Remote and Flexible work: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to discover the present state of Remote and Flexible work research. In order to facilitate the systematic review process, this investigation follows a predetermined procedure. The dataset for this research consisted of 101 publications published over a period of 13 years. This study explores four themes; the study related to identifying the relationship between employment engagement and flexible work arrangements, the concept and the literature were also concerns. Researchers also attempted to address solution to remote and flexible work issues and explore their challenges. Flexible work arrangements might be investigated to solve security issues, organizational sectors and humanity as a whole might benefit from such a study.

Keyword: Article, Flexible, Remote, Review, Work

Introduction

Workplace flexibility, including the option to telecommute or work from home, is not novel (Supriatna, Sofiani, & Anindita, 2020). The phenomenon of "working here, there, or anywhere" originated in the United States during the 1980s as a response to the issues of traffic congestion and the high costs associated with office space (Erasmus, 2020). Flexible work or working, commonly referred to as flextime, refers to a work schedule arrangement wherein employees maintain a full day of work but have the flexibility to vary their work hours beyond the conventional '9 to 5' work day. Flexible work arrangements encompass various practices, including telecommuting, working beyond traditional office hours, modifying contractual hours, and accumulating overtime hours (Groen, Triest, Coers, & Wtenweerde, 2018). Employees have the option to engage in either full-time or part-time employment while

operating remotely from a designated worksite, such as their residence, an outdoor workspace, or an alternative location, in accordance with the regulations imposed by the employer. Flexible arrangements are typically implemented by employers with the provision of specific guidelines, which may include predetermined time frames for commencing and concluding work, as well as designated core working hours during which all employees are expected to be present. Various study state that; Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) are commonly categorized into two primary classifications: the first being flexibility in terms of work schedule, and the second being flexibility in terms of work location (Shockley & Allen, 2007). The initial practice is commonly known as "flextime", whereas the subsequent practice has been alternatively labeled as "flex place" or "telework" (Charalampous, Grant, Tramontano, & Michailidis, 2019).

Flexible work arrangements enable employees to modify their work schedule, working hours, work location, or take leave from work to fulfill non-work obligations, either on a permanent or temporary basis (Orishede & Ndudi, 2020). The modern workforce, particularly the younger group, is exhibiting a growing desire towards trying enhanced flexibility within their work environments. According to recent reports, a significant proportion of individuals belonging to the millennial generation express a desire to engage in telecommuting or to have the option of flexible working hours. It is highly probable that in the forthcoming years, the prevalence of flexible working arrangements will rise above the occurrence of fixed working schedules across a wide range of occupations (Chung & Lippe, 2018). Flexible work arrangements have been found to enhance work-life balance, enabling employees to effectively navigate their personal obligations and professional duties (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). When given the opportunity to work at their most productive hours and in an environment that suits them, employees in flexible work environments generally report higher levels of output (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Both individuals and businesses benefit from these agreements since they cut down on travel time and other expenditures associated with getting to and from work (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Such arrangements' adaptability is a potent tool for attracting and retaining top employees, which in turn gives companies a strategic edge in the marketplace (Thompson, Payne, & Taylor, 2014). Employers that value their employees' individuality and treat them with respect and understanding are more likely to have a workforce that reflects society at large (Michielsens, Bingham, & Clarke, 2014).

Working remotely may have a negative impact on team morale and productivity since it can lead to a breakdown in communication and coordination (Yang, et al., 2022). The difficulty in keeping eyes on and managing remote workers may have an effect on performance reviews and employee responsibility (Jeske, 2022). Not all workers may have the same access to flexible arrangements, which might lead to an unfair allocation of responsibility and opportunity (Kossek & Lautsch, 2017). Workplace flexibility has the potential to hinder the kind of unplanned ideas and innovations that emerge from having coworkers close at hand (Cheng, Sun, Zhong, & Li, 2023). The potential compromise of sensitive company data can be

