



RESEARCH PAPER

**Flexible Scheduling, Perceived Organizational Support and
Employees' Organizational Commitment: Mediation of Job
Satisfaction**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support in organizational commitment of employees. The study also probed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the specified association. For this purpose, the study applied convenience sampling technique and selected a sample from the universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Primary data were collected from the respondents through a mailed questionnaire. The researchers selected 80 participants from each university and distributed the questionnaires accordingly. 312 completely filled questionnaires were used for analysis purposes. Data analysis was completed by using SPSS and AMOS. After examining the basic statistics, the study examined the effect of each independent variable on dependent variable of organizational commitment. The study then applied Hayes (2013) model to check the mediation of job satisfaction. The results showed a positive role of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support in organizational commitment of employees, which was fully mediated by the job satisfaction. Based on findings, the study suggested for adoption of flexible working hours policy and high support to the employees for better contributions and well-being of the individuals and institutions.

KEYWORDS Commitment, Employees, Flexible Scheduling, Satisfaction, Support

Introduction

In the modern era of globalization and stiff competition, retention of competent workforce became a challenging task for the organizations. To cope with such a situation, the organizations are continuously reviewing the policies to attract and retain qualified, skilled and competent workers. Balancing work-family life of employees and creating organizational commitment has got considerable attention by the organizations. Organizational commitment develops positive feelings and thoughts of employees towards the organization, and they can put their best efforts for its prosperity while intending to stay for a longer time period (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Fatula, 2018). This situation could strengthen the attachment of the employees with the organization to which they are serving (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Kont & Jantson, 2014). The organizations with larger number of committed workers secured higher performance and productivity (Mubarik, Chandran, & Devadason, 2018; Noah & Steve, 2012). Organizational commitment may emerge due to variety of intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors. In this context, affective, normative, and continuous commitment levels have been identified in the literature (Gunlu, Aksarayli, & Perçin, 2010; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Tella, Ayeni, & Phopoola, 2007). The researchers also observed an association of each level of commitment with organizational performance

and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of employees (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Shore & Wayne, 1993).

For management of the organizations, it became imperative and challenging to identify the factors that could boost the organizational commitment of the employees. Flexible work scheduling and organizational support are amongst the factors that can create comfort and satisfaction for the employees. In such a situation, they could put more effort and concentration on job related tasks. The adjustment of working hours in accordance with the demands of the employees could help them to secure a balance of job and other responsibilities. This adjustment positively influences the employees' commitment to organizations (Lee, 2019). It has become more important now due to the engagement of couples in jobs and assuming personal and professional responsibilities by each partner. Such dual responsibilities also became a source of conflict between work and family life (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Any imbalance in work-family life can create stress, tension and frustration which could negatively affect individuals and organizations. The employees need organizational support to avoid conflicting situations and manage the stressful events effectively. They expect care, proper acknowledgment of their contributions and due consideration of their well-being by the employer. The employees' perception of organizational support and care could help in achieving high productivity, raise performance and commitment with the organization (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Fatula, 2018; Hutchison & Garstka, 1996; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shanock et al., 2019; Shore & Wayne, 1993).

The convincing role of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support attracted the attention of the researchers to explore its further dimensions. For this purpose, this study was initiated to examine the role of each specified factor in organizational commitment of employees, selected from higher education sector of AJ&K. The study also examined the mediating role of job satisfaction in this role. The primary data were collected through a mailed questionnaire and the responses were analyzed by using statistical techniques. The researchers observed a positive influence of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support on organizational commitment of employees, which was fully mediated by job satisfaction. It was noted that job satisfaction influences the organizational commitment both directly and indirectly. It is, therefore, important and relevant to create conducive and friendly environment at workplace, while aligning the individual and organizational interests. Such a situation can increase the job satisfaction of employees and they can show high commitment towards the organization and its goals. The findings of the study could induce the management of the organizations to devise some policies of adjustable working schedule and enhancing support mechanism for employees to keep them satisfied, committed and loyal. The policy of flexible scheduling is already in practice in many countries of the world. However, very few organizations of Pakistan are following this policy. The findings would, therefore, be relevant and beneficial for different stakeholders. Addressing the issue in this region could also be a useful addition in the existing literature and is expected to pave a way of further research in this domain.

