

CHAPTER 17

Face-Time Matters: A Cross-Level Model of How Work-Life Flexibility Influences Work Performance of Individuals and Groups

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Because time at work necessarily implies time away from other activities, employees who are observed to be present at work for extended hours appear to be more committed. ...it is not clear that such employees accomplish more. Face-time as an indicator of commitment, though clearly an imperfect rule, works because it unambiguously indicates that the work of the organization takes precedence over other aspects of one's life.

(Bailyn, 1993, 110)

Face-time, the visible time that employees spend at work, is a social cue that co-workers and managers use to infer employee commitment to work (Munck, 2001). Work-life flexibility options such as part-time, flextime, and telework allow individuals greater influence over the time, timing, and place of work, and have important social and group performance implications related to face-time, coordination, and motivation. Work-life flexibility occurs when employees are able to initiate flexibility in how long, when, and where they work in a manner that allows them to integrate work with other life roles such as family or leisure (Perlow, 1997).

To date, organizations have often implemented flexibility programs without adequate attention to the effects of changes in face-time on social processes in the group, coordination of work, cooperation among co-workers, and the implications for group performance. We suggest this is particularly problematic because work is increasingly being organized around groups.

Instead, research has focused on flexibility practices (such as flextime, telecommuting, and shortened work weeks) as a human resource benefit to attract and retain talent (Barnett & Hall, 2001). Even when the individual outcomes are examined, research has focused on attitudinal consequences such as satisfaction, commitment, intent to turnover, and strain over behaviors such as performance (e.g., Gottlieb, Kelloway & Barham, 1998). Very few studies consider the motivation and coordination consequences (Levine & Moreland, 1998) on individual and group performance and often overlook cross-level effects of use on groups

(Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Cross-level effects are critical because use reduces face-time and has motivational and coordination consequences for co-workers.

The limited current research and theory on the performance effects of work-life flexibility is mixed. Some scholars contend that using flexibility has many benefits such as empowering employees to have greater schedule control, and enabling them to select the most personally productive work times to implement work and family more effectively (Federico & Goldsmith, 1998; Lambert, 2000). When these outcomes occur, the company also benefits as there is likely to be improved performance and increased discretionary contributions such as higher suggestions, as well as reduced turnover, absenteeism, and interruptions from work-family conflicts (Crandall & Wallace, 1998; Hill, Miller, Weiner & Colihan, 1998; Lambert, 2000). Other research, however, is contradictory and fails to show performance benefits (Dunham, Pierce & Castenada, 1987; Hill et al., 1998; Judiesch & Lynness, 1999). In reviewing the flexibility literature, scholars have generally concluded that the potential benefits of flexibility have not been fully realized and more research is needed (Avery & Zabel, 2001; Perlow, 1997).

CHAPTER GOALS AND BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

To address these gaps, the goals of this chapter are: (1) to introduce a cross-level model that links the reduced face-time of flexibility use with in-role and extra-role individual and group-level work performance; and (2) to develop a richer conceptualization of types of flexibility by jointly examining its positive and negative effects and differentiating motivation and coordination consequences of reduced face-time for performance at multiple levels.

Our conceptualization of work-life flexibility differentiates three basic types of flexibility (time, timing, and place), highlighting the importance of light versus heavy intensity. Our model (see Figure 17.1) emphasizes individual and cross-level effects of work-life flexibility use on performance. We organize the chapter by first describing key boundary conditions. Second, we present a typology of three basic types of employee-initiated work-life flexibility. Third, we introduce our model and propositions that describe the effects of work-life flexibility use on individual and group performance and discuss its implications for research and practice.

A key boundary condition of our chapter is our focus on employee-initiated flexibility. We acknowledge that employers often initiate and require changes in the number of hours worked (e.g., temporary lay-offs or required overtime), changes in the timing of work (e.g., rotating shifts or compressed work week), and changes in the location of work (e.g., required telecommuting or split-location responsibilities). These practices require employees to be flexible about their work. These examples of required flexibility, however, are outside the domain of our model. Instead, we focus on work-life flexibility where employees influence

