CHAPTER 6

WOMEN AND FLEXITIME

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6.0 INTRODUCTION ABOUT FLEXIBILITY

Trends of working hours now shows that flexible work arrangements that allow employees to have working hours that fluctuate compare to the working hours of eight hours a day, more and more popular with the development of technology such as the internet, video conferencing, and most recently through ‘cloud-computing’. At present also, it can be seen that the individual requires more balance between work and life at the same time they have more time to take care of their families. Therefore, they require more independent work arrangements to meet the needs of work and their daily lives. Traditionally working time where the time work began at nine to five job is increasingly not required (Manpower, 2010).

In developed countries, the trend for flexible working is increasingly accepted by society even more so with the progress and efficiency of information and communications technology (Star, 2011). According to a study conducted in the US found that 25 million people participate in the SOHO or Small Office Home Office ’, one form of flexible employment, in various sectors. Likewise, Canada (2.5 million); United Kingdom (2.2 million); Australia (778,000); and New Zealand (200 000). However, in Malaysia, the concept is still new (Star, 2011).

The most popular flexible working arrangements in the country is flexibility on working hours which is free to start and finish at the hour
set by the workers themselves, in accordance with the number of working hours per day that has been set. The second most popular flexibility in Malaysia is flexibility to work from home (Manpower, 2010).

According to Kamus Dewan Fourth Edition, the term connotes flexibility regarding the circumstances or nature, which can easily be changed or adjusted in accordance with the new situation. This means, flexible working arrangements refer to flexible working hours for individuals to be able to adapt it in order to be able to contribute its workforce (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011).

Flexibility can be divided into five, namely flexibility 'external numeric' flexibility 'internal numeric, functional flexibility, financial flexibility, and also the flexibility of location (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011; Reilly, 1998; and Possenriede & Plantenga, 2011). Flexibility 'external numeric', referring to the flexibility to set the number of workers drawn from the external labour market and by placing the workers in the system temporary (temporary worker) or contract, or by easing regulations and making layoffs. In other words, the easing of legal protection of labour allows employers to dismiss workers can take or keep them in line with the needs of the company.

The second is flexibility 'internal numeric or flexibility of working hours. According Selvaratnam & Yeng, (2011) it can be achieved through the flexibility provided by the employer in regulating the hours of employees in the organization. This includes the flexibility to put workers on a part-time, set the working time, work by shifts, flexibility approve leave such as maternity leave or childbirth, the flexibility in organizing working time and so on.

The flexibility of working or organizational flexibility is flexibility to move workers from one task to another in the organization and to adapt to technological changes, assignments and organizations policy (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011). In their study, adding that the financial flexibility or salary means the salary levels of employees varies. Salaries are the result of supply and demand of labor is determined by the department, the workload or performance of the employee. Flexibility location refers to the availability of employees to work outside of the normal place of employment such as working at home (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011).

However, this study focuses on flexibility 'internal numeric, or also known as the flexibility of working hours. This is so because, according to a study conducted online by The Edge Malaysia 'found
that 76% of respondents wanted flexible working time flexibility than other work. According to Noor Rahamah (2013), working time flexibility to adjust work schedules mean home to engage in full-time jobs. According to Ahmad Sufian (2002), time flexibility means how to use time-based work independently where employees are free to choose to do the work at any time as long as the assignment to be completed by the date and time specified. Types working time flexibility are shown in Table 6.1 below.

6.1 TYPES OF FLEXIBILITY

The table below shows the types of working time flexibility, which is divided into six type of flexibility which are flexibility in hour, part-time work, work at home, job sharing, working at job centres (telecentres) and work-based goals.

Table 6.1: Types of Flexibility (Source: Ahmad Sufian, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Flexibility</th>
<th>Characteristics of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexitime</td>
<td>Management for parents who have children in school and are responsible for sending children to school. They do not necessarily need to be in the office from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job</td>
<td>Most employees have a conflict between the obligations of work and life. This type of work is able to prevent workers from losing interest or are bound by the company and suitable for employees who have committed or have to take care of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working from home</td>
<td>Working at home has many advantages for workers who have the responsibility side. It's not working full-time but more on increased productivity. By way of effective work, the worker was able to make the job easier and less stressful. In addition, these workers must be equipped with the full support equipment such as computers, specific furniture and phone lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>Job sharing is 'part-time' job where an organization needs to apply this type of working in order to maintain the quality of work as a result of the loss of skilled labour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Type of Flexibility** | **Characteristics of Work**
---|---
Job centre (telecentres) | This type of work is able to provide the balance of life in which they are suitable for independent workers who serve customers in specific locations.

Work-based goals | This type of flexible working arrangement is more on the policy of 'family-friendly' where most of the employees will have leave, unpaid leave and emergency leave. Employees should only work when there is work for them. It provides benefits to workers and employers. In this way, the relationship between workers and employers will be deepened and thus helping to reduce the loss of skilled labour.

### 6.2 FLEXIBLE WORKING HOUR

According to the Fourth Edition of Kamus Dewan, the term flexibility regarding the circumstances or nature, which can be easily changed or adjusted according to the new situation. This means, flexible working arrangement refers to flexible working hours for an individual to be able to adapt it in order to contribute their service (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011).

According to Noor Rahamah (2013), flexible working hour is how an employee adjusting their personal task schedules to engage in full-time jobs. According to Ahmad Sufian (2002), time flexibility means working methods based on the use of freely where employees are free to choose to do the work at any time as long as the assignment to be completed by the date and time set.

