



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijemss.v6i5>
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The Influence of Flexible Working on Happiness at Work Through Employee Engagement in Indonesia Financial Service Authority

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Abstract: Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) is increasingly recognized as a strategic approach to improve employee well-being, particularly in public sector organizations that often struggle with rigid bureaucratic systems. This study investigates the direct and indirect effects of FWA on Happiness at Work (HAP), with Employee Engagement (EE) as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 800 employees in the Indonesian public sector through a structured questionnaire. Structural Equation Modeling with SmartPLS 3.4 was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that FWA significantly affected EE ($\beta = 0.332$, $t = 5.504$, $p = 0.000$) and HAP ($\beta = 0.143$, $t = 2.742$, $p = 0.006$). In addition, EE has a strong positive effect on HAP ($\beta = 0.530$, $t = 10.868$, $p = 0.000$) and significantly mediates the relationship between FWA and HAP (indirect effect $\beta = 0.176$, $t = 5.516$, $p = 0.000$). These findings underscore the importance of fostering a flexible work environment to enhance employee engagement and psychological well-being.

Keyword: Flexible Working, Happiness at Work, Employee Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a fundamental and universal psychological aspect of human life, reflecting a positive emotional state that is aspired to by every individual in various cultural backgrounds and social contexts (Bhatia et al., 2020). In positive psychology, happiness is not simply understood as a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction, but rather as a complex psychological experience, involving subjective perceptions of a good, meaningful, and productive life. Two main approaches to understanding happiness, namely the hedonistic and eudaimonic approaches, have become the dominant theoretical frameworks in various scientific studies. The hedonistic approach refers to the achievement of pleasure and avoidance of pain (Diener et al., 1999; Schimmack, 2008), which in the modern concept is known as subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes aspects of life satisfaction, high frequency of positive emotions, and low negative emotions. Meanwhile, the eudaimonic approach views happiness as the result of developing one's potential and living a life in accordance with an individual's intrinsic values, including goal achievement, self-actualization, and meaningful social relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

In practice, the two approaches do not negate each other, but rather complement each other. Studies such as those conducted by Kashdan et al. (2008) and Waterman et al. (2008) show that the balance between the pleasures of life and the meaning of life is the foundation of complete happiness. Accordingly, today's organizations need to understand that employee happiness is not solely the result of the facilities or rewards provided, but also from work experiences that are felt to be meaningful and empowering.

Along with the transformation of the work paradigm, the concept of Happiness at Work has also emerged, which emphasizes the importance of positive psychological conditions in the work environment as part of the quality of employee life (Fitriana, Hutagalung, & Awang, 2022). Happiness at work is associated with increased productivity, loyalty, and employee desire to continue contributing to the organization (Pryce-Jones, 2010). Singh and Aggarwal (2018) stated that Happiness at Work is a condition characterized by high life satisfaction, dominance of positive emotions, and minimal negative emotions. In addition, Fitriana et al. (2021) emphasized that job happiness needs to consider evaluations of job characteristics (such as salary and career ladder), affective feelings at work, and the level of emotional attachment to the organization.

Fisher (2010) in her review identified that in the last two decades, various new constructs such as well-being, engagement, and other positive affective conditions have emerged to capture the nuances of happiness in the work context. These concepts have similarities in the evaluative dimension, positive emotions, and pleasant flow experiences. Happiness at work can be reviewed based on three aspects: level of manifestation (individual, team, organization), temporal stability (momentary or long-lasting), and distinctive thematic content. One real form of happiness at work is high employee engagement. Zeng and Han (2005) define engagement as a positive emotional and motivational state that is sustainable, reflecting employees' readiness to devote themselves to work. Similarly, Bakker and Demerouti (2008) state that engagement reflects a cheerful and satisfied cognitive and emotional condition, characterized by vigor, dedication, and involvement. In another perspective, engagement is also positioned as the opposite of burnout. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) describe that engagement produces energy and participation, in contrast to burnout which produces emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Schaufeli et al. (2002) strengthen this view by stating that engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption) is the antithesis of cynicism and apathy. However, work happiness does not come automatically. A comprehensive organizational strategy is needed that is oriented towards employee psychological well-being. One strategy that is now a major concern is the implementation of flexible working. Flexible working is defined as a work system that gives employees the freedom to determine the time and location of work, both formally and informally (Hyland, 1999). This concept has become increasingly relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic which has drastically changed conventional work patterns. Rau and Hyland (2002) mention two main features of work flexibility, namely workplace flexibility (telecommuting) and work time flexibility. This is also supported by Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015) who state that this flexibility is highly dependent on employee discipline and results orientation. With the flexibility to determine when, where, and how long to work, employees have a greater opportunity to balance professional and personal roles (Pandiangan, 2018).