heightened due to the increased cyber security risks associated with employees working from diverse locations (Pratt, 2023). Certain employees may encounter difficulties in establishing clear boundaries between their work and personal lives, which can result in burnout and a subsequent decline in productivity (Boamah, Hamadi, Havaei, Smith, & Webb, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted significant transformations in the manner in which individuals carry out their work. The implementation of a worldwide lockdown in April 2020, coupled with the imperative for physical distancing, has resulted in the displacement of numerous employees from their traditional office spaces, necessitating a return to their (Braje, 2023). The subject of work flexibility and its adoption within the workplace have attracted significant interest from researchers in the fields of industrial sociology and human resource management, as well as professionals across various industries, in recent years. The subject of this study has gained significant attention across multiple disciplines, research paths, and the requirements of contemporary professional environments (Sunaryo, Sawitri, Suyono, Wahyudi, & Sarwoto, 2022). The increased interest in Flexible Work Arrangements and their influence on the modern workforce necessitates the development of a comprehensive review research. Regarding this subject, researchers are interested in reviewing the idea in order to solve the following question.

1. What is the publication trend in this title?
2. Which article were the best in this field?
3. Which are the main journals in this field?
4. Which country is leading this research?
5. What are the focus areas in this title?

Methodology

This study was based on qualitative research methodology (Mahat & Aithal, 2022). Study cover time frame from 1994 to 2023. The present study employs a standardized protocol to guide the implementation of activities associated with the systematic review (Mahat & Aithal, 2022).
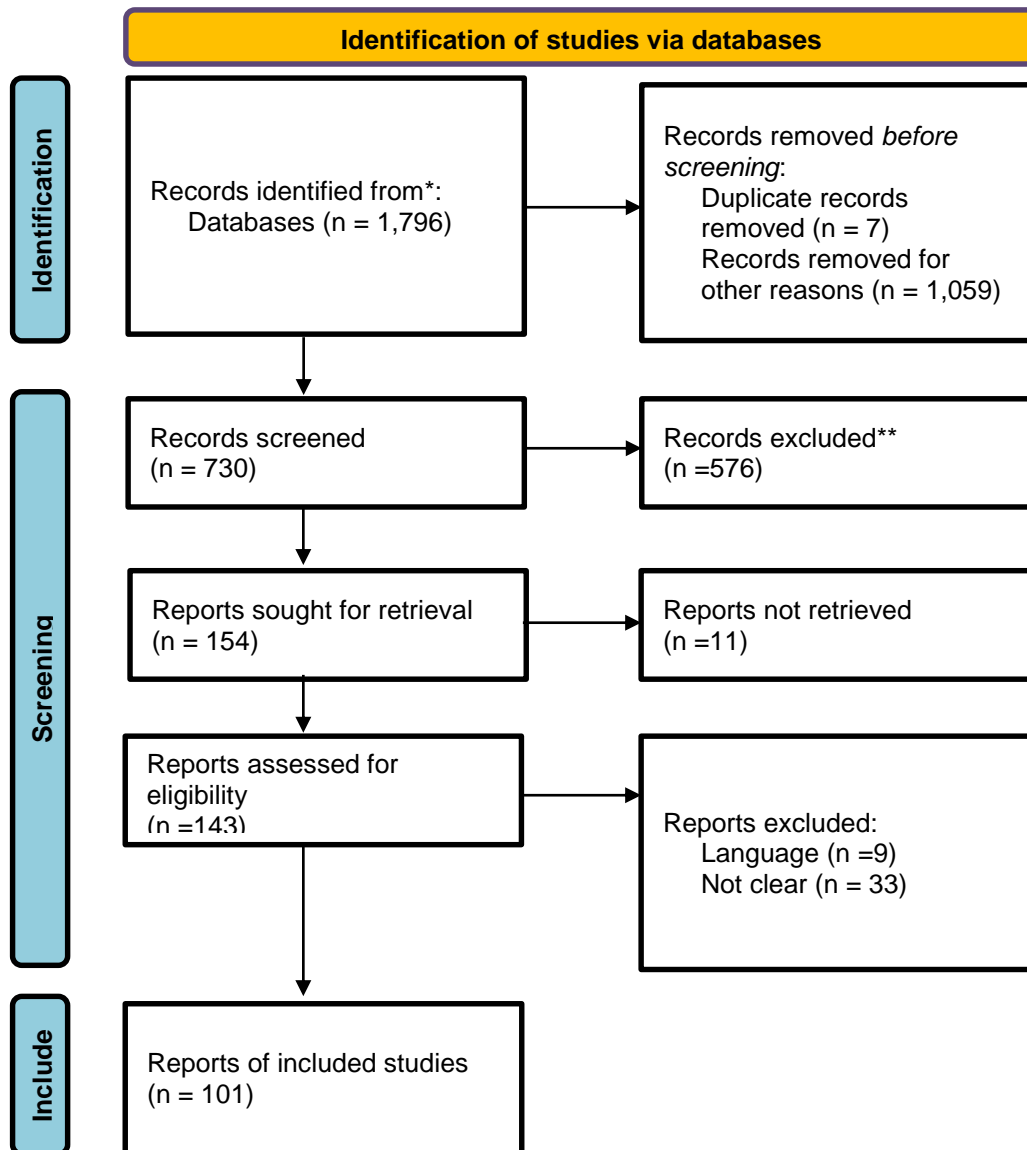
Figure 1: PRISMA

