

Analyzing the Link Between Work Flexibility, Job Satisfaction and Job Performance Among Romanian Employees

Lefter Viorel

Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Department of Management

viorel@lefter.org

Casuneanu Ionut

Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies

icasuneanu@gmail.com

Enache Andreea-Oana

"Costin C. Kiritescu" National Institute of Economic Research, Romanian

Academy enache_oanaa@yahoo.com

Abstract

The labour market has redefined in recent years and has changed the way employers report to employees. Work flexibility is important in the context in which those who work at the desired hours tend to be more motivated and spend a longer period of time without changing their job.

The paper aims to analyse the link between the main forms of work flexibility, job satisfaction and job performance using a sample of 220 employees, emphasising the role of work flexibility in the motivation system of employees and evaluating the impact of workspace on job satisfaction and performance.

The empirical results revealed that schedule flexibility (a flexible program, teleworking or reducing overtime) tend to significantly influence job satisfaction and performance and from the four new types of working (FO, CW, HOT, HOP) the results revealed that all four ways of working highly impacted the well-being, personal and professional performance and the overall level of motivation.

Key words: work flexibility, Romanian employees, job satisfaction, job performance, ways of working

J.E.L. classification: J22, J81, O15, C83.

1. Introduction

Innovation, creativity and initiative are key conditions for ensuring performance in most current workplaces, and also are the incentives that motivate the new generations. This are the premises from which new ways of working, such as flex office, coworking, partial or total home office, have developed in recent years. With the promotion of teleworking law in Romania, homework has become a topic of interest in Romanian society. The labor market has redefined in recent years and has changed the way employers report to employees.

Flexibility at work is important. Those who work at the desired hours tend to be more motivated and spend a longer period of time without changing their job. Digital transformation and technology enable, in many areas, to carry out activities from anywhere where there is an internet connection.

This paradigm shift has led, in recent years, to an increase in employees' autonomy, breaks during work schedules to meet the needs of employees, employee participation in decision making, workspace modelling to increase employee creativity and productivity.

In this context, the paper aims to emphasize the role of flexibility in work in the motivation system of employees and also to evaluate the impact of workspace on job satisfaction and performance using a sample of 220 employees.

The paper is organized as follows. The second section is dedicated to the presentation of the most relevant studies regarding work flexibility, job satisfaction and job performance, while the following section is dedicated to methodology and data. The section of empirical results is structured into two sub-sections: sample profile reflecting the main features of interviewed employees and the analysis of linking different forms of flexibility with job satisfaction and job performance, the paper ending with the main conclusions.

2. Theoretical background

The concept of flexicurity has been promoted at the level of the European Union since 2007, the year of Romania's accession to the EU, being defined as an integrated strategy to ensure at the same time greater flexibility and stability on the labor market. It is more than likely that the future reserves changes regarding the way of organizing the work, and that the traditional approach of 8 hours / day, 5 days per week could not provide anymore the necessary solutions in the dynamics of technological changes that many organizations are currently going through.

Cazes and Nesporova (2006) analysed changes in employment patterns in the western Balkan countries in comparison with the new EU members, Bulgaria and Romania, taking into consideration the concept of flexicurity.

Serban (2012) mentioned that the adaptability of the employees can be significantly improved through an increased labour market flexibility who will lead to a greater productivity, leading to a more efficient allocation of human resources within the economy.

Using the results provided by Time Use Survey and Labour force Survey, Istrate and Caragea (2008) investigated how working arrangements could affect time use of Romanians, revealing that many workers feel that they must choose between work and family, organizations have recently become interested in alternative ways to schedule work, part time labor force covers a small dimension of labor market. They mentioned that the main advantages of using flexitime working arrangements are: the increased level of productivity, higher employee morale and enthusiasm and also a better balance between work and family life.

Into a comparative study on labour market flexibility between Romania and Austria, Avram and Avram (2012) analyzed the main dimensions of labor market flexicurity, the quality of social partnership and the present status of the targets set by of Europe 2020 Strategy.

Vasilica and Mladen (2009) revealed the importance of flexicurity as being a combination of flexible labour market and satisfactory levels of security. They also analysed the four policy components of EPL index-flexibility of the labour law, lifelong learning policies, active labour market policies and social security system - in an integrated manner.

