



# Flexible Working Hours and Job Satisfaction in Females

**Nazmiye ARDUÇ**

Phd Clinical Psychology, Bahçeřehir University,  
[nazmiye.arduc@ou.bau.edu.tr](mailto:nazmiye.arduc@ou.bau.edu.tr), ORCID: 0009-0009-2734-9214

**Elif Berfin BEYHAN**

Clinical Psychology Graduate Student, İstanbul Okan University  
[psikologelifbeyhan@gmail.com](mailto:psikologelifbeyhan@gmail.com), ORCID: 0009-0009-0761-4412

## Abstract

To examine the concepts of job satisfaction among females and the impact of working arrangements, this review examines five research articles from different countries. The cultural variations in women's job satisfaction according to their working hours were addressed in research done in different nations. This review claims that gender difference in job satisfaction is present and the impact of working arrangements like flexible hours has an impact on job satisfaction especially in females. Also, flexible working arrangements, such as homeworking, working part-time, flexitime, job-sharing, compressed hours, and term-time, were identified for the study. Moreover, it is suggested that the findings reported as a result of the data of different samples obtained from different countries, even if flexible working hours mean the same concept across countries, whether the effects of conditions and women on them have changed in future studies. Depending on the results of these articles, different directions in the issue were found. In this review paper, the discussion and implications based on whether gender may have an impact on the relationship between flexible working hours and job satisfaction will be covered.

**Keywords:** *Flexible Working Hours, Gender, Job Satisfaction, Working Arrangements.*

## **Kadınlarda Esnek Çalışma Saatleri ve İş Doyumu**

### **Özet**

Çalışma kapsamında bu derlemede, esnek çalışma saatlerinin kadınlar üzerindeki iş doyum etkisini, farklı ülkelerden beş araştırma makalesini ele alarak incelemektedir. Farklı ülkelerde yapılan araştırmalarda, kadınların, çalışma saatlerine göre iş doyum etkisinin kültürel farklılıkları ele alınmıştır. Bu incelemede, iş doyumunda cinsiyet farklılıklarının açığa çıktığı ve özellikle kadınlarda esnek çalışma saatlerinin iş doyumunda etkili olduğu öne sürülmektedir. Ayrıca çalışma için evden, yarı zamanlı, iş paylaşımli, sıkıştırılmış saatli, dönem bazlı ve esnek saatli çalışma gibi olanak ve seçenekler belirlenmiştir. Farklı ülkelerden elde edilen farklı örneklem verileri sonucunda ortaya konulan bulgulara göre esnek çalışma saatleri ülkeler arasında aynı kavramı ifade etse de esnek çalışma koşulları ve kadınların iş doyumları arasındaki ilişkinin ileriki çalışmalarda araştırılması önerilmektedir. Bu makalelerin sonuçlarına bağlı olarak, araştırma bağlamında ele alınan konunun yönleri de açığa çıkmıştır. Bu derlemede, cinsiyetin esnek çalışma saatleri ile iş doyumları arasındaki ilişki üzerinde bir etkisinin olup olmayacağına dayalı tartışma ve çıkarımlar ele alınacaktır.

**Keywords:** *Esnek Çalışma Saatleri, Cinsiyet, İş Doyumu, Çalışma Düzeni.*

### **Flexible Working Hours and Job Satisfaction in Females**

Along with the increasing numbers of females employed in private and public sector, it is noticeable that it has become important what elements influence their job satisfaction. Thus, it is important to tell various studies have been carried out to examine these elements in the field of industrial and organizational psychology. These elements can be job-related or individual-related.

Shallal (2011) has aimed at examining the elements affecting job satisfaction in females in the United Arab Emirates. For the research, 1272 female workers attended and completed the survey across the United Arab Emirates. Regarding the age, education, and income variables, also the same study reported that age is a significant factor influencing job satisfaction in females. Moreover, those who get higher income are found highly satisfied compared to those who get less income. Finally, Shallal (2011) also stated that those with higher levels of education are more

satisfied with their jobs. It can be claimed that several variables might influence job satisfaction in females, age, income, and education.

Other variables were questioned as well. For example, in India, et al., (2014) carried out a comparative study examining women in banking and education sectors in terms of work life balance and job satisfaction. According to the findings of study, elements defining job satisfaction are likely to contribute women hold work-life balance. In this research, the elements defining job satisfaction were mentioned as colleagues giving support to the employee, supportive working conditions, work challenging the employee mentally, equitable rewards and employee-oriented policies and so on (Yadav, Dabhabe, 2014). From this point of view, it can be claimed that, as well as age and education, which are elements more related to the individual, job-related elements like working conditions take stage and it was showed that they are likely to influence job satisfaction (Yadav, Dabhabe, 2014).