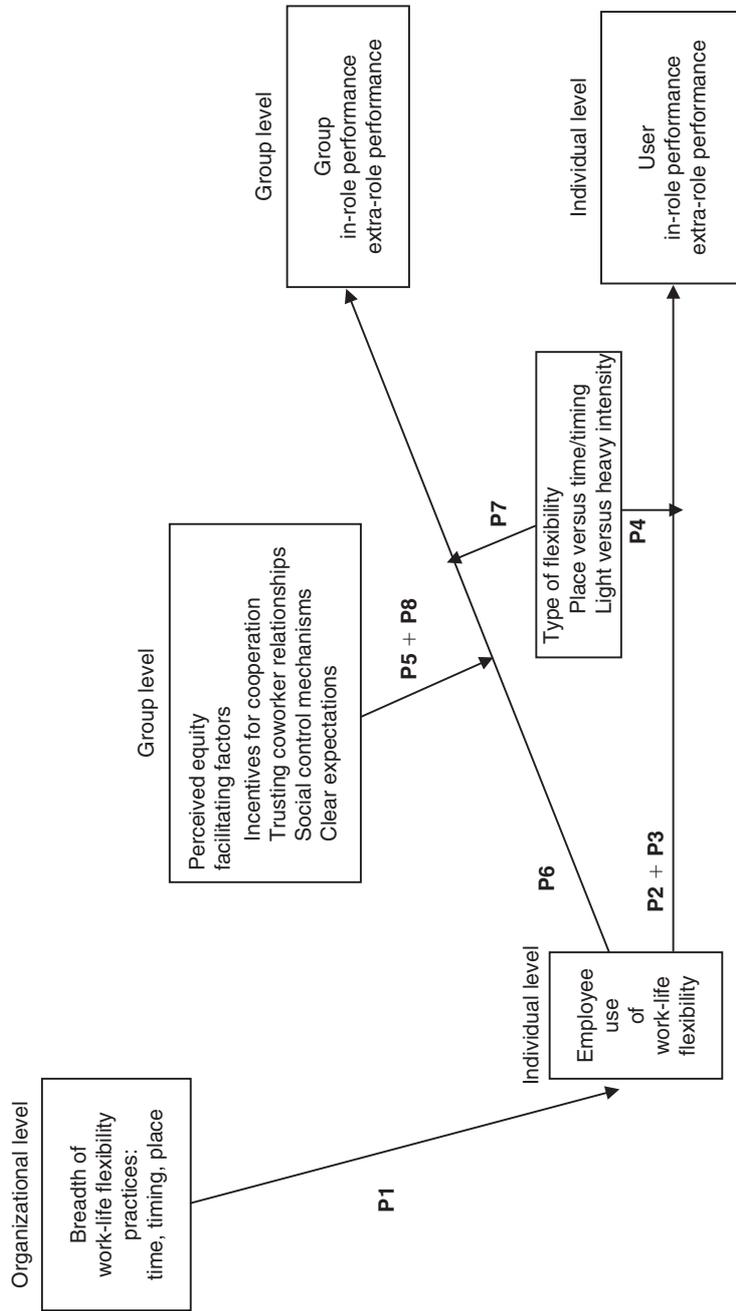


Figure 17.1 Work-life flexibility and work performance

Table 17.1

Basic types of flexibility	Employee-initiated: Time, timing, and place	Employee-initiated intensity	Employer-mandated: Time, timing, and place
Time flexibility	Reduced hours Personal leave Educational leave Travel leave Family leave Maternity/Parental leave Disability leave Leave without pay Overtime limits Phased retirement	Light intensity: Full-time hours Moderate intensity: Reduced hours Heavy intensity: Extended or indefinite Leave of absence	Temporary layoffs Temporary plant shutdown Reduced hours to save costs Required part-time hours Changes in overtime hours
<i>Definition:</i> Flexibility in the number of hours worked			
Timing flexibility	Flex-time Core hours flexi-time Total flexibility in timing Results-based professional Work	Light intensity: Standard hours (i.e., 9–5) Moderate intensity: Core hours or days Heavy intensity: Total flexibility; no core	Rotating shifts Four-day work week Compressed work week Seven-day work coverage
<i>Definition:</i> Flexibility in when work occurs			
Place flexibility	Optional telecommuting Occasional telecommuting Optional satellite office Flexibility to work at home Permanent telecommuting	Light intensity: Employer workplace Moderate intensity: Occasional telework Heavy intensity: Permanent telework	Required telecommuting Required satellite office Required client office work Required travel Split-location job duties Job transfer
<i>Definition:</i> Flexibility in where work occurs			

the time duration, timing, and the place of work (for examples, see Table 17.1). A second domain consideration is our assumption that work processes are interdependent and that employees must coordinate their work with others. Thus, our model, with its emphasis on face-time, has primary relevance to employees whose work is closely integrated with their work group co-workers and supervisors. It has less relevance to individual contributors and independent consultants. Our third assumption is that group performance is more than the sum of individual performance (Hackman, 1990), and thus it is important to consider face-time effects of flexibility use on group-level performance. While beyond our chapter's scope, we also wish to note that the degree to which use of work-life flexibility for individuals and their co-workers maintains or enhances individual and group performance ultimately also has implications for continued access and indirect

effects on family relationships and opportunities for community involvement. Our fourth assumption is that for flexibility policies to positively affect individual and group performance, organizations must have processes that not only support the adoption of flexibility policies, but also the creation of cultures that enhance their access and use, which we refer to as embeddedness (the degree to which members feel the culture supports access and use of flexible work options) (see Andreassi & Thompson in this volume). Our fifth assumption is that although we present three types of flexibility separately (time, timing, and place) as they are often studied separately, increasingly in practice employees may be negotiating combinations such as reduced hours with more place flexibility. Although this multiple use issue is beyond our scope, future scholars should examine the performance impact of flexibility use in varying combinations.

TYPES OF WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY

Work-life flexibility is defined as organizational policies and practices that allow individuals to initiate flexibility in how long, when, and where they work. Flexibility provides autonomy to self-manage work-role enactment in relation to nonwork demands (Olmstead & Smith, 1997). Compared to child and eldercare benefits, which focus specifically on caring for dependents, work-life flexibility is broader and can benefit all employees across the life span. Table 17.1 provides examples of different types of work-life flexibility (time, timing, and place).

