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THESIS

Antecedents and effects of use of flexwork practices in times of crisis

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Abstract

The effects of use of flexwork practices have often been researched, but this is not the case for its antecedents. In this research, the effect of the perceived impact of the economic crisis on the use of flexwork practices is studied and whether job security and self-monitoring moderate this relationship. In addition, the effects of use of flexwork practices on organizational member proficiency performance and work engagement are investigated. Data is collected via an online survey under 212 employees of an IT services and consultancy organization. The perceived impact of the crisis appears to positively influence the use of flexwork practices. Self-monitoring and job security do not moderate this relationship. The use of flexplace practices results in a higher organizational member proficiency performance, but use of flextime practices does not. There appears to be no effect of use of flexwork practices on work engagement. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Introduction

The total amount of Americans that worked an entire day at a remote location, dropped from 33.7 million in 2008 to 26.2 million in 2010 (WorldatWork, 2011). About 20% of the total workforce works at least one day per week remotely. This decline was especially profound for people who worked on a freelance basis (16.6 million in 2008 to under 10 million in 2010) compared to people who worked on a full- or part-time contract basis for an employer (17 million in 2008 to 16 million in 2010). In The Netherlands more than 27% of the Dutch employees worked at least one hour per week at home in 2010 compared to about 25% in 2005 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2011). Although this is only a slight increase, the average amount of hours they worked at home increased from 5.5 hours per week in 2006 to 6.2 hours per week in 2010. Noteworthy are the big differences between education levels in the amount of employees working at home. According to the same statistics from CBS (2011), only about one out of eight employees with a low education level worked at least one hour per week at home. This was one out of five for a medium level of education and around one out of two for highly educated employees. The age of the employee appeared to be of influence on the use of flexwork practices as well. According to the statistics from CBS (2011), one out of ten employees between 15 and 25 year old worked at home at least one hour per week compared to three out of ten for employees between 25 and 65 years old.

The Dutch government stimulates flexwork practices proactively, for example by proposing a law that working from home at least one day per week should become a right of the employee (Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau, 2012). Although this political policy is only one of the possible reasons why Dutch employees increase their time working remotely, it clearly illustrates that working relations and the meaning of work seem to change in The Netherlands. According to the article, there are good reasons to institutionalize flexible working practices. The article states that it would save employers 500 to 700 million euros per year and it would decrease the traffic congestions with about 20%. Both employers and employees would benefit from higher productivity and less time and money spend on commuting. In

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sum, all stakeholders would benefit and no negative effects of flexwork practices are mentioned. But what determines whether people make use of flexwork practices and what are really the effects of flexwork practices?

This research aims to provide insight in the antecedents and effects of flexwork practices. The relationship between the perceived impact of the economic crisis and the use of flexwork practices is examined. In addition, the possible moderating influence of job security and self-monitoring on this relationship is investigated. Furthermore the effects of flexwork practices on organizational member proficiency performance and work engagement are examined.

According to academic literature, the effects of flexwork practices are thoroughly researched (cf. Illegems & Verbeke, 2004; Konrad & Mangel, 2000), both concerning the organization and the employee. When flexwork practices are used, organizations can benefit from an increase in various types of performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Organizations who implement flexwork practices also appear to attract and retain more skilled employees (Illegems & Verbeke, 2004) who are less absent (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999). When an organization offers flexwork practices, employees are more loyal to the organization (Roehling, Roehling & Moen, 2001) and are less likely to leave the organization (Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006). Organizations can directly benefit financially from flexwork practices, because use of flexwork practices reduces organizational costs (Kossek & Michel, 2012)

Beside benefits for the organization, use of flexwork practices also has benefits concerning the employee. Employees benefit from less costs and time spend on commuting when they work remotely or travel on times when there is less traffic congestion (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990). The availability of flexwork practices gives employees a rise in perceived autonomy (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) which results in them being better able to manage their work-life balance (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Fonner & Roloff, 2010). When employees make use of flexwork practices, they perceive less role stress and

also get more satisfaction from their job (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). According to Fonner & Roloff (2010), this higher job satisfaction is due to less stress from work interruptions by colleagues.

However, when considering the effects of flexwork practices, it is important to note that these effects are not all positive and clear. Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright and Neuman (1999) found in their study that the effects of time flexibility diminished over time. In addition, Peters, Den Dulk and Van der Lippe (2009) found in their study that time flexibility resulted in working more overtime and this enhanced the negative perception of work interfering with private life. Lastly, contrasting findings concerning conflicts in work-life balance are found in the meta-analyses of Gajendran and Harrison (2007), Byron (2005) and Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2006). Shockley and Allen (2007) found that this discrepancy was due measurement of either the combination of use of time and place flexibility or only use of time flexibility. Shockley and Allen found that offering possibilities for time flexibility is a more effective way of reducing conflicts in work-life balance than offering place flexibility possibilities.

