

Assessing Flexible Work Arrangements and its Implications on Future Work - A Vicennial Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study examines flexible work arrangements through research using bibliometric analysis to pinpoint new themes, trends, and significant research and its implications for future work.

Methodology: This study will evaluate ways to involve workers in flexible work arrangements quantitatively and qualitatively using bibliometric analysis tools such as Biblioshiny and VOSViewer. It will cover a broad range of papers from the Web of Science database, looking at different fields from different angles.

Major Findings: This study will provide important insights into the current state of flexible employee work environments and its implications for the future. It will highlight historical trends, notable scholars, and new ideas, providing a detailed overview of the domain's intellectual structure. These findings will be useful for scholars and practitioners looking to understand the current state of flexible work arrangements.

Managerial Implications: This research has managerial implications for both theory and practice. Scholars will better understand the flexible work arrangements research landscape, which will help them establish informed theories and future research topics related to the future of work arrangements.

Keywords: Flexible work environment, Future work arrangement, VOSviewer, Bibliometric analysis, Biblioshiny

Introduction:

Flexible work arrangements can be classified as formal or informal, depending on their duration (Townsend, McDonald & Cathcart, 2016). The multiple dimensions of workplace flexibility, including policies and practices, attitudes and values, work design and decisions, and interpersonal

communication and interactions shape its meaning and experiences. Flexible Work arrangements can be categorized as Flexible schedule options, including flextime, reduced workweeks, shift arrangements, or Flexible hours of work Ability to work remotely Flexible leave arrangements, including parental, special, and unpaid leave, and Additional options, such as scheduling breaks (Pitt-Catsouphes and Matz-Costa,2009).

Changes in the demographics of families and patterns of paid workforce participation, along with the rapidly increasing number of single parents and dual-earner couples and supervisory responsibilities, make it difficult for employees to balance work and family obligations throughout their whole lives (McNall, Nicklin & Masuda, 2010; Allen & Eby, 2016). The lines between work and home are blurred because of technological breakthroughs that alter how, where, and when work is done. The act of working is no longer exclusively associated with a single physical site (Allen & Eby, 2016). A flexible work arrangement (FWA) is a group of amenities that an organization offers to its employees that allow them to work at a different time and location from the usual schedule. While the scientific community has extensively examined the notion of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) in recent decades, there is a dearth of information regarding the effects of flexible work practices on sustainable development. Research indicates that FWAs have positive effects on sustainability at three different levels of abstraction: the individual, the business, and the society when applied carefully and preparedly. The financial, ecological, and social realms are the three interconnected areas where flexible work methods yield benefits (Čiarnienė, Vienažindienė and Adamonienė, 2018). The harmony of team dynamics, organizational tactics, and personal preferences is essential for the success of hybrid work arrangements. There is currently no one-size-fits-all strategy for hybrid work in the software sector (Castro and França, 2024).

This study takes viewers on an intriguing expedition into the realm of flexible work arrangements across a wide range of countries. This study uses bibliometric analysis to evaluate and analyze research on flexible work arrangements. This methodology enables us to systematically review, summarize, and evaluate the wide spectrum of published research, providing insights into the main themes, trends, approaches, and gaps in the field of flexible work arrangements.

This study aims to answer essential questions:

RQ1: What is the current state of Flexible Work arrangements research in various countries?

RQ2: What are the most common research themes and methodologies?

RQ3: How do Flexible work arrangements practices differ among various countries and what factors impact these differences?

RQ4: In exchange for offering flexible work arrangements, what kinds of outcomes do organizations receive?

The authors hope to offer a greater knowledge of Flexible work arrangements through a thorough bibliometric analysis, providing insights that can guide academic research agendas, government policies, and organizational strategies. By doing this, this study advances the field of human resource management studies as well as the general discussion about how Flexible work arrangements propels the technological, social, and economic development of various countries.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Definition and Concept of Flexible Work Arrangements

The initial surge in demand for flexible work schedules, also referred to as family-friendly, work-life balance, or work-life integration policies, acknowledged their significance in providing flexibility to employees, parents, and other stakeholders to facilitate the reconciliation of work and Family life lives in a demanding global business environment of the 20th century (Bailyn, 1993). Work alternatives that allow for flexibility in terms of where, when, or how much work is accomplished are known as flexible work arrangements (Rau and Hyland, 2002). Short-term job or vacation breaks, such as part-year job, sabbaticals, vacations, and leaves, are a type of flexible work arrangements (FWA) that are getting comparatively less attention than others. These adaptable work schedules enable people to take brief leaves of absence from their jobs without losing their jobs (Etzion, 2003). The main characteristic of these arrangements is that the worker, not the employer, determines the working arrangement (Alis et al., 2006). Organizations across the world employ flexible working arrangements, as a widespread practice, in response to the many issues brought on by these changes. These are the programs created by employers to give workers more scheduling flexibility so they can fulfill job-related responsibilities. The goal is to increase organizational flexibility, improve work-life balance, and boost performance (Klindzic and Maric, 2019).

