

Bridging the Gap: New HRM Strategies for Managing the Challenges of Flexible Work

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Abstract

The rise of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) has fundamentally challenged traditional human resource management (HRM) models, which were originally designed for stable employment patterns in centralized workspaces. This paper outlines strategic directions for reorienting HRM practices to effectively support flexibility while maintaining organizational engagement, equity, and performance. Four key dimensions are considered: 1) developing and sustaining organizational culture in a distributed work environment; 2) designing mechanisms to assess fairness and digital infrastructure in access to FWAs; 3) personalizing flexible work policies based on job characteristics and individual needs; and 4) revising recruitment and performance evaluation standards to accommodate the realities of flexible work. Drawing on interdisciplinary research and practice-based evidence, the paper highlights the importance of digital infrastructure, transparent governance, empathetic leadership, and adaptive performance metrics in enabling inclusive and resilient agile work systems. Building on these dimensions, the paper also explores the specific challenges and policy implications for Vietnam's evolving labor market, offering strategic recommendations to support sustainable HRM transformation in the context of digitalization and workforce flexibility.

Keywords

Flexible Work, Human Resource Management, Organizational Culture, Equity and Inclusion, Digital Workforce

1. Introduction

Technological advancements—particularly the proliferation of the internet, personal computing, mobile devices, and emerging innovations such as the Internet of Things (IoT)—had already begun to significantly reshape the nature of work.

These technologies enabled fundamental changes in organizational operations through increased automation, enhanced remote communication, data-driven decision-making, and novel forms of collaboration across time and space. The COVID-19 pandemic functioned as a significant accelerant, substantially amplifying pre-existing trajectories of technological integration within organizational practices. Therefore, hybrid work has been more and more popular and seen as the suitable way to balance work and life.

The evolution of work models, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, presents a range of complex challenges for organizational management in general and human resource management (HRM) in particular. Despite the accelerated digital transformation and successful adoption of remote technologies—especially among technology firms—many organizations have reinstated on-site work requirements. While multiple organizational, cultural, and strategic factors may underlie this shift, a central concern pertains to the management of employee engagement, supervision, and performance optimization within increasingly flexible and hybrid work arrangements. This managerial uncertainty has the potential to constrain the benefits associated with flexible work models and may inadvertently diminish employee motivation, autonomy, and job satisfaction. Accordingly, developing robust HRM strategies that reconcile flexibility with accountability and performance remains a critical imperative for organizations navigating the future of work.

Rather than restricting flexible work arrangements—which have become increasingly favored by younger segments of the workforce—contemporary managers and human resource professionals should advance the design and implementation of adaptive management frameworks. These frameworks should transition from traditional time-based oversight to models centered on performance outcomes, while simultaneously prioritizing the enhancement of employee experience and the cultivation of long-term organizational commitment within decentralized, digitally mediated work environments.

According to this trend, many researchers have pointed out the challenges and directions for human resource management in the context of flexible work.

2. Literature Review

FWAs have garnered significant scholarly attention for their positive impact on employee well-being and organizational performance. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that FWAs contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and improved work-life balance.

Based on empirical data collected through surveys of employees and students in Jakarta between March and May 2023, [Rhian Indradewa, Agustinus Ayung Prasetyo \(2023\)](#) investigated the impact of flexible working arrangements on work-life balance and job satisfaction. The study introduced job stress, emotional exhaustion, and personal work-life improvement as moderating variables. The findings revealed that FWAs exert a statistically significant positive effect on both job

satisfaction and the perceived quality of work-life balance. Notably, improvements in personal work-life domains were found to reduce emotional exhaustion, thereby reinforcing the notion that flexible work models not only enhance job-related outcomes but also contribute to employee psychological well-being.

In addition to enhancing work-life balance, FWAs have been associated with significant cost savings for employees, particularly in reducing commuting expenses. According to a survey by FlexJobs, remote workers save an average of \$4000 per year on commuting and other work-related expenses. [Jan C.T. Bieser, Bhavana Vaddadi, Anna Kramers, Mattias Hojer and Lorenz M. Hilty \(2021\)](#) showed that employees save significant commuting time when working from home (Home Office—HO) compared to working at the employer office (EO), thereby allowing them to allocate more time to work-related tasks. Alongside this benefit, FWAs are associated with operational cost savings due to a reduced demand for office space ([Hook, Court, Sovacool & Sorrell, 2021](#)).

