



# Flexing Work-Nonwork Boundaries: Time, Place, or Both?

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## Abstract

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are implemented by many organizations to provide employees with opportunities to make traditional boundaries more flexible. While telework has allowed employees to work in alternate locations than the traditional office (flexplace), organizations sometimes grant employees the freedom to choose their work hours throughout the day (flexitime). Although organizations that offer flexplace may also offer flexitime, they are distinct policies that can be implemented separately and are not always implemented together. Previous research focuses on the outcomes of individual FWAs but does not examine the interaction between them or their joint influence. The focus of this project is to examine the extent to which flexitime and flexplace have a combined influence on employee outcomes. The goal is to answer three research questions: 1) how is flexitime related to employee outcomes, 2) how is flexplace related to employee outcomes, and 3) to what extent do the influence of flexplace on employee outcomes depend on flexitime? These questions were answered using data from a survey of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using archival data consisting of two surveys, a total of 405 participants answered both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys during the summer months of the pandemic. Results indicate that flexitime is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to turnover intentions and burnout. Flexplace was positively related to job performance and negatively related to stress and burnout. Contrary to expectation, FWAs had independent, rather than joint, effects on the outcomes.

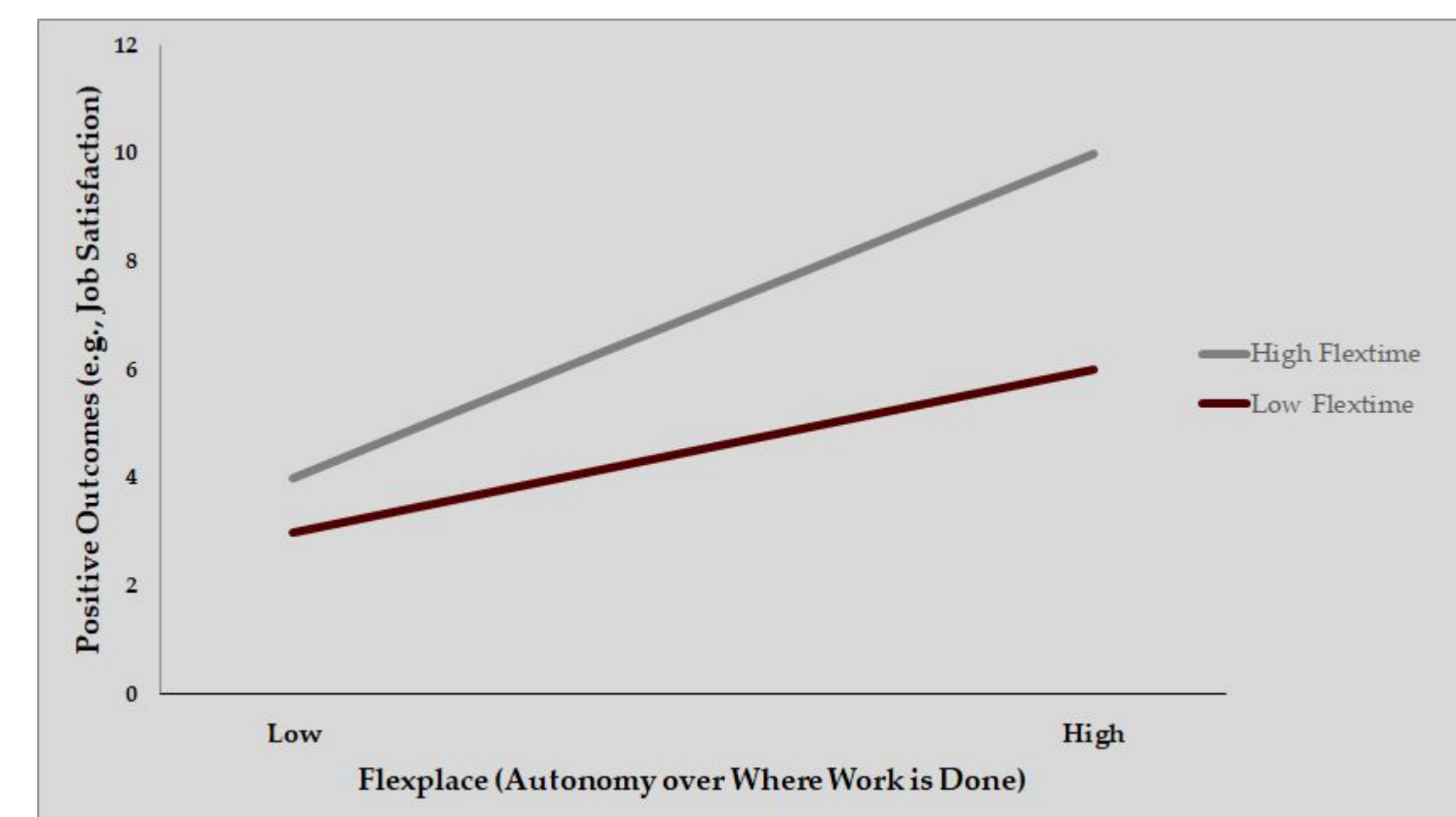
## Introduction

- Flexitime is a work arrangement in which employees have discretion over when to work throughout the day
- Flexplace is a work arrangement in which employees have discretion over where to work, such as working from home
- Considerable research examining these arrangements separately has demonstrated that flexitime (Baltes et al., 1999) and flexplace (Allen et al. 2015) are associated with positive work-related outcomes
- Conservation of resource theory suggest that the combination of flexitime with flexplace is likely to result in even better outcomes than just one of the two. Correspondingly, some researchers have begun to examine these arrangements together.
  - In a sample of professional workers who teleworked approximately 1 day a week, Golden and Viega (2005) did not find an interaction between flexplace and flexitime on job satisfaction
  - In a sample of primarily non-teleworkers, Alexander (2014) found minimal evidence for a significant interaction between flexplace and flexitime