2.2 Significance of Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work environments lead to increased employee engagement, reduced workload, greater work-family balance, and improved mental health (Pitt-Catsoupes and Matz-Costa ,2009). Incorporating the ethos of sustainability into human resource management will require a redesign that prioritizes flexible time and place for employee development. This will boost organizational performance and employee job satisfaction, two key benefits of sustainable HRM (Davidescu *et al.*, 2020). The conventional ideas of work and well-being are changing, and remote work is destined to stay in the competitive market. Businesses need to take advantage of this chance to cultivate a remote work culture that protects the well-being and health of remote workers in addition to emphasizing productivity (Garg and Ranga, 2024). Establishing a strong leadership commitment, providing frequent gender bias training, and allowing for flexible work arrangements are all necessary to prevent gender imbalance in the workplace(A, Allam and Soliman, 2024).

Individuals of generations B and Y express the greatest level of satisfaction with the flexible work arrangements implemented in their respective organizations. Additionally, it was found that women value flexibility in the workplace somewhat more than men do. Women place a higher value on being able to balance work and family obligations, reducing stress, improving health, saving money and time, and being able to earn what they need (Čiarnienė, Vienažindienė and Adamonienė, 2018). Allostatic load was lower in workers, both male and female, who used shorter hours working arrangements. There was a variation of nearly one unit in the allostatic load scale amongst women who were responsible for more than one kid under the age of fifteen. Women with flexible work schedules and those without them. Women who balance work and family responsibilities may be able to lower their chronic stress levels with fewer hours worked and more flexible work schedules (Chandola *et al.*, 2019).

2.3 Connection between Flexible Work Arrangements and Organizational Outcomes

While women are more likely to work from home extensively, men are more likely to work from home overall. The likelihood of working from home is positively correlated with education, experience, and computer use, and negatively correlated with small business size and young employees. Working from home and doing so extensively are positively impacted by having children under six years old, working overtime, and scheduling work time (Sarbu, 2014). The research indicates a negative correlation between job security and flexible scheduling.

Furthermore, there is little proof that employees at companies offering flexible work schedules experience lower levels of stress. However, as determined by employee discretion and teamwork, flextime may result in higher employee involvement in decision-making (Eldridge and Nisar, 2020). Nearly eighty percent of respondents said that flexible work alternatives contribute to their success as employees to a "moderate" or "great extent" (Pitt-Catsouphe and Matz-Costa, 2009). The ability to take time off was linked to reduced workplace spillover, whereas the flexibility to alter work schedules and work from home was linked to higher home spillover to work. Whether spillover is favorable or negative probably depends on the individual worker's circumstances and preferences (Grice, McGovern and Alexander, 2008). It was specifically shown that type of ownership was the most significant contextual factor because businesses owned by foreigners typically offer greater flexibility or alternative work schedules. Similarly, it was established that sector and industry played a significant role in determining the existence of various FWAs. When comparing the private and public sectors, the private sector uses flexible arrangements more frequently. When it comes to industry, services saw a higher use of FWAs than manufacturing. It was discovered that the firm's size was only partially crucial for utilizing flexible scheduling, since only overtime and shift work rose with the development of the organization. year of foundation (Klindzic and Maric, 2019). Employees who work in the management sciences colleges in the Peshawar district view flexibility in time as a critical component of their work performance and support it. According to this survey, institutions' administrations only remaining option if they want to increase production and efficiency is to implement a flexible time system (Hashim, Ullah and Azizullah Khan, 2017). By cutting commuting times and traffic congestion, implementing FWM can efficiently reduce pollution. By fostering more social connection among coworkers, FWM has the potential to improve corporate cooperation and encourage creativity (Yu, Burke and Raad, 2019). Variables pertaining to flexible work schedules may be related to how committed an employee is to their employer. Furthermore, a flexible work schedule may lessen psychological stress symptoms that are encountered. The process by which this correlation arises may account for the weak relationships between the attitude variables and the flexible working hour design characteristics that have been seen. It was suggested that employees will benefit from greater work schedule flexibility (time autonomy) as work schedules grow more flexible. Employees that have more time to themselves will be more committed to the organization, have more job satisfaction, and show less signs of psychological stress (Pierce and Newstrom, 1983). There is evidence that

work-family problems (FWP) have detrimental effects on relationships at work, home-work conflicts, and the organizational, economic, and health domains (Soga *et al.*, 2022).

3. Research Objectives:

To analyze the progression of research on flexible work arrangements across time in various countries.

1. To analyze the progression of research on flexible work arrangements within a timeframe in various countries.
2. To investigate the benefits derived from the implementation of flexible work arrangements.
3. To evaluate India's standing in research publications on flexible work arrangements.
4. To identify the top 3 most cited countries internationally, the top 3 institutions making important contributions, and the most prolific authors, and evaluate the citation in the field of flexible work arrangements.
5. To study the implications of flexible work arrangements on organizational performance in various aspects.