The availability of flexible work arrangements varies widely in the US according to the type of workplace and the workforce. For example, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics National Compensation Survey (2000) shows that 7% of large employers offer some flexible work arrangements compared to only 2% of small employers. Access to policies varies widely by type of employee group which creates doubt about whether organizational level studies on policy adoption provide an accurate indicator of access and use across work groups or type of job (Kossek, 2005). For example, the BLS shows that professional and technical employees were twelve times as likely as blue-collar employees and three times as likely as clerical employees to have access to flexible work schedules (BLS, 2000).

TIME FLEXIBILITY

The first type of work-life flexibility is *time flexibility*—the flexibility to modify the *duration* of work relative to nonwork. Two common approaches are: (1) employee-initiated workload reduction (working less than full-time), and (2) leaves of absence. Time flexibility was initially adopted by large US employers and law/accounting firms in the 1980s, because employees often worked significant overtime (often unpaid) due

to an “up or out” mentality (make partner or leave), and this time inflexibility resulted in over 20% turnover annually (Connor, Hooks & McGuire, 1997).¹

TIMING FLEXIBILITY

The second basic type is *timing flexibility*—the flexibility to influence *when* work is scheduled. Timing flexibility, such as flextime, allows variability and temporal freedom in the *timing* or *scheduling* of work, while the number of hours worked and workload remain the same. Timing flexibility can avoid peak congestion and reduce commuting time, thus enabling more family and leisure time or more time at work (Avery & Zabel, 2001).

PLACE FLEXIBILITY

The third basic type of work-life flexibility is *place flexibility*—the flexibility to influence *where* work occurs. Place flexibility allows employees to work at home or at remote, regional, or client sites to reduce commuting and co-worker interruptions (Avery & Zabel, 2001; Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Telecommuting occurs when employees work from home and satellite teleworking occurs when employees work at a location that is remote from their main office but closer to home (Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006).

A MODEL OF WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY AND WORK PERFORMANCE

Our model includes consequences of work-life flexibility on individual user performance and cross-level consequences of individual use of each of these three types of flexibility on group performance. In the individual-level portion of the model we include the cross-level effects of breadth of flexibility practices on individual use. Consistent with Lambert (2000), we propose that flexibility provides motivational benefits to individual users and, extending prior work, we also identify potential coordination costs of using flexibility. When employees use flexibility (work fewer hours, work non-core hours, and work at remote locations), this reduces their face-time at work and their opportunity to coordinate work with co-workers.

We then shift to the group level where we consider cross-level effects of individual use on group performance. When employees work fewer hours, work non-core hours, or work at remote locations, this reduces their face-time at work

¹This, of course, is in addition to public policies predating the 80s in many other developed countries, many of which provide maternity/parental leave; paid vacation, and disability leave.

and, based on social comparison, can raise equity issues. If co-workers feel that use is inequitable, the cross-level motivational effect on overall group performance will be negative. In contrast, if co-workers feel that use is equitable, this cross-level motivational effect will be positive and will enhance group performance. The model also incorporates cross-level coordination effects based on type of flexibility and intensity of use. Lastly, we propose four group-level facilitating factors that managers can use to manage work-life flexibility effects on group performance.

INDIVIDUAL USER CONSEQUENCES

BREADTH OF WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY PRACTICES (TIME, TIMING, AND PLACE)

Although designed to benefit employees, face-time concerns can cause negative reactions to flexibility (Bailyn, 1993; Kossek, Barber & Winters, 1999). For example, some employees may fear use will damage their careers (Perlow, 1997). Other employees may view lower face-time of peers negatively because flexibility policies don't benefit them personally (Grover, 1991). We suggest flexibility policy breadth (e.g., narrow practices focused on work-family needs such as child/eldercare versus broad practices including time, timing, and place options applicable to personal, community, educational, and leisure activities that can be used by all employees regardless of age, career stage, or income) may be one reason for low use of existing policies. Certainly the degree to which the culture or climate suggests attending to work and family needs, the degree to which broad flexibility options are available, and the priority put on face-time and sacrificing work over family are other informal factors that can enhance or impede the effective use of policies (see Andreassi & Thompson, this volume, and Kossek, Colquitt & Noe, 2001).

Typically, when organizations first respond to work-life issues, they offer low breadth work-family benefits (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000). If, over time they do not expand the range of options, employees without family responsibilities may not benefit personally and may feel they are being treated inequitably (Burkett, 2000). In contrast, if flexibility practices are broad (time, timing, and place), most employees should benefit and utilization should be higher. Broadly applicable practices acknowledge that all employees juggle multiple roles and value work-life integration (Lambert, 2000) and should generate more positive reactions and less reactance than narrow practices, which benefit a more limited segment of the workforce. Broad practices support a range of life responsibilities and interests such that lower face-time is not based only on child or dependent care. In contrast, narrow policies focus attention on the lower face-time of those with the greatest family demands. We propose that broad flexibility options will lead to higher individual use, since employees may use flexibility for many different work-life reasons.

P1: Broad work-life flexibility practices that include time, timing, and place (rather than only legally mandated or work-family benefits) will enhance individual use of flexibility.

In the next sections, we differentiate motivation and coordination consequences for those who use flexibility. This extends past individual-level research, which has focused primarily on the motivational benefits to users. Drawing on Levine and Moreland (1998), we suggest that it is important to recognize both motivation and coordination consequences of flexibility.