Research shows that although flexible working has the potential to increase well-being and work happiness, the mediating role of employee engagement is crucial in realizing these results. Therefore, this study aims to empirically examine: (1) the effect of flexible working on employee happiness; (2) the effect of flexible working on employee engagement; (3) the effect of employee engagement on employee happiness; and (4) the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between flexible working and employee happiness.

By understanding this relationship comprehensively, it is hoped that organizations, especially government institutions, can formulate work policies that are more adaptive,

inclusive, and oriented towards improving the quality of life of employees in a sustainable manner.

METHOD

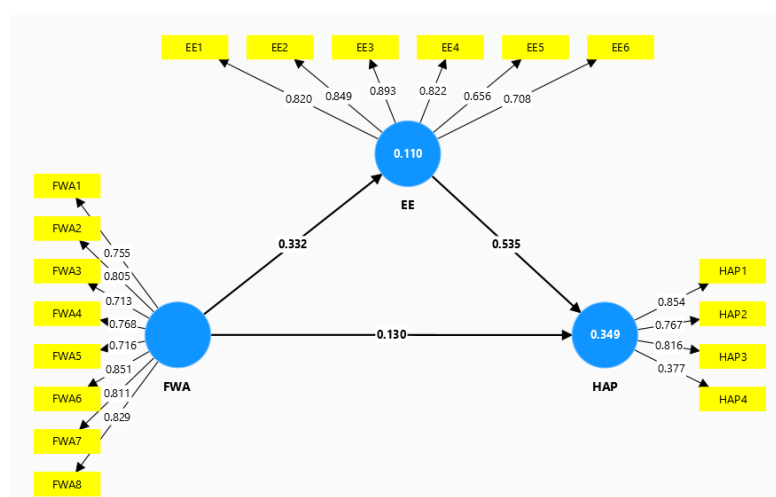
Research on the Influence of Flexible Working on Happiness with Employee Engagement which will act as a mediating variable on employees of institution X using a quantitative research approach and is included in the explanatory research category (Neuman, 2024). In sampling, simple random sampling was used (Sugiyono, 2022). Data collection was carried out by sending research questions online and distributing them to OJK employees at the Head Office.

Flexible Working was measured using eight statement items adapted from Hyland and Rau (1997), including flexibility in working hours, location, task arrangements, and decision making. Happiness was measured using the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) which consists of four statement items, Employee Engagement was measured through six items based on the AON Hewitt model (2014) which includes the dimensions say, stay, and strive. All items in the three variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. PLS was chosen because of its ability to manage latent variables measured through indicators and support simultaneous analysis of a number of variables. The model analysis process consists of two steps, namely the evaluation of the outer model (to assess validity and reliability) and the inner model (to test the relationship between variables and hypothesis testing).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher used the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 software. The data analysis procedure was carried out in two stages, namely the evaluation of the outer model and the inner model. The evaluation of the outer model aims to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators against the latent construct, with reference to the criteria of Hair et al. (2017) which include the outer loading value > 0.70 (but values between 0.40–0.70 can still be considered to be maintained in certain contexts), the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value > 0.50 to indicate convergent validity, and the Composite Reliability value > 0.70 for construct reliability.