4. Research Methodology and Data Analysis

A bibliometric literature review is an organized procedure with multiple stages that provide a full picture of the research environment in a specific area or subject. The first critical step is to perform a comprehensive search for suitable literature. This procedure is to identify and collect all relevant academic papers, journals, and publications on the chosen topic or study area. The goal is to provide a thorough and representative dataset as the foundation of the evaluation. Once the first set of literature has been gathered, certain criteria are developed to determine which publications will be listed in the review. Criteria for evaluating sources include publication date, significance for the study topic, and quality. After selecting relevant papers, the next step is to conduct an analysis using Science Mapping and Visualization. Science mapping, which is frequently helped by bibliometric programming such as VOSviewer and the Bibliometrix R package, is an important part of bibliometric literature evaluations.

4.1 Data collection methods, including sources and databases used

The PRISMA diagram depicts the flow of articles through the various stages of a systematic review of flexible work arrangements research in various countries from 2002 to 2023. In the first phase, 338 publications were found in the Web of Science database using the search phrases "Flexible work arrangements", "FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS", "flexible working arrangements", and "FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS". In the next phase, the document type was filtered to articles, resulting in 222 articles. In the third phase, the WOS categories were filtered to Management and Business, reducing the number of articles to 191. In the next phase, the language was filtered to English. This resulted in 182 articles. So articles that were related and in English all were included, resulting in a final sample of 182 articles.

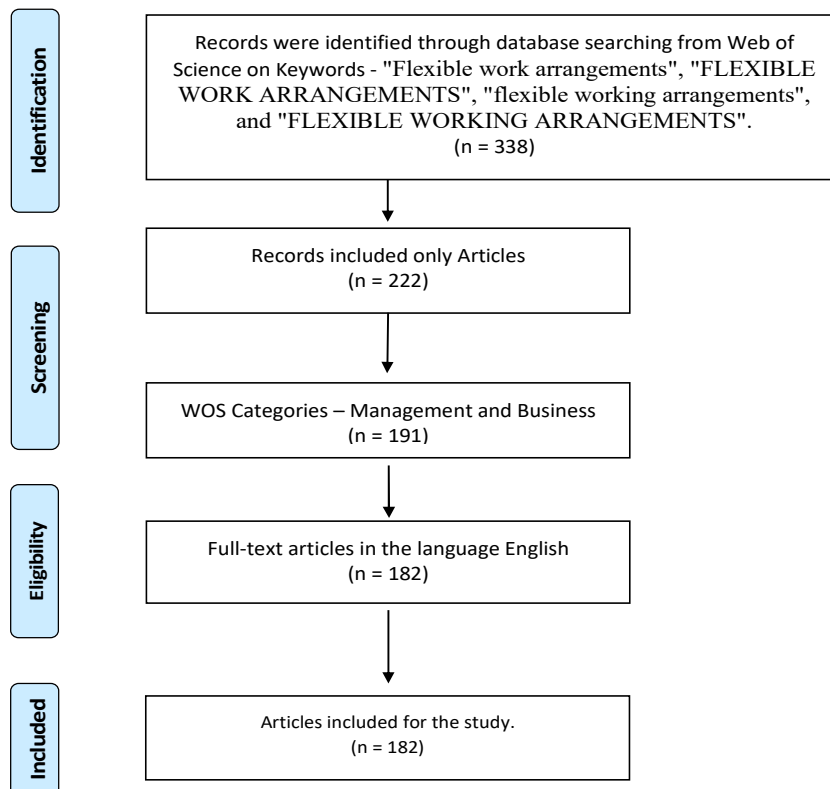


Fig. 1 PRISMA Model

Figure 2 below shows the overview of the documents collected from the Web of science database.



Fig. 2 Overview of the documents collected from the Web of Science database.

4.2 Science Mapping

4.2.1 Overview of the production of the articles in the area over the years, prominent authors, sources, and keywords

(a) Annual Scientific Production per year

Table 1 represents the chronological growth of the research for the Flexible work arrangements study for the period of 2002-2023 and Figure 3, generated from Bibliometrix software, represents the graphical representation of Table 1. The number of articles on Flexible work arrangements has increased steadily over the past 20 years. The year 2023 saw the highest number of articles published on Flexible work arrangements, with 36.

The percentage of articles on Flexible work arrangements has also increased over time. In the beginning of the 20th century specifically between 2002 to 2007, the articles on Flexible work arrangements were only 7. From the year 2014 to 2019, the number of articles published was 44 which was somewhat higher on the side compared to the year between 2008 to 2013 (38 articles). 24.18% increment was noticeably higher which again jump in the year between 2020-2023 and reached 51.10% with the total number of articles only in last three years were 93. A surge in the production of research articles in the area can be seen from the year 2015. The increasing number of articles on Flexible Work arrangement suggests that this is a growing area of research interest.

This is likely due to the growing recognition of the importance and need of Flexible Work arrangement for organizational success.

Table 1. Number of articles published.