MOTIVATION CONSEQUENCES TO USERS

When employees have options to influence how much, when, and where they work, these choices have motivational and performance implications. When organizations offer work-life flexibility options to their employees, they recognize individual differences in scheduling preferences, acknowledge diversity, and do not force all employees to conform to the same work practices. Offering a broad range of flexibility options signals that employees have unique needs and indicates that human capital is a key organizational resource (Federico & Goldsmith, 1998). Consistent with this, the research on perceived organizational support (POS) demonstrates that when employees feel they are supported by the organization, they experience an obligation to reciprocate (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch & Rhodes, 2001). This obligation results in higher organizational commitment and motivation to contribute to the organization in exchange for benefits received. Those who use flexibility and are able to influence the time, timing, and place of work should experience high levels of motivation.

Past work-life flexibility literature has emphasized motivational benefits of the three types of flexibility. For example, research on time flexibility demonstrates that voluntary part-time workers (e.g., job-sharers) experience psychological benefits and often work at high energy levels (Avery & Zabel, 2001). Employees who work reduced workloads report they are better able to give their best to their jobs (Lee & Kossek, 2004). Flexibility in the timing of work enhances work integration with other life commitments (e.g., childcare, eldercare, education, exercise, and financial, legal, medical appointments) and enhances job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and motivation (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Hill et al., 1998; Kossek et al., 1999). Place flexibility cuts commuting time, reduces co-worker interruptions, and increases work concentration (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). We argue that use of time, timing, and place work-life flexibility has positive motivational consequences for employees. In work contexts, the direction,

intensity, and duration of high motivation typically focus on task responsibilities (Mitchell, 1997). We propose that individual use of work-life flexibility should be personally motivating and should enhance in-role work performance.

P2: *Motivational effects:* Individual use of work-life flexibility provides motivational benefits to users and enhances their in-role performance.

COORDINATION CONSEQUENCES TO USERS

When employees have options to influence how much, when, and where they work, these choices also have coordination consequences for them because they will have less face-time at work (Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher & Pruitt, 2002). When employees work less than full-time, work flexible hours, or work off-site, they are less proximal to their co-workers. This reduced contact and interaction can create barriers and can make it more difficult to help others with their work (Van de Ven & Ferry, 1980). We suggest that lower face-time can create coordination challenges that detract from the opportunity to engage in extra-role behavior (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Organ, 1988; Van Dyne, Cummings & McLean Parks, 1995). Extra-role behavior (ERB) is discretionary behavior that requires initiative, is not formally rewarded, and is not an expected role responsibility. Helping, the most commonly researched form of ERB, occurs when employees voluntarily pitch in and assist co-workers. Lower face-time, however, reduces the opportunity to help co-workers. If employees work fewer hours, at different times, or at distant locations, they may be unavailable to help when deadlines make the benefits of teamwork and cooperation particularly important. They may not be physically present to answer questions and help newcomers learn their jobs or be unaware that others need help. We propose reduced face-time creates coordination challenges that reduce discretionary helping.

P3: *Coordination effects:* Individual use of work-life flexibility creates coordination challenges for users and detracts from their extra-role performance.

Moving to considering differing effects of type of work-life flexibility used (see Table 17.1), we propose that different types of flexibility have different implications for face-time, coordination, and ERB. Specifically, we argue that type of flexibility moderates the relationship between individual use and the user's ERB. We first focus on place and then on intensity.

The key aspect of place flexibility is working at a remote location. Compared to time or timing, place flexibility has the most dramatic effect on worker proximity (Wells, 2001). For example, with reduced hours (time flexibility) or flexible hours

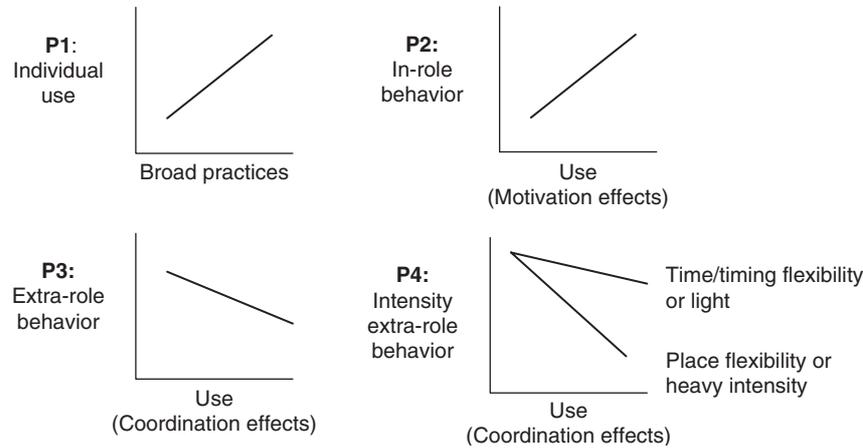


Figure 17.2 Individual work-life flexibility and individual performance

(timing flexibility), employees continue regular and ongoing contact with co-workers because they are located at the same facility. In contrast, place flexibility is more likely to have serious implications for regular face-to-face interaction. When employees work at home, at a client's office, or at a satellite facility, their access to co-workers is reduced more significantly than when they work fewer hours (time flexibility) or when they work flexible hours (timing flexibility). Those who telework participate in fewer informal office gatherings (lunch or coffee) and will be less aware that co-workers need their help. For example, Cooper and Kurland (2002) describe the professional isolation and reduced informal communication that occur for those who work at remote locations. Place flexibility generally makes it more difficult to offer spontaneous, discretionary help. In sum, we predict an interaction where reduced extra-role behavior (helping) will be most severe for those who use flexibility in *where* they work (i.e., place flexibility) (see Figure 17.2).

