

The Influence of Flexible Human Resource Management on Employees' Job Well-being

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Abstract. The rapidly changing competitive environment and increasingly diverse employee demands have impacted traditional organizational structures and management models. How organizations achieve efficient and rapid response has attracted widespread attention from both practical and academic circles. Centered on flexible design and rapid response, flexible human resource management (FHRM) can realize the efficient acquisition and optimal allocation of human resources, which serves as a vital managerial tool to improve organizational adaptability and resilience. Flexible office and flexible working hour systems play a key role in solving corporate management dilemmas and enhancing organizational toughness. As the core component of organizations, employees require human resource management practices to cultivate their knowledge, skills and internal motivation to support the delivery of organizational strategies. Therefore, exploring the positive impacts of FHRM carries important theoretical and practical value. With the continuous improvement of material living standards, employees' spiritual demands have grown stronger, and they pay more attention to positive psychological experiences brought by work, among which self-efficacy experience is particularly critical. Improving employees' job well-being has become a core way for enterprises to build competitive advantages. Human resource management should not only focus on the achievement of organizational performance goals but also the improvement of employees' well-being experience. Based on the above background, this study explores the impact of FHRM on employees' job well-being. To clarify the internal mechanism between the two variables, this study adopts self-determination theory and introduces the satisfaction of self-efficacy as a mediator to analyze the transmission path through which FHRM affects job well-being by meeting employees' self-efficacy needs. Meanwhile, considering both the content and implementation process of human resource practices, this paper introduces human resource management strength (HRM strength) as a moderator to identify boundary conditions for the effectiveness of FHRM and fully reveal its comprehensive functional logic.

Keywords: Flexible Human Resource Management, Job Well-being, Self-efficacy, HRM Strength, Self-determination Theory.

1. Introduction

The competition among enterprises essentially lies in talent competition. The rapid iteration of external environments and shifts in the demands of new-generation employees make rigid traditional HRM models difficult to adapt to current business operations. Against this backdrop, flexible human resource management has emerged. Through flexible measures such as shared staffing and hybrid work, FHRM helps organizations cope with market fluctuations and match diversified employee demands, continuously improving organizational adaptability and responsiveness (Liang, 2024; Ji, 2024; Li, 2024).

Current research on FHRM is still in its initial stage. Most existing literature focuses on macro-level outcomes such as organizational performance and innovation (Zheng, 2024; Zhao, 2024; Ferrarini & Curzi, n.d.), while few studies discuss its individual-level influences. Employees' individual states directly determine the implementation effect of organizational strategies, and HRM practices are core carriers to cultivate staff abilities and stimulate internal motivation. Modern employees attach great importance to psychological experiences at work; thus HRM must balance organizational performance and employee well-being. Job well-being can positively predict

employees' affective commitment and job performance, acting as a key element of corporate core competitiveness (Lv, 2021; Huang et al., 2017). Therefore, this study selects employees' job well-being as the outcome variable to explore the impacts of FHRM, aiming to realize a win-win situation for organizations and individuals.

Self-determination theory clearly explains how external environments shape individual behaviors and mental health. The theory proposes that the satisfaction of self-efficacy needs is the core driving force of individual attitudes and behaviors. When external environments satisfy people's competence needs, individuals gain positive psychological experiences and healthy growth. A large number of empirical studies have verified that the satisfaction of self-efficacy significantly boosts personal well-being (Qu, 2023; Lv, 2021; Ge, 2014; Sun, 2012). Humans are born with innate potential for psychological growth and actively pursue the satisfaction of competence needs. As a core organizational environmental factor, FHRM provides diverse resource support for employees' growth to satisfy their self-efficacy. Based on self-determination theory, this study introduces self-efficacy satisfaction as a mediator to interpret the relationship between FHRM and job well-being. We argue that FHRM can meet employees' self-efficacy via diversified resource supply and flexible manpower allocation, thereby enhancing their job well-being.

By sorting out existing literature, this paper summarizes three major research gaps:

- (1) Existing studies on FHRM mostly focus on organizational performance indicators, while discussions about employees' individual work attitudes and behaviors are insufficient;
- (2) Few papers explore the internal mechanism of FHRM, and there is a lack of empirical explanations based on self-determination theory;
- (3) Boundary conditions under which FHRM takes effect remain unclear, and relevant research on moderators is scarce.

Based on the above research deficiencies, this paper defines three core research contents:

- (1) Examine the direct positive effect of FHRM on employees' job well-being;
- (2) Take self-efficacy satisfaction as a mediator to reveal the transmission path linking FHRM to job well-being;
- (3) Introduce HRM strength as a moderator to explore differentiated influences of FHRM on employees' self-efficacy under varying implementation intensity.

2. Theoretical Model and Value of Flexible HRM

2.1. Theoretical Model

This study constructs a moderated mediation model: FHRM acts as the independent variable, self-efficacy as the mediator, job well-being as the dependent variable, and HRM strength as the moderator that regulates the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator.