Other studies also added more elements to this perspective. Zou (2015) questioned work orientations and job aspects like secure job, good pay, friendly people at work and decided that they are influencing job satisfaction, as well. According to Zou (2015), convenient hours of work and choice in the hours of work are also influencing job satisfaction. Furthermore, Bushra (2012) emphasized that flexible working hours are also influencing job satisfaction and turnover intentions among females.

This review has the goal to examine the gender difference in job satisfaction and the impact of working arrangements like flexible hours on job satisfaction especially in females. Through research articles about job satisfaction among females and the flexible hours, this review will investigate on five research articles from different countries.

### **A Review on Flexible Hours and Women's Job Satisfaction**

In this part, articles presenting the relationship between such work-related features as flexible hours and gender differences in job satisfaction are reviewed.

In Pakistan, Bushra (2012) had the goal to investigate turnover intentions and job satisfaction in females working at public universities. However, from a broader perspective, it is examined several variables from job satisfaction to job characteristics and so on. Bushra (2012) chose a sample who are females in two universities and employed 50 questionnaires, surveys, and inventories in total. Depending on the related study' results found that flexible working hours has determined job satisfaction of females in two universities. In addition to this, it is reported that workplace location, performance appraisal and skills utilization increase the levels of job satisfaction in females and eventually they decrease the intensity of turnover intentions. Moreover, it was found that when they are less able to work independently, it demotivates them and increase their intention to leave the job (Bushra, 2012).

In the United Kingdom, Wheatley (2017) carried out a study examining the influence of flexible working arrangements on several variables and has the goal to offer an understanding toward the gendered nature of flexible employment. For the study, flexible working arrangements were determined, which are regarded as homeworking, working part-time, flexitime, job-share, compressed hours and term-time (Wheatley, 2017). Eventually, Wheatley (2017) suggested that flexible working result in gender related differences in job satisfaction and make us remember that gendered nature of employment is present. Results showed that flexible working arrangements like homeworking had a positive influence on job satisfaction of both females and males (Wheatley, 2017). Moreover, part-time working and homeworking are much preferred by men and along with flexitime, they have a positive influence on men's satisfaction (Wheatley, 2017). For females, Wheatley (2017) suggested that they are more restricted regarding their use of flexible working arrangements. Accordingly, it was claimed that some women are negatively affected by flexible working arrangements, especially their job satisfaction was negatively influenced when they work part-time during an extended period of time and flexitime.

In one article, Zou (2015) examined work orientations and gender differences. The data was obtained by 2006 Skills Survey in the United Kingdom. It is reported that there is a gender difference regarding job satisfaction. With no regard to working full-time or part-time, females were found more satisfied with their jobs than males. Another result is that work orientations are related to individuals' satisfaction with their jobs and the intensity of the satisfaction is likely to change depending on the individual. Finally, Zou (2015) stated that if work orientations were

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adapted and changed depending on the individuals, gender difference was not an issue influencing job satisfaction. In this article, many work orientation elements were mentioned, and further studies might follow a way in which variables are more homogenous or specific variables are examined like convenient hours and flexible working hours and so on.

Origo and Pagani (2008) had the goal to investigate empirically if flexible work arrangements influence some measures related to job satisfaction differently in European samples. For this, they included employed and self-employed individuals over 15 across Europe in the study. They examined flexibility in quantitative and functional levels and examined extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction in line with features of the employees like age, gender, skill and resident country. Mainly, it is found that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and functional flexibility while there was a little negative influence of quantitative flexibility on job satisfaction. In this sense, they also found that age, skill and country of residence have an influence on job satisfaction, but it was found that there is no impact of flexible working on job satisfaction regarding gender (Origo, Pagani, 2008).

Bowen et al. (2008) carried out research through web-based survey in South Africa and questioned if demographic factors, choice of career, harassment, and discrimination at workplace influence job satisfaction in quantity surveyors. In the study, sample included 144 respondents with a great majority of males who constituted 84 percent of total sample. Findings showed that personal satisfaction while doing the work, low degree of supervision, higher levels of participating in decision-making processes, challenging and creative work and obtaining recognition for the work they have done are main elements influencing job satisfaction. Moreover, regarding job satisfaction, gender difference was not found, however, it was found that females regard flexible working hours as more important, and they reported they are more likely to have flexible working hours. Additionally, Bowen et al. (2008) reported that females are more likely to see their occupation as male-dominated and specifically in cases of lacking flexible working hours and negative attitudes toward maternity leave.