To be able to compare results of different studies regarding flexwork practices, it is important to have a clear and uniform conceptualization of this construct. Flexwork practices are defined as arrangements that allow employees to vary when and where they work. Hill et al. (2008) define workplace flexibility as “the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks” (p. 149) which comprises of flextime (when), flexplace (where) and flexlength (how long). Shockley and Allen (2007) define flextime as the flexibility in the timing of work, whereas flexplace involves flexibility in the location where work is conducted. According to Eaton (2003) flextime is the ability to schedule flexible starting and quitting times, sometimes with a core-hours requirement. These definitions differ from ones concerning teleworking and telecommuting. Both teleworking and telecommuting incorporate workers to have no personal contact with colleagues, but being able to communicate with them using new technology (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990) or supported by technological

connections (Fitzer, 1997, p. 65, in Fonner & Roloff, 2010). Although, technology and ICT can substitute for work-related travel and support flexwork practices (Illegems & Verbeke, 2004), this is not considered a necessity. Therefore the definition of Shockley and Allen (2007) is used in this research.

Use of flexwork practices in the economic crisis

Shockley and Allen (2011) argue that, in contrast to the benefits of flexwork practices, there is not much known about the motives and factors which influence the use of flexwork practices by employees. They found that, contrary to popular belief, employees who make use of flextime and flexplace practices were more motivated by work-related motives like productivity and efficiency than life management motives like childcare or reducing commuting time. Even more surprising was the fact that women were significantly more motivated to use flextime and flexplace for work-related motives compared to life management motives. Furthermore they found that employees who lived with a partner made more use of flextime practices than those who did not live with a partner, but no difference was found for use of flexplace practices.

Employees make use of flexwork practices to increase the efficiency and performance in their job (Shockley & Allen, 2011). However, people seem convinced that they are evaluated by their superiors and colleagues on the amount of hours they are present at the workplace (Munck, 2001). Make use of flexwork practices for work-related purposes, but being convinced one is evaluated on the hours present at the workplace, creates a paradox. In addition, not being present on the regular times and places is generally associated with negative consequences (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999) such as professional isolation and negative career consequences (Baruch & Nicholson, 1997 in Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Cooper & Kurland, 2002). However, there seems to be a difference between the perceived and objective effects of use of flexwork practices. Gajendran and Harrison (2007) found that use of flexwork practices increased the quality of the employee-supervisor relationship. Moreover, telecommuting does not affect career advancement prospects or performance according to the study by McCloskey and Igbaria (2003).

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This presumed negative career consequences and social isolation makes use of flexwork practices difficult, especially in an organizational culture in which working many hours is considered normal. This is even more difficult when employees are convinced they have to live up to the expectations of others (Ibarra, 1999; Hewlin, 2009). These presumed negative consequences for ones career are especially relevant in research in the current economic situation and the subsequent rise in unemployment. In The Netherlands, the unemployment-rate steadily dropped from 6.5% in 2005 to 3.8% in 2008. However, in 2008 the financial recession started and the unemployment rate increased to 5.4% in 2010 (CBS, 2012a). The amount of layoffs in the first eight months of 2009 (85.000) was almost twice as high as the first eight months of 2008 (44.000) (CBS, 2009). The contractual wages were raised by 3.3% in 2008, 2.8% in 2009, but only 1.3% in 2010 and 2011 (CBS, 2012b). The amount of vacancies has been declining for 2 years (CBS, 2012c).

Even in this economic crisis, in which cutbacks are necessary for most organizations to survive, the availability of flexwork practices seems hardly influenced. Galinsky and Bond (2009) found that during the recession in the United States, organizations maintained (81%) or even increased (13%) their amount of flexwork practices. Moreover, only 6% of the organizations decreased their amount of flexwork practices. The slight majority (57%) of the organizations gave their employees some or a great deal of influence on the decision to use these flexwork practices. Galinsky and Bond (2009) speculate that organizations keep up the amount of flexwork practices to get the employees more engaged. Employers in this study responded that they wanted to keep up the morale and keep 'fun' in work during these times of economic crisis.

Especially in this economic crisis organizations can benefit from flexwork practices from the fact that use of flexwork practices has positive effects on performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) and results in less organizational costs (Kossek & Michel, 2012). On the other hand, employees presume use of flexwork practices to have negative consequences for ones career and to result in professional isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002).