[Kristen M. Shockley and Tammy D. Allen \(2007\)](#), as well as [P. Matthijs Bal and Annet De Lange \(2014\)](#), emphasize that FWAs have emerged as strategic instruments for enhancing organizational efficiency and competitiveness through increased employee productivity, improved staff retention rates, and decreased absenteeism.

[Conradie and De Klerk \(2019\)](#) highlight the role of FWAs in attracting and retaining talent, especially within competitive labor markets and geographically dispersed environments where flexible structures provide a recruitment advantage.

[Wilhelmus J. Conradie, Jeremias J. de Klerk \(2019\)](#) underscore the substantial advantages associated with FWAs, notably their positive influence on employee engagement and performance, as well as their capacity to expand access to talent across broader geographic regions. Moreover, the implementation of flexible work models contributes to operational cost efficiency, particularly by reducing expenditures related to physical office space and employee commuting costs. The authors further argue that the inherent adaptability of FWAs is especially well-suited to sectors characterized by innovation and a high demand for agility, such as the technology industry (e.g., software development). This relevance is heightened in the context of developing economies, where attracting qualified talent and managing operational costs are critical to sustaining organizational competitiveness.

Beyond these tangible advantages, [Bin Wang, Yukun Liu, Jing Qian, Sharon K. Parker \(2021\)](#) argue that decentralized work models not only support continuity during crises—such as pandemics or supply chain disruptions—but also foster adaptive cultures that are better equipped to navigate uncertainty. Taken together, these findings underscore the multifaceted value of FWAs in improving both employee experience and organizational sustainability.

These findings underscore the multifaceted benefits of FWAs, highlighting their role in promoting employee satisfaction, reducing stress, and offering financial advantages. As organizations navigate the evolving landscape of work, inte-

grating flexible work models can serve as a strategic approach to enhancing employee well-being and organizational resilience. Moreover, FWAs not only contribute to immediate operational efficiency but also support long-term talent management strategies by fostering a more adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable work environment—one that aligns with the shifting expectations of a diverse and increasingly mobile workforce.

However, despite the numerous benefits attributed to flexible work arrangements, their implementation also presents a range of challenges for human resource management, particularly in areas such as performance monitoring, employee engagement, organizational culture, and equitable access to flexibility.

Al-Dahabi, Algazo, Hajjaj, and Abukhait (2024) conducted a qualitative investigation into the HRM challenges associated with the rise of remote work arrangements. Drawing on in-depth interviews with HR managers across diverse organizational sectors, alongside survey data from remote employees, the study explored critical areas such as communication practices, virtual team-building initiatives, and performance management systems. The authors aimed to identify strategic HR responses that could sustain employee productivity and well-being in contexts characterized by physical separation from the traditional workplace. Their findings underscore the necessity for HRM frameworks that are both technologically supported and employee-centered, particularly in navigating the complexities of virtual work environments.

Lubica Bajzikova, Helena Sajgalikova (2004) identified a range of structural and cultural challenges confronting HRM within flexible work environments. Their analysis emphasized persistent gaps in labor legislation, insufficient managerial competencies for overseeing non-traditional work arrangements, entrenched rigidities in working habits, and cultural resistance to flexibility. These factors were found to impede the effective implementation of flexible work models, underscoring the need for systemic and managerial adaptation in HRM practices.

Susan Chemei, Phyllis Osodo, Francis Anyira (2025) conducted an empirical study examining the relationship between FWAs and employee retention in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) located in the North Rift region of Kenya. The findings revealed that respondents generally perceived flexible work arrangements—such as compressed workweeks, flexible working hours, and telecommuting—as beneficial, particularly in supporting the balance between professional responsibilities and personal commitments. Although participants expressed some openness to pursuing external opportunities, retention remained relatively high among those reporting satisfaction with their current roles. Importantly, the study identified a statistically significant positive correlation between the availability of flexible work options and employee retention rates, suggesting that as flexibility increased, so too did the likelihood of employees remaining with the organization. These results align with and further substantiate existing literature asserting the strategic importance of flexible work models in enhancing employee retention, especially in the NGO sector, where work-life balance is often a critical determi-

nant of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, they pointed out potential challenges that could lead to burnout and decreased productivity if these arrangements are not managed effectively.

To overcome the multifaceted challenges associated with HRM in the context of hybrid work, numerous studies have proposed strategic directions aimed at enhancing organizational adaptability, sustaining employee engagement, and redefining managerial practices to align with flexible and decentralized work environments.

