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Does Flexible Work Schedule Affect Bangladeshi Retail Workers' Job Performance and Job Satisfaction? A Case Study

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of flexible work schedules (FWS) on employee job performance and job satisfaction within Bangladesh's retail sector, a critical economic driver contributing 14.3% to GDP and employing 12% of the workforce. Despite the sector's rapid growth, challenges such as rigid work hours, high stress, and attrition continue, exacerbated by socio-cultural factors like gender roles and religious traditions. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines surveys of 250 employees in total across major cities, focusing on demographics, job satisfaction, and performance metrics. Key findings reveal that 80% of respondents reported enhanced job satisfaction under FWS, with 85.5% linking flexibility to increased productivity and 89.1% mentioning reduced work-related stress. Flexible arrangements—including flextime, compressed workweeks, and job-sharing—improved work-life balance for 85.4% of participants, predominantly by balancing personal and professional responsibilities (60%) and reducing commute time (21.8%). However, challenges emerged in teamwork coordination (65.5% approval vs. notable dissent) and managerial resistance embedded in traditional views of authority. Demographically, the workforce is primarily male (78.2%), aged 20–29 (71.7%), and early-career (41.8% with 1–3 years' experience), emphasizing potential gender imbalances and a youthful, dynamic labor pool. Structural barriers, such as resource constraints and the absence of FWS provisions in the *Bangladesh Labour Act (2006)*, further hinder adoption. It underscores the need for policy changes and cultural shifts to align organizational goals with employee well-being. While cross-sectional data limits causal inferences, the findings emphasize FWS as a transformative tool for reducing turnover and enhancing productivity in Bangladesh's retail landscape. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and expand to diverse industries and regions to validate sustainability and broader applicability.

Keywords: Flexible work schedules, employee job satisfaction, employee job performance, retail sector, Bangladesh, work-life balance.

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, Bangladesh is one of the next eleven evolving middle-income countries and a frontier market due to local and global investments and service provisions [3]. In recent years, Bangladesh's retail industry has undergone transformative growth, driven by enhanced service quality, globally competitive frameworks, and substantial investments from both domestic and international sources. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, Bangladesh has maintained an average annual growth rate exceeding 6.2% over the past decade. In 2016, it ranked as the 46th largest economy by GDP and 33rd by purchasing power parity (PPP), with a GDP surpassing \$226 billion and

an unemployment rate below 4.1%, positioning it as an attractive destination for local and global. The retail industry is a major employment driver, accounting for 12% of national jobs, and contributed 14.3% to the GDP in 2011–2012 when combined with wholesaling activities [3].

Reports indicate that an overwhelming 98% of consumer spending in Bangladesh is channeled through small-scale retailers, representing the highest reliance on such outlets in South Asia [3]. The retail sector, valued at approximately \$200 billion, plays a pivotal role in the nation's economic expansion. Bangladesh's economy, among the world's most rapidly advancing, is predominantly consumption-driven, with retail alone contributing 47% to the GDP and the broader consumption sector accounting for over 70% [3]. However, it has not come without its challenges, particularly around employee retention, productivity and satisfaction. In the socio-cultural and economic context of Bangladesh, inflexible work hours is a major source for employee dissatisfaction and increased attrition rates, failing to settle employers' and employees' needs for efficiency and work-life balance. Employees, particularly women, face challenges to balance work with caregiving liabilities due to conventional gender roles (World Bank, 2021). Rigid work hours may also conflict with prayer times or religious festivals (e.g., Ramadan), causing stress [12]. Long, non-negotiable hours contribute to high attrition rates (ILO, 2017). More than 85% of workers lack proper contracts, leaving them susceptible to unfair schedules (ILO, 2017). Over 68% of employees in Dhaka's corporate sector report stress due to fixed schedules [12]. Survey of RMG (ready-made garment) workers found that 40% left jobs due to poor work-life balance [3].