Databases and search terms

The Dimension database was used for the analysis of the results. The researcher directs the database to set up the search engine to only consider the Keyword and Abstract fields. Terms such as "remote work," "flexible work," "work flexibility," and "remote and flexible work" to find the article.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study includes the fields of Commerce, Management, Tourism, and Services. This study adopted studies that applied systematic review methodology to augment the quantity of available literature and facilitate the identification of the central theme.

This study did not include the examination of chapter, proceeding, preprint, monograph, or edited book sources. The study excluded abstract documents that were unclear and written in unclear language.

Tools and Data Analysis

Study used Excel to show the frequency, percentage, bar chat (Mahat & Mathema, 2018). VOSviewer was used to analyses the key article, publication, and country that encompass the study. The study also aimed to identify the main research base on citation conducted in this particular field.

Results

Publication per years

Table 1: Previous study in Remote and Flexible work

S.N	Publication Years	Number of Publication	Percentage
1	1994	2	1.9%
2	1996	1	0.9%
3	2001	2	1.9%
4	2009	1	0.9%
5	2013	2	1.9%
6	2014	1	0.9%
7	2015	1	0.9%
8	2016	1	0.9%
9	2017	2	1.9%
10	2020	11	10.9%
11	2021	21	21.8%
12	2022	36	35.7%
13	2023	20	19.9%
Total	13Years	101	100

Source: Data base

From 1994 to 2017, the research scenery on Remote and Flexible work was comparatively limited, with only a few publications emerging in each year, comprising less than 2% of the total. However, in 2020, the interest in this topic began to surge, with 11 publications representing 10.9% of the total. The following year, in 2021, the number of publications more than doubled to 21, accounting for 20.8% of the total publications.

The trend of increased research on Remote and Flexible work continued to escalate in 2022, with a substantial rise in publications, reaching 36, representing 35.7% of the total. This notable growth in scholarly interest persisted into 2023, with 20 additional publications contributing to the field, amounting to 19.9% of the total publications.

Overall, the data shows an incredible shift in focus, with a significant rise in research attention on Remote and Flexible work over the years, particularly in recent times, signifying a growing recognition of its importance in the modern work environment.

Top Article

Table 2: Rank of Article title in Remote and Flexible work base on Citation

Rank	Article Name	citations
1	Assessing the growth of remote working and its consequences for effort, well-being and work-life balance (Felstead & Henseke, 2017)	404
2	Teleworking: Frameworks for Organizational Research (Daniels, Lamond, & Standen, 2001)	162
3	Flexible Working, Individual Performance, and Employee Attitudes: Comparing Formal and Informal Arrangements (Menezes & Kelliher, 2016)	101
4	Enforced remote working and the work-life interface during qlockdown (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020)	100
5	Telework and Worker Health and Well-Being: A Review and Recommendations for Research and Practice (Beckel & Fisher, 2022)	37
6	Structuring for innovative responses to human resource challenges: A skunk works approach (Biron, et al., 2020)	35
7	Job Quality and Work—Life Balance of Teleworkers (Rodríguez-Modroño & López-Igual, 2021)	34
8	Forced flexibility and remote working: opportunities and challenges in the new normal (Franken, Bentley, Shafaei, Farr-Wharton, Onnis, & Omari, 2021)	34
9	Remote work and work-life balance: Lessons learned from the covid-19 pandemic and suggestions for HRD practitioners (Shirmohammadi, Au, & Beigi, 2022)	32
10	Telework Research and Practice: Impacts on People with Disabilities (Linden, 2014)	30