Casuneanu (2014, p.1) identifies the main priorities to increase the labor force flexibility: "multi-qualification of workers, use of information technologies, job rotation, team work, continuous professional training of the employees, updating the job descriptions, expanding the practice of atypical employment contracts – fixed term work contracts, temporary work contracts, contracts for home employment, teleworking".

Tufa (2016) and Igrat et al.(2016) investigated the relationship between quality of working life, job quality and work-life balance revealing work life balance as a key factor in improving working conditions.

3. Methodology and data

The main objective of the paper was to emphasize the role of flexibility in work in the motivation system of employees and also to evaluate the impact of workspace on job satisfaction and performance.

The empirical research was carried out on a sample of 220 individuals with ages between 15-64 years old having the statute of employee based on a stratified sample concerning the following layers: regional distribution of employed persons, activity sector distribution, gender distribution and urban / rural distribution. The sample obtained was considered to be representative at the national level. The sample was statistically representative in all areas of activity. The data has been collected during the period October-November 2018.

The main research questions of the study were: Is work flexibility impacting the overall level of motivation of Romanian employees? What is the opinion of Romanian employees regarding the new ways of working and how these new type of workspace would impact the general level of wellbeing, growth and professional development, social and professional relationships, personal professional performance and organizational performance?

The potential impact of ways of working, from the point of view of organizational performance and the feedback of office people has been evaluated through dichotomous variables.

Flex Office [FO] referred mainly to non-personal and non-tertiary workspaces, also called hot desk or share desk, which are generally linked to spaces that create better facilities for meetings, concentration, creative activities, learning activities and more.

Coworking [CW] means activities in leased spaces, usually individual and short-term, or just for certain activities, often by people with diverse, often complementary activities that they can carry out at home, but which they prefer to do in an environment with more social relationships, with which they interfere frequently and professionally. Home Office is homework, either [HOT] or part [HOP].

The empirical analysis was based on frequencies and descriptive statistics. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 (SPSS) was used to perform the analysis.

4. Empirical results

4.1. Sample profile

From the total of 220 Romanian employees interviewed, most of them were males (55%) and have ages ranging between 36-45 years old(30%) respectively 46-55 years old(30%). Only 5% of them have ages under 26 years old and a very small proportion were elderly (55 years and over, 7%). The sample regional distribution revealed a relatively balanced distribution, 20% of interviewed employees coming from Bucharest-Ifov, while almost 11%-12% of them were coming from other regions of the country. Approximately 31% of employees come from small companies with almost 49 employees, while 27% of sample work in large companies with more than 250 employees. The majority of respondents (70%) declared to work in limited liability companies, while only 7% of them in public institutions. Most of the employees work in companies from service area (44%) followed by manufacturing industry (24%) and retail trade (11%). Almost 27% of employees have as length of service over 10 years, while 23% of them have between 1-3 years, respectively 5-10 years. Concerning the years of experience in management positions, an overwhelming proportion of employees (82%) declared not to have such an experience.

Regarding the main occupation, a quit large proportion of employees declared to be skilled workers (42%), while only 19% of them were higher education specialists and 15% of them declare to be public services' employees

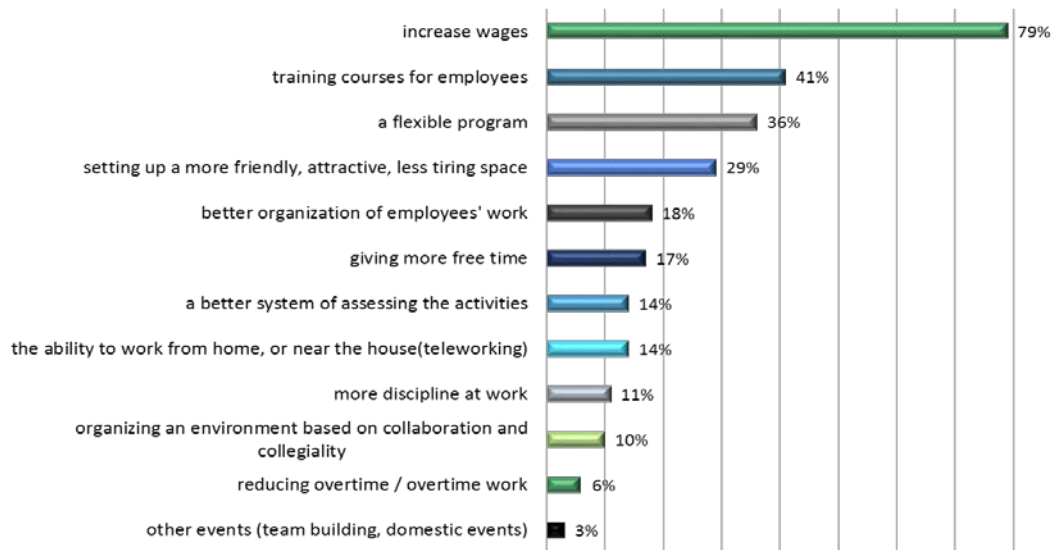
It is worth to mention that a large proportion(42%) of interviewed employees have salary under the threshold of 2500 lei and only 6% of them earned between 5000 and 7000 lei, while an even smaller proportion(2%0 earned between 7000 and 10000lei.

