

# Impact of Work Environment and Workplace Flexibility on Academicians' Well-being

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the impact of work environment and workplace flexibility on the well-being of academicians of private universities in Bangladesh. Using simple random sampling, a survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire and gathered 200 data. SPSS 22.0 was used for analyzing the data. The findings revealed that both the variables (work environment and workplace flexibility) have significant impact on academicians' well-being. The findings of the study might be beneficial for all concerned in taking appropriate decisions regarding work environment and workplace flexibility to ensure the well-being of academicians in Bangladesh. As the study is mostly based on academicians, it might be expanded to include other groups of people and/or a larger sample size. Furthermore, further research is needed to determine the impact of other new variables that may have an impact on employee well-being. There is also the possibility of performing more research in different geographical areas.

**Keywords:** Work Environment, Workplace Flexibility, Academicians, Well-being.

## 1. Introduction

Well-being has become one of the greatest challenges to societies in these days (Dóra et al., 2019). Workplace plays a major role in this regard as people devote a large portion of their time at work (Aamondt, 2015). Today, there has been a great deal of concern over the employees' well-being at work (Noblet et al., 2008). However, employee behavior in organizations is impacted by various organizational

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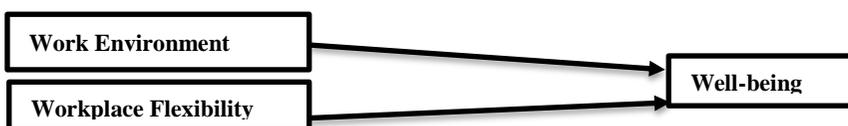
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characteristics including work environment and workplace flexibility (Rahman et al, 2021; Berberoglu, 2018). Both work environment and workplace flexibility have important outcomes at individual as well as organizational levels (Rahman et al, 2017; Ghanbari & Eskandari, 2016). According to Viitala et al. (2015), the influence of work environment and workplace flexibility is very strong on the well-being of workers. Many prior studies found, work environment and workplace flexibility significantly affects employees' mood, attitude and behavior (Rahman et al, 2019; Abdul Karim, 2013). Suitable physical and social environment along with satisfactory working conditions plays crucial role in securing good health, promoting positive attitudes towards life and thus, ensuring well-being at workplace (Rožman & Štrukelj, 2021; Lamb & Kwok, 2016). Thus, work environment and workplace flexibility are positively related with employee commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, work engagement, productivity as well as organizational effectiveness (Rahman et al, 2020; Albrecht et al., 2018; Castro and Martins, 2010). Promoting health and well-being is a common aspect in most professions (Rožman et al., 2019), however, it is closely associated with the teaching because teaching is viewed as the most stressful profession. Moreover, the work of academicians in universities has changed to a great extent in recent years (Anjum & Ghose, 2019). Changes in the educational policies and status of higher education have increased the pressure of academicians especially in the context of private universities. The working conditions and organizational culture at different universities are becoming similar to other occupations. Consequently, academicians in private universities are facing job insecurity, lack of career growth opportunities and lack of workplace flexibility (Rahman et al, 2018). Besides these, other issues that have arisen in this profession are work-life imbalance, lack of support from management and colleagues, less control over job, pressure to publish large volume of research papers etc. Given the increasing work demands, academicians are experiencing higher level stress which in turn affecting their well-being at work (Cownie, 2011). So, ensuring academicians well-being at workplace has become a necessity of time which posing great challenges for educational institutions. Considering this, the current study focuses on investigating the impact of work environment and workplace flexibility on the well-being of private university academicians in Bangladesh.