Literature Review

The employees in the organizations develop insight into it in terms of its focus on their welfare, well-being and giving value to their contributions. This concept was initiated by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) in organizational support theory. The employees thus build perceptions about the organization based on treatment the organization gives to them. This theory was drawn on the concept of social

exchange theory, which explains the exchange of both tangible and intangible goods between two parties (Blau, 1964). This had explained that the people generally develop the relationships based on expectations of getting something in return. The following of rules and discipline by both the parties is a pre-requisite to maintain it for a longer time (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the context of an organization, social exchange theory specifies the association of employees and organization in such that the employees devote their efforts for better reward in return. The rewards may either be intrinsic or extrinsic. A positive and humane treatment by the organization can induce the employees to work hard for the sake of higher performance and productivity of the organizations (Bae, 2023; Bhatti, Iqbal, Santoro, & Rizzato, 2022; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Suliman & Iles, 2000).

In the contemporary business environment, organizations are facing an acute shortage of committed and motivated employees who can stay longer and exhibit loyalty (Alqubati, Dixon, & Hossan, 2019). The authors further elaborated that due increased job dissatisfaction and work pressures, a scale of employees tend to leave their current jobs. This implies that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction play a vital role in employee's job commitment and organizational loyalty. In the similar line of research, Syahputri and Harahap (2023) have found that employee's turnover intention increases due to lack of leadership support and working environment. Similarly, Mehmood, Aziz, and Husin (2023) stated that work stress has a positive impact on employees' turnover intention, thereby, decreasing job commitment and job satisfaction simultaneously. Hence, it is imperative for the organizations to look after the employees and eliminate factors causing job stress so that employees can focus job related chores and exhibit higher level of commitment.

Rewarding the employees, valuing their contributions and taking care of their well-being bring positive changes to the satisfaction level of employees and the organizational performance (Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012; Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). The working environment and conditions are also crucial to the job satisfaction of employees (Appelbaum et al., 2009; Bakotić & Babić, 2013). Taking care of such factors is, therefore, important to the success of individuals and organizations. Securing the organizational commitment of employees has also got significant importance in the area of human resource management and organizational behavior. The researchers explored different factors which could be influential in gaining the commitment of employees. Flexible work scheduling is one such factor discussed in the literature. It helps the employees to bring a balance in work and family, lessen their stress and contribute effectively to the organization (Butler, Grzywacz, Ettner, & Liu, 2009; Krausz, Sagie, & Bidermann, 2000). Balancing the roles and responsibilities of work and personal life is considered important for the employees (Jackofsky & Peters, 1987). Flexible scheduling helps in securing this balance to a larger extent, which can bring job satisfaction and be helpful in developing positive attitude (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999; McGuire & Liro, 1986). The employees are in search of an organization which may offer them flexible hours of work and a supportive working environment. In a flexible and supportive environment, employees show high productivity and performance (Casey & Grzywacz, 2008).