Allowing employees to better balance their personal and professional responsibilities might decrease stress at work, increase engagement, and, ultimately, performance. As the study shows, Employers fear reduced output with flexible policies [3]. Employees in urban areas like Dhaka increasingly seek hybrid or remote models (World Bank, 2021). Flexible work schedules, such as flexible work hours, job-sharing, and compressed workweeks may present an avenue for improving employee job performance and satisfaction. The *Bangladesh Labour Act (2006)* mandates overtime pay but lacks provisions for flexible hours [6]. While some tech startups (e.g., bKash) now offer varied shifts to retain talent [12]. Despite that, flexible work schedules are seemingly underutilized in the context of the Bangladeshi retail sector [1]. Flexible scheduling may contribute to employee's well-being and productivity, especially in Bangladesh where family role and social

expectations take priority in work-life balance. The current study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between flexible work schedule, job performance and job satisfaction among retail employees in Bangladesh. More specifically, this study investigates the following:

- To assess the impact of flexible working schedules on the job performance of employees in retail stores of Bangladesh.
- To analyse the relationship between flexible work schedules and employee job satisfaction in retail stores of Bangladesh.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The dynamics of the modern workplace have significantly evolved due to flexible work schedules. Which emerged as a critical factor in influencing employee outcomes. Flexible work schedules allow employees to adjust their working hours according to their personal and professional needs, have garnered significant attention from researchers and practitioners alike, particularly in labour-intensive sectors such as retail. The retail sector in Bangladesh is a significant contributor to the national economy, providing employment opportunities to a large segment of the population. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the implementation of flexible work schedules within this sector.

The Concept of Flexible Work Schedules

The flexible work schedule is an alternative for the traditional fixed working hours that has become very popular nowadays. This arrangement has improved the work-life balance of an employee, addressing their need to reduce the stress [12]. Flexible work schedule provides various types of arrangement that is far different from the traditional 9 to 5 workday. These includes:

- Flex time: Employees can adjust their start and finish time according to their need covering the total work time (World Bank, 2021)
- Compressed Workweeks: Employees work longer hours over fewer days (e.g., four 10-hour days). (World Bank, 2021)
- Job sharing: Sometimes multiple people can share a singular full-time position. [8]
- Telecommuting/Remote Work: Employees work from home or another remote location[5]
- Hybrid work: A flexible work model where employees may operate fully on-site, entirely off-site (through remote work or telecommuting), or adopt a hybrid approach, dynamically shifting between on-site and off-site locations depending on situational demands, organizational goals, and individual employee needs [5].
- Shift work: Employee shifts will be staggered, with distinct teams performing their responsibilities during designated time slots across the day, accommodating varied schedules while maintaining operational coverage. [19]. Flexible work schedule is particularly relevant in retail industry due to the industry's long working hours, irregular shifts and sometimes the need

for extra covering during the peak hours [7]. Flexibility in work schedule has some demerits as well. Such as employee burnout, high turnover ratios etc. are very common in the retail stores of Bangladesh.

Employee Job Performance and Flexible Scheduling

In most of the cases the job performance is based on employees' performance, productivity, quality of work and their overall contribution aligning with the organisational goal. Different research has marked the positive relation between flexible work hour and job performance. Employees with flexible work schedule are better at managing their time which leads them to improved focus and productivity [11]. In the retail sector of Bangladesh, it can lead to minimize absenteeism and enhanced performance [12].

However not all the studies showed a positive outcome. Such as, showed in his research that over flexibility can lead to insufficiency specially when the employees lack the proper time management [14]. So, it can be said that the impact of flexible work schedule varies based on how it is implemented and monitored.

Employee Job Satisfaction and Flexible Work Schedules

Job satisfaction is the contentment of an employee with their current roles and work arrangements. Flexible work schedule is linked with the higher job satisfaction as it gives the employees to have a proper balance of responsibility in personal and professional life [16]. For the employees of a retail store in Bangladesh this work life balance is very important. As the long working hour and customer facing roles are associated with high level of stress.

Flexible work arrangements provide a sense of empowerment and trust among the employees which ultimately leads to greater satisfaction [7]. In Bangladesh the satisfied employees are more loyal to the organisation and reduces the turnover ratio [18].