Source: Data base

Research articles on Remote and Flexible work were ranked based on the number of citations they received. The article titled "Assessing the growth of remote working and its consequences for effort, well-being, and work-life balance" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) secured the top rank with 404 citations. Following closely behind, the article "Teleworking: Frameworks for Organizational Research" (Daniels, Lamond, & Standen, 2001) held the second position with 162 citations. In the third rank was the article "Flexible Working, Individual Performance, and Employee Attitudes: Comparing Formal and Informal Arrangements" (Menezes & Kelliher, 2016) with 101 citations. Articles by Anderson & Kelliher (2020) and Beckel & Fisher (2022) obtained the fourth and fifth positions, respectively, with 100 and 37 citations. The remaining articles secured lower ranks with citation counts ranging from 35 to 30.
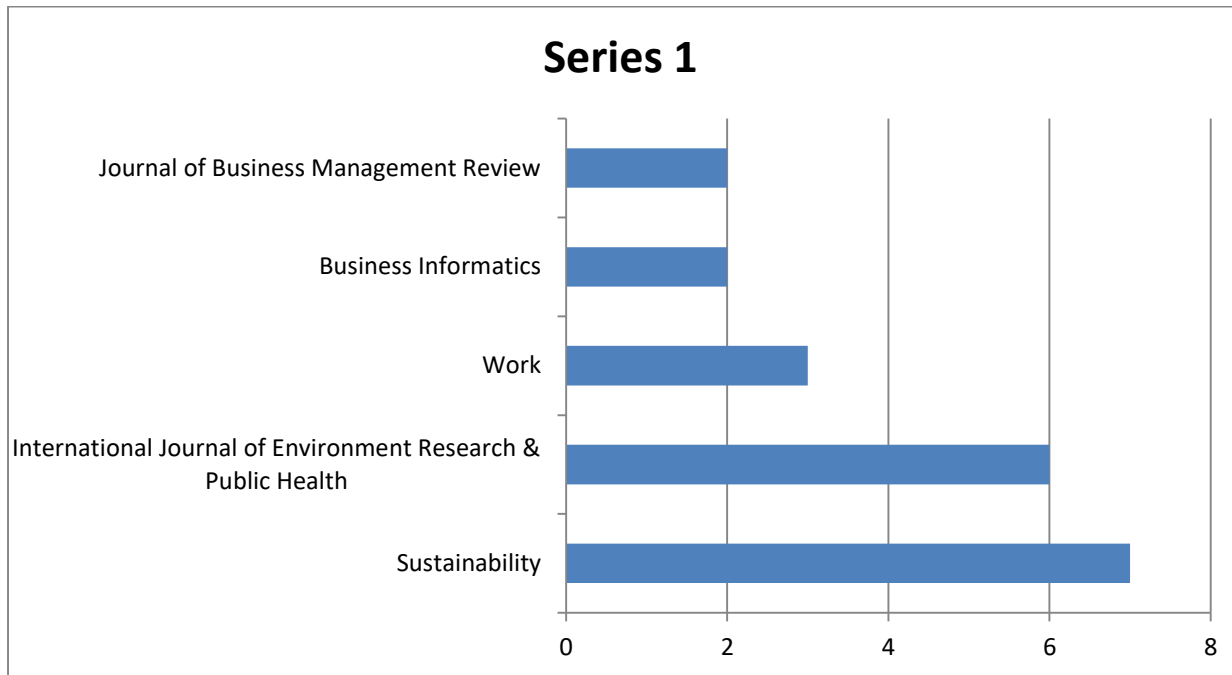
Top Publisher

Figure 2: Top publishers in Remote and Flexible work

The top publishers in the field of Remote and Flexible work were identified based on the number of source documents. The journal "Sustainability" secured the first rank with seven source documents, indicating its prominent position in publishing research on this topic. The "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" closely followed, holding the second position with six source documents. In the third place was the journal "Work" with three source documents. Additionally, the journals "Business Informatics" and "Journal of Business Management Review" both occupied the fourth and fifth ranks, each having two source documents related to Remote and Flexible work. These publishers played a crucial role in disseminating research findings and advancing the understanding of this area of study. Remain all publisher published only one article each.