Year	Articles	% of total articles
2002-2007	7	3.85
2008-2013	38	20.88
2014-2019	44	24.18
2020-2023	93	51.10
Total Articles	182	

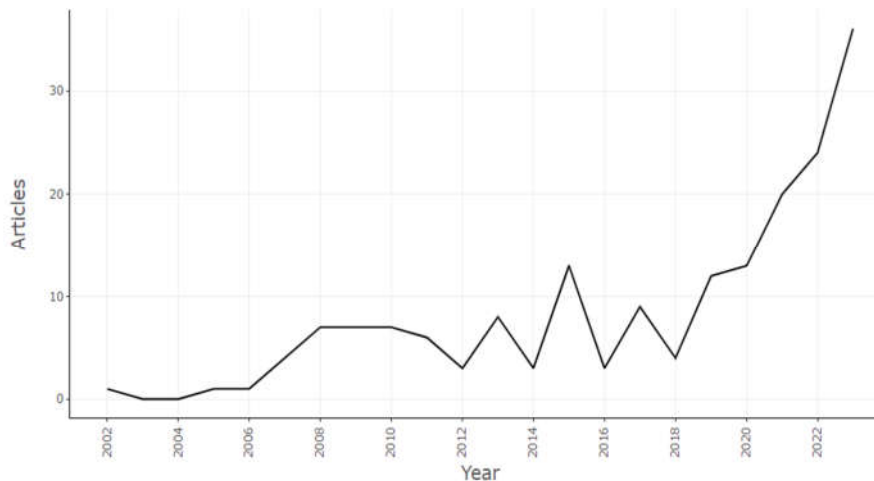


Fig.3. Annual Scientific Production from the year 2002-2023.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

(b) Three-Factor Analysis:

The figure represents Pitt-Catsoupes M, Hallman DM, Jahncke H, Bjarntoft S among the top influential authors connected with almost all the cited sources and keywords shown in the figure. Journal of Applied Psychology is the most frequently cited source among the most prominent authors in the field of Flexible work arrangement; it also has the longest bar. "Flexible work arrangements" is the keyword that the top authors use the most, as indicated by the longest bar. In the second, "work-life balance," in the third, "workplace flexibility," and so forth come after it.

Overall, it is apparent that all the top writers have utilized the term "Flexible work arrangements," which has the widest lines amongst other keywords related to the Journal of Applied Psychology. Because of this, they rank as the most significant and favored keywords. The Journal of Applied Psychology is the most favored source and has a rich collection of papers about Flexible work arrangements.

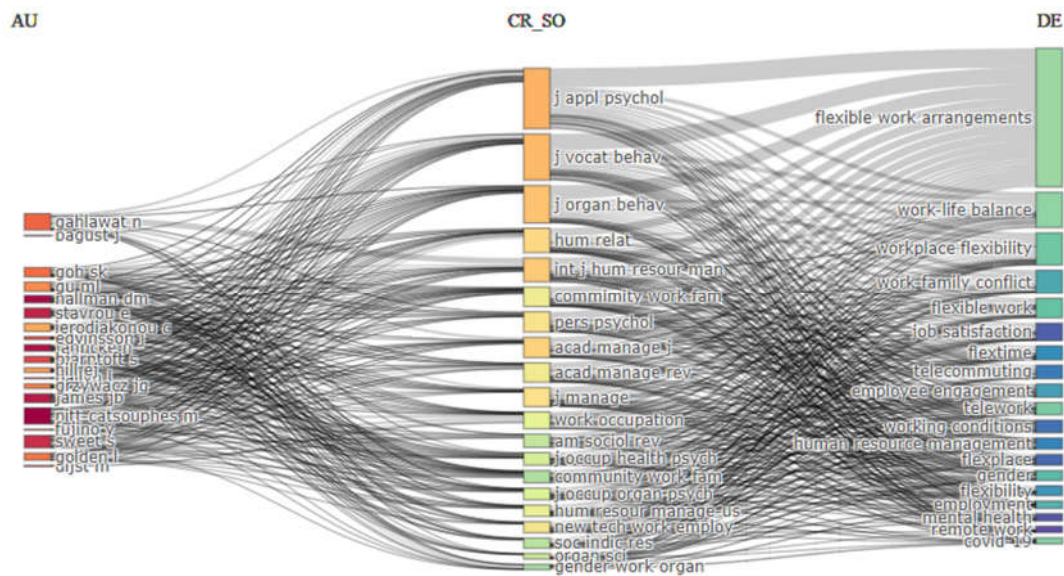


Fig. 4 Three- factor analysis of the relationship among top authors (left), references they cite (middle) and keywords they use (right)

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

4.2.2 Keyword analysis

a) Co-occurrence analysis

The figure depicts the keyword co-occurrence network, with a minimum of 3 occurrences per keyword. The network map shows that the keywords are clustered under 5 clusters. Only 59 of the 848 keywords discovered in the 182 research papers passed the minimal level.

Keywords include Flexible work arrangements (n=53), flexibility (n=26), gender (n=21), impact (n= 24), performance (n = 18), employment (n = 17), and family conflict (n = 16). Recently, gender (n=21), work-life balance (n=16), workplace flexibility (n=14), stress (n=13) and employee engagement (n=10) have received attention. These keywords highlight the current focus of flexible



Fig. 6 Word cloud analysis

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

As all capture the essential elements that support flexible work arrangements, all these terms are significant. An employee with flexible work arrangements has the freedom to decide when and where to start working as well as when to finish. The goal of work-life balance management is to help employees control their stress levels and improve their overall job happiness. An atmosphere or work schedule that lacks the limitations typical of a regular work schedule is referred to as a flexible working arrangement. These agreements consider personal life and enable employees to contribute to achieving a better work-life balance. The degree to which workers find fulfillment and enjoyment in their work is known as job satisfaction. Flexible work arrangements offered to the employees tend to be more involved in their work. Organizational commitment refers to employees' affiliation with their organization and desire to stay with it.

