

Scheduling Flexibility and Employee Health Outcomes: A Meta-Analytic Review

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Abstract : Scheduling flexibility is becoming an increasingly available option for employees struggling to balance their work and life responsibilities, allowing employees to coordinate work schedules with their additional roles. The goal of such opportunities is to help employees manage the demands they face across domains of life by allowing employees to work from home, design their own work hours, take time off when necessary, along with various other scheduling accommodations. Organizations are also turning to utilizing scheduling flexibility to facilitate employee health and wellbeing through the reduction of stress and maximization of efficiency. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effects of scheduling flexibility on employee health-related behaviors and outcomes through a synthesis of research. The current meta-analytic review of 19 samples within 16 studies with a total sample size of 20,707 employees examines the relationship between the degree of scheduling flexibility available to employees and the resulting health outcomes and exercise habits. The results demonstrate that reduced scheduling flexibility is associated with poorer health status, suggesting that schedule inflexibility can hinder employees' ability to maintain and support their health. These findings hold practical implications for developing work schedules to promote employee health and health-related behaviors, such as eating well and exercising. Additionally, there was a positive association between increased scheduling flexibility and engagement in exercise, suggesting that employees with more flexible schedules exercise more frequently than those with less flexible schedules. A potential explanation for the resulting relationship is that flexible schedules leave employees more time due to shorter work days, shorter or eliminated commutes, etc. with which they can use to engage in healthy behaviors. These findings stress the importance of promoting job designs that facilitate employee engagement in healthy behaviors, which directly impact their overall health status. Implications for practice are discussed as well as future directions in examining the link between job design and employee health and well-being.

Keywords : exercise, health, meta-analysis, job design, scheduling flexibility

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