In addition to highlighting the benefits of FWAs such as enhanced productivity, reduced employee turnover, and lower absenteeism, Strategic *Direction* (2008) emphasized the strategic importance of flexibility for overall business success. The publication recommended that organizations empower their human resource departments through the establishment of clear objectives, well-structured implementation processes, and robust internal communication mechanisms to fully leverage the advantages of flexible work models.

Direction (2023) discusses the shift from work-life balance to work-life integration and how flexible work arrangements, supported by technology, can increase job satisfaction and reduce burnout. It also highlights factors for successful implementation and potential pitfalls.

Overall, the existing literature underscores that FWAs offer substantial benefits to both employees and organizations. For employees, FWAs contribute to improved work-life balance, increased job satisfaction, and reduced commuting-related stress. For organizations, they enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism and turnover rates, support talent attraction and retention, and generate operational cost savings by lowering demand for office space and commuting expenses.

Nonetheless, several HRM challenges have been identified in the implementation of FWAs. These include poor internal communication, difficulties in performance evaluation, weakened organizational cohesion, and inequitable access to flexibility options. In response, prior studies have proposed various strategies, such as empowering HR departments through the establishment of clear goals and structured processes, or transitioning from a work-life balance model to a work-life integration approach.

However, these strategies do not yet fully address the complexities of managing FWAs across diverse cultural and organizational contexts—particularly in developing economies such as Vietnam. To address this gap, the present study aims to propose a set of new strategic directions for HRM in the context of flexible work. These include: developing and sustaining organizational culture in distributed work environments; designing mechanisms to assess fairness and equity in accessing FWAs; personalizing flexible work policies based on job characteristics and individual needs; and revising recruitment and performance evaluation standards to align with the realities of flexible work models. Furthermore, the study will anticipate the challenges Vietnamese organizations may encounter during implementation and offer macro-level policy recommendations to facilitate the effective

and equitable adoption of FWAs.

3. Some Strategic Directions for HRM in the Context of Flexible Work

HRM was historically shaped within the framework of stable, full-time employment and face-to-face workplace interactions—conditions that prevailed for much of the industrial and post-industrial periods. As flexible work models have become increasingly widespread, particularly in the wake of global disruptions and digital transformation, organizations have faced significant uncertainty and resistance regarding how to manage employee performance, sustain organizational culture, and ensure equity. These concerns have prompted some firms to restrict or reverse flexible work practices. However, rather than reverting to traditional modes of operation, HRM must undergo strategic reorientation to address the evolving nature of work. This section outlines several strategic directions that may support HRM in adapting to flexible work contexts, including: Developing and sustaining organizational culture in distributed work environments; Designing mechanisms to assess fairness and equity in accessing FWAs; Personalizing flexible work policies based on job characteristics and individual needs; and Revising recruitment and performance evaluation standards to align with the realities of flexible work models.

3.1. Developing and Sustaining Organizational Culture in Distributed Work Environments

In the context of increasingly FWAs, the development and maintenance of organizational culture present complex and evolving challenges. Cultivating a cohesive culture across distributed environments requires strategic commitment from leadership, intentional design of communication systems, and inclusive practices that foster engagement, trust, and a shared sense of purpose. Rather than relying on physical proximity, culture must now be actively constructed through digital infrastructure, value-driven interactions, and continuous organizational alignment.

Establishing a digital cultural foundation is central to this transformation. Consistent and accessible communication channels—both formal and informal—are essential for maintaining social dynamics and cultural coherence (Kane et al., 2017; Gibbs et al., 2021). Digital collaboration platforms, scheduled virtual interactions, and multimedia communication methods help simulate traditional office interactions (Choudhury et al., 2021). However, the core challenge lies in embedding organizational values into daily digital routines. This can be facilitated through value-laden storytelling, employee recognition systems, and decision-making practices that reflect cultural priorities (Collins & Mossholder, 2017; Dennerlein & Rosing, 2022).

Fostering engagement and belonging within flexible work contexts depends on relational depth and inclusivity. Regular one-on-one communication between

managers and employees enhances personalized support and signals organizational care (Saks, 2006; Allen et al., 2015). Purposefully designed interaction opportunities—such as cross-functional collaboration, mentoring programs, or hybrid gatherings—strengthen social cohesion and accelerate onboarding in remote settings (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Caza et al., 2021; Beno, 2021). These activities contribute not only to reinforcing employee identity but also to enhancing collective resilience.