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Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the less participants will make use of flexwork practices

Self-monitoring

Use of flexwork practices comes with presumed negative consequences (cf. Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Therefore the organizational culture should be explicitly supportive of the use of flexwork practices (Voydanoff, 2007 in Hill et al., 2008). The study of Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, (1999) indicates that a supportive work-family culture indeed stimulate use of flexwork practices. Kossek, Barber and Winters (1999) found that peer use of flexplace practices is a significant predictor of previous and future use of flexwork practices by the participant.

The social environment of employees seems to influence the use of flexwork practices. To what extend the employee is influenced might depend on self-monitoring. According to Gangestad and Snyder (2000), self-monitoring “concerns the antecedents and consequences of variation in the extent to which individuals strategically cultivate public appearances” (p.533). High self-monitors want to get accepted by their social environment and engage in behaviors to realize this (Hewlin, 2009). They are more influenced by social pressure and opinions of others than low self-monitors. According to Gangestad and Snyder (2000), low self-monitors are even unable to change their behavior based on perceptions of their social environment. This difference makes high self-monitors less consistent in their behavior than low self-monitors. Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: The higher the amount of self-monitoring, the stronger the negative effect of the perceived effect of the crisis on the use of flexwork practices.

Job security

For organizations to survive in this current economic situation, cutbacks can be necessary. Layoffs are one of the possible cutbacks for organizations, but the job security of employees is threatened as a result. Job security is defined as the expectation about the continuity of the current job situation (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997). It refers to the subjectively perceived likelihood of involuntary job loss (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002). The higher this subjectively perceived likelihood of involuntary job loss, the lower the expectation about the continuity of ones current job situation and therefore the lower ones perceived job security.

As mentioned before, employees are convinced negative career consequences are associated with not being present on the regular times and places (Baruch & Nicholson, 1997 in Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Cooper & Kurland, 2002). When employees make use of flexwork practices and therefore are not present on the regular times and places, trust between the organization and the employee is essential (Smithson & Lewis, 2004). When employees make use of flexwork practices, they have more freedom over the hours they work, where they work and are to a higher degree evaluated on the results of their work. Organizations therefore have less supervision and control over the amount and quality of the work this employee produces. Use of flexwork practices can therefore only succeed when there is trust between the organization and the employee (Harrington & Ruppel, 1999). However, Sverke, Hellgren and Näswall (2002) found that organizational commitment and trust decline when job security declines.

Not being present on the regular times and places is associated with negative career consequences. Trust is necessary for use of flexwork practices to succeed, but trust declines when job security declines. Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: The lower the job security, the stronger the negative effect of the perceived effects of the crisis on the use of flexwork practices.

Performance

Performance is a much researched construct within the organizational psychological literature and also the specific relationship between use of flexwork practices and performance is subject of study in many articles. However, Neely, Gregory and Platts (1995) hit the nail on the head when they say “performance measurement is a topic which is often discussed but rarely defined” (p. 1228). They argue that individual performance consists of the two dimensions efficiency and effectivity. This is only a rough definition of general performance, because performance is a broad construct which consists of many subconstructs (cf. Griffin, Neal & Parker, 2007).

The effects of flexwork practices are studied thoroughly, but are also debated. Organizations can benefit from a higher perceived organizational performance when they offer flexwork practices (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000). Bailey and Kurland (2002) give an overview of articles which all find positive effects on self-rated performance. In contrast to the findings of Bailey and Kurland, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) found no effect of use of flexwork practices on self-rated individual performance, but there was an effect on supervisor-rated and objective measured individual performance. In the study of Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright and Neuman (1999), a significant effect on objective measured productivity was found, but self-rated performance was not affected. They argue that they might have not found an effect on self-rated performance due to a ceiling effect. There would be no room for further improvement in self-rated performance. Other explanations might be that employees simply work more hours (Peters, Den Dulk & Van der Lippe, 2009), but therefore differ in their self-rated performance compared to objective measured performance.

Especially in this economic situation, organizations need to know how effective flexwork practices are for the organization and how employees evaluate their organizational performance. To determine to what extent flexwork practices should be offered, it is necessary to have insight in the benefits and costs for the organization. Because this need for clarity and the fact that organizations determine to what extent they offer flexwork practices, this research is focused on performance on the organizational level.

Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007) define three dimensions of work role performance, namely proficiency, adaptivity and proactivity which all can be analyzed on individual, team/departmental and organizational level. In modern organizations, employees and their tasks are becoming more interdependent from each other. Therefore performances on the different levels of analysis are also becoming more interdependent from each other. This research is focused on proficiency performance on organizational level. The definition of Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007) is used who define organizational member proficiency performance as “the degree to which an individual meets the expectations and requirements of his or her role as a member of an organization” (p. 331).

Self-rated performance on individual level is debated (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), but employees perceive a higher organizational performance when flexwork practices are offered (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000) Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 4: The higher the use of flexwork practices, the higher the self-rated organizational member proficiency performance.

Work engagement

Work engagement is considered the opposite of burnout (cf. Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002), work engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, affective motivational state of work-related well-being that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption” (p.74). Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris (2008) specify these three components further as follows: “Vigour is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work, and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work” (p. 188).

The link between use of flexwork practices and work engagement is hardly researched. The results in the research of Plantinga (2011) into the relationship between use of flexwork practices and work engagement are inconclusive. Ten Brummelhuis, Bakker, Hetland and Keulemans (2012) however find that the 'new ways of working', which inter alia consists of flextime and flexplace, have a positive effect on daily work engagement. In addition, job autonomy is highly correlated with engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2007). The possibility to make use of flexwork practices can be seen as a form of autonomy. As described by Gagne (2003), the more autonomy people perceive to have, the more engaged people are in the activities they undertake. The support of others for autonomy also has a positive influence on work engagement (Deci et al., 2001). Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 5: The higher the use of flexwork practices, the higher work engagement.

Method

Participants and design

600 employees of an international consulting and IT services organization were invited to participate. 212 participants, 32 women and 180 men, voluntarily filled in the entire questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 35.3%. The mean age was 43.3 years ($SD=11.0$). Most participants had either successfully finished a WO master (38.4%), HBO bachelor (35.1%) or WO bachelor / HBO master (11.4%). They individually filled in the online questionnaire on a self-chosen time and place. All 600 invited employees received 1 invitation plus 1 reminder.

Procedure

Participants received an invitation to participate in the study on their business email address. They were asked to fill in an online questionnaire. The email said the topic of the research was flexwork practices. All participants had the choice to participate or not and all received the same questionnaire.

Questionnaire

Perceived impact of the crisis

One self-made question (*De effecten van de crisis op mijn organisatie zijn*) was asked to assess the perceived impact of the crisis on the organization. The answering scale was a 7-point scale ranging from “geen effect” to “heel hoog”.

Use of flexwork practices

This scale consisted of two 4-item subscales by Hyland (1999). These two subscales measured the use of flextime and flexplace practices. Two sample items of the subscale which measured the use of flextime practices, were “*Het aantal keer dat ik daadwerkelijk zelf kies op welke tijden ik mijn werkdag begin en eindig vanwege persoonlijke voorkeuren / omstandigheden, is*” and “*Het aantal keer dat ik daadwerkelijk zelf mijn werktijden kies, is*”. Two sample items of the subscale which measured the use of flexplace practices, were “*Het aantal keer dat ik daadwerkelijk mijn werklocatie kies, is*” and “*Het aantal keer dat ik daadwerkelijk zelf kies op welke locatie ik mijn werk uitvoer vanwege persoonlijke voorkeuren / omstandigheden, is*”. The answering scale for both subscales was a 5-point scale ranging from “nooit” to “4-5x per week”. Cronbach’s alpha for use of flexplace practices was 0.901 and Cronbach’s alpha for use of flextime practices was 0.851.

Amount of flexwork practices allowed by the supervisor

This scale consisted of two 4-item subscales by Hyland (1999). These two subscales measured the amount of flextime and flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor. Two sample items of the subscale which measured the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor, were “*Het aantal keer dat mijn leidinggevende mij toestaat om zelf de tijden te kiezen waarop ik mijn werkdag begin en eindig vanwege persoonlijke voorkeuren / omstandigheden, is*” and “*Het aantal keer dat mijn leidinggevende mij toestaat zelf mijn werktijden te kiezen, is*”. Two sample items of the subscale which measured the amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor, were “*Het aantal keer dat mijn leidinggevende mij toestaat zelf mijn werklocatie te kiezen, is*” and “*Het aantal keer dat mijn leidinggevende mij toestaat om zelf de locatie te*

kiezen waar ik mijn werk uitvoer vanwege persoonlijke voorkeuren / omstandigheden, is". The answering scale for both subscales was a 5-point scale ranging from "nooit" to "4-5x per week". Cronbach's alpha for amount of flexplace allowed by the supervisor was 0.893 and Cronbach's alpha for amount of flextime allowed by the supervisor was 0.871.

