's work engagement based on organisational and socio-cultural determinants.

Demographics

The demographic data of the respondents (N = 359) can help us to gain a valuable understanding of the sample population. As to age, most of the respondents were clustered at the lower end of the age group, with 29.0% between 20-25 years and 28.4% between 26-30 years, indicating that most of the participants were young working-age women. The number of respondents in the age group of 31-35 years was 20.6%, with 10.0 and 12.0 percent of respondents in the 36-40 years and 41 years groups, respectively. In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were married (51.0%), others were single respondents (39.6%), and others were divorced and widowed (6.7 and 2.8), respectively. This implies that a good number of the sample might be juggling between work and family life.

On the aspect of family size, 41.5 % of the respondents indicated that they had no children and 38.7% had one or two children. A lower number had between three and four children (15.3%), and a few (4.5) had five or more children. With regard to employment type, most of the respondents were doing full-time, on-site work (54.0%), and the second category was hybrid employment (20.6%). Part-time jobs contributed 15.3%, and only ten per cent of the respondents had been working full-time on a remote basis. This means that despite the existence of flexible work arrangements, the respondents have most of their work done as full-time, on-site work.

The individuals were mainly in the private sector (62.7%) and the public sector (18.9%). The sample was 11.1% in the NGO/development sector and 7.2% in the

self-employed category. Regarding work experience, 28.7% of the respondents had 1-3 years of experience, and the next highest percentages were 24.5% (4-6 years) and 19.8% (7-10 years). Participants who had a total experience of over 10 years constituted 17.5% and the ones who had not attained a year were 9.5%. In general, the sample is dominated by young, married, early/mid-career women who work full-time in the private sector and is therefore appropriate to investigate the relationship between flexible work arrangements, work-family conflict, and women’s work engagement.

Table 1.
Demographics Table

Demographics	Categories	N	%
Age Group	20–25	104	29.0%
	26–30	102	28.4%
	31–35	74	20.6%
	36–40	36	10.0%
	41+	43	12.0%
Marital Status	Married	183	51.0%
	Single	142	39.6%
	Divorced	24	6.7%
	Widowed	10	2.8%
Number of Children	None	149	41.5%
	1–2	139	38.7%
	3–4	55	15.3%
	5+	16	4.5%
Employment Type	Full-time (On-site)	194	54.0%
	Hybrid	74	20.6%
	Part-time	55	15.3%
	Fully Remote	36	10.0%
Sector	Private	225	62.7%
	Public	68	18.9%
	NGO/Development	40	11.1%
	Self-employed	26	7.2%
Work Experience	<1 year	34	9.5%
	1–3 years	103	28.7%
	4–6 years	88	24.5%
	7–10 years	71	19.8%
	10+ years	63	17.5%