Source: Author's data processing, 2025

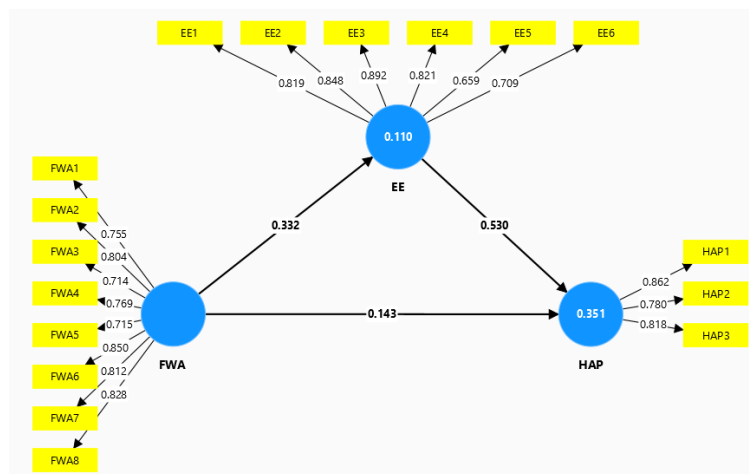
Figure 1. Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0 phase 1

Table 1. Validity Test Results Based on Loading-Factor Values Phase 1

Indicator	Employee Engagement (EE)	Flexile Working (FWA)	Happiness (HAP)
EE1	0,820		
EE2	0,849		
EE3	0,893		
EE4	0,822		
EE5	0,656		
EE6	0,708		
FWA1		0,755	
FWA2		0,805	
FWA3		0,713	
FWA4		0,768	
FWA5		0,716	
FWA6		0,851	
FWA7		0,811	
FWA8		0,829	
HAP1			0,854
HAP2			0,767
HAP3			0,816
HAP4			0,377

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

Based on the results of the convergent validity test in phase 1, it is known that there is one indicator with an outer loading value below 0.40 so that the indicator does not meet the minimum criteria and must be eliminated from the measurement model. After the indicator was removed, retesting was carried out in phase 2. The results showed that all indicators of each variable were considered feasible for further analysis.



Source: Author's data processing, 2025

Figure 2. Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0 phase 2

Table 2. Validity Test Results Based on Loading Factor Values in Phase 2

Indicator	Employee Engagement (EE)	Flexile Working (FWA)	Happiness (HAP)
EE1	0,819		
EE2	0,848		
EE3	0,892		
EE4	0,821		
EE5	0,659		
EE6	0,709		
FWA1		0,755	
FWA2		0,804	
FWA3		0,714	
FWA4		0,769	
FWA5		0,715	
FWA6		0,850	
FWA7		0,812	
FWA8		0,828	
HAP1			0,862
HAP2			0,780
HAP3			0,818

In this research, discriminant validity was then assessed to ensure that each indicator better represents its original construct than other constructs. This test was conducted by comparing the cross-loading value of each indicator against the measured variable with the cross-loading value against other constructs. After indicators that did not meet the validity criteria were removed at the initial stage, the test results showed that each indicator had the highest loading value on its original construct, with a value of >0.70 and greater than the cross-loading against other constructs. This finding indicates that each construct in the research model has a good level of discriminant validity (Farrell, 2010; Hair et al., 2017), and strengthens the reliability of the model structure in measuring the intended dimensions.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results Based on Cross-Loading Values

Indicator	Employee Engagement (EE)	Flexile Working (FWA)	Happiness (HAP)
EE1	0,819	0,298	0,477
EE2	0,848	0,355	0,541
EE3	0,892	0,269	0,513
EE4	0,821	0,201	0,441
EE5	0,659	0,208	0,364
EE6	0,709	0,216	0,382
FWA1	0,273	0,755	0,246
FWA2	0,244	0,804	0,216
FWA3	0,300	0,714	0,297
FWA4	0,214	0,769	0,160
FWA5	0,242	0,715	0,249
FWA6	0,290	0,850	0,249
FWA7	0,246	0,812	0,290
FWA8	0,240	0,828	0,247