4.2.3 Citation patterns and their impact on the field

(a) Based on author

Figure 7 displays the authors with the highest h-index: PITT-CATSOUHES M (h-index = 4) and HALLMAN DM (h-index = 3). PITT-CATSOUHES M has published at least 4 papers with at least 4 citations, whereas HALLMAN DM has published at least 3 papers, each has been cited at least four times. In addition, the image reveals a huge cluster of authors with h-indexes of 2. This

implies that there is a sizable number of active academics in the field of Flexible work arrangements who are conducting high-impact work. It is also worth noting that all the writers in the figure have h-indexes greater than 1. This shows that the field of flexible work arrangements is relatively mature, with a strong research community.

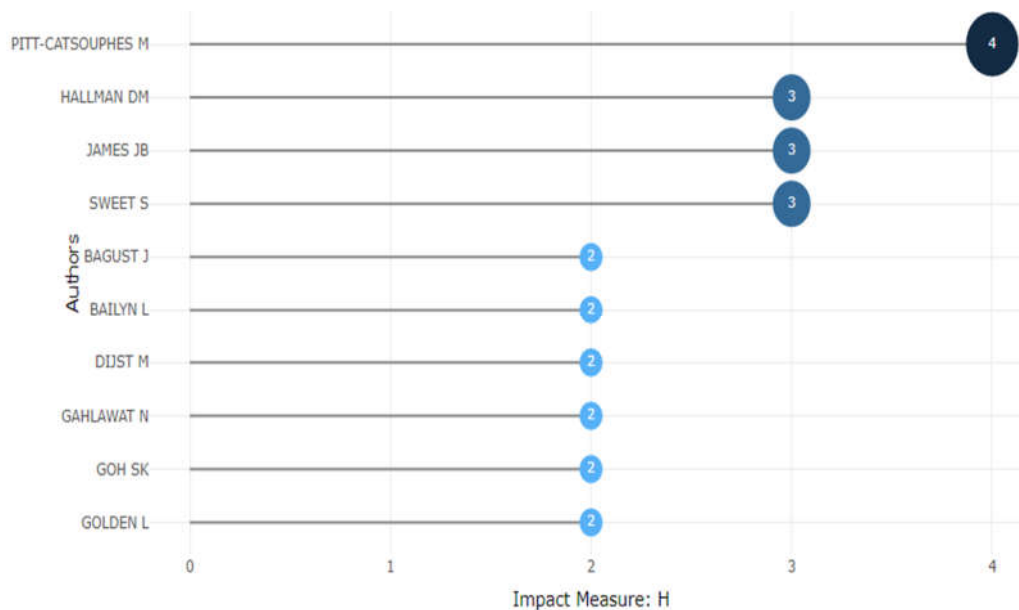


Fig. 7 Authors with the highest h-index.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

(b) Based on documents

Figure 8 displays the papers with the highest global citations, indicating their major contribution to the field's knowledge base. Hill EJ (2008) has received the most citations (224) among the papers on the list. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the notion of workplace flexibility. Kelly (2007) represents a conceptual model of how control over schedules affects work-life conflicts, suggest recommendations for implementing standard policies on flexible hours. Golden L, 2008 is the third most cited paper on the list, with 125 citations. This paper investigates potential differences among employees based on personal traits in their capacity to modify the start and finish schedules of the workday and work from home.

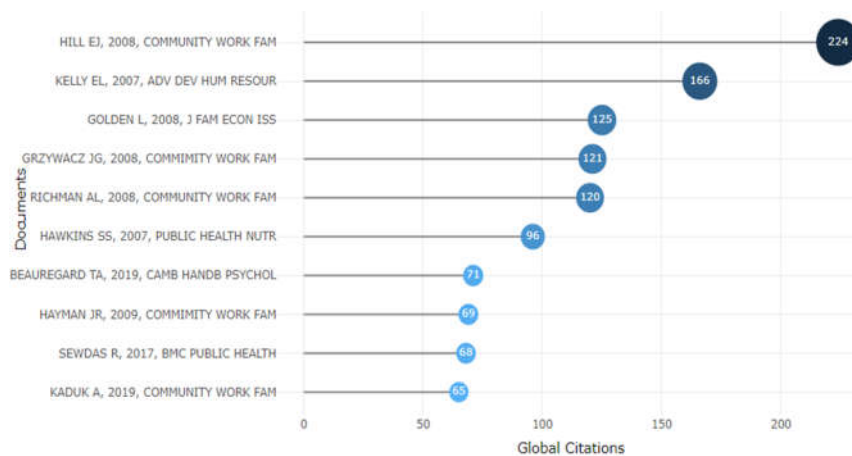


Fig. 8 Most globally cited documents.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

(c) Based on country:

The United States receives the most citations in Flexible work arrangement studies, with 1259 overall. Australia is the second most referenced country, receiving 265 total citations. The United Kingdom is the third most referenced country, receiving 232 total citations. Research indicates that the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom are at the forefront of flexible work arrangements. Countries with a robust research infrastructure, supportive government policies, and a high interest in flexible work arrangements may have a competitive advantage.