  - In a study of undergraduate student job seekers reading hypothetical scenarios (vignettes), Thompson et al. (2015) found both flexitime and flexplace were associated with anticipated organizational support and organization attraction, but the interaction between the two was not significant
  - In a study comparing US and Chinese workers from companies with formal flexibility policies, Lai et al. (2020) found that access to flexitime and flexplace were independently, but not jointly, associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and work-family balance

### Hypotheses

- H1)** Flexplace is positively associated with functional work-related outcomes and negatively related to stress-related outcomes
- H2)** Flexitime is positively associated with functional work-related outcomes and negatively related to stress-related outcomes
- H3)** The impact of flexplace on work-related and stress-related outcomes is enhanced when paired with high levels of flexitime

## Results



### Overall Findings

- 1) Flexplace was positively related to job performance and negatively related to stress and burnout.
- 2) Flexitime was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to turnover intentions and burnout.
- 3) There was not a significant interaction between flexitime and flexplace.



Correlations		
	Flexitime	Flexplace
<b>Work-related outcome</b>		
Job satisfaction	.135*	.023
Job performance	-.009	.214*
Turnover intentions	-.101*	-.017
<b>Health-related outcomes</b>		
Work-family interference (WIF)	-.095	-.083
Family interference with work (FIW)	.026	.019
Work-to-family guilt (WFG)	-.037	-.034
Family-to-work guilt (FWG)	.029	.001
Stress	-.088	-.128*
Burnout	-.167*	-.101*

## Discussion

- Consistent with previous research, flexitime and flexplace are independently but not jointly associated with positive outcomes
- Results may be unique to the pandemic as few people had discretion over flexplace
- Additional work is needed to tease apart the theoretical mechanisms underlying the independent effects of flexitime and flexplace



## Method

- The data examined in this study were collected in June 2020 from two waves of surveys of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically the second wave of survey data
- H1 and H2 were tested by calculating correlations, while H3 was tested using moderated regression
- A total of 405 participants ranging in age from 20 to 73 years ( $M = 39.58$ ,  $SD = 10.24$ )
- Two sets of outcomes were tested:
  - Traditional work-related: job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intentions
  - Health-related outcomes: work-family interference, family interference with work, work-to-family guilt, family-to-work guilt, stress, burnout
- All constructs were measured with previously validated measures from the research literature

## References

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