HAP1	0,533	0,247	0,862
HAP2	0,393	0,235	0,780
HAP3	0,480	0,301	0,818

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that all indicator loading values against their original constructs are higher than the cross-loading values against other constructs. As an illustration, in the HAP construct, each indicator shows a higher loading value compared to its correlation with other constructs. For example, the HAP3 indicator has a loading value of 0.818 against construct X, which is higher than its correlation value with the FWA construct, which is 0.301. A similar pattern is also found in all other indicators, indicating that each indicator better represents its original construct than other constructs. From the results of the reliability test shown in table 4 below, all constructs in this study—Flexible Working, Employee Engagement, and Happiness at Work—have a Cronbach's Alpha value ≥ 0.70 . This value indicates that each construct has high internal consistency and is able to measure the intended variable reliably. In addition, the Composite Reliability value for all constructs is also above the threshold of 0.70, which further strengthens the conclusion that this research instrument is reliable (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each construct is above 0.50, indicating that each construct has met the convergent validity criteria. Accordingly, all indicators in this study are not only reliable but also valid, so they are worthy of being used for further structural model testing.

Table 4. Results of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Employee Engagement	0,882	0,899	0,911	0,633
Flexile Working	0,909	0,912	0,926	0,612
Happiness	0,759	0,772	0,861	0,674

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

The R-Square test results show that the Employee Engagement (EE) variable has an R-Square value of 0.110 and an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.107. This means that around 11.0% of the variation in Employee Engagement can be explained by exogenous variables in the model, in this case Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA). Meanwhile, 89.0% of the other variations are explained by other factors outside this regression model. This value is relatively low, so it can be concluded that the predictive ability of the model in explaining changes in the Employee Engagement variable is still limited. Meanwhile, for the Happiness at Work (HAP) variable, an R-Square value of 0.351 and an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.347 were obtained. This means that around 35.1% of the variation in Happiness at Work can be explained by the variables in the model, namely Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) and Employee Engagement (EE), while the remaining 64.9% is explained by other variables not included in the regression model. This value is classified as moderate, indicating that the model has sufficient predictive ability in explaining the variation of Happiness at Work. Therefore, this model is relatively better in explaining the HAP variable compared to EE, and supports the mediation role of EE in the relationship between FWA and HAP, although the predictive power for EE is still weak.

Table 5. Test Result for R-Square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q-square
Employee Engagement	0.110	0.107	0.066
Happiness	0.351	0.347	0.227

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

The results of the Q² value test used to assess the predictive relevance of the model show that the Employee Engagement (EE) variable has a Q² value of 0.066. and for Happiness at Work (HAP) of 0.227, indicating that the model has relevant predictive ability, especially for the HAP construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), a Q² value > 0 indicates predictive relevance, and Q² ≥ 0.25 is in the moderate category, while between 0.02–0.15 is in the weak category. Therefore, this model has weak predictive power for EE, but is quite good for HAP. Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the direct effect between variables in the structural model. The coefficient value indicates the direction and strength of the influence between variables, while statistical tests (t-test) and p-value are used to test the significance of the influence. First, the effect of Employee Engagement on Happiness at Work has a coefficient value of 0.530, with a t value of 10.868 and a p-value of 0.000 ≤ 0.05. This shows that Employee Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Happiness at Work. This means that the higher the employee engagement, the level of happiness at work will also increase significantly. Second, the effect of Flexible Working Arrangement on Employee Engagement has a coefficient of 0.332, with a t value of 5.504 and a p-value of 0.000 ≤ 0.05. This indicates that the implementation of flexible work has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. In other words, the more flexible the work system implemented, the higher the level of employee engagement in the organization. Third, the direct effect of Flexible Working Arrangement on Happiness at Work is also significant with a coefficient value of 0.143, a t value of 2.742, and a p-value of 0.006 ≤ 0.05. This shows that flexible working directly contributes to increased job happiness, although the magnitude of its influence is relatively smaller compared to the path through Employee Engagement. Accordingly, all hypotheses in this model are accepted because each has a t-value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05. This shows that both the direct influence of Flexible Working on Employee Engagement and Happiness at Work, as well as the influence of Employee Engagement on Happiness at Work, are all statistically significant and support the theoretical model proposed in this research.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing of the Structural Model for Direct Effects