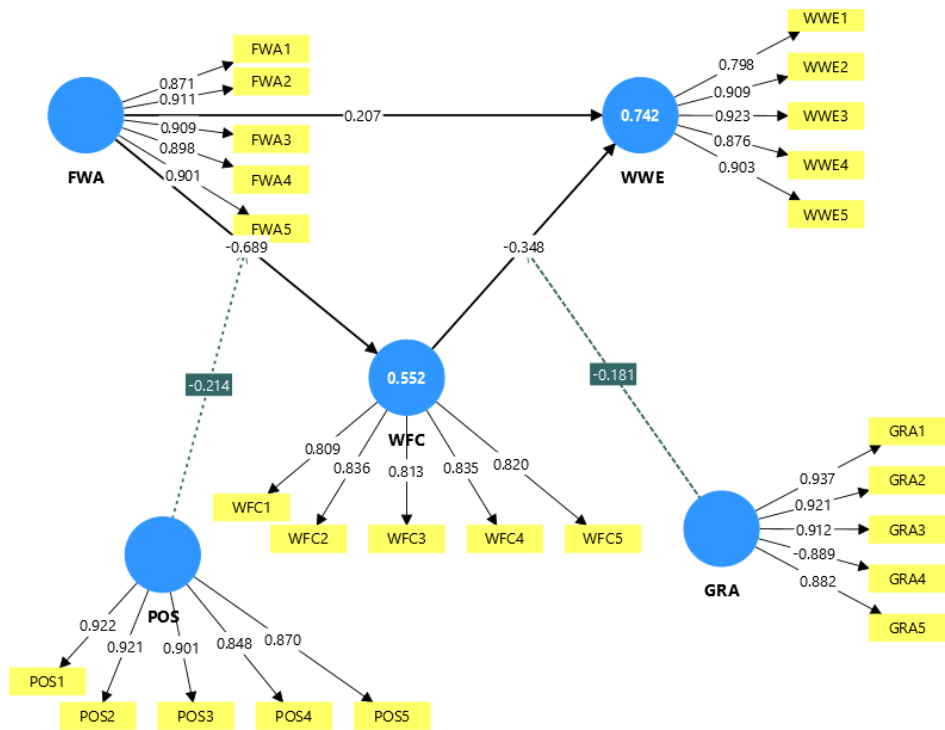


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Table 2.
Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
FWA	0.940	0.942	0.807
GRA	0.517	0.951	0.825
POS	0.936	0.942	0.798
WFC	0.881	0.885	0.677
WWE	0.929	0.936	0.780

DATA ANALYSIS

The results indicate that most constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha values for FWA, POS, WFC, and WWE exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, while GRA shows a low alpha value of 0.517. However, rho_a values for all constructs are above 0.70, indicating acceptable construct reliability. Furthermore, the AVE values for all constructs exceed 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity of the measurement

model.

Table 3.
Outer Loadings

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
FWA	FWA1	0.871	0.868	0.037	23.615	<0.001
FWA	FWA2	0.911	0.907	0.022	41.710	<0.001
FWA	FWA3	0.909	0.909	0.018	50.301	<0.001
FWA	FWA4	0.898	0.898	0.021	42.070	<0.001
FWA	FWA5	0.901	0.901	0.019	47.218	<0.001
GRA	GRA1	0.937	0.935	0.020	46.507	<0.001
GRA	GRA2	0.921	0.918	0.020	44.931	<0.001
GRA	GRA3	0.912	0.910	0.027	34.230	<0.001
GRA	GRA4	0.889	0.886	0.028	32.259	<0.001
GRA	GRA5	0.882	0.876	0.032	27.646	<0.001
POS	POS1	0.922	0.921	0.025	37.622	<0.001
POS	POS2	0.921	0.921	0.016	57.428	<0.001
POS	POS3	0.901	0.900	0.021	42.283	<0.001
POS	POS4	0.848	0.846	0.033	26.016	<0.001
POS	POS5	0.870	0.870	0.027	32.362	<0.001
WFC	WFC1	0.809	0.809	0.043	18.693	<0.001
WFC	WFC2	0.836	0.835	0.034	24.696	<0.001
WFC	WFC3	0.813	0.810	0.043	19.095	<0.001
WFC	WFC4	0.835	0.833	0.036	22.971	<0.001
WFC	WFC5	0.820	0.816	0.043	18.927	<0.001
WWE	WWE1	0.798	0.796	0.046	17.425	<0.001
WWE	WWE2	0.909	0.909	0.019	47.741	<0.001
WWE	WWE3	0.923	0.923	0.016	57.943	<0.001
WWE	WWE4	0.876	0.876	0.032	27.575	<0.001
WWE	WWE5	0.903	0.902	0.019	46.427	<0.001

The outer loadings were examined to assess indicator reliability within the measurement model. The indicators for Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) demonstrated loadings ranging from 0.871 to 0.911, while Perceived Organisational Support (POS) indicators ranged from 0.848 to 0.922. Work–Family Conflict (WFC) indicators produced loadings between 0.809 and 0.836, whereas Women’s Work Engagement (WWE) indicators ranged from 0.798 to 0.923. These values indicate satisfactory indicator reliability. The Gender Role Attitudes (GRA) indicators also showed high absolute loadings, ranging from 0.882 to 0.937. All indicator loadings were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. Overall, the measurement indicators demonstrated strong relationships with

their respective constructs.