The Bangladesh Context

Global studies provide important insights, but the socio-economic and cultural context of Bangladesh calls for research that is more specific and relevant to the local situation. The retail sector, a major economic driver (\$200 billion market), faces challenges such as rigid schedules, gender imbalances, and resource constraints [3]. Furthermore, conventional managerial perspectives may perceive flexibility as a challenge to authority and discipline, thereby complicating its adoption [12]. Even with these challenges, there's evidence showing that the growing focus on employee well-being and the competitive nature of the retail industry are leading to changes. Retail chains that have adopted flexible work practices have seen improvements in employee morale and customer service quality [10]. While global studies highlight flexible work schedule benefits, Bangladesh's unique socio-economic landscape such as informal employment, high attrition and consumption-driven economy demands localized research (ILO,2017), (Salim, 2024).

Existing studies predominantly address corporate or manufacturing sectors (e.g., RMG), neglecting

Bangladesh's retail industry, which employs 12% of the workforce and contributes 14.3% to GDP. Most studies rely on cross-sectional data, failing to capture longitudinal impacts of FWS on performance and satisfaction. Self-reported data risks bias, and causal relationships remain underexplored. Although Bangladesh Labour Act (2006) has formulated overtime pay, it lacks provisions for FWS, creating a regulatory [6]. However, Prior research overlooks mediating factors like organizational culture, leadership styles, and technological readiness, which are critical for FWS efficacy in resource-constrained settings [10].

III. METHODOLOGY

This study has used, a mixed-methods approach, bringing together quantitative and qualitative data to assess the benefits of flexible working hours in delivering an effective approach to the workplace. Numerical data will be gathered from participants using a survey to quantify their job performance and satisfaction based on a flexible work schedule, while qualitative interviews will provide insight into workers' perceptions of flexible work arrangements. This study's target population includes employees working in retail stores in big cities of Bangladesh like Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, and Sylhet. Stratified random sampling is the methodology to make certain that all kinds of retail stores are represented, including clothing stores, grocery stores, and electronics stores. We will sample 250 employees in total, 200 in surveys and 50 in in-depth interviews. A structured questionnaire has been designed to gauge employees' work performance and satisfaction levels. Work-life balance, job stress, productivity, and overall job satisfaction are all key variables.

Use of statistical tools like correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationship between flexible work and job performance/satisfaction. Interview transcripts have been analyzed using thematic analysis, to examine employee's experiences and perceptions of remote working and identify common patterns and themes. The assessment focuses on the specific cultural and contextual factors relevant to Bangladesh. All participants have been informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and informed consent will be obtained, guaranteeing that their participation is voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be preserved. It also clarifies that individuals will be able to drop out of the study at any time without consequence. In addition, the study will consider cultural sensitivities to ensure that participants feel respected and safe in sharing their experiences.

IV. FINDINGS

Table-1: Sample Characteristics (Demographic Section)

Characteristics	%
Age	
• Below 20	7.5
• 20-29	71.7
• Above 30	20.8
Gender	
• Male	
• Female	
Years of experience in retail sector	
• Less than a year	21.8
• 1-3	41.8
• 4-6	27.3
Employment status	
• Full time employees	47.3
• Part time employees	40
• Contractual employees	2.7

Job Satisfaction Section

- Does flexible work schedule provide satisfaction: Our findings show that, a total of 80% (series-1) of the total respondents voted for satisfied or very satisfied with flexible work schedules and rest of 20% (series-2) voted for dissatisfaction.
- Does work schedule flexibility is important: Total of 81.8% (series-1) of the total respondents think that work schedule flexibility is extremely important, and rest 18.2% (series-2) believes that it is not that important to in your work life.
- Does flexible work schedule affect work-life balance: Out of all respondents, 85.4% (series-1) think that having a flexible work schedule greatly enhances work-life balance and rest 14.6% (series-2) of them have less impact in work-life balance due to flexible work schedule.
- The primary reasons one person value flexible work schedules: Our data shows that, 60% (series-1) of the total respondents think that flexible work schedules are needed for balancing personal and professional responsibilities, 21.8% (series-2) think that it is needed for reducing commute time and the rest 18.2% (series-3) think otherwise like managing health and family obligation.