4.2. Analyzing the potential impact of different forms of flexibility on job satisfaction and job performance

Evaluating the responses offered by the employees, it can be highlighted the importance of financial motivation through the increase of wages, but this form of motivation will bear fruit only on short-term. Usually, the elements of non-financial motivation are more important. Almost 79% of employees mentioned this form of financial motivation as important.

Among other measures mentioned, we have included functional flexibility (training course for employees, a better organization of employees 'work or a better system of assessing the activities), schedule flexibility (a flexible program, teleworking or reducing overtime).

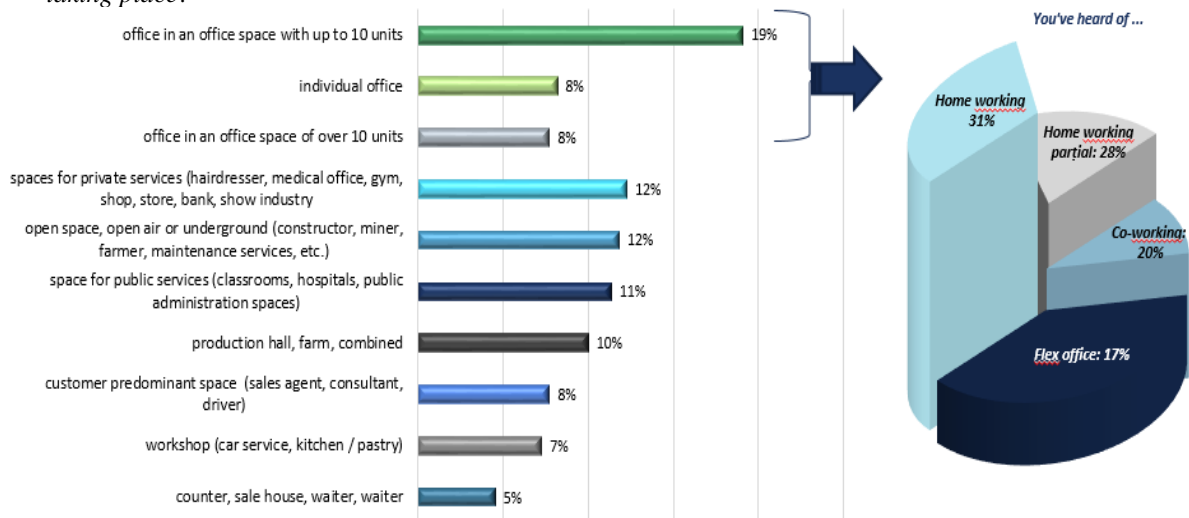
Figure no. 1 Main measures that need to be taken in order to improve the motivation of the employees of the organization



Source: Own processing

The functional flexibility was mentioned as the second option after the salary increase, voted by 41% of employees, while on the third place it is important a flexible program (36%) for the Romanian employees. Employees who perceived to have more flexibility on the job reported better sleep, more exercise, and a healthier lifestyle in general than those employees who did not perceive the availability of flexibility.

Figure no. 2 Which of the following situations is best suited to describe where most of your activity is taking place?