Job Security

Job security was measured by a 5-item scale based on Kraimer, Wayne, Liden and Sparrowe (2005). The five questions with the highest factor loadings from their study were selected. One sample question was "*Ik denk dat mijn functie zeker is*". The answering scale was a 7-point scale ranging from "sterk mee oneens" to "sterk mee eens". Cronbach's alpha was 0.905.

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring was measured by the 11-item subscale other-directness from the Self-Monitoring Scale by Briggs, Cheek and Buss (1980). Two sample items were "*Ik ben niet altijd de persoon die ik lijk te zijn*" and "*Om aardig gevonden te worden, gedraag ik me het liefst naar wat mensen van me verwachten*". The answering scale was a 5-point scale ranging from "helemaal niet mee eens" to "helemaal mee eens". Cronbach's alpha was 0.707.

Work Engagement

The 9-item scale UBES9 by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) was used to measure work engagement. One sample item was "*Ik ga helemaal op in mijn werk*". The answering scale was a 7-point scale ranging from "nooit" to "Altijd (dagelijks)". Cronbach's alpha was 0.936.

Organizational member proficiency performance

Organizational member proficiency performance was measured by the 3-item scale by Griffin, Neal and Parker (2007). One sample item was "*Praatte ik op een positieve manier over mijn organisatie*". Participants were asked how much they performed the specified action in the last month. The answering scale was a 5-point scale ranging from "weinig" to "veel". Cronbach's alpha was 0.859.

Analytical approach

Six hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. The first two analyses tested the relationship between the perceived impact of the crisis and the use of flexplace and flextime practices. The third and fourth analyses tested the moderating effect of job security and self-monitoring on the relationship between the perceived impact of the crisis and the use of flexplace and flextime practices. Analysis five tested the effect of the use of flextime and flexplace practices on organizational member proficiency performance. Analysis six tested the effect of use of flextime and flexplace practices on work engagement.

Both analyses one and two controlled for the amount of flexplace and flextime practices allowed by the supervisor. As discussed in the introduction, not being present on the regular times and places is generally associated with negative consequences such as negative career consequences and professional isolation (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). When supervisors are not perceived as allowing use of flexwork practices, this might limit the actual use of flexwork practices (Voydanoff, 2007 in Hill et al., 2008; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999). Therefore it was necessary to control for the amount of flexwork practices allowed by the supervisor.

For conducting the (moderated) regression analyses, the steps described by Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004) were followed. First the predictor variables were standardized and centered to avoid problems with multicollinearity and to make it easier to look into moderation effects. Secondly, the predictor variables were entered hierarchically. For analyses one, two, three and four, the amount of flexwork practices allowed by the supervisor was entered in the first block. In the second block the predictor variables were entered and in the third block the product terms were entered to test for moderation effects. For analyses five and six, the predictor variables were entered in the first block.

Results

One participant was removed from the dataset due to serious doubts of the reliability of the given answers.

Correlations

The mean scores and standard deviations of the scales together with the correlations between the scales can be found in table one. Self-monitoring was negatively correlated with work engagement ($r=-.205, p<.01$) and work engagement was positively correlated with organizational member proficiency performance ($r=.473, p<.01$). Furthermore, job security was positively correlated with organizational member proficiency performance ($r=.155, p<.05$). As expected, the amount of use of flexplace practices was positively correlated with organizational member proficiency performance ($r=.192, p<.01$), but use of flextime practices was not correlated with organizational member proficiency performance ($r=0.89, ns$). Use of flextime and flexplace practices were positively correlated ($r=.556, p<.01$). A positive correlation was found between the amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor and use of flexplace practices ($r=.730, p<.01$). Also a positive correlation was found between the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor and use of flextime practices ($r=.706, p<.01$). Organizational member proficiency performances was also positively correlated with the amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor ($r=-.269, p<.01$). The perceived impact of the crisis had a negative correlation with job security ($r=-.190, p<.01$) and positive correlations with use of flexplace practices ($r=.146, p<.05$) and use of flextime practices ($r=.153, p<.05$).