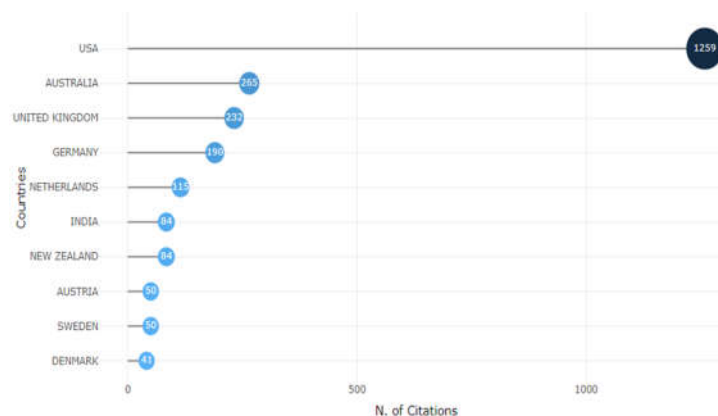


Fig 9 Most cited country.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

4.2.4 Analysis of booming themes in the field

(a) Trend Topics

From 2008 to 2023, the top trending themes were "flexible work arrangements" (47 times). Between 2014 and 2023, "work-life balance" was referenced 14 times, while "workplace flexibility" was mentioned 9 times in the Flexible Work Arrangement study. Aside from these, although it appears less frequently, the term "telecommuting" is the longest-trending topic in the field between 2008 and 2019. The current trending topic observed was "COVID-19" which has been increasing relevance from the year 2022-2023 and has appeared 9 times, followed by "work-life balance" which has appeared 14 times between 2014 to 2021. This data suggests that organizations prioritize flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, workplace flexibility, and telecommuting. New trends like Covid-19 highlight the importance of corporations adapting to their employees' evolving requirements.

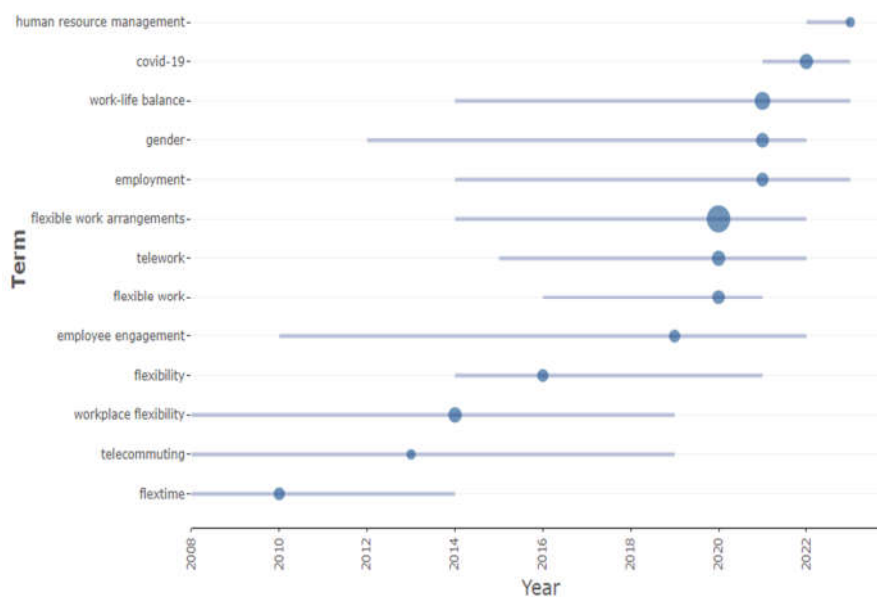


Fig 10 Trend topics.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

(b) Thematic Map

The thematic map was generated using Bibliometrix (R Package) based on author keywords. The settings used were: 50 words, a minimum cluster frequency of 5, and 3 labels. The figure shows

that the majority of bubbles are based on basic and niche themes, with only one bubble centered on the Centrality and Density axis. The motor theme is broader than the other three themes, indicating a focus on flexible work arrangements and constantly evolving concepts. There is a high emphasis on the fundamental concepts of workplace flexibility, work-life balance, and flexibility, which are generally acknowledged and used. Motor themes play a crucial role in driving innovation and growth in the discipline, making it significant for practice. The niche topic in the Flexible Work Arrangements thematic map indicates that while the area is specialized, it is still evolving and refining specific notions. The buzzwords in the specialized subject, including job autonomy and work environment, are crucial for comprehending and dealing with flexible work arrangements. The basic theme on the thematic map of Flexible work arrangements indicates that this topic contains the most fundamental concepts and terms in the field. It serves as the framework for the remaining three topics. The core theme's keywords, including flexible work, schedule control, stress, burnout, part-time employment, and social networking, are crucial for understanding and managing flexible work arrangements.