## **Discussion**

In this review, the goal was to examine the gender difference in job satisfaction and the impact of working arrangements like flexible hours on job satisfaction especially in females. Several articles were reviewed and decided that studies on different samples with different methodological designs reported diverse results. For example, in the study by Bushra (2012), it was found that flexible working hours have a positive impact on job satisfaction in females. In another study, Origo and Pagani (2008) claimed that there is no significant gender difference in job satisfaction regarding the impact of flexible working hours. Thus, it can be claimed that there is no consensus on the impact of flexible working hours on job satisfaction in females even if there are many findings which are contradictory or parallel to each other. Moreover, in another study, differences in job satisfaction of women were examined in the context of working arrangements. Wheatley (2017) stated that there is a possible negative impact on females' job satisfaction because females are more constrained regarding flexible hours along with different variables. It can be claimed that the reason for negative impact can be a result of feeling of constraints resulted from assigned gender roles. This is showing the reasons more than showing the differences because the context was more about working arrangements than it was about gender issues.

On the other hand, the research and articles presented in this review were done across many countries. The countries include several ones across Europe, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and South Africa. Through different samples from different occupations and different countries, it can be claimed that the findings would have been generalized. However, it proved that findings reported through data of different samples from different countries made us question if the conditions and their impact on females might vary even if flexible working hours mean the same concept across the nations. In Pakistan, it was found that flexible hours have determined job satisfaction in females while it had not determined job satisfaction in females in the United Kingdom. This can be a result of gender approach and culture differences in these countries. The United Kingdom is more individualistic culture with a developed nature, and gender gap in many areas does not appear while Pakistan has a more collectivistic culture and underdeveloped nature, and women were more assigned to gender roles.

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Some studies were examining different satisfaction factors, and some were different working arrangements. For example, Origo and Pagani (2008) separated job satisfaction into two different concepts while others directly examined job satisfaction as a whole. Furthermore, Wheatley (2017) examined different specific flexible working arrangements from part-time to homeworking and so on, while other did not take into account these differences. Like Wheatley (2017), in the study by Zou (2015), working orientations were varying. Also, Scandura and Lankau (1997) investigated the relation between flexible work hours and job satisfaction in their study. The goal of this study is to maintain the greatest possible family-work balance and to maximize to employee efficiency and satisfaction. According to the findings of the study, female managers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction differ depending on whether they have flexible work hours. As a result, Female managers who work flexible hours are more satisfied with their jobs than female managers who do not. Additional to working hours, different concepts like good pay and so on were added, which created a heterogeneity in the independent variables in the study, which might result in ambiguous results despite the results were significant.

The studies presented above had different samples regarding gender. While some examined only females, some other examined females and males and compared the results depending on the gender. For example, one study by Bowen et al. (2008) compared samples from both genders. Bushra (2012) did not compare two groups, included only female academicians in universities and aimed to examine this group. This might create statistical differences which result in changes in findings. Furthermore, some studies even changed the proportion of the samples from different genders, which also might result in changes in results.

In the study by Bowen et al. (2008), 84 per cent of the sample were males. Significant difference between genders in job satisfaction resulted from flexible hours was not found in the study by Bowen et al. (2008). If more females were included in the study, different results would have been obtained. In this study, the male dominance was also pronounced repeatedly, which needs more attention to investigate.

## **Conclusion**

As a result of the review, it can be said that different results which are contradictory were found in many articles across the world. The main limitation in this review is not to conceptualize working arrangements and narrowing the concept into flexible working hours. There was no specific definition of flexible working hours. The intention was more like examining the issue by referring to flexible working arrangements, which is a broad topic. Studies were not numerous regarding the impact of flexible working hours on job satisfaction in females. By including local research on the gender-related job satisfaction issue, this review could have been offering more data for local researchers.

For further studies, it can be claimed that cross-cultural study with the same measurement materials and procedures can be recommended. For example, using samples from more individualistic countries like European countries and using samples from more collectivistic countries like Japan, these studies can be carried out with the same measurement materials and procedures. By this, at least a homogeneous content and design are possible to be held. Moreover, participants from different occupations with similar features can be included in these studies because homogeneous samples might give more genuine results.

On the other hand, gender is a delicate issue to examine. In all studies presented here, gender was not questioned, and they assumed gender is a basic concept. By going deeper in the issue, by re-conceptualizing gender definitions, different perspectives can be offered, and several studies can be conducted by allowing better working arrangements for women. In the current conjuncture, it can be claimed that gender has different meanings and gender studies have been more integrated into diverse disciplines in academy.



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