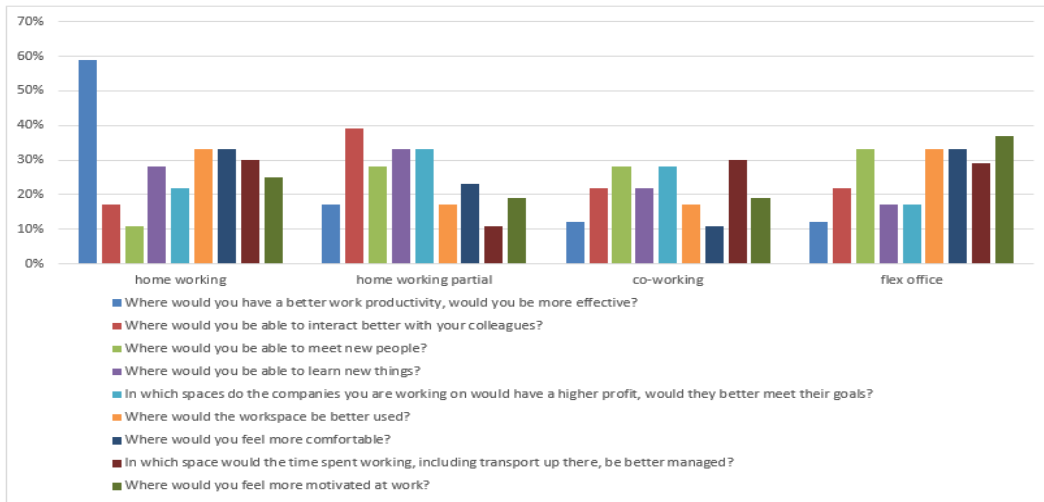
Source: Own processing

Evaluating the responses, we can mention that about 19% of employees work in office within an office space with up to 10 units, while 8% work in individual offices respectively in office within an office space of over 10 units. Asked about new ways of working, 31% of them known about home working, 28% of partial home working, 20% of co-working and only 17% of flex office. Examining the impact of these forms of ways of working (FO, CW, HOT, HOP) on the job performance and satisfaction, the results revealed that for those working in an individual office:

- Home working will have a highly impact on the well-being and personal professional performance (employee productivity);

- Partial home working will be a positive effect on growth and professional development, social and professional relationships and organizational performance;
- Flex office will have a direct impact on the well-being, social and professional relationships and job motivation.

Figure no. 3 The impact of different forms of workspace on the job performance and satisfaction for employees working in an individual office

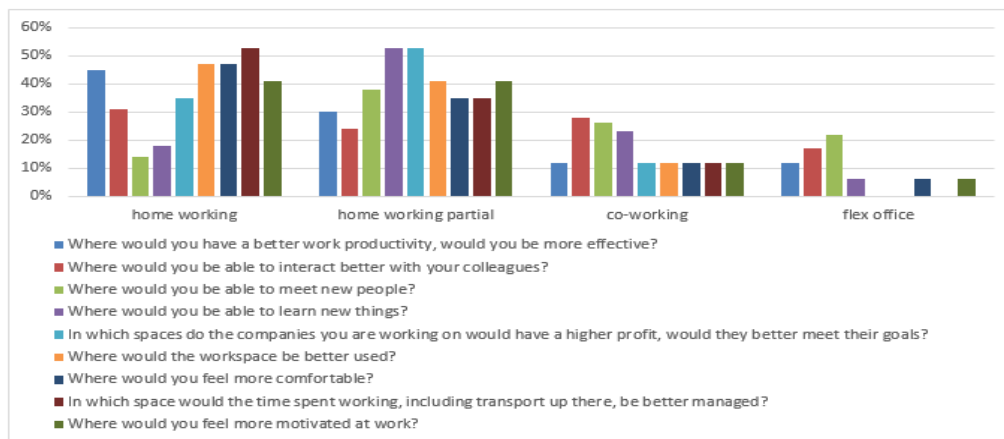


Source: Own processing

For those working in an office space with up to 10 units, the opinions are slightly different:

- Home working is very important, impacting positively the employee productivity, interaction with colleagues, well-being, and better managed working time and ultimately job motivation.