Trust and transparency form the backbone of distributed organizational culture. Transparent communication regarding strategic decisions, organizational changes, and individual expectations is vital for maintaining alignment. Codifying processes and clearly articulating expectations for remote work help ensure procedural equity (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Moreover, equipping employees with the tools and training to navigate digital work environments effectively is essential to reducing disparities in access and capability (Leonardi, 2021). Feedback mechanisms, both upward and lateral, further contribute to a climate of psychological safety and continual improvement.

Preventing fragmentation remains a persistent risk in distributed work models. Without deliberate efforts to foster connection, employees may become siloed, weakening organizational identity and collaboration (Bartel, Wrzesniewski, & Wiesenfeld, 2012). Creating shared cultural experiences—whether through virtual events, collective milestones, or social impact initiatives—can generate a sense of community beyond work tasks. Just as important is reiterating the organization's vision and demonstrating how each individual's contribution connects to broader goals. The deployment of inclusive digital tools and equitable digital literacy initiatives ensures that all employees, regardless of role or location, remain integrated into the cultural fabric of the organization.

In sum, sustaining organizational culture in distributed work environments requires a proactive and multi-dimensional approach—one that leverages technology, reinforces shared values, and prioritizes human connection across physical and digital boundaries.

3.2. Designing Mechanisms to Assess Fairness and Equity in Accessing FWAs

The increasing adoption of FWAs in modern organizations necessitates the development of robust mechanisms to ensure fairness and equity in their provision and access. As distributed work models—including remote and hybrid work—become more prevalent, organizations face the critical challenge of designing transparent, consistent, and impartial systems that uphold organizational justice and inclusivity while enhancing performance outcomes.

A foundational element in fostering fairness in FWA access lies in the precise and transparent articulation of eligibility criteria. Rather than relying on uniform or simplistic eligibility rules, organizations must recognize the complex interplay between diverse job functions, individual employee needs, and operational re-

quirements. Different roles inherently vary in their suitability for remote or flexible work. For example, positions requiring frequent on-site presence, specialized equipment, or direct client interaction necessitate distinct considerations compared to those performing digitally enabled, independent tasks. Eligibility frameworks must therefore incorporate these nuances to avoid unfair exclusion or privileging of certain employee groups.

Equally important is the explicit prevention of biases linked to demographic attributes, personal circumstances, or managerial discretion. Without clear guidelines, subjective decisions can lead to inequitable outcomes and perceptions of unfairness (British Council, 2023). Organizations should develop objective, job-related criteria consistently applied across all employees. The use of standardized rubrics evaluating factors such as task independence, communication demands, performance metrics, and demonstrated self-management capabilities helps to institutionalize impartiality and transparency in eligibility assessments.

Procedural fairness in FWA access also requires the establishment of well-defined application processes and evaluation frameworks. Transparent procedures detailing the information employees must submit, the review steps, and expected decision timelines empower employees to engage with the process confidently, reducing uncertainty and mistrust. To mitigate individual biases, evaluation should be conducted by committees representing diverse organizational perspectives, such as human resources, line management, and employee representatives. Utilizing standardized assessment rubrics aligned with eligibility criteria ensures consistency and accountability in decisions.

Beyond initial access, continuous monitoring and evaluation of FWA policies' impact across employee demographics and job categories are critical for identifying and addressing potential inequities over time. Quantitative data—such as adoption rates segmented by gender, ethnicity, parental status, and hierarchical level—can reveal patterns of disparity or exclusion. Complementing these with qualitative data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups provides deeper insight into employee perceptions of fairness and underlying systemic barriers. These mixed-method approaches enable organizations to detect both overt and subtle inequities in policy implementation.

Regular audits of FWA applications, approvals, denials, and employee feedback support ongoing accountability and iterative improvement of policies. Audit findings should inform targeted interventions to redress inequities and refine access mechanisms, thereby enhancing organizational equity and trust.

In addition to equitable access, organizations must proactively address secondary inequities associated with flexible work. Remote employees may encounter challenges related to workload distribution, diminished visibility for career advancement, and reduced access to informal networking and mentoring opportunities. To counteract these disadvantages, FWA policies should include clear guidelines for performance evaluation based on measurable outputs and outcomes rather than physical presence. Ensuring equal access to training and devel-

opment programs regardless of work location prevents career stagnation among flexible workers (Training Industry, 2022). Moreover, investment in virtual networking platforms, mentorship programs, and inclusive team-building initiatives fosters a cohesive organizational culture where all employees feel valued and supported.