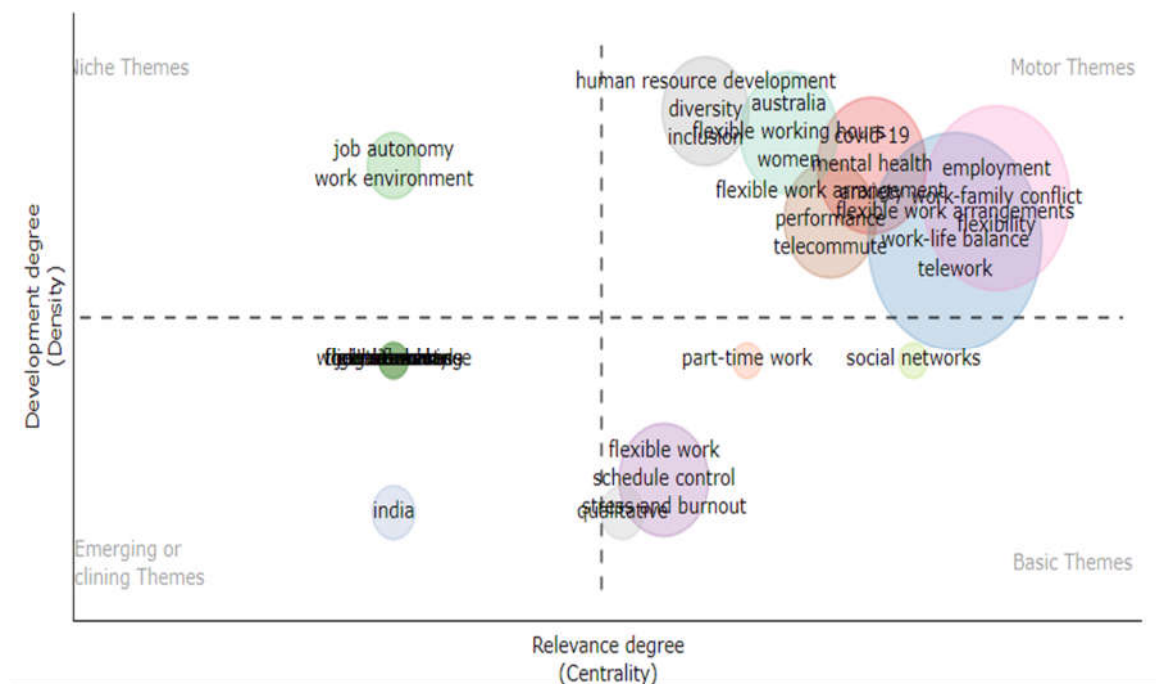


Fig 11 Thematic map.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

4.2.5 Collaboration analysis

(a) Corresponding author's country:

The USA has the most articles (53), followed by Australia (25) and Germany (12). Brazil, Egypt, Ethiopia, Korea, and Slovenia have 1.000 MCP ratios, while India and Turkey have near-zero MCP ratios. Flexible work arrangements research is a global phenomenon, with scholars from several countries contributing significantly. Research activity is concentrated in specific countries, like the United States, Australia, and Germany. This information can help locate colleagues, build research alliances, and make funding decisions.

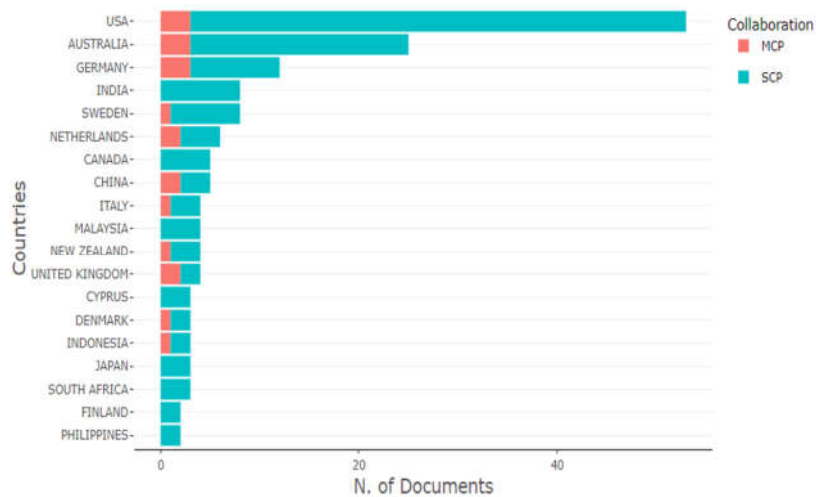


Fig. 12 Corresponding author's country.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

(b) World collaboration

Figure 13 indicates over 35 global collaborations in the field based on the frequency of co-authored articles. Data analysis on authorship and collaborative research patterns indicates that majority of collaborations are single, followed by two. The USA is among the most active countries in the field, collaborating with 14 other countries. Australia and Netherlands are the second most active country in the field, cooperating with four other countries. The UK is the third most active country in the field, cooperating with four other nations.