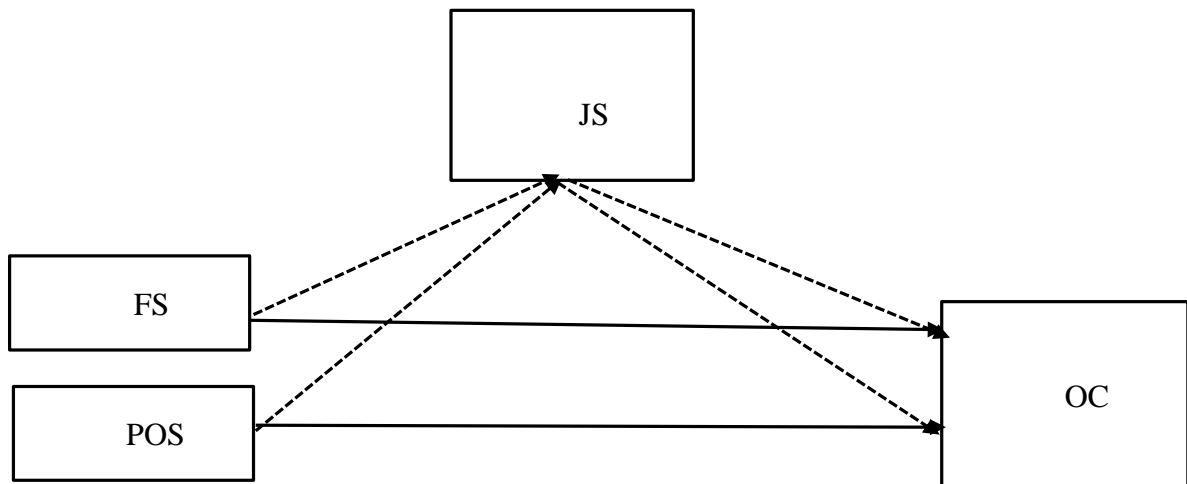
To overcome the issues and put full concentration on work, employees need support of the organization. The perceived organizational support is regarded valuably by the employees. It could boost employees' morale and improve their job performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Organizational support could be helpful in fulfilling the employees' emotional needs. It could also help in developing positive sentiment and responsible behavior in the organization. Perceived organizational support found to be

associated positively with the job satisfaction, work-family balance, employees' well-being and performance (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Meng, Wang, & Tian, 2021). The employees' perception regarding care and support from the organization could induce them to work with commitment and loyalty for the organization (Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003). The perceived organizational support could also be helpful in reducing absenteeism and turnover, increasing productivity and performance, and enhancing the commitment with the organization (Sihag, 2021; Zagenczyk, Purvis, Cruz, Thoroughgood, & Sawyer, 2020). The organizational commitment of employees is also influenced by their job satisfaction. The employees who are satisfied with the work environment and conditions devote their best efforts and energies to improve organizational productivity and performance. There are different possible factors that may influence the job satisfaction, including equitable rewards, good working conditions, positive dealings and friendly working environment (Awan & Asghar, 2014; B. Lee, C. Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Pratama, Suwarni, & Handayani, 2022; Sagituly & Guo, 2023; Shmailan, 2016; Yandi & Havidz, 2022).

Job satisfaction is crucial for organizational commitment of employees (Bhatti, Nawaz, Ramzan, & Ullah, 2017; Chordiya, Sabharwal, & Goodman, 2017; Loan, 2020; Lok & Crawford, 2001; Markovits, Davis, Fay, & Dick, 2010; Okpara & Wynn, 2008; Yandi & Havidz, 2022). Flexible work arrangements played a constructive role in the job satisfaction of employees (Gašić & Berber, 2023; Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). It also helped in improving job performance, individuals long term stay in the organization and consequently the organizational performance (Kim, Henly, Golden, & Lambert, 2020; Masuda et al., 2012). The trend of promoting flexible work arrangements has especially developed in the wake of COVID-19 and afterwards (Bocean, Popescu, Varzaru, Avram, & Iancu, 2023; Çemberci, Civelek, Ertemel, & Cömert, 2022; Guerriero & Guido, 2022; Trujols et al., 2020). In addition, organizational support and care also contribute to promote trust, satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees (Chen & Eyoun, 2021; Maan, Abid, Butt, Ashfaq, & Ahmed, 2020; Utomo et al., 2023; Wen, Huang, & Hou, 2019). Organizational care could bring positive changes in the attitude and dealing of the employees. Hence, keeping all these factors into consideration, this study was intended to examine the role of flexible scheduling, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in organizational commitment of employees, for which it is hypothesized:

- H₁. Flexible scheduling enhances employees' organizational commitment.
- H₂. Perceived organizational support enhances employees' organizational commitment.
- H₃. Job satisfaction enhances employees' organizational commitment.
- H₄. Job satisfaction fully mediates the effect of flexible scheduling on employees' organizational commitment.
- H₅. Job satisfaction fully mediates the effect of perceived organizational support on employees' organizational commitment.