The use of flexible working hours available to assist workers, especially mom to face their functions (Noor Rahamah, 2013). In fact, most organizations offering flexible working hours for employees since it provides advantages not only to employees but also to employers. (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). There are a lot of advantages especially to the employees as it can help to increase up to 60-89 percent job satisfaction (Thompson, 2008).

Flexible working time is a new method in which providing benefits to both employers and employees (Shagvaliyeva & Yazyanifard, 2014). Women are the ones who are often associated with flexible work time
due to their responsibilities and tasks at home and work (Hochschild, 1989).

Flexible working time is an alternative that can be provided by employers to women to ensure woman's professional workforce could be maintained. Following the women family responsibilities and duties they paid in the office, it is difficult for women to give their full commitment to the task. Thus, the flexible working time is the method that can be used to solve this problem. Through flexible working time, employees can choose an appropriate time working for them as long as they meet the stipulated working hours along with the daily core (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

Flexible working time method is capable of providing benefits to employers and employees. On behalf of employers or companies, flexible working time is running can improve employee productivity, while increasing the company's profits (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011; Syagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). On behalf of the employees, its use of flexible working methods has been shown to reduce employee absenteeism, reduce stress, reduce employee turnover and improve their job satisfaction levels (Thompson, 2008). It also can improve the control of autonomous workers because they have to organize their own work schedule (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

However, flexible working time method also has some drawbacks, namely a change in the work culture of the company, problems schedule and coordination, and difficulty to supervise (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

6.3 WOMEN AND FLEXITIME

Flexible working time is a new method in the work of the many benefits to both employers and employees (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Women are the ones who are often associated with flexible work time due to their responsibilities at home and work and also work (Hochschild, 1989).

Changes in the Malaysian economy in the 1970s that turned from agriculture to the industrial sector as well as increase the number of workers needed to drive the Malaysian economy. Female workers are not excluded in the labour force increased. According to Subramaniam, Overton, & Maniam (2015), the increase in female labour force is affected by two main factors, namely the increase of
household income (husband and wife), and also the number of female students in excess of male students at the university.

According to the Malaysia Labour Force Survey Report, 2013, the labour force participation rate of women in 2013 was 52.4% which is an increase of 2.9% compared to 2012. The labour force participation rate of women is different in each country vary, and typically is lower than participation male labour force. In South Korea, women's labour force participation is at the lowest level at the age of 25-29 years. It is different in 1990 where female labour force participation is at its lowest at the age of 20-24 years (Subramaniam et. al., 2015).

In Malaysia, women aged 25-34 years had the highest female labour force participation of 69.3 per cent in 2013, an increase of 2.1% compared to 2012. This suggests that the age range of 25 to 34 year age range who are productive in terms economic activity of 82.9% in 2012 and 83.8% in 2013 (Labour Force Survey Report, Malaysia, 2013).

According to the 2013/2014 Economic Report released by the Finance Ministry, the labour force participation of women in Malaysia is relatively low when compared with the level of development of the country, despite their higher enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary levels of education. In 2012, only 49.5 percent of women aged between 15- and 64-years old working or looking for work, lags far behind regional countries such as Thailand (70 percent), Singapore (58 percent) and Indonesia (52 percent) (Star, 2014).

The trend in most developed countries have found that the participation of women in the workforce through two peaks, that is when the women joined the workforce after graduation, and the second was after the expiry of child care for their children (BH, 2014; Subramaniam et al., 2015). The desire of women to return to work is also influenced by the support from the work itself (Utusan Online, 2014). Between the support options that can be provided by the employer is part-time, part-time, as well as working time flexibly.

According to a survey by online job site company, JobStreet.com found that as many as 64% of respondents said that their career interests of women workers in life changed after they have a baby. They are more focused on their lives, especially the responsibility of the family, child care, and so on.

Among the major factors that lead women to leave work is due to become full-time housewives and also to take care of their families (BH, 2014). Survey also found that 44% of female employees intend
to leave their careers after gaining the child. However, according to a survey questionnaire Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (Talent Corp) in 2012 found that as many as 93% of women who quit his job to work while re-evaluated.

The involvement of women in business and to contribute services to the country is not a small sacrifice. Many things need to be looked after by them to balance their lives in terms of family and career (Selvaratnam & Yeng, 2011). The high cost of living in urban areas is also forcing women to work in Malaysia to increase income (Fazirah Sharifah Syed Ahmad et. al, 2013)

Flexible working time method is capable of providing benefits to employers and employees. On behalf of the employer or any company, the offering of flexible working hour can improve employee productivity, while increasing the company's profits (Selvaratnam &Yeng, 2011; Syagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). However, due to difficulties in dividing time between work and home, the labor force participation of women decreased by 48 percent (Subramaniam et. al., 2015).

6.4 CONCLUSION

Flexible working is used increasingly by both employees and employers, on the one hand to address work-life balance demands, and on the other as a means to increase productivity. These distinct rationales have implications for our understanding of how gender and the gender dominance of the workplace may impact worker’s access to it. Recent European data show that once individual and company-level characteristics are taken into account, there were no clear gender differences in access. However, gender dominance in the workplace played a role in who has access to schedule control. Men working in mostly male-dominated jobs and sectors had limited access compared to men working in jobs and sectors where an equal number of men and women are represented. For women, working in male-dominated jobs and sectors was no worse than working in gender-neutral jobs and sectors. However, working in jobs and sectors where women were over represented decreased the likelihood of access to schedule control for both men and women. The ‘women work penalty’ for working in female-dominated jobs was stable across countries. Although ‘women work penalty’ in female-dominated sectors varied across countries, in none was access better than in sectors where both genders were equally represented.
REFERENCES

2013/2014 Economic Report