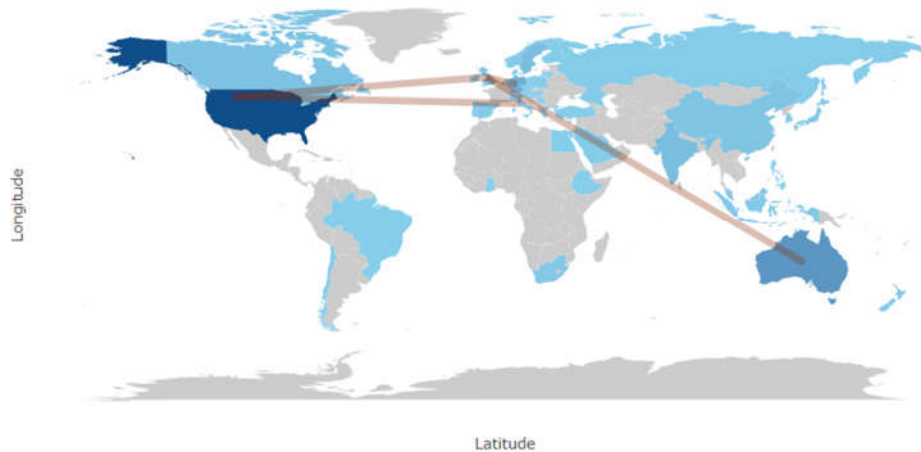


Fig 13. World Collaboration.

Source: Author generated the image in Bibliometrix (R Package)

5. Discussion and future direction of the research

The relevance of flexible work arrangements and their impact on people, teams, companies, and the industry are highlighted by the major trends and themes that have been recognized under this study. A noteworthy pattern showed that the number of papers published throughout the study period increased chronologically. Flexible work arrangements are becoming more and more popular, which is probably because they are becoming recognized as a critical component of corporate success. The three-field plot study brought attention to the concentration of eminent authors, highlighting the significance of recognizing their important contributions and the value of accommodating developing scholars' itineraries. Important keywords were identified through word cloud analysis so that organizations might enhance flexible work arrangements. According to the author's citation patterns, a considerable number of active researchers are working on high-impact projects in the area of flexible work arrangements. It also suggests that there is a robust research community in the relatively mature topic of flexible work arrangements. Citation patterns based on documents suggest that publications with the most worldwide citations make a significant contribution to the area's foundation of knowledge. Citation patterns by country indicate that countries with a solid research infrastructure, favorable government policies, and an avid interest in flexible work arrangements might have an edge over competitors. The data from the trend research indicates that companies should give telecommuting, flexible work schedules, work-life balance, and workplace flexibility the greatest importance. Emerging patterns such as COVID-19

underscore how crucial it is for businesses to adjust to the changing needs of their workforce. According to the thematic analysis, the motor theme is more widespread than the other three themes, emphasizing flexible work schedules and ideas that are always changing. The commonly accepted and utilized core ideas of flexibility in the workplace, work-life balance, and flexibility are highly valued. The terms "job autonomy" and "work environment," which are popular in this field of study, are essential to understanding and managing flexible work schedules. Collaboration study by corresponding author nation revealed that flexible work arrangements research is a worldwide phenomenon, with scholars from various countries making important contributions to specific countries such as the United States, Australia, and Germany. To be more precise, India is still in its early stages. Data study of authorship and collaborative research trends shows that most collaborations are single, and the United States is among the most active countries.

6. Ramification of the study

The study on flexible work arrangements has numerous implications for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. For researchers, the study indicates a solid and expanding body of research on flexible employment arrangements. This gives academics a plethora of data to draw on while performing their studies. The study recommends further research on the influence of flexible work arrangements on organizational performance and success and strategies for integrating them. For practitioners, the study offers various insights into the elements that influence flexible work arrangements. Practitioners can use this knowledge to create and implement flexible work arrangements. The study shows that flexible work arrangements improve organizational performance, making it a compelling commercial case to invest in them. For policymakers, the study demonstrates the importance of flexible work arrangements for businesses and organizations around the world. Policymakers can utilize this information to create policies that promote flexible work arrangements, such as funding and scheduling perks. The survey highlights the relevance of flexible work arrangements for businesses and organizations globally.

7. Conclusion

This study conducted a thorough bibliometric analysis of the existing landscape of research on flexible work arrangements. The study's findings may assist organizations in prioritizing flexible work arrangements and recognizing their significant impact on overall performance. This entails making a commitment to invest in a productive flexible work schedule, tracking its efficacy regularly using surveys and other tools, and fostering an ongoing flexible work environment that values openness, respect, and open communication. Fostering flexible work involves offering possibilities for flexible hours, proactively addressing issues, and cultivating a positive work atmosphere. The study's findings also suggest that practitioners should foster relationships with employees, lessen work-life conflict, lessen stress, offer flexible scheduling, assign work efficiently, promote self-manage collaboration, virtual reward accomplishments, and solicit input to improve continuously. Implementing these practical insights can create a flexible work environment that values and motivates individuals, leading to organizational success.

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