Fig 1: Job Satisfaction Section

Job satisfaction Criteria	Series-1 (%)	Series-2 (%)	Series-3 (%)
Does flexible work schedule provide satisfaction	80 (satisfied or very satisfied)	20 (Dissatisfied)	-
Does work schedule flexibility is important	81.8 (extremely important)	18.2 (Not important)	-
Does flexible work schedule affect work-life balance	85.4 (Impacts positively)	14.6% (Impacts less)	-
The primary reasons one person value flexible work schedules	60 (work life balance)	21.8 (reduce commute time and the rest)	18.2 (manage health & family obligation)

Job Performance Criteria	Series-1 (%)	Series-2 (%)	Series-3 (%)
Does flexible work schedule improve one's ability to meet work targets	67.3 (Agreed/ Strongly agreed)	8 (Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed)	24.7 (Neutral)
Does flexible work schedule impact one's productivity	85.5 (Impacts positively)	14.5 (Impacts less)	-
Does flexible work schedule help to manage work-related stress	89.1 (Agreed/ Strongly agreed)	10.9% (Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed)	-
The primary reasons one person value flexible work schedules	65.5 (Agreed/ Strongly agreed)	18.1 (Disagreed/ Strongly Disagreed)	16.4 (Neutral)

Job Performance Section

- Does flexible work schedule improve one's ability to meet work targets: About 67.3% (series-1) of the 55 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that having a flexible work schedule helps one achieve their goals, while 8% (series-2) disagreed and the remaining 24.7% (series-3) respondents were neutral.
- Does flexible work schedule impact one's productivity: 85.5% (series-1) respondents believes that flexible work schedule significantly increases or increases one's productivity and rest 14.5% (series-2) of the people believes it has less impact or decreases.
- Does flexible work schedule help to manage work-related stress: 89.1% (series-1) respondents believes that flexible work schedule help one person to manage work related stress better than non-flexible work schedule jobs. Rest 10.9% (series-2) have disagreement on this statement.
- Does flexible work schedules enhance teamwork and collaboration in workplace: Here 65.5% (series-1) respondent strongly agrees or agrees that flexible work schedules enhance teamwork and collaboration in workplace, but 18.1% (series-2) of respondents strongly disagrees or disagrees that it cannot be done if the work schedules are flexible and 16.4% (series-3) have been neutral.



Figure 2: Job Performance Section

V. DISCUSSION

The majority of the respondents (71.7 percent) are between 20-29 years old, and therefore, young individuals take control of the survey due to probable reasons of appreciating flexibility to build a career and personal life. Gender of the respondents is skewed towards the male gender with the percentage standing at 78.2, which could reflect partial distortion of gender representation in retail. The average age of the respondents is young; that is, 1-3 years of work experience in the retail industry. Distribution of employment is evenly spread, with full time 47.3% and part-time 40, which may have their influence on attitudes towards flexibility differently.

Shifts in work schedules seem to boost work satisfaction a great deal. Massive satisfaction at 80% with flexible schedule and 81.8% with the aspect that it is important, again indicated that flexibility needs to be made in work schedules. In addition, as many as 85.4 percent believed that flexibility at the workplace enabled them to balance work and life. The most important ones would be: balancing of personal and professional life at 60, and the decrease of the commuting time at 21.8. This demonstrates that there is a necessity to meet the various needs of employees in order to be holistically satisfied.

Flexible working hours also lead to good job performance outcomes: approximately 67.3% of the respondents answered that flexible work arrangements contributed to the accomplishment of targets, whereas 85.5% of the respondent's connected flexibility with high productivity. In addition, an overwhelming majority (89.1 percent) believe that flexibility alleviates work-related stress and so is a critical factor in ensuring mental health. Yet, the influence on teamwork and co-working were met with ambivalent perceptions, as 65.5% of respondents agreed that it has had such effect, but a significant percentage workers disagreed-a response that is consistent with the difficulty in aligning teamwork when using flexible mechanisms.