Description	Path Coefficient	t-test	p-value	Criteria
Employee Engagement → Happiness	0.530	10.868	0.000	Accepted
Flexible Working → Employee Engagement	0.332	5.504	0.000	Accepted
Flexible Working → Happiness	0.143	2.742	0.006	Accepted

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

The mediation effect or indirect effect is part of how the indirect influence of Flexible Working on Happiness at Work occurs through the intermediary role of Employee Engagement. The table above shows the Path Coefficient value of 0.176, the t-test value of 5.516, and the p-

value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. The results of this test indicate that the indirect effect is statistically significant.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Employee Engagement acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between Flexible Working and Happiness at Work. This means that when an organization implements flexible work arrangements, it will increase employee engagement, which in turn contributes positively to increasing happiness at work.

This is in line with the concept that indirect effects occur when exogenous variables (Flexible Working) affect endogenous variables (Happiness at Work) through intermediary variables (Employee Engagement). Because the t value of $5.516 > 1.96$ and p-value < 0.05 , it can be concluded that there is a significant mediation effect, and the proposed hypothesis is accepted.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing of the Structural Model for Indirect Effects

Description	Path Coefficient	t-test	p-value	Criteria
Flexible Working → Employee Engagement → Happiness	0.176	5.516	0.000	Accepted

Source: Author's data processing, 2025

The results of the path analysis show that Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement (EE) with a coefficient of 0.332, a t-value of 5.504, and a p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. This indicates that the implementation of a flexible work system can increase employee engagement in the organization. This finding is in line with previous research which states that work flexibility provides space for employees to balance work and personal life, thereby increasing their engagement in work (Golden et al., 2014). Furthermore, EE also has a positive and significant effect on Happiness at Work (HAP) with a coefficient of 0.530, a t-value of 10.868, and a p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. This means that the higher the employee engagement, the level of happiness at work will also increase significantly. This is supported by research showing that engaged employees are more likely to feel satisfaction and happiness at work because they feel recognized, empowered, and have goals that are aligned with the organization (Fisher, 2010).

In addition, FWA also has a direct effect on HAP with a coefficient of 0.143, a t-value of 2.742, and a p-value of $0.006 \leq 0.05$. Although the direct effect is smaller than the indirect effect through EE, this shows that work flexibility directly contributes to increased work happiness. Previous research has also found that flexibility in work schedules can increase employee happiness by giving them more control over their working hours (Golden et al., 2014).

The mediation effect analysis shows that EE significantly mediates the relationship between FWA and HAP with a path coefficient of 0.176, a t-value of 5.516, and a p-value of $0.000 \leq 0.05$. This confirms that the implementation of FWA can increase EE, which in turn increases HAP. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that employee engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between work flexibility and work happiness (Commer, Haugh, and Goggins, 2018). However, the implementation of FWA does not always run smoothly, especially in the government sector which is still thick with a bureaucratic work culture and performance appraisals based on physical presence. Challenges such as unclear work time limits, uneven workloads, and superior expectations that are not in line with the principles of flexibility are still major obstacles in creating a work environment that supports employee well-being (Golden et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

This study empirically confirms that Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) has a positive and significant influence on employee happiness (Happiness at Work/HAP), both directly and indirectly through the mediation of Employee Engagement (EE). The results of the analysis show that FWA increases EE, which in turn strengthens the level of happiness at work. Accordingly, all research objectives are achieved: (1) FWA has a significant effect on HAP; (2) FWA has an effect on EE; (3) EE has an effect on HAP; and (4) EE significantly mediates the relationship between FWA and HAP.

Moreover, the implementation of FWA needs to be supported by other factors such as a supportive work culture, empathetic leadership, a fair reward system, open communication, and career development opportunities (Fisher, 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). A Combination of work flexibility and organizational policy can foster a more productive and conducive to employee well-being.

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