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Table 1.
Correlations between all tested variables (N=211 employees)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Work engagement	3.80	1.06	-							
2. Self-monitoring	2.48	0.47	-.205**	-						
3. Organizational member proficiency performance	3.57	0.87	.473**	-.055	-					
4. Job security	3.74	1.55	.114	.060	.155*	-				
5. Use of flexplace practices	3.81	1.01	.024	-.077	.192**	-.015	-			
6. Use of flextime practices	3.80	1.10	-.051	-.119	.089	.058	.556**	-		
7. Amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor	3.98	1.16	.019	-.046	.149*	.039	.493**	.706**	-	
8. Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	3.78	1.25	.037	-.031	.269**	.051	.730**	.468**	.690**	-
9. Perceived impact of the crisis	5.35	.899	-.004	-.063	-.036	-.190**	.146*	.153*	.032	.053

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)

* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

Regression analyses

The first hypothesis states that the higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the less participants will make use of flextime and flexplace practices. Two linear regressions were conducted to examine whether the perceived impact of the crisis had an effect on both the use of flextime and flexplace practices when controlling for the amount of flextime and flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor. For use of flextime practices, the linear regression showed

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that the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor was a significant predictor ($\beta=.71, p<.01$) of use of flextime practices. The model including the perceived impact of the crisis was significantly better than the model with only the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor ($\Delta R^2=.017, \Delta F=7.30, p<.01$) and in this model the perceived impact of the crisis was a significant predictor ($\beta=.13, p<.01$) of use of flextime practices. The amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor was still a significant predictor ($\beta=.70, p<.01$). These results can be found in table 2a.

Table 2a.
Effects of perceived impact of the crisis on use of flextime practices

	B	SD	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.499	
Amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor	.664	.046	.706**		
Step 2				.516	.017**
Amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor	.660	.045	.702**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	.143	.053	.130**		

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)

* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

For use of flexplace practices, the linear regression showed that the amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor was a significant predictor ($\beta=.73, p<.01$). Again the model with the perceived impact of the crisis was significantly better than the model with only the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor ($\Delta R^2=.012, \Delta F=5.29, p<.05$) and in this model the perceived impact of the crisis was a significant predictor ($\beta =.11, p<.05$) of use of flexplace practices. The amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor was still a significant predictor ($\beta=.73, p<.01$). These results can be found in table 2b.

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Table 2b.
Effects of perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexplace practices

	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.533	
Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	.590	.038	.730**		
Step 2				.545*	.012
Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	.586	.038	.725**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	.109	.047	.108*		

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)

* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

Therefore the first hypothesis that the higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the less participants will make use of flexwork practices, was not supported. There are significant effects of the perceived impact of the crisis on the use of flexplace and flextime practices, but in the opposite direction of the expectation. It appears that the higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the more employees will make use of flexwork practices.

The second and third hypotheses stated that the higher the amount of self-monitoring and the lower the job security, the stronger the negative effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on the use of flexplace and flextime practices. This hypothesis can be rejected beforehand because the effect of hypothesis one was in the opposite direction. However, the moderated regression analyses were still conducted to examine whether job security and self-monitoring affected the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexwork practices, controlled for the amount of flexwork practices allowed by the supervisor.

Moderated regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexplace practices, controlled for the amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor. Again the amount of

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flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor ($\beta=.73, p <.01$) was a predictor of use of flexplace practices. The model with the perceived impact of the crisis, self-monitoring and job security was not significantly better than the model with only amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor ($\Delta R^2=.015, \Delta F=2.25, ns$). Furthermore, the model with the interaction terms included, was not significantly better than the previous model ($\Delta R^2=<.002, \Delta F=0.44, ns$). These results can be found in table 3a.

Table 3a.
Effects of perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexplace practices with self-monitoring and job security as moderators

	B	SD	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.533	
Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	.590**	.038	.730**		
Step 2				.548	.015
Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	.586**	.038	.725**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	.100*	.048	.099*		
Self-monitoring	-.047	.048	-.047		
Jobsecurity	-.031	.048	-.030		
Step 3				.550	.002
Amount of flexplace practices allowed by the supervisor	.588**	.038	.727**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	-.140	.277	-.139		
Self-monitoring	-.229	.296	-.226		
Jobsecurity	-.196	.300	-.194		
Perceived impact of the crisis *	.020	.035	.170		
Selfmonitoring Perceived impact of the crisis *	.074	.117	.242		
Jobsecurity					

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)

* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

A second moderated regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on use of flextime practices, controlled for the amount of flextime practices allowed by the supervisor. The amount of

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flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor ($\beta=.71, p<.01$) turned out to be a predictor of use of flexitime practices. The model with the perceived impact of the crisis, self-monitoring and job security was significantly better than the model with only amount of flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor ($\Delta R^2=.027, \Delta F=3.871, p<.01$). The amount of flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor ($\beta=.70, p<.01$) and the perceived impact of the crisis ($\beta=.14, p<.01$) were significant predictors in the new model, but self-monitoring ($\beta=-.08, ns$) and job security ($\beta=.06, ns$) were not. The model with the interaction terms included, was not significantly better than the previous model ($\Delta R^2=.01, \Delta F=1.33, ns$). These results can be found in table 3b.