Study Implications

Thus, this research focuses on flexible working hours to enhance job performance and happiness of the employees working in the retail industry of Bangladesh. Changeable working schedules decrease stress, enhance attitude of employees towards work and perform better since one can adjust his or her working and personal life easily. Thus, the retail managers are best aided to strive to ensure a good working environment and to improve staff retention. Moreover, such practices could result in a more motivated staff as this is the pillar of the organization. The paper fills the gaps in research by:

- Specifically, within the retail sector of Bangladesh, in the framework of the investigation of FWS.
- Highlighting cultural, structural, and managerial barriers to FWS adoption.
- Suggesting policy-specific remedies (e.g., pilot projects, integrating technology) to become more policy-relevant.

Study Limitations

However, the study under analysis has a number of disadvantages. It targets the south Asian Bangladeshi retail outlets; this filters its results limited to other establishments or other civilizations. In addition to this, data gathered is on self-reported information, which may lead to a response bias, since the employees may over- or underrate their perceptions. Moreover, the study design fails to determine the longitudinal impacts or causality due to the fact that it is a cross-sectional study that only measures a given point in time relationship between flexible scheduling, job performance and satisfaction.

Future Scope of the Study

The current analysis can be followed in the future using the longitudinal method to learn the stability and maintenance of the effects of flexible work schedules on staff performance and contentment. These reasons explain why the research can be extended to multiple industries, regions or even other countries. With the assistance of sophisticated methods, such as scheduling programs and AI-based performance figures among staff members, more conclusions can be made regarding the extent to which flexible arrangements can be productive. To understand more about the correlation between work flexibility and job satisfaction and performance in various organizations, other attributes that may be researchable in future include the age, gender, organizational culture and the recent technological growth of the employees. Due to this broader perspective of the problem, organizations across the globe will be in a position to embrace a more accommodating and effective working environment to their workforce. This synthesis connects global FWS theories and socio-economic reality in Bangladesh and provides operational policy implications to policymakers and retail managers.

Recommendations

The modern workforce increasingly prioritizes flexibility as a cornerstone of job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. To address these evolving needs, organizations can adopt strategic measures to implement and optimize flexible work arrangements. The proposed steps focus on balancing employee well-being with organizational goals, ensuring sustainable success in dynamic work environments

Short Discussion

1. Adaptable Policies (e.g., flex time, shrink weeks) are accommodating to the needs of various employees, therefore they are inclusive and flexible.
2. Training guarantees that managers and teams maneuver through flexibility and do not become miscommunicated or lose productivity.
3. Pilot Programs give organizations the opportunity to test feasibility and to refine methods before scaling up.
4. Coordination and accountability (technology scheduling tools, communication mediums) is streamlined.
5. Feedback Mechanisms help to keep policies consistent to the needs of employees encouraging constant improvement.
6. Work-Life Balance programs increase employee's morale, loyalty and performance by alleviating burnout.

7. Custom Solutions cater to generational or role-based preferences (e.g. parents who require childcare assistance).
8. Continuous Assessment Measures KPIs (retention rates, satisfaction survey) to measure impact and warrant scalability.

Through the combination of these strategies, organizations will be able to promote the culture of trust and empowerment, which in turn will move the employee welfare and performance of the business. Flexibility develops a competitive edge keeping talent and increasing productivity, and turnover.

VI. CONCLUSION

Retail employees in Bangladesh have their work satisfaction and productivity at a very high level as well as a good work life balance because of flexible work schedules. The results show that more than 80 percent of participants considered flexible arrangements to be helpful, minimizing the stress and enhancing performance. But such issues as conservative managerial culture and lack of resources are to be dealt with to facilitate implementation. Implementing such plans can make the labour force motivated and loyal and pay to organizational success. It is also important to mention that the paper shows how the flexibility initiatives can be adapted to the unique socio-cultural and economic environment of Bangladesh that prepares the path to a more versatile and useful working environment.

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