Research Model



(Note: FS: Flexible Scheduling, POS: Perceived Organizational Support, JS: Job Satisfaction, OC: Organizational Commitment)

Material and Methods

For examining the relationships, the study targeted the higher education sector and selected a sample of employees from 06 universities of AJ&K. The sample selection was made by applying the convenience sampling approach and 80 participants were selected from each university. The study was quantitative in nature, and it applied survey approach for collection of primary data. The questionnaires were mailed to the target respondents. This technique is more feasible for approaching the literate respondents and it helps in minimizing the direct interference of the researchers and managing responses from distinct geographical locations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The questionnaire was developed by adopting the measures from reliable published sources and mailed to target respondents. The participants were asked to complete the survey voluntarily, while giving them confidence of privacy assurance and using the information for academic and research purposes only. 5-point Likert scale was used to seek the responses and its anchors were ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

For flexible scheduling, 4-items scale was taken from the study of Bayazit and Bayazit (2019). This scale was developed by Allen (2001) and its sample item is, "Picking your own start and finish times and/or days as long as you work an agreed number of hours". To measure perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, the study opted the scale of Eisenberger et al. (1986) with 8-items and 4-items, respectively. The sample items of this scale are, "My organization really cares about my well-being", "All in all, I am very satisfied with my current job". Maan et al. (2020) also used this scale for measuring the perceived organizational support. Lastly, the study used 15-items scale of Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) to determine the organization commitment of the employees. The sample item of this scale is, "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization". The researchers mailed 480 questionnaires in total to the employees selected from 06 universities of AJ&K. Continuous follow up was made to seek responses. This systematic follow up helped the researchers to receive 320 responses. During data sorting, some questionnaires were found incomplete or unclear in choices. Such responses were excluded from the analysis. The study included the analysis of 312 completely filled questionnaires. The analysis was started by examining the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and reliability analysis. SEM approach was then applied to examine the hypothesized direct effects. The feasible measurement model was selected

by using the commonly accepted and earlier applied fit indices. Mediation analysis was conducted in accordance with the studies of Hayes (2013), Preacher and Hayes (2008).

Results and Discussion

To examine the pattern of collected responses, descriptive statistics were checked, and the results are presented in table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
FS	1.00	5.00	3.15	0.71
POS	1.00	5.00	2.86	0.59
OC	1.00	5.00	3.08	0.60
JS	1.00	5.00	3.21	0.84

Flexible scheduling (FS) and perceived organizational support (POS) were the independent variables of the study. Organizational commitment (OC) and job satisfaction (JS) were taken as dependent variable and mediator, respectively. The data analysis was based on 312 complete responses, which were collected by using a 5-point Likert ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The higher mean value thus inclined towards agreement side. The dispersion of responses was examined with the help of standard deviation and is also presented in table 1 above. After examining the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis was conducted, and its results are summarized in table 2.

Table 2
Correlation Analysis

Variables	FS	POS	JS	OC
FS	1			
POS	.528**	1		
JS	.415**	.525**	1	
OC	.609**	.710**	.708**	1

(** $p < .01$)

The results in table 2 show a positive correlation amongst the variables. As expected, and generally believed, flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support were positively correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment were also correlated positively. The researchers examined the reliability of the measures, and its results are presented for readers in table 3.