Discriminant validity

Table 4.
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

Constructs	FWA	GRA	POS	WFC	WWE	POS × FWA	GRA × WFC
FWA							
GRA	0.385						
POS	0.373	0.286					
WFC	0.757	0.313	0.444				
WWE	0.681	0.724	0.385	0.697			
POS × FWA	0.328	0.257	0.216	0.077	0.220		
GRA × WFC	0.204	0.444	0.152	0.186	0.500	0.315	

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to the recommended threshold, HTMT values should be below 0.85 (strict criterion) or 0.90 (liberal criterion) to confirm adequate discriminant validity.

The results indicate that all HTMT values fall below the threshold of 0.85, with values ranging from 0.077 to 0.757. The highest HTMT value is observed between Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) and Work–Family Conflict (WFC) at 0.757, followed by Gender Role Attitudes (GRA) and Women’s Work Engagement (WWE) at 0.724, and WFC and WWE at 0.697. Despite being relatively higher compared to other values, these remain within acceptable limits. All other construct pairs demonstrate comparatively lower HTMT values, indicating clear distinction among constructs. Additionally, the interaction terms (POS × FWA and GRA × WFC) also show low HTMT values with other constructs, confirming that the moderating variables are empirically distinct.

Overall, the results confirm that discriminant validity is established, suggesting that each construct in the model measures a unique concept and there is no significant issue of multicollinearity or construct overlap.

Table 5.
R-square

Construct	R-square	R-square Adjusted
WFC	0.552	0.538
WWE	0.742	0.731

The R-square results indicate the explanatory power of the model for endogenous variables. Work–Family Conflict (WFC) has an R-square value of 0.552, suggesting that 55.2% of the variance in WFC is explained by its predictors (Flexible Work Arrangements and Perceived Organisational Support, including moderation effects). This represents a moderate level of explanatory power. Women’s work engagement (WWE) shows a higher R-square value of 0.742, indicating that 74.2% of its variance is explained by the model variables (WFC, Gender Role Attitudes, and interaction effects), which reflects a substantial explanatory power. The adjusted R-square values are close to the original values, confirming model stability and absence of overfitting.

Table 6.
Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	T-value	P-value	Result
H1	FWA → WFC	-0.689	9.807	0.001	Supported
H2	FWA → WWE	0.207	2.676	0.008	Supported
H3	GRA → WWE	-0.413	5.689	0.001	Supported
H4	GRA × WFC → WWE	-0.181	2.758	0.006	Supported
H5	POS → WFC	-0.209	2.391	0.017	Supported
H6	POS × FWA → WFC	-0.214	2.422	0.016	Supported
H7	WFC → WWE	-0.348	4.683	0.001	Supported
H8	FWA → WFC → WWE	0.240	4.213	0.001	Supported
H9	POS → WFC → WWE	0.073	2.183	0.029	Supported

The results of the hypothesis testing show that all relationships proposed in the model are statistically significant and supported. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) strongly and negatively influence Work–Family Conflict (WFC) ($\beta = -0.689$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that the more flexible the arrangements, the less conflict there is between the work and family roles. FWA also positively relates to women’s work engagement (WWE) ($\beta = 0.207$, $p = 0.008$), which implies that flexible policies help to increase women’s work involvement. Traditional gender norms are associated with a significant negative effect on WWE ($\beta = -0.413$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that they negatively impact women’s work engagement. What is more, WFC negatively affects WWE ($\beta = -0.348$, $p < 0.001$), further supporting its role as a key barrier.