Table 3b.
Effects of perceived general effect of the crisis on use of flexitime practices with self-monitoring and job security as moderators

	B	SD	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				499	
Amount of flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor	.664**	.046	.706**		
Step 2				525	.027**
Amount of flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor	.654**	.045	.696**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	.150**	.054	.137**		
Self-monitoring	-.089	.053	-.082		
Jobsecurity	.068	.054	.062		
Step 3				532	.006
Amount of flexitime practices allowed by the supervisor	.644**	.046	.685**		
Perceived impact of the crisis	.636*	.307	.578*		
Self-monitoring	.415	.329	.379		
Jobsecurity	.111	.333	.101		
Perceived impact of the crisis *	-.006	.039	-.048		
Selfmonitoring Perceived impact of the crisis *	-.203	.130	-.610		
Jobsecurity					

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)

* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

Therefore the second and third hypotheses, that state that high self-monitoring and low job security strengthen the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on the use of flexplace and flextime practices, were not supported.

Hypothesis four stated that the higher the use of flexwork practices, the higher the self-rated organizational member proficiency performance. A regression analysis was used to examine if the use of flexwork practices was related with self-rated organizational member proficiency performance. Use of flexplace practices was positively related to organizational member proficiency performance ($\beta=.21, p<.05$), but use of flextime practices was not ($\beta=-.03, ns$). The results can be found in table 4.

Table 4.
Effects of use of flexplace and flextime practices on organizational member proficiency performance

	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²
Step 1				.037
Use of flexplace practices	.179	.071	.206**	
Use of flextime practices	-.022	.071	-.025	

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)
* significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

Therefore the fourth hypothesis, that stated that use of flexwork practices has a positive effect on organizational member proficiency performance, was partly supported. Use of flexplace practices had a positive effect on organizational member proficiency performance, but use of flextime practices had no effect.

The fifth and last hypothesis stated that use of flexwork practices has a positive effect on work engagement. A regression analysis was used to examine whether the use of flextime and flexplace practices were related with work engagement. Both use of flexplace practices ($\beta=.08, ns$) and use of flextime practices ($\beta=-.09, ns$) had no effect on work engagement. The results can be found in table 5.

Table 5.
Effects of use of flexplace and flextime practices on work engagement

	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²
Step 1				.006
Use of flexplace practices	.080	.088	.075	
Use of flextime practices	-.098	.088	-.093	

Note: ** significant at $p=.01$ significance level (2-tailed)
 * significant at $p=.05$ significance level (2-tailed)

Therefore the fifth hypothesis, which stated that use of flexplace and flextime practices has a positive effect on work engagement, was not supported.

Discussion

The current research aimed to provide more insight in the antecedents and effects of use of flexwork practices as requested by Shockley and Allen (2011). They note that factors and motives which influence the decision of individuals to make use of the available flexwork practices are hardly researched. Especially in the current time of crisis, the effect of the environment of organizations is a relevant topic for research. This paper shed light on the effects of the economic crisis which was not researched before in this context. Together with the effects of flexwork practices, these results contribute to the literature on flexwork practices.

The perceived impact of the crisis was measured to see whether this predicted use of flexwork practices. Results showed that the higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the more participants made use of flexplace and flextime practices. In addition, job security and self-monitoring were measured to see whether this moderated the relationship between the perceived impact of the crisis and the use of flexwork practices. They both had no effect on the relationship between the perceived impact of the crisis and the use of flexwork practices. As effects of use of flexwork practices, work engagement and organizational member proficiency performance were measured. No effect from use of flexwork practices on work engagement was found, but the use of flexwork practices turned out to have a positive effect on

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organizational member proficiency performance. The results are discussed below

It turned out that the *higher* the perceived impact of the crisis, the more participants made use of flexplace and flextime practices. This is opposite to the expectation. Possible reasons are that the population exists of people who are used to make use of flexwork practices. They might increase their use of flexwork practices because they notice they can become more productive. This is in line with findings of Shockley and Allen (2011) who find that employees are motivated by work-related motives like productivity and efficiency. Another explanation is the work culture of the organization, in which employees are stimulated and expected to make use of flexwork practices. The job itself encompasses employees to travel to the customer a lot, which can be seen as making use of flexwork practices by the participants. Together with the fact that it is common practice to work more hours than contracted for and this is linked to a higher probability to make use of flexwork practices (Golden, 2008), it is not a big surprise that the higher the perceived impact of the crisis, the more employees work remotely. Employees might perceive this as contributing positively to their career and performance.