Finally, transparent communication regarding FWA decision-making processes and the rationale behind approvals or denials is vital for sustaining employee trust. While safeguarding individual privacy, organizations should provide employees with general explanations about the criteria and frameworks guiding decisions. Such transparency reduces perceptions of arbitrariness and strengthens the legitimacy of FWA policies.

In conclusion, designing mechanisms to assess fairness and equity in accessing FWAs requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that integrates clear eligibility criteria, standardized processes, ongoing evaluation, and proactive measures to mitigate secondary inequities. These efforts contribute to cultivating a just, inclusive, and high-performing organizational environment that harnesses the full potential of flexible work modalities.

3.3. Personalizing Flexible Work Policies Based on Job Characteristics and Individual Needs

The transition towards FWAs calls for a significant shift from uniform, standardized policies to more personalized frameworks that reflect the diverse nature of job roles and individual employee circumstances. Recognizing the heterogeneity in job demands and personal needs is essential for optimizing the benefits of FWAs, including enhanced employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention (Kelliher & Anderson, 2009). This section explores the strategic imperatives and practical methods for tailoring flexible work policies based on an integrative understanding of job characteristics and employee preferences.

A critical initial step in personalizing FWAs involves a comprehensive analysis of job characteristics. This entails examining the specific tasks, responsibilities, collaboration requirements, and performance indicators associated with each role. Some roles inherently support full remote work due to their independence and digital task orientation (OECD, 2020). Conversely, roles requiring frequent face-to-face collaboration, use of specialized on-site equipment, or direct client interactions necessitate more in-person presence (Parker et al., 2020). Effective personalization depends on systematically evaluating attributes such as role autonomy, frequency of synchronous communication, the necessity of immediate physical presence for problem-solving, and the measurability of outputs in flexible work contexts. This analysis enables organizations to identify the scope and limits of flexibility appropriate for each job family or individual position.

Beyond job-related factors, the individual needs and preferences of employees constitute a pivotal dimension in personalizing FWAs. Employees' diverse personal contexts—such as caregiving responsibilities, health conditions, commuting

constraints, and unique work styles—must be acknowledged and accommodated wherever feasible without undermining business objectives (Wellable, 2025). Personalization may include options such as flexible working hours, compressed workweeks, or occasional remote work tailored to specific circumstances. For example, caregivers might benefit from flexible scheduling to balance work and family duties, while employees with disabilities may require adjustments to their work environment or remote work options to maintain productivity and well-being. Moreover, respecting individual preferences regarding work environment and scheduling can foster greater job satisfaction and performance.

The successful implementation of personalized FWAs requires clear communication channels and adaptable application procedures. Employees should have formal opportunities to express their needs and propose flexible arrangements aligned with their roles and team goals. Managers play an essential role by engaging in empathetic dialogues, assessing individual requests, and negotiating mutually beneficial solutions. Training managers to be open-minded, flexible, and equipped to handle non-traditional work arrangements is vital for maintaining team cohesion and operational effectiveness.

To ensure fairness and consistency, organizations should establish guiding principles and decision-making frameworks for evaluating personalized FWA requests. These frameworks must balance individual needs with organizational demands and uphold equitable treatment across teams. While flexibility is central, maintaining standardized processes prevents favoritism and reinforces trust in FWA policies.

Technology underpins the feasibility of personalized FWAs by enabling communication, collaboration, and task management across diverse work settings. Investment in reliable digital infrastructure and user support is critical for facilitating seamless remote work and flexible scheduling.

Moreover, performance management systems must evolve to accommodate flexible work diversity. Traditional observation-based evaluations are inadequate for flexible employees; outcome-based metrics and clear performance expectations are necessary. Continuous feedback and open manager-employee communication ensure personalized arrangements do not compromise individual or team effectiveness.

Finally, organizations must regularly review and refine personalized FWA policies. Soliciting feedback from both employees and managers provides insights into successes and challenges, allowing policies to adapt in response to evolving job demands and changing employee needs. Such iterative adaptation ensures the sustained relevance and efficacy of FWAs within dynamic organizational contexts.