P4a: Coordination effects: Type of flexibility moderates the coordination effects of individual use of work-life flexibility on individual extra-role behavior, such that the relationship will be weaker for time or timing types of flexibility than for place flexibility.

UTILIZATION INTENSITY

For our second moderator, we consider the intensity of use. For each of our three basic types of work-life flexibility, we differentiate and provide examples of

light, moderate, and heavy intensity. We then propose that the opportunity to perform extra-role behavior will be most severely restricted for heavy intensity flexibility.

Place Intensity

Although extreme examples of flexibility such as total flexibility of hours or permanent telework, which exemplify heavy intensity utilization, often get emphasized by the media, Bailey and Kurland's (2002) insightful conceptualization of telecommuting notes that utilization of alternate work arrangements need not be high in intensity. Although some employees telecommute 100% of the time, occasional place flexibility is more common. Light intensity *place flexibility* occurs when employees work at one central work location, except for occasional off-site meetings with suppliers or clients, etc. Moderate intensity *place flexibility* involves periodic remote work. For example, an employee who regularly works in the office might telework away from the primary work site during a special project. Teleworking 2–3 days a week allows employees to reduce commute time, work closely with clients, and accommodate personal responsibilities. In contrast, heavy intensity *place flexibility* involves long-term or permanently working away from the primary work location (Wells, 2001). This occurs when employees choose their primary or permanent place of work outside the office (home, client).

Timing Intensity

Likewise, having no core hours or working exclusively nights/weekends (heavy intensity timing flexibility) provides few opportunities for co-worker interaction, yet flextime with core hours (moderate intensity) is a more common example of timing flexibility. Light intensity *timing flexibility* occurs when employees work standard schedules such as 9–5, except for occasional school conferences, etc. Moderate intensity *timing flexibility* involves working core hours. This allows employees to influence the timing of when they start, stop, and break—as long as they are present at work during a set period of time (i.e., 9 to 3) (Olmstead & Smith, 1997). For example, working core hours but flexing starting time allows employees to meet personal obligations outside of work such as family, medical, or legal appointments. Heavy intensity *timing flexibility* allows total flexibility in hours, without core hours. This allows employees to work unpredictable hours—perhaps to satisfy irregular travel demands and client preferences for staggered or longer service hours. This includes daily flexibility with no core hours, banking hours for future time off, or a standard number of hours required in a certain period with no timing requirements.

Time Intensity

Similarly, although some employees take extended leaves for family or personal reasons (heavy intensity time flexibility), occasional or periodic reduced hours

(moderate intensity) such as during school vacations or while preparing for a professional examination are more common. Light intensity *time flexibility* occurs when employees work full-time, except for occasional sick days or personal time off. Moderate intensity *time flexibility* involves voluntary workload reduction in return for reduced compensation (Lee & Kossek, 2004). Examples include working thirty hours a week, phased-in retirement or return from leave-of-absence, regular or seasonal reduced-hours, job sharing, and short increments of paid time-off (Avery & Zabel, 2001). In contrast, heavy intensity *time flexibility* includes voluntary paid or unpaid leaves of absence, where the employee takes extended time off such as leave for birth, adoption, eldercare, and education (Judiesch & Lynness, 1999).

In each of these three contrasts, heavy intensity work-life flexibility reduces opportunities for regular interaction with co-workers, while lower intensity use allows ongoing coordination and contact. Building on these distinctions, we suggest that intensity has important implications for face-time and that it will moderate the relationship between individual use and ERB. This is an important issue given contemporary trends that emphasize interdependent work processes that emphasize employees' cooperation in helping their co-workers (Ilgen, 1999). If an employee occasionally uses reduced hours, flexible hours, or off-site work (light to moderate intensity), the employee will still have regular contact with co-workers and thus can still contribute ERB.

In contrast, heavy intensity use (such as an extended leave of absence, routinely working nights, or permanently working at home) can prevent regular contact and interaction with others. Less face-time, in turn, has negative implications for user ERB. For example, employees who typically do not work the same number of hours, at the same time or in the same place, are more likely to feel cut off from peers and excluded from general interactions. They will be less aware of both work and interpersonal issues that affect their co-workers and will be less able to pitch in spontaneously and help their colleagues. Thus, we propose an interaction where intensity has coordination implications for the relationship between use and extra-role behavior (see Figure 17.2).

P4b: *Coordination effects:* Intensity moderates the coordination effects of individual use of work-life flexibility on individual extra-role behavior, such that the relationship will be weaker (less negative) for light intensity than for heavy intensity.