Country Rank

Table 3: Country rank base on Document and citation

Rank	Country	Documents	Citations
1	United kingdom	8	477
2	United states	8	143
3	Australia	5	252
4	Poland	5	4
5	Italy	4	4
6	Russia	4	5

7	Spain	3	36
8	Romania	3	29
9	Finland	3	19
10	Germany	3	9

Source: Data base

based on the number of documents and citations produced in Remote and Flexible work, the United Kingdom and the United States were at the forefront, both with eight documents each, garnering 477 and 143 citations, respectively. Australia ranked third, contributing five documents with 252 citations. Several countries, including Poland and Italy, also produced five documents, but their citation counts were relatively low at 4 each. Russia and Finland both had four documents, with 5 and 19 citations, respectively. Spain and Romania each produced three documents with 36 and 29 citations, while Germany contributed three documents with 9 citations. These rankings reflect the research output and impact of different countries in the field of Remote and Flexible work in the past.

Core study

Table 4: Key Study highly cited document

S.N	Methods	Major outcomes of research
Relationship between Flexible work and work engagement		
1	Quantitative	Informal flexible working has favorable indirect impacts, whereas formal flexible working has negative direct effects (Menezes & Kelliher, 2016).
2	Quantitative	The practice of remote working has been found to be positively correlated with increased levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job-related well-being. However, it is important to note that these advantages are accompanied by the drawbacks of work intensification and an increased difficulty in separating from work (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).
3	Quantitative	Results showed four work engagement profiles. 75% of workers had average or high engagement at work, which maintained following a little uptick. 25% of low-engaged workers decreased. High degrees of organizational support, home as a work setting, job-related self-efficacy, and job crafting were associated with high work engagement during remote employment (Mäkikangas, Juutinen, Mäkiniemi, Sjöblom, & Oksanen, 2022).
4	Quantitative	The influence of gender and the various forms of telework, as well as the workplace and intensity of (ICT) usage, are significant determinants of working conditions and job quality (Rodríguez-Modroño & López-Igual, 2021).
Concept and Review		

1	Review	The present model clarifies the mechanisms through which telework can potentially impact the health and well-being of workers, taking into account various factors at the individual, work/life/family, organizational, and macro levels (Beckel & Fisher, 2022).
2	Review	Reveled hidden costs of Flexible working practice and its implications for workers, managers of technology platforms, organizations, and society (Soga, Bolade-Ogunfodun, Mariani, Nasr, & Laker, 2022).
3	thought piece	It has been argued that the positive outcomes observed for both employees and employers, which are often linked to increased autonomy and gratitude among employees for having the ability to choose their working arrangements, may not be present when working from home is mandatory for employees (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020).
4	Quantitative	The findings indicate that there is a partial mediation effect of role clarity on the relationship between work overload and emotional exhaustion in the context of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mihalca, Ratiu, Brendea, Metz, Dragan, & Dobre, 2021).
Solution		
1	Qualitative	The study emphasizes the factors that could enhance the efficacy of remote work in the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers identified several factors that contribute to the success of remote working, including preferences for flexible working arrangements, the implementation of smart working practices, the cultivation of self-discipline, and the establishment of clear leadership roles and expectations (Adekoya, Adisa, & Aiyenitaju, 2022).
2	Qualitative	Identify the challenges that are commonly associated with remote work, along with the crucial resources that contribute to both wellbeing and productivity in such a work environment (Franken, Bentley, Shafaei, Farr-Wharton, Onnis, & Omari, 2021).
3	Qualitative	This study constructs a conceptual framework for understanding interpersonal connectivity work among distributed workers. The framework posits that these workers must effectively navigate the fundamental conflicts between freedom and control, as well as nearness and farness, in order to effectively establish and maintain interpersonal connectivity (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020).
Challenge		
1	Review	The utilization of skunk works serves as a valuable addition to the current body of research on human resources practices and systems employed by organizations for the purpose of effectively managing their conventional and predictable workforce requirements (Biron, et al., 2020).

2	Review	Four themes were identified that illustrate the disconnect between the ideal expectations and the unfavorable realities of remote work: This study examines four key areas of interest in the context of work arrangements: (1) the comparison between flextime and work intensity, (2) the relationship between flex place and space limitation, (3) the feasibility of technologically-enabled work arrangements and their potential impact on techno stress and isolation, and (4) the examination of family-friendly work arrangements and their potential influence on housework and care intensity (Shirmohammadi, Au, & Beigi, 2022).