3.4. Revising Recruitment and Performance Evaluation Standards to Align with the Realities of Flexible Work Models

The rapid and widespread adoption of flexible work models has prompted organizations to fundamentally reconsider and redesign their traditional recruitment and performance evaluation standards. Legacy approaches, which were largely

based on assumptions of full-time, co-located employment, no longer effectively capture the specific skills and attributes required to succeed in distributed and remote work environments. Moreover, conventional performance evaluation methods that rely heavily on direct supervision and physical presence prove inadequate and potentially unfair in flexible work contexts. To fully capitalize on the advantages of FWAs, organizations must strategically revise their talent acquisition and performance management frameworks to reflect the unique demands and realities posed by these modern work models.

Revising recruitment standards for flexible work environments is essential to identify candidates who can thrive under flexible conditions. Traditional recruitment processes often favor candidates with prior experience in conventional office settings, which risks overlooking individuals who possess key competencies crucial for remote work success. To address this, organizations must redefine their ideal candidate profiles by emphasizing competencies such as strong self-discipline and time management, enabling individuals to independently structure their work, meet deadlines, and navigate distractions without direct oversight (*RemoteWorkforce, 2024*). Additionally, excellent written and verbal communication skills are imperative, as asynchronous and digital interactions become primary modes of collaboration, requiring clarity, conciseness, and adaptability across multiple communication platforms.

Further, proactive problem-solving and resourcefulness are indispensable, as remote workers frequently encounter situations requiring independent initiative and creative solutions without immediate managerial support. Adaptability and resilience also emerge as critical traits, enabling employees to maintain productivity amidst ambiguity and changing circumstances inherent in flexible work environments. Digital literacy and comfort with technology are prerequisites, given the reliance on a range of collaboration, communication, and productivity tools. Equally important is emotional intelligence, which supports self-awareness, effective remote relationship management, and the nuanced communication necessary for fostering virtual team cohesion.

Recruitment strategies should evolve to reach candidates with these targeted skills. This involves leveraging remote-friendly job boards, online professional networks, and talent platforms that transcend geographical barriers, thus expanding the pool of candidates actively seeking flexible work opportunities. Incorporating virtual assessment techniques—such as online tests, simulations, and video interviews—allows employers to evaluate candidates' remote work capabilities directly. Behavioral interview questions tailored to explore candidates' past experiences in flexible or remote settings can provide insights into their readiness and suitability. Moreover, assessing digital communication proficiency during the recruitment process ensures the candidate can thrive in virtual interaction environments. Embracing diversity in candidate backgrounds is also crucial, as skills transferable from various industries and life circumstances enrich the remote workforce.

Revising Performance Evaluation Standards for Flexible Work Models requires a shift from traditional presenteeism-focused evaluations toward outcome-based and goal-oriented assessments. In flexible and remote contexts, physical presence is an unreliable and inequitable performance indicator. Organizations must emphasize clear, measurable objectives and key results (OKRs) or similar frameworks that focus on tangible outputs, deliverables, and the impact of work rather than time spent at a workstation. Establishing transparent expectations regarding communication frequency, methods, and collaborative engagement in remote settings helps maintain accountability and teamwork.

Technological tools, including project management platforms and digital performance tracking systems, become indispensable for monitoring employee progress, milestones, and individual contributions. Incorporating 360-degree feedback mechanisms that include input from peers, subordinates (when applicable), and clients provides a comprehensive evaluation of employee performance and their impact within distributed teams. Encouraging employees to engage in self-assessment and reflection fosters a culture of continuous development and ownership over personal performance in flexible arrangements.

The evaluation process itself must be adapted to fit flexible work realities. Regularly scheduled virtual check-ins and structured feedback sessions should replace informal, in-person office interactions, ensuring consistent communication and support. Performance appraisals must prioritize the quality and effectiveness of outputs over visibility or time logged, recognizing that productive remote employees may not always be constantly “seen” but deliver exceptional results. Feedback should be timely, specific, and actionable, addressing challenges unique to remote work, such as communication barriers or technology constraints. Recognizing and rewarding competencies such as self-management, digital communication, and initiative emphasizes their critical role in successful flexible work. Finally, ensuring equitable evaluation across remote and on-site employees prevents bias towards physical presence and upholds fairness and consistency in performance management.

In conclusion, successfully navigating the evolving work landscape increasingly characterized by flexible arrangements requires a comprehensive and adaptive framework that holistically addresses the complex dynamics of distributed work. Building and maintaining a strong organizational culture in dispersed environments hinges on proactive, technology-enabled strategies that emphasize consistent communication, reinforcement of core values in virtual spaces, and fostering meaningful virtual interactions to cultivate a shared sense of identity and purpose.