The moderating effects are also important. GRA amplifies the negative effect of WFC on WWE ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.006$), suggesting traditional attitudes exacerbate the negative effects of conflict. Likewise, Perceived Organisational Support (POS) negatively influences WFC ($\beta = -0.209$, $p = 0.017$) and positively affects the effectiveness of FWA in decreasing conflict ($\beta = -0.214$, $p = 0.016$). Results of the mediation analysis also show that WFC significantly mediates between

FWA and WWE ($\beta = 0.240$, $p < 0.001$) and between POS and WWE ($\beta = 0.073$, $p = 0.029$). Overall, the results support the hypothesis that flexible work options and organisational support positively influence the work engagement of women both directly and indirectly through the mediation of work–family conflict, and that gender role attitudes are a key contextual factor.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The results lend support for the proposed relationships between flexible work arrangements and work–family conflict, and perceived organisational support and gender role attitudes and women's work engagement. All nine hypotheses were statistically confirmed, suggesting that work flexibility has an impact on women's work engagement, as well as other factors such as family pressures, organisational support and socio-cultural expectations.

The findings for H1 show that flexible work arrangements have a significant negative effect on work–family conflict ($\beta = -0.689$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that increased flexibility in work time and place is related to decreased work/family interference. This finding is in line with the literature findings that flexible working arrangements offer employees more autonomy over competing work and family demands (Yucel & Fan, 2023). The relatively strong effect seen in the present study supports the need for flexibility as a coping mechanism with regard to work–family pressures for working women.

H2 suggested that there was a positive relationship between flexible working arrangements and women's work engagement. This relationship is confirmed by the results ($\beta = 0.207$; $p = 0.008$), where an increase in flexibility at work is related to higher levels of enthusiasm, energy, motivation, and involvement in work. This result supports the evidence that flexible working arrangements can enhance employees' experiences at work by granting flexibility and autonomy in how work is organised (Chung et al., 2022; Fuller & Hirsh, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). The direct effect, however, is somewhat smaller than the effect related to flexible work arrangements on work–family conflict, indicating that flexibility can have a direct impact on work engagement among women as well as through its effect of reducing competing role demands.

The results also confirmed H3, which posited that gender role attitude is negatively related to women's work engagement ($\beta = -0.413$, $p < 0.001$). This discovery indicates that more traditional beliefs about women's domestic and caregiving roles are linked to not participating in paid activities. This finding aligns with past studies that reveal how traditional gender norms can impact women's employment outcomes and influence their perceptions of women's role in the household rather than in the workplace Boakye-Yiadom and Nketiah-

Amponsah (2022); Maqsood (2024); Nair (2025). The negative association is relatively strong, suggesting that socio-cultural expectations still play an important role in women's lives even when they are offered employment opportunities.

H4 investigated the possibility of gender role attitudes moderating the relationship between work–family conflict and women's work engagement. The interaction effect was statistically significant and negative ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.006$), thus providing support for the proposed moderation. The results show that the relationship between the negative impact of work–family conflict and women's work engagement is strengthened by higher levels of traditional gender role attitudes. As the burden on women to take on more roles in the household and care for the sick then, there will be potentially more negative repercussions for women's involvement in the labour force in such contexts. This finding echoes the wider literature which highlights the role of gender norms in influencing women's working experiences (Gangl & Ziefle, 2023; Maqsood, 2024).

As the results indicate, perceived organisational support has a significant negative correlation with work–family conflict for H5 ($\beta = -0.209$, $p = 0.017$). This is because women who feel their organisations value them and care about their well-being have lower levels of work–family conflict. This is in line with previous studies that indicate that organisational support can lower employee strain and facilitate the handling of work and family conflicts (Andrade et al., 2022; Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023). The outcome underscores the significance of an organisation's support for workers' out-of-work roles.

Based on this, H6 posited that perceived organisational support moderates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work–family conflict. Flexible work arrangements had a moderating effect ($\beta = -0.214$, $p = 0.016$), meaning that such work is more likely to have a negative effect on work–family conflict when organisational support is high. The discovery here indicates that a formal flexibility policy is not enough – staff also need to feel comfortable about using it, and its use is accepted and supported within the organisation. The findings align with the literature, which indicates that organisational support has a positive impact on the success of flexible workplace practices (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

The findings also confirmed H7, which suggested that work–family conflict has a negative influence on women's work engagement ($\beta = -0.348$, $p < 0.001$). There is thus higher conflict between work and family responsibilities with lower enthusiasm, motivation and involvement in work. The findings are in line with earlier studies that found work–family conflict to be associated with stress, lower job satisfaction, withdrawal behaviours, and lower organisational attachment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). This finding highlights work–family

conflict as an important obstacle for women who are simultaneously working and raising children to maintain positive engagement with work.