Job security and self-monitoring did not moderate the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexplace and flextime practices. Because the effect of the perceived impact of the crisis on use of flexwork practices was in the opposite direction of the expectation, the additive effect of job security and self-monitoring was not anymore to be expected. Secondly, the company under research had a work culture in which use of flexwork practices is stimulated. Therefore this is not deviant from the expectations of others and self-monitoring might not have an additive effect. Lastly, Moen and Kelly (2007) state that use of flexwork practices leads to a higher job security. Therefore the effect of job security on use of flexwork practices might be more complex than expected.

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The use of flexplace practices resulted in a higher self-rated organizational member proficiency performance. However, use of flextime practices did not predict self-rated organizational member proficiency performance. Most research indicates that flexible working practices in general have a positive effect on organizational performance (e.g. Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000), but other research also specifically argued use of flextime practices would increase productivity (e.g. Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Shepard, Clifton & Kruse, 1996; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Therefore the result, that use of flextime practices did not result in a higher organizational member proficiency performance, was not expected. This result might be attributable to the specific work culture. As Gajendran and Harrison (2007) note, the amount of flexibility is of influence on the effect of use of flexwork practices. They found that less flexible schedules resulted in stronger effects than more flexible schedules. In the organization under study, employees have much freedom in the hours they work. Beside this explanation, it is also known that those who make use of flextime practices work more overtime (Peters, Den Dulk & Van der Lippe, 2009). In the company under study, this holds true. This might influence how employees experience their organizational member proficiency performance as use of flextime practices might not be considered a choice, but a necessity.

There did not appear to be an effect of use of flexplace or flextime practices on work engagement. This relationship is hardly researched. Plantinga (2011) found inconclusive results. Ten Brummelhuis, Bakker, Hetland and Keulemans (2012) found positive effects of 'new ways of working' on daily work engagement, but other studies in which this relationship was researched, were not found. Still this result was not expected, because the use of flexwork practices is seen as a form of autonomy and as Gagne (2003) found, the more autonomy people perceive, the more engaged people are in the activities they undertake. In addition, Schaufeli and Bakker (2007) found that job autonomy is highly correlated with engagement. This is supported by the fact that the availability of flexwork practices has a motivating aspect on employees (Lambert, 2000; Kossek & Van Dyne, 2008). There might be a discrepancy between the availability of flexwork practices and the use of

these flexwork practices. Secondly, the organization under study had a work culture in which the use of flexwork practices is considered normal. This might have contributed to the fact that the use of flexwork practices had no effect on work engagement in this study.

Limitations and future research

First, this study is conducted in one organization and the work culture might have contributed to the found antecedents and effects of flexwork practices. Therefore more research should be conducted in other organizations with different work cultures regarding flexwork practices. Secondly, this study made use of self-rated measures which might differ from objective measures. Further study is necessary to determine whether there is a difference in objective and subjective measures. This is especially relevant for organizational performance, because there is reason to believe subjective and objective measures of performance might differ (cf. Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999) and the objective effects are relevant for organizations evaluating the benefits and costs of flexwork practices. A third limitation is that this research was cross-sectional. Especially when incorporating the economical situation which is constantly changing and therefore measurement is heavily reliant on the time of study, longitudinal research is necessary to have a clear picture of the studied relationships. Further research would therefore ideally be longitudinal and also measure more factors that might influence the use of flexwork practices. Fourth and last limitation is that there was no validated scale available to measure the impact of the economic crisis. This is inherent to the difficulty to conceptualize the construct, but further research should try to conceptualize the impact of the crisis and find underlying factors.

Additionally further research should look into the relation between use of flexwork practices and work engagement. Scarcity empirical evidence is available and therefore more research into this relationship is needed. Further research should also incorporate the amount of flexibility of flexwork practices, because this influences the effects of flexwork practices (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Conclusion and practical implications

Self-rated organizational member proficiency performance increases due to the use of flexplace practices. When participants experience the impact of the crisis to be high, they use flexplace and flextime practices more. The fact that the vast majority of organizations maintain or increase their level of flexwork practices, as described by Galinsky and Bond (2009), is beneficiary in light of this finding. However, organizations should be careful with the amount of flexibility, because too much flexibility has a negative effect on performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Organizations should stimulate and explicitly support flexplace to increase organizational member proficiency performance. Further research is necessary to elaborate on the exact mechanism underlying the found results and whether the effects can be found in other populations.

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