Equity and fairness in accessing FWAs are equally vital. Organizations must develop transparent and systematic mechanisms that carefully consider the diversity of job roles, individual employee needs, and potential biases. Such mechanisms require continuous evaluation and iterative adaptation to promote inclusivity and prevent disparities in flexible work opportunities.

Moreover, personalizing flexible work policies based on thorough analyses of

job characteristics and individual circumstances significantly enhances both employee satisfaction and organizational performance. This personalization demands flexible, employee-centered application processes, empathetic managerial support, and strategic deployment of technological tools to accommodate diverse work styles and preferences.

Finally, aligning recruitment and performance evaluation standards with the realities of flexible work models is fundamental to sustaining a high-performing workforce. Organizations need to redefine candidate profiles to prioritize skills critical for remote and distributed work success and shift toward outcome-based performance evaluations that emphasize tangible results rather than physical presence.

Ultimately, embracing flexible work transcends merely providing remote options; it calls for a strategic, integrated approach that reimagines organizational culture, ensures equitable access, prioritizes individual needs, and adapts core talent management practices. Through deliberate attention to these interrelated domains, organizations can cultivate resilient, engaged, and productive workforces capable of thriving in the rapidly changing future of work, unlocking the full potential of FWAs while mitigating the risks of fragmentation.

4. Navigating FWAs in Vietnam: Organizational Challenges and Policy Pathways

In the context of Vietnam, where both internationally standardized HRM practices (Diendandoanhnghiep.vn) and FWA models (Reeracoen.com.vn, 2025) are still in developmental stages, the adoption of strategic HRM recommendations tailored to flexible work environments holds significant potential for delivering substantial benefits. However, to fully realize this potential, Vietnam must proactively identify and address a range of challenges related to infrastructure, organizational culture, and managerial capabilities.

4.1. Developing and Sustaining Organizational Culture in Distributed Work Environments

Challenges:

The development of organizational culture within distributed work environments in Vietnam faces several significant obstacles. Technological infrastructure remains uneven, resulting in disparities in connectivity quality and access to digital tools across different regions, thereby impeding effective digital communication. Moreover, many enterprises and employees lack sufficient experience with remote work, leading to difficulties in establishing standardized processes and maintaining internal cohesion. Traditional work mindsets that emphasize physical presence in the office further hinder the transition to flexible work models. Additionally, distributed environments increase the risk of “silo culture”, where workgroups become isolated, impairing the continuity of shared organizational values and collective identity.

Policy Recommendations:

To overcome these challenges, a comprehensive and coordinated policy ap-

proach is required. First and foremost, investment in upgrading national digital infrastructure, especially in underserved and remote areas, is essential to ensure equitable participation in digital work environments. Simultaneously, support for enterprises—particularly small and medium-sized businesses—in their digital transformation efforts is necessary through targeted training, advisory services, and financial assistance. Furthermore, raising awareness and promoting the benefits of flexible work arrangements, along with fostering a culture aligned with distributed work realities, are critical components. Finally, encouraging research initiatives and the sharing of best practices will facilitate the dissemination of effective organizational models tailored to distributed work contexts.

4.2. Designing Mechanisms to Ensure Fairness and Equality in Access to FWAs

Challenges:

Ensuring fairness and equality in access to FWAs remains a significant challenge in Vietnam. The country currently lacks a clear legal framework that explicitly defines the rights and obligations related to FWAs, resulting in inconsistencies in practical implementation and potential risks of discrimination. Furthermore, approval or denial of FWA requests often depends heavily on subjective managerial judgment due to the absence of transparent evaluation criteria. Enterprises also face difficulties in assessing the suitability of flexible work models for specific job roles. Additionally, managerial apprehensions about the ability to monitor and control remote employee performance contribute to hesitancy in endorsing FWAs.

Policy Recommendations:

To address these barriers, it is imperative to develop and promulgate a comprehensive legal framework for FWAs that clearly delineates employees' rights to request flexible work and employers' responsibilities in considering such requests. The Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs should provide detailed guidelines on standardized procedures and objective criteria for evaluating FWA requests to ensure transparency and fairness. Concurrently, promoting social dialogue and engaging representative organizations is essential to collaboratively establish common standards for assessing and implementing FWAs. Finally, establishing robust monitoring mechanisms to enforce relevant regulations and developing effective dispute resolution channels will safeguard employee rights within flexible work environments.