2.2. Practical Value of Flexible Human Resource Management

Traditional HRM cannot adapt to the development of modern enterprises (Liang, 2024; Li, 2024). Centered on dynamism and rapid response, FHRM advocates equal and value-oriented management, which fully stimulates employees' initiative and creativity and realizes coordinated growth of employees and enterprises.

2.3. Implementation Strategies of Flexible HRM

- (1) Build a flexible working environment: Establish harmonious corporate culture via flexible strategies and dynamic coordination to strengthen employees' sense of responsibility and innovative thinking.
- (2) Construct flat organizational structures: Build information-sharing platforms to improve the efficiency of information circulation and decision-making.
- (3) Implement flexible management systems: Innovate recruitment modes, optimize flexible post design, and launch humanized attendance policies.

(4) Establish multi-level compensation systems: Develop differentiated salary structures based on scientific performance appraisal to attract, retain and motivate talents.

3. Sub heading: Deduction of Main, Mediating and Moderating Hypotheses

3.1. Flexible HRM and Employees' Job Well-being

Job well-being refers to positive psychological experiences when employees exert their potential and realize self-value at work, consisting of two core elements: positive emotion and long-term sense of purpose. Positive emotions expand individuals' material, intellectual and social resources, while a sense of purpose endows people's behaviors with direction and meaning.

Self-determination theory holds that appropriate organizational environments cultivate individuals' intrinsic motivation and improve well-being (Lv, 2021). HRM practices serve as core channels through which organizations deliver resources to employees, relieve work pressure, encourage proactive behaviors and support personal growth. Composed of dynamic and adaptive human resource measures, FHRM matches diverse employee expectations, supplies abundant work resources, helps staff achieve career goals and personal development, and continuously strengthens their sense of job well-being.

Specifically, FHRM improves employees' professional competence through systematic training; enriches job diversity via job rotation and job enrichment to raise satisfaction; fully explores individual potential through dynamic manpower allocation; enhances employees' sense of belonging and recognition via adequate authorization and open suggestion channels; strengthens team collaboration through team-based performance incentives; realizes perfect person-job fit to support self-actualization; and balances work and life via flexible schedules to reduce work-family conflict. In summary, we propose:

Hypothesis 1: Flexible human resource management has a significantly positive impact on employees' job well-being.

3.2. The Mediating Role of Self-efficacy

Employees with high self-efficacy acquire positive emotions more easily through goal achievement and actively explore work meaning to boost pleasure, which significantly enhances job well-being. Existing empirical evidence proves that self-efficacy mediates the positive relationships between supportive HRM, high-performance work systems and employee well-being, and buffers the negative impacts of job insecurity (Lv, 2021). As core cognition of individuals' ability judgment, self-efficacy acts as a mediator between FHRM and job well-being. Thus we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between flexible human resource management and employees' job well-being.

3.3. The Moderating Role of HRM Strength

The implementation effect of HRM depends on both the rationality of institutional contents and the effectiveness of the whole implementation process. Employees' clear perception and unified understanding of human resource policies are prerequisites for HRM practices to function. The concept of HRM strength focuses on the implementation process and measures the degree of employees' consensus on HR policies. Higher HRM strength leads to clearer transmission of organizational policies, and employees' attitudes and behaviors are more consistent with organizational expectations.

Under high HRM strength, employees can clearly perceive organizational expectations, the organization attaches importance to staff opinions and opens channels for participation to satisfy autonomy needs. Employees fully perceive organizational support for their ability development, and their competence needs are satisfied. All staff form unified cognition of FHRM, boosting organizational trust and team collaboration, which maximizes the positive effect of FHRM on self-efficacy. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 3: HRM strength positively moderates the relationship between flexible human resource management and self-efficacy; the positive influence of FHRM on self-efficacy becomes stronger when HRM strength is higher.

4. Research Methodology and Empirical Design

4.1. Research Methodology

This study adopts two research methods: literature research and paired questionnaire survey.

4.1.1. Literature Research

Literature retrieval is conducted on databases including Web of Science and CNKI. This paper systematically sorts out the concepts, dimensions and mature measurement scales of four core variables (FHRM, HRM strength, self-efficacy, job well-being), summarizes limitations of existing research, and constructs the theoretical hypothesis model of this study.

4.1.2. Questionnaire Survey

Mature international scales are adopted and revised after translation and back-translation. Questionnaires are collected in two stages via the Credamo online platform to obtain paired data of supervisors and subordinates. Invalid samples are eliminated after screening. SPSS27.0 and Mplus7.0 are used to conduct reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, aggregation test, descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression to verify all hypotheses.