### **Research Framework and Hypotheses Development based on Literature**



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

## **2. Relationship between Work Environment and Well-being**

The work environment is the surroundings of employees' where they operate. It includes the physical setting such as buildings, office temperature, working tools or equipment as well as the psychological aspects of how the work is organized (Anjum et al., 2021). As employees spend most of their time inside the office, the indoor environment directly influences their health, well-being, behavior and performance (Holcroft & Punnett, 2009). For example, the colors used in the workplace could influence the employees' mood and wellness as each colour has different effects on human body and mind. Unsuitable colours might be subject to negative psychological impacts such as stress, depression, dullness or boredom. Similarly, noise problem at work can affect employees' concentration which may cause stress related disorders (Kamaruzzaman & Zawawi, 2010). Office interior with living plants, well lighting, proper ventilation, windows views etc. can help workers to be less tired and have a restorative effect on their attention (Kamarulzaman et al., 2011). Unsatisfactory working condition leads to discomfort, depression and anxiety among the workers (Fabiano et al., 2008). On the other hand, sound working environment makes the employee feel good and alleviate their stress (Aarabi et al., 2013). Thus, working conditions is responsible for ensuring an individual's job-related well-being and quality of life (Anjum & Islam, 2021; Md-Sidin et al., 2010). In view of these literatures, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Work Environment has significant impact on academicians' well-being

## **3. Relationship between Workplace Flexibility and Well-being**

Workplace flexibility allows employees to organize their work schedules, location, or even tasks based on their preferences (Anjum et al., 2021; Bal & De Lange, 2014). This flexibility provides employees with more autonomy to organize their work and non-work activities (Golden, 2013). Development of a healthy work design through reduced division of labor and increased freedom could energize employees at work (Höge, 2019). These changes in the structure of work can alter work outcomes including employee well-being (Moen et al., 2013). Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) enables employees to balance their work and personal life so that the employees could get enough time to dedicate to their families and hobbies (Wayne et al., 2013; Richman et al., 2008). Thus, workplace flexibility can improve employees' well-being (Rahman et al 2018; TerHoeven & Van Zoonen, 2015). Based on the literature, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Workplace Flexibility has significant impact on academicians' well-being

#### 4. Research Method

A total of 200 academicians from different private universities in Bangladesh were taken for the study. The preliminary data was gathered through a questionnaire. The researcher used a random sampling method for collecting the data. The questionnaire consists of five Likert-scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree in their answers. Researchers decided to split up the questionnaire into two sections. Part-A of the survey included demographic information about the respondents, while Part-B included the respondents' perceptions of the work environment and flexibility in the workplace. It was also necessary to employ secondary data obtained from various sources such as several published research articles, peer-reviewed papers, and books, among others, to construct the theoretical components and pick the research variables for this study. The researchers employed the quantitative technique in this study to evaluate the hypotheses and validate the proposed research model. The data were analyzed using the SPSS 22 statistical software. The correlation coefficient was calculated to evaluate the internal relationships of the research variables and descriptive statistics for all of the demographic questions. Finally, multiple regressions were used to determine the impact of the work environment and workplace flexibility on the well-being of academicians.

#### 5. Analyses and Findings

##### *Demographic analysis*

**Table 1: Respondents' Profile**

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	111	55.5
	Female	89	44.5
Age	25-35	91	45.5
	36- 45	78	39.0
	46-55	22	11.0
	Above	9	4.5
Job Experience (years)	Less than 5	99	49.5
	6 to 10	45	22.5
	11 to 15	38	19.0
	16 to 20	11	5.5
	Above 20	7	3.5
Job Title	Teaching Staff	46	23
	Lecturer	71	35.5
	Assistant Professor	57	28.5
	Associate Professor	20	10
	Professor	06	3

## Reliability Test

**Table 2: Reliably Values**

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Work Environment	4	.726
Workplace Flexibility	4	.712
Well-being	3	.724

In this study, four sets of reliability tests were conducted, with the results showing the Alpha value of different constructs and the number of items used for each construct in order to achieve the standard Cronbach's Alpha value ( $> 0.70$ ) for each construct. .726;.712; and.724 are the Cronbach's Alpha values for Work Environment, Workplace Flexibility, and Well-being, respectively, which are all higher than 0.70, according to the table. This assures that the reliability or internal consistency of the survey questions is appropriate for the purposes of this study.