CROSS-LEVEL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WORK GROUP

Following the recommendations of Bailey and Kurland (2002), we now focus on cross-level effects of reduced face-time on group-level outcome (proposition

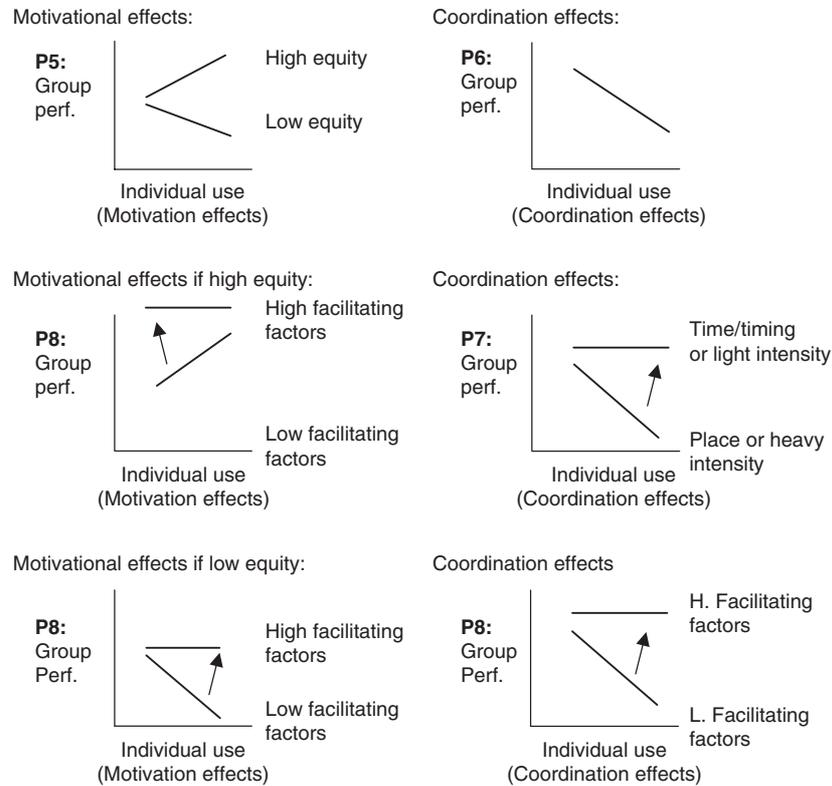


Figure 17.3 Individual work-life flexibility and group performance

5–8). For clarity, we consider motivational and coordination cross-level effects separately. (See Figure 17.3 for illustrations.)

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Earlier we argued that broad work-life flexibility practices provide benefits that can be used by most employees. In this section, we suggest that peer perceptions of equitable use will moderate the cross-level motivation effects of individual use and reduced face-time on work group performance. When flexibility practices are broad, most employees can expect to benefit in the future, even though only some may benefit immediately. When peers observe co-workers using flexibility, this provides behavioral evidence (signaling) that flexibility options are real and available for use (Lambert, 2000). It also shows that the organization values employees and creates a sense of reciprocal obligations. When organizations recognize the personal lives of a broad cross-section of employees, this is motivating and facilitates reciprocity (Eisenberger et al., 2001). At the group level, equitable reduced face-time can further

strengthen motivation and can lead to deviation-amplifying positive spirals (increasingly going above the norm to help out others), that enhance in-role and extra-role group performance (Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995).

In contrast, if peers feel that others' use of work-life flexibility is not equitable, the cross-level motivational effects of reduced face-time on work group performance will be negative. If only a minority use flexibility (perhaps because options are narrow and not applicable to all, or because of negative career consequences), lower face-time of users becomes obvious to nonusers (Perlow, 1997). If policies focus only on work-family flexibility, those who do not have dependents may not benefit and may feel they are being treated unfairly. Here face-time can be demotivating (Burkett, 2000; Grandley, 2001) for nonusers, causing them to reduce their feelings of injustice by lowering contributions to the organization and refusing to help those who use flexibility. In extreme cases, nonusers may retaliate and punish users (exclude them from informal gatherings, withhold work-related information, or blame them for problems that occur in their absence) (Andersson & Pearson, 1998; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). At the group level, these negative cross-level effects should further detract from motivation, leading to deviation-amplifying negative spirals, which reduce group IRB and ERB.

Combining these processes, we propose an interaction where perceived equity changes the form of the relationship between individual use and group performance, such that the relationship between individual use and group performance will be positive when perceived equity is high, but will be negative when perceived equity is low (see Figure 17.3).

P5: *Motivational effects:* Perceived equity moderates the cross-level effect of individual use of work-life flexibility on group performance (both IRB and ERB), such that high perceived equity enhances motivation in the group and causes a positive relationship between individual use and group performance, but low perceived equity reduces motivation in the group and causes a negative link between use and group performance.

COORDINATION FACTORS

We also propose that individual use of work-life flexibility has cross-level effects on coordination processes in work groups (Rapoport et al., 2002). To avoid confounding relationships, we assume in this section that the motivational effects discussed above are held constant. When employees use flexibility (working fewer hours, different hours, or in a different place), their face-time is reduced and peers in the work group have additional challenges of coordinating work processes with users of flexibility. As work processes become increasingly interdependent and as

managers delegate more responsibility to work groups (Ilgen, 1999), this has important implications for overall group performance. If an employee does not work the same number of hours, at the same time, or in the same location, reduced face-time influences other team members. It is not enough to create conditions where the individual is working hard—they may be working very hard, but making team dynamics work well can still be a challenge (Wells, 2001). Flexibility use by an individual can delay responses to customer requests and questions, disrupt routines of peers, create extra work for those left in the office, and cause resentment. When employees work in less proximity to each other, joint problem-solving and coordination of work processes is more difficult (IRB) and the reduced face-time makes it hard for employees to detect and respond to unexpected needs for assistance (ERB). At the group level, individual use of work-life flexibility creates coordination challenges, which lead to process losses (Steiner, 1972) and deviation-amplifying negative spirals that detract from group performance.