4.2. Empirical Questionnaire Design

All scales adopt a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

4.2.1. Measurement Scales

Table 1. Scale of Flexible Human Resource Management (Chang et al., 2013)

Dimension	Item No.	Item Description
Coordination-oriented FHRM	FHRM1	Our company updates employee information in information systems regularly to allocate manpower efficiently and rapidly.
	FHRM2	Our company delivers important information
	FHRM3	Our company adopts organization-based salary
	FHRM4	Our company takes actions based on employees'
	FHRM5	Our company adopts team-based salary
	FHRM6	Our company uses performance evaluation procedures

Table 1 is the measurement scale for flexible human resource management developed by Chang et al. (2013). This scale focuses on the flexible arrangement of human resources, covering multiple dimensions such as flexible staffing, performance evaluation and compensation system setting, and is widely used in FHRM empirical research.

Table 2. Scale of HRM Strength (Hauff et al., 2017)

Variable	Item No.	Item Description
HRM Strength	HRMS1	I clearly understand the objectives and specific measures of our company's HRM.
	HRMS2	I can fully comprehend the objectives and specific measures of our company's HRM.
	HRMS3	I recognize and accept the objectives and specific measures of our company's HRM.
	HRMS4	My direct supervisor and HR department follow consistent criteria in HRM implementation.
	HRMS5	I can perceive the expected outcomes of our company's HRM practices.
	HRMS6	All HRM practices in our company are consistent with each other.
	HRMS7	Our company invests heavily in fully implementing HRM practices.

Table 2 shows the HRM strength scale compiled by Hauff et al. (2017). This scale reflects employees' consistent perception of human resource management policies, mainly involving policy transparency, implementation consistency and internal coordination of human resource practices.

Table 3. Self-efficacy Scale (Bass et al., 2020)

Variable	Item No.	Item Description
Self-efficacy	WWB1	I can confidently defend my viewpoints at work.
	WWB2	I feel proud to work with my supervisors.
	WWB3	I speak with enthusiasm during work communication.

Table 3 presents the self-efficacy scale from Bass et al. (2020). The scale focuses on individuals' self-judgment of working competence, investigating employees' self-confidence, sense of competence and positive cognition in work scenarios.

Table 4. Job Well-being Scale (Zheng et al., 2015)

Variable	Item No.	Item Description
Job Well-being	WWB1	My work is full of fun.
	WWB2	Generally speaking, I am satisfied with my current job.
	WWB3	I can always find ways to enrich my work.
	WWB4	I am basically satisfied with my job contents.
	WWB5	Working is a meaningful experience for me.
	WWB6	I feel basically satisfied with the sense of achievement brought by work.

Table 4 is the job well-being scale proposed by Zheng et al. (2015). The scale comprehensively captures employees' work-related positive psychological experience, including emotional experience such as work happiness and satisfaction, as well as cognitive experience such as work meaning and achievement.

4.2.2. Control Variables

Employees' gender, age, education level and organizational tenure are set as control variables. Gender: 0 = female, 1 = male; Education: 1 = high school and below, 2 = junior college, 3 = bachelor, 4 = master and above; Age is recorded in years; organizational tenure is recorded in months.

4.2.3. Sample and Data Collection

Paired questionnaires for supervisors and subordinates are distributed on the Credamo platform, covering enterprises in Beijing, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Shandong, Guangdong and other regions across various industries. Each supervisor fills in the FHRM scale, while ten corresponding subordinates fill in scales of HRM strength, self-efficacy, job well-being and personal information, improving sample representativeness.

4.2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

1. Reliability analysis: SPSS27.0 is used to calculate Cronbach's α of each scale to test internal consistency.
2. Confirmatory factor analysis: Mplus7.0 is adopted to establish six-factor and alternative five-factor models to test discriminant validity.
3. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.
4. Hierarchical regression to examine mediating and moderating effects.

5. Summary

5.1. Theoretical Implications

1. Expand research on outcome variables of FHRM: Most existing literature focuses on organizational outputs, while this paper verifies its positive impact on individual job well-being and supplements individual-level empirical evidence.

2. Enrich the application of self-determination theory: Taking self-efficacy satisfaction as the mediator, this study opens the "black box" between FHRM and job well-being and provides a new theoretical perspective for mechanism research.

3. Supplement boundary conditions of FHRM: This paper introduces HRM strength as a moderator, integrates the content and implementation perspectives of HRM, and enriches empirical research on HRM strength.

5.2. Practical Implications

1. Enterprises should systematically construct FHRM systems: Optimize recruitment, training, job rotation and flexible attendance policies, build information-sharing platforms, realize dynamic manpower allocation, and achieve mutual development of employees and organizations.

2. Managers should focus on cultivating employees' self-efficacy: Meet staff's competence needs through full authorization, regular feedback, flexible schedules and systematic training to stimulate positive work attitudes and behaviors.

3. Attach importance to the implementation process of HRM: HR departments should simplify and fully interpret policies, and managers should support HR initiatives to unify employees' cognition and maximize the effectiveness of HRM practices.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study only selects job well-being as the outcome variable; future research can expand indicators such as innovative behavior, turnover intention and organizational citizenship behavior. Only HRM strength is included as the moderator; subsequent studies can explore individual traits and organizational atmosphere as boundary conditions. Cross-sectional data is adopted in this paper; longitudinal tracking and daily diary designs can be used in follow-up research to verify causal relationships.

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