Figure no. 4 The impact of different forms of workspace on the job performance and satisfaction for employees working in an office space up to 10 units

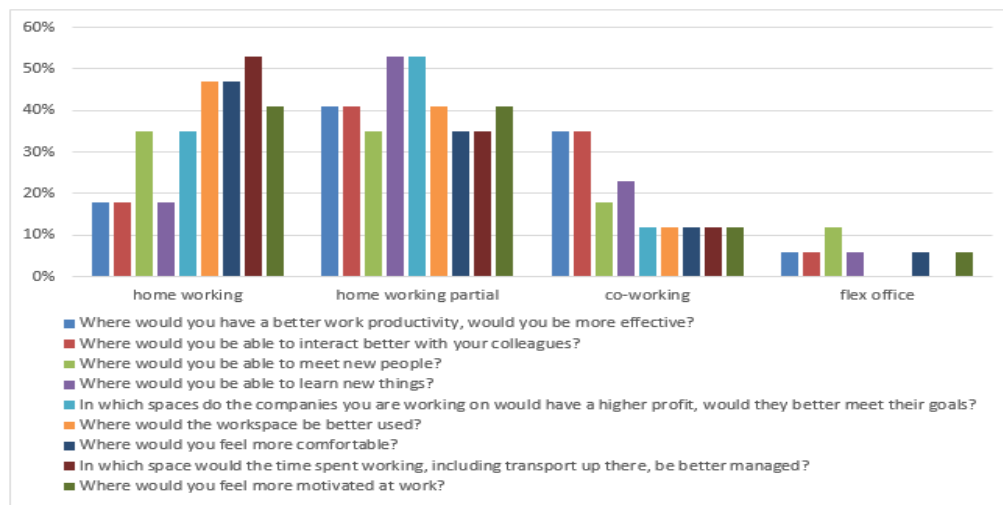


Source: Own processing

- Partial home working will impact directly the growth and professional development, social and professional relationships, personal professional performance and organizational performance

For those working in an office space with more than 10 units, partial home working is very important leading to the growth and professional development, social and professional relationships, personal professional performance and organizational performance, while home working is relevant from the perspective of knowing new people, well-being and the overall level of job motivation.

Figure no. 5 The impact of different forms of workspace on the job performance and satisfaction for employees working in an office space with more than 10 units



Source: Own processing

5. Conclusions

The paper aimed to analyse the link between the main forms of work flexibility, job satisfaction and job performance using a sample of 220 employees, emphasising the role of work flexibility in the motivation system of employees and evaluating the impact of workspace on job satisfaction and performance.

Analyzing the potential impact of different forms of flexibility on job satisfaction and job performance, functional flexibility (training course for employees, a better organization of employees 'work or a better system of assessing the activities), schedule flexibility (a flexible program, teleworking or reducing overtime) tend to significantly influence job satisfaction and performance.

Examining the impact of four types of working (FO, CW, HOT, HOP) on the job performance and satisfaction, the results revealed that all four ways of working highly impacted the well-being, personal and professional performance and the overall level of motivation.

5. References

- Avram, C. D. and Avram, A., 2012. Comparative Study in Labor Market Flexicurity Austria-Romania. *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Science Series*, 21(1).
- Cășuneanu, I., 2014. Management priorities to increase labor force flexibility in the Romanian organizations. *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, 18(4 (593)), 143-152.
- Cazes, S. and Nesporova, A., 2006. Combining flexibility and security for employment and decent work in the western Balkans. *South-East Europe Review for Labour and Social Affairs*, 9(2).
- Vasilica, C. and Mladen, L., 2009. *Assessing flexicurity policy-case study for Romania*.
- Igrat, R., Marinas, C. V., Agoston, S. and Mircioi, I., 2016. Work–Life Balance Practices in Romanian Organisations–A Pilot Study Conducted on HR Professionals. *Management and Economics Review*, 1(1), 1-19.
- Istrate, G. M. and Caragea, N., 2008. *Time use and work arrangements in Romania*. MPRA_paper_45506.pdf, [online] Available at: https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/45506/1/MPRA_paper_45506.pdf
- Serban, A. C., 2012. A better employability through labour market flexibility. The case of Romania. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 4539-4543.
- Tufa, L. A., 2016. Quality of working life, job quality and work-life balance in Romania. Measurements and policy recommendations for improving working conditions. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 16(2), 3.
- *** SPSS package version 22.