P6: *Coordination effects:* Individual use of work-life flexibility creates coordination challenges for peers and has negative effects on group performance (IRB and ERB).

TYPE OF FLEXIBILITY AND GROUP PERFORMANCE

We now consider the moderating role of type of flexibility in influencing the cross-level coordination effects of individual use on group performance. Extending the arguments developed to support proposition 4 (which predicted type of flexibility that would moderate the effects of use on extra-role behavior at the individual level), we propose the type of flexibility influences the relationship between individual use and group performance. We base our arguments on the criticality of coordination for both in-role and extra-role group performance.

We propose that type of flexibility used (time, timing, place) has differential cross-level implications for face-time and coordination of group outputs. We argue that individual use of place flexibility will have more extreme cross-level effects on group performance than either time or timing flexibility. This is because place flexibility (the location of work) has a more dramatic effect on worker proximity to co-workers than either time or timing. When employees work regularly from home or telework from a satellite office, they have less frequent and less regular contact with peers. This has two coordination consequences. Less face-time reduces interaction and makes group communication, problem-solving, cooperation, and coordination more difficult. Place flexibility also causes group-level process losses that detract from in-role group-level performance (Steiner, 1972).

Place flexibility and less face-time also make it more difficult for group members to know when co-workers need help and they are less likely to be present to offer help (ERB). Again, we suggest that these effects lead to deviation-amplifying negative spirals that detract from extra-role performance (Lindsley et al., 1995). Overall, we propose an interaction where type of flexibility used (place versus time/timing) changes the form of the cross-level coordination effects of individual use on group performance. When face-time is reduced the most (place flexibility), the individual use and group performance link will be stronger than for time or timing.

P7a: *Coordination effects:* Type of flexibility moderates the cross-level coordination effects of individual use of work-life flexibility on group performance (IRB and ERB), such that the relationship will be weaker (less negative) for time or timing than place.

Second, we also propose that intensity (light-heavy) has differential cross-level implications for coordination of group outputs (both IRB and ERB). More specifically, we argue that face-time implications of heavy intensity (e.g., time: extended leave of absence; timing: routinely working nights; or place: permanently working at home) will change the link between individual use and group performance more than light or moderate intensity. Light intensity includes examples of time (full-time work with occasional absences), timing (a 9–5 schedule with occasional shifts in timing), and place (central work location with occasional off-site meetings). In each of these instances, employees maintain regular proximity to co-workers and thus protect their face-time and allow ongoing work coordination and discretionary helping. Similarly, moderate intensity (voluntary seasonal part-time work during school vacations, working core hours but flexing start time to avoid peak traffic, periodic remote work during a special project) allows face-time and regular contact with co-workers that, in turn, facilitates work coordination and discretionary helping. In contrast, heavy intensity interferes with IRB and ERB coordination processes in the group. When employees take an extended leave of absence from work, routinely work non-core hours, or work regularly off-site, they have little face-time. As a result, it is more challenging for the group to integrate the required and discretionary efforts of these employees. This leads to group-level process losses which detract from group-level in-role and extra-role performance (Steiner, 1972). In sum, we propose an interaction where the face-time implications of utilization intensity change the cross-level coordination effects of individual use on group performance. With heavy intensity, the relationship between individual use and group-level performance will be more negative than with light intensity.

P7b: *Coordination effects:* Intensity moderates the cross-level coordination effects of individual use of work-life flexibility on group performance (IRB and ERB), such that the relationship will be weaker (less negative) for light intensity than for heavy intensity.

GROUP-LEVEL FACILITATING FACTORS AND GROUP PERFORMANCE

We now turn our attention to group-level factors that can change the cross-level motivation and coordination effects of individual reduced face-time on group-level performance. This is a critical issue because increased coordination demands and peer concerns about flexibility abuse require careful management at the group level (Rapoport et al., 2002). In developing this part of our model, we draw on the social dilemma literature (Pruitt, 1998; Schroeder, 1995) to suggest techniques that managers can use to reduce unanticipated (and often unintended) negative consequences of individual behavior (in our case, use of work-life flexibility) on group-level outcomes (group IRB and ERB). Social dilemmas occur when individual decisions benefit the actor but also trigger costs to the group. Social dilemmas are mixed motive situations that juxtapose personal interests and collective interests (Schelling, 1978; Schroeder, 1995).

This idea of a mixed motive situation is relevant to our interest in work-life flexibility because individual use of work-life flexibility benefits the individual personally, but reduced face-time may confer motivation and coordination costs on the group. For example, propositions 5–7 describe circumstances where individuals benefit personally from the use of work-life flexibility but the cross-level motivation and coordination effects on group performance can be negative. If employees generally feel that utilization of flexibility is not equitable, this can lower motivation in the group and have negative consequences for overall group performance. Similarly, if an employee works in a different location, different hours, or fewer hours, it can be more difficult for the overall group to coordinate its work (IRB) and it can also be more difficult for peers to help each other (ERB).