Table 3
Reliability analysis

Variables (No. of Items)	Cronbach's Alpha
FS (04)	0.858
POS (08)	0.737
OC (15)	0.878
JS (04)	0.873

The study considered the threshold level of 0.70 regarding reliability of measures as proposed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The calculated values of reliability analysis, as shown in table 3, conform to the standard as the value of Cronbach's Alpha

for all the variables are above the specified level. The researchers then determined the fitness of measurement model with the help of confirmatory factor analysis and by examining the values of appropriate fit indices, i.e. CMIN/DF, RMSEA, IFI, TLI, CFI. The results are not reported here; however, all the statistics were in accordance with the specified threshold level and the model fitness was established. In the next step, specified direct effects were examined and results are in table 4.

Table 4
Regression analysis

Path	Coefficient
FS → OC	.561***
POS → OC	.262***
JS → OC	.610***

(*** $p < .001$)

The results of regression analysis showing the role of flexible scheduling, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in organizational commitment of the employees are reported in table 4. The results show a positive influence of all the specified variables on employees' organizational commitment, i.e. flexible scheduling ($\beta = .561, p < .001$), perceived organizational support ($\beta = .262, p < .001$), job satisfaction ($\beta = .610, p < .001$). These findings are in line with the existing studies, which reported positive effect of flexible scheduling, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction on organizational commitment of employees and on certain other components related to job (Bhatti et al., 2017; Chordiya et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020; Tohidian & Rahimian, 2019; Zagenczyk et al., 2020). The study further proceeded to probe the mediating mechanism of job satisfaction in addition to its direct role for which the researchers applied Hayes model. The results of mediation analysis are in table 5.

Table 5
Mediation analysis

Path	Coefficient	LL	UL
FS→JS→OC	.347**	.289	.413
POS→JS→OC	.292**	.184	.381

(** $p < .01$)

As evident from the results, job satisfaction fully mediated the effect of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support on organizational commitment of the employees ($\beta = .347, p < .01, CI = .289 \sim .413$; $\beta = .292, p < .01, CI = .184 \sim .381$). These results indicate that the flexible work arrangements and organizational support enhanced the job satisfaction of employees, which then promoted their commitment to the organization. Such settings are, therefore, beneficial for individuals and the institutions.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support in organizational commitment of employees. The study further probed the direct and mediating role of job satisfaction. In today's environment, adaptable work scheduling became important because of change in family structure and engagement of couples in the jobs. The flexibility in adjustment of working hours and work from home policy could help the employees in overcoming work-family imbalance and associated conflicts. The employees in such a situation could feel ease and comfort for putting high concentration on job related tasks. Moreover, the employees are frustrated from external environment and seeking support at workplace. The moral, emotional and psychological support in the workplace could provide much relief to the employees. They consider that

the organization is taking care of their well-being and they put their best efforts to honor the organizational commitments. The positive feelings about the organization could create satisfaction at the job, sense of belongingness with the organization, and induce the employees to work hard for attainment of organizational objectives.

The convincing role of work scheduling and organizational support motivated the researchers to further examine the phenomenon. To probe the matter, the researchers selected a sample of employees from the higher education sector of AJ&K. The questionnaire was developed and distributed among the employees of 06 universities. The responses were gathered, and statistical tools were applied for analysis to draw meaningful inferences. The results of regression analysis show a positive and significant influence of flexible scheduling, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in the organizational commitment of employees. Job satisfaction also significantly mediated the effect of flexible scheduling and perceived organizational support on employees' organizational commitment. The results of the study established a base to conclude that the employees are really concerned with flexible work scheduling and organizational care. Employees assign high value to such organizational practices and resultantly show satisfaction at their job and commitment to the organization. Flexible scheduling and support can thus pave a way of success for individuals and organizations. It is, therefore, recommended to create a flexible and conducive environment at the workplace so that the employees may feel satisfaction and comfort and show high level of commitment to the organization. These findings and recommendation are, however, based on the responses collected from a relatively smaller sample of employees from the universities of AJ&K. For further broader evidence on the subject matter, the study could be extended with a bigger sample of teaching and non-teaching staff from the universities and other institutions of higher education. This may also be extended to examine the pattern in other sectors and from different other aspects.

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