H8 explored the moderating effect of work–family conflict between flexible work arrangements and women’s work engagement. Supporting the hypothesised mediation, the indirect effect was significant ($\beta = 0.240$, $p < 0.001$). This shows that flexible work positively relates to women’s work engagement, in part due to lowering the work–family conflict. In other words, flexibility provides women with more control over competing responsibilities, thereby decreasing the interference of competing roles between work and family, and ultimately facilitating greater engagement with work. This result aligns with previous studies demonstrating that work–family conflict decreases with flexible working arrangements, which leads to better employee outcomes Yucel and Fan (2023).

Lastly, H9 suggested that the link between POS and women’s work engagement would go through the lens of work–family conflict. The indirect effect was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.073$, $p = 0.029$), thus supporting the hypothesis. This implies that organisational support is related to women’s work engagement in part by lowering the strain of conflicting work and family responsibilities. When women feel valued and supported in their organisations, they might be better able to balance competing demands, which can lead to reduced work–family conflict and higher levels of work engagement. This result supports work–family conflict as an explanatory pathway between organisational support and employee outcomes (Andrade et al., 2022).

Overall, the results show that women’s work involvement is related to the combination of organisational and socio-cultural factors. Flexible work arrangements have a direct impact on work engagement as well as an indirect impact via reduced work–family conflict. In addition to their negative impact on work–family conflict, perceived organisational support also enhances the effectiveness of flexible work options, and traditional gender role attitudes have a direct negative effect on women’s work engagement, as well as exacerbate the negative effect of work–family conflict. All of these findings have implications for the integrated view taken in this study, and when combined, indicate that workplace flexibility is best delivered when supported by a supportive organisational culture, and when the constraints of socio-cultural factors on women’s employment are less stringent.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how flexible working arrangements, work–family conflict, perceived organisational support, and gender role attitudes affect women’s work engagement. The results demonstrate that flexible

work arrangements positively correlate with women's work engagement and, importantly, have a significant negative correlation with work–family conflict. Work–family conflict, in turn, has a negative impact on work engagement and is an intervening variable between flexible work arrangements and work engagement, as well as between perceived organisational support and work engagement.

The results further demonstrate that perceived organisational support reduces work–family conflict and strengthens the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements in managing competing work and family demands. At the same time, traditional gender role attitudes negatively affect women's work engagement and intensify the adverse effect of work–family conflict on engagement. These findings indicate that women's work engagement is shaped by the combined influence of organisational practices, family-related pressures, and socio-cultural expectations.

Overall, the study highlights that flexible work arrangements alone may not be sufficient to enhance women's work engagement. Their effectiveness is greater when supported by a supportive organisational environment and when restrictive gender role expectations are comparatively weaker. The study therefore contributes an integrated organisational and socio-cultural perspective to understanding the factors that shape women's engagement in paid work.

Recommendations

It can be inferred, based on these results, that organisations should embrace and intensify their flexible work practices like remote work, flexible schedules, and hybrid work arrangements to accommodate the needs of women employees better. Employers are also encouraged to increase perceived organisational support by encouraging family-supportive supervision, equitable workplace practices and a culture that does not discriminate against women who need to take care of the family. At the policy level, the policy must be implemented to create awareness that will break the traditional attitudes on gender roles that limit the economic contribution of women. Moreover, interventions aimed at specific work–family conflict reduction should be developed by the organisations and policymakers, as it is one of the key obstacles to further employment of women. Future studies can give credence to this model by considering other contextual variables, industries and the cultural context to give more insight into the factors involved in the participation of women in the workforce.

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