The social dilemma literature provides a useful framework for thinking about managerial interventions that can reduce the group-level motivation and coordination challenges associated with reduced face-time. Pruitt (1998) suggested specific group-level facilitating factors that can be used to reduce negative cross-level effects of individual behavior on group-level outcomes. We consider four of these factors: incentives for cooperation, trusting co-worker relationships, social control, and clear expectations. According to Pruitt, each of these factors can be used to enhance cooperation among work group members. Each of these suggests managerial techniques for positively structuring and managing the cross-level effects of work-life flexibility use on overall group effectiveness. Table 17.2

Table 17.2

Group-level facilitating factors that influence work-life flexibility and group performance

Social dilemma interventions To enhance cooperation	Examples of practical application of social dilemma interventions
<i>1. Incentives</i>	
* Tangible incentives	Provide <i>tangible</i> incentives such as <i>extra paid time-off</i> for employees who cover for co-workers. Offer greater work-life flexibility as a <i>reward</i> for high performance or as another technique for rewarding seasoned employees who have earned the maximum merit increase or are at the top of their pay range.
* Intangible incentives	Stress <i>intangible</i> benefits, emphasizing the value of <i>positive relationships</i> , increased <i>social identity</i> with the group, and <i>long-term positive consequences of ongoing relationships</i> . Use <i>selection</i> strategies to hire self-motivated individuals with <i>prosocial values</i> who will be motivated to cooperate and support work-life flexibility.
<i>2. Co-worker relationships</i>	
* Matching	Support <i>low-risk positive matching strategies</i> such as <i>offering to cover personally</i> and <i>asking employees to co-self-manage</i> flexibility. Encourage employees to work out <i>agreements to cover for each other</i> (e.g., I'll work for you this Saturday if you work for me next).
* Trust	<i>Model trust by delegating</i> scheduling and coordination for specific projects to employees. Lower risks of trusting behavior by making sure that co-workers do <i>not have to cover for those who continually fail to follow-through</i> on their promises to trade time. <i>Intervene</i> , if necessary, to <i>curb abuse, reverse decisions, or clarify appropriate behavior</i> . Reinforce beliefs that <i>cooperation need not be identical or zero sum</i> in the short-run and that <i>all will benefit personally and collectively</i> from ongoing cooperation.
<i>3. Social control mechanisms</i>	
* Voluntary compliance	Establish clear <i>norms for cooperation</i> and set a climate of <i>strong shared values</i> . <i>Ask for voluntary cooperation</i> and publicly <i>recognize</i> this good citizen behavior. Pair experienced employees with newcomers, as part of a <i>peer mentoring system to socialize cooperation</i> . Ask for <i>public declarations</i> of overall support for flexibility and future willingness to cooperate.
* Promises/Threats	Provide clear statements of <i>realistic benefits</i> based on ongoing cooperation such as adding flexibility options for educational courses or personal travel. Provide equally clear statements of <i>realistic threats</i> for non-cooperation such as removing specific flexibility options (i.e., drop the ability to bank hours in exchange for future time off).
* Rules	Develop <i>policies and procedures</i> for using work-life flexibility based on input from group members. Set up <i>web scheduling</i> so each employee

(continues)

Table 17.2 (continued)

Social dilemma interventions To enhance cooperation	Examples of practical application of social dilemma interventions
* Approvals	knows everyone's schedule. <i>Document and publicize appropriate ways to change schedules</i> to support work-life flexibility. Ask <i>group leaders or subgroups</i> to administer approval of flexibility requests. Provide <i>procedural justice guidelines</i> so that employees understand the process. Establish a <i>hierarchy of needs</i> for determining priorities and balancing responsible use over the long-term.
4. Clear expectations	Initiate conversations that <i>clarify expectations</i> for work-life flexibility use. Make sure employees <i>understand</i> the <i>benefits</i> of ongoing cooperation and the <i>risks</i> of abuse. Communicate clear expectations that work and life <i>situations change</i> and that all employees <i>must be flexible</i> . Facilitate <i>periodic discussions of responsible use</i> . Help employees <i>anticipate challenging situations</i> and <i>develop alternatives</i> for ongoing successful work-life integration. Initiate <i>lunch discussions</i> so employees better understand peer's work and lives outside of work

provides specific examples of how each facilitating factor can enhance cooperation among group members.

The first characteristic that Pruitt (1998) identified is tangible and intangible incentives that motivate cooperation. Social dilemma research suggests the importance of providing financial incentives and other rewards to support cooperation toward the attainment of group goals (Komorita & Parks, 1994) and the intangible satisfaction derived from positive work relationships (Kramer & Goldman, 1995). Specific application to work-life flexibility suggests the benefits of providing paid time off to employees who cover for co-workers who use flexibility. Another application would be offering additional flexibility options as a reward for high performance or as another incentive for those who are at the maximum of their pay ranges. Thus, managers can frame cooperation on work-life flexibility issues in terms of personal gains (financial benefits, positive relationships with others, and long-term positive consequences of ongoing relationships). Another technique suggested by the social dilemma literature is hiring employees who have a prosocial orientation