4.3. Personalizing Flexible Work Policies Based on Job Characteristics and Individual Needs

Challenges:

Personalizing FWAs according to job characteristics and individual employee needs presents considerable challenges for organizations. The diversity of job roles and personal circumstances complicates implementation and management, making it difficult to ensure consistency and fairness across the organization. In the absence of clear guiding frameworks, decision-making risks becoming subjective,

potentially fostering perceptions of unfairness among employees. Furthermore, accommodating individual needs may sometimes conflict with requirements related to performance, coordination, and continuity of work. Another significant barrier is the lack of appropriate tools and systems in many organizations to effectively manage personalized work agreements.

Policy Recommendations:

To effectively implement personalized FWAs, it is essential to establish a unified guiding framework outlining principles, criteria, and application procedures that balance individual needs with job demands. The government should support enterprises in accessing and adopting flexible management technologies that enable efficient monitoring and coordination of diverse work arrangements. Concurrently, it is crucial to enhance managerial competencies, particularly in listening skills, fair assessment, and context-sensitive decision-making. Facilitating open dialogue and flexible negotiation between employees and employers also constitutes a key factor in embedding personalized FWA policies sustainably and effectively in practice.

4.4. Revising Recruitment and Performance Evaluation Standards to Align with the Realities of Flexible Work Models

Challenges:

In the context of the growing prevalence of flexible work models, many organizations continue to apply traditional recruitment and performance evaluation standards. Current recruitment criteria often emphasize in-office experience, neglecting essential skills for remote work such as self-management, online communication, and adaptability. Performance evaluation methods based on working hours and physical presence have become outdated, posing difficulties in accurately measuring actual productivity. Many enterprises lack objective tools and metrics to assess flexible work performance effectively. Additionally, conservative mindsets among recruiters and managers represent significant barriers to innovating recruitment and evaluation processes.

Policy Recommendations:

To adapt to flexible work models, it is necessary to research and widely disseminate updated recruitment and performance evaluation standards that focus on soft skills, independent working ability, and outcome effectiveness. Relevant authorities should support enterprises in developing goal- and results-based evaluation systems, such as OKRs, while providing appropriate guidance, tools, and consultancy. Organizing training programs for recruitment and management teams to enhance skills in remote interviewing and assessment is also essential. Finally, promoting the adoption of modern technologies in recruitment and performance evaluation—from online recruitment platforms to performance measurement software—will optimize processes and ensure objectivity. These measures will contribute to building a fair, efficient, and sustainable flexible work environment that meets the evolving demands of the labor market.

5. Conclusion

Flexible work represents an emerging mode of organizing work, enabled by advances in science and technology. It allows for personalized work experiences, reduces operational costs, and enhances employee satisfaction. However, from a traditional management perspective, flexible work poses significant challenges—particularly the risk of weakening internal cohesion and fragmenting organizational culture. These concerns are valid and continue to hinder the broader adoption of flexible work models.

To address these obstacles, human resource managers and organizational leaders must adopt strategic adaptations, including: 1) cultivating an organizational culture that aligns with distributed work environments; 2) developing mechanisms that ensure fairness and equity in access to FWAs; 3) personalizing flexible work policies based on job characteristics and individual employee needs; and 4) revising recruitment criteria and performance evaluation systems to reflect the realities of non-traditional work contexts.

These strategic shifts not only contribute to the advancement of human resource management theory in the era of flexible work but also help organizations improve performance and enhance employee satisfaction in an increasingly dynamic and competitive labor market.

Nonetheless, given the broad scope of this study, each of the aspects discussed entails complex layers of legal, managerial, technological, behavioral, and cultural dimensions. As such, the current research does not yet reach the necessary depth for comprehensive analysis. Building on the proposed conceptual framework, the author hopes this work will inspire more in-depth studies focusing on specific topics such as access mechanisms and performance metrics for FWAs, the formation of digital organizational cultures, and models for individualized flexible work policies suited to the Vietnamese context.

This study's primary limitations lie in its conceptual nature, the absence of empirical validation, and limited consideration of cultural and economic variation. Additionally, it presents a predominantly positive perspective on flexible work arrangements, without sufficiently addressing potential adverse effects such as increased workload, blurred work-life boundaries, or social isolation.

Future research should focus on empirically testing the proposed framework, examining its applicability across diverse organizational and cultural settings, and adopting a more balanced lens that critically engages with both the opportunities and challenges posed by flexible work practices.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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