**Table 3: Correlation**

	Employees' Well-being	Work Environment	Workplace Flexibility
Well-being	1		
Work Environment	.214**	1	
Workplace Flexibility	.273**	.002	1

The study employed the Pearson correlation analysis to show the internal consistency among all the research variables. Table 3 reveals that, well-being and work environment are significantly correlated with each other (.214\*\* or 21.4%) at 99 percent confidence interval and significant at the 0.01 level (.000). Moreover, well-being has also been found to be significantly correlated with workplace flexibility (.273\*\*or 27.3%, .000). On the other hand, work environment has found positively correlated with workplace flexibility (.002 or 0.2 %, .000). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the correlation coefficient of no pair exceeded the criterion of 0.9 indicates the value of discriminant.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis**

### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.396a	.156	.40437

a. Predictors: (Constant): Work Environment, Workplace Flexibility

b. Dependent Variable: Well-being

The findings of the study are summarized in Table 4. The R square value is .156, which indicates that the independent variables can predict 15.6 percent of the variation in the dependent variable (Well-Being) from the independent variables (Work Environment and Workplace Flexibility). As a result, the statistical significance of the proposed study model is established.

**Table 5: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.946	3	1.982	12.121	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	32.049	196	.164		
	Total	37.995	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Well –being						
b. Predictors: (Constant): Work Environment, Workplace Flexibility						

Table 5 depicts the results of this study's ANOVA test, which indicates the general importance of the studied model in this study (s). In this research, the p value was denoted as (0.000), which is significantly less than the 0.05 or 5% level of significance. As a result, we can conclude that the proposed research model is statistically significant (F=12.121; p<0.05).

**Table 6: Summary of Coefficients**

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
	Unstandardize d Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.504	.373		4.029	.000	.768	2.240
Work Environment	.196	.060	.214	3.260	.001	.077	.314
Workplace Flexibility	.217	.067	.219	3.225	.001	.084	.349

The coefficients of this analysis are summarized in Table 6, which is shown below. Model 1 illustrates the relationship between work environment and well-being, whereas model 2 depicts the relationship between work environment and well-being that has been determined to be statistically significant (r=.214, t= 3.260, p= 0.001<0.05). As a result, H1 is approved. Workplace flexibility, on the other hand, has been found to be statistically significant in relation to well-being (r=.219, t= 3.225, p= 0.001<0.05). As a consequence, hypothesis H2 has also been accepted.

## **6. Discussions of the Findings**

This study aims to address the impact of work environment and workplace flexibility on academicians' well-being. The output shows that, the relationship between work environment and well-being is statistically significant. This finding is similar to some prior research findings (Rahman et al, 2017; Mafini, 2016; Aarabi et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2014; Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Lamb & Kwok, 2016). Thus, we can say that, work environment and academicians' well-being is positively associated with each other. If organizations could ensure a sound working environment with all necessary facilities then it will help to keep their employee happy, stress free as well as will contribute to their well-being. Additionally, the study reveals that, workplace flexibility and well-being is positively correlated with each other. Thus, it can be said that, there is a significant impact of workplace flexibility on academicians' well-being. Many previous researches also confirmed the similar findings (Höge, 2019; Moen et al., 2013; TerHoeven & Van Zoonen, 2015; Bronkhorst et al., 2015). If organizations provide employees with freedom to choose their working hour as well as give them independence on making work related decisions then it will definitely help the organizations to ensure their employees' well-being. As the findings of the study showing that, both the variable has significant impact on employees' well-being, organizations must focus on maintaining a suitable work environment with flexible policies to ensure both the physical and mental well-being of their workers.

## **7. Research Contribution and Limitations**

This research could help policy makers in understanding the role of work environment and workplace flexibility in ensuring the employees' well-being particularly in the context of higher education. Though this research has been conducted on academicians, the output of this study could also be employed on other service sector organizations. The study, thus, helps organizations in designing their work environment and taking appropriate policies regarding work flexibility in a way that boost employee morale and ensure their well-being. Along with contributing to the existing literature, the study also serves as reference for future research on similar issues. As the work is mainly based on academicians, further study can be done on other group of people and/or with increased sample size. Additionally, more research is required to identify the impact of other new variables that could affect employees' well-being. Moreover, there is also scope for conducting further studies on other geographical locations.

## 8. Conclusion

This study tried to examine the impact of work environment and workplace flexibility on the well-being of academicians in private universities of Bangladesh. It has been found that both the variables have statistically significant impact on well-being at work. Being in the most stressful profession, teachers should be given highest positive concern regarding workplace policies. The study concludes that, academicians' well-being at workplace largely depends on the conditions of surroundings where they work and the freedom they are given by their institution. Therefore, organizations should be more focused in developing appropriate strategies regarding a safe, comfortable and healthy working environment as well as employees' independence in taking some of their work related decisions.

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