Source: Data base

Key studies that have conducted were group through highly cited documents in the field of Remote and Flexible work include:

Relationship between Flexible Work and Work Engagement: Quantitative studies revealed that informal flexible working had favorable indirect impacts on work engagement, whereas formal flexible working had negative direct effects (Menezes & Kelliher, 2016). The practice of remote working was found to be positively correlated with increased levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job-related well-being. However, it was noted that these advantages were accompanied by the drawbacks of work intensification and difficulty in separating from work (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Additionally, a quantitative study identified four work engagement profiles during remote employment, with high degrees of organizational support, home as a work setting, job-related self-efficacy, and job crafting associated with high work engagement (Mäkikangas et al., 2022). Another quantitative study emphasized that gender, forms of telework, workplace conditions, and ICT usage significantly influenced working conditions and job quality (Rodríguez-Modroño & López-Igual, 2021).

Review and Concept: Through reviews and thought pieces, the mechanisms and impacts of telework on worker health and well-being were clarified, considering factors at different levels (Beckel & Fisher, 2022). Hidden costs of flexible working practices and their implications for workers, technology platform managers, organizations, and society were also revealed (Soga et al., 2022). Moreover, a thought piece discussed how mandatory remote work might not yield the same positive outcomes as voluntary remote work, which often provides employees with increased autonomy and gratitude for their chosen working arrangements (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020). A quantitative study during the COVID-19 pandemic found a partial mediation effect of role clarity on the relationship between work overload and emotional exhaustion in teleworking contexts (Mihalca et al., 2021).

Solution: Qualitative studies emphasized factors contributing to the success of remote work in the COVID-19 pandemic, including preferences for flexible working arrangements, implementation of smart working practices, cultivation of self-discipline, and establishment of clear leadership roles and expectations (Adekoya, Adisa, & Aiyenitaju, 2022). Challenges associated with remote work were also identified, along with crucial resources that contributed

to both well-being and productivity in such work environments (Franken et al., 2021). Furthermore, a qualitative study constructed a conceptual framework for understanding interpersonal connectivity work among distributed workers, highlighting the need for effectively navigating conflicts related to freedom, control, nearness, and farness (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020).

Challenge: Through reviews, the utilization of skunk works as an effective addition to human resources practices and systems for managing conventional and predictable workforce requirements in organizations was discussed (Biron et al., 2020). Another review study examined key areas of interest in the context of remote work, illustrating the discrepancies between ideal expectations and the unfavorable realities, such as flextime, work intensity, flex place, space limitations, technologically-enabled work arrangements, techno stress, isolation, family-friendly work arrangements, and their potential impact on housework and care intensity (Shirmohammadi, Au, & Beigi, 2022). These highly cited documents have significantly contributed to understanding Remote and Flexible work concepts and challenges.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to determine the current pattern, popular journal, article, publication, leading nation, and primary subject in the domain of Remote and Flexible work. Research conducted study between 1994 and 2023 indicates that the investigation of this particular subject matter notable increase subsequent after occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research publication titled "Evaluating the expansion of telecommuting and its implications for productivity, employee satisfaction, and work-life equilibrium" achieved the highest position with a total of 404 citations. The journal "Sustainability" achieved the highest ranking, supported by seven source documents, thus demonstrating its prominent status in the field of publishing research on this particular topic. The topic of remote and flexible work study has received significant attention in European and American countries. The study conducted in this research aims to investigate four distinct themes, namely: The objective of this study is to investigate the correlation between flexible work arrangements and work engagement. The primary aim is to analyze the concept of flexible work and its impact on employee engagement. Additionally, a comprehensive review of existing literature will be conducted. Researchers were also concerned with developing solutions that may arise as a result of flexible work and identifying the challenges that flexible work creates in the workplace.

Future researchers may consider conducting a systematic review to examine the relationship between flexible work arrangements and work engagement. The researcher was instructed to conduct a review on the challenge of developing a core theme. Research can be undertaken to investigate the resolution of security challenges associated with flexible work arrangements. Such research has the potential to bring about a significant transformation in organizational sectors, as well as yield benefits for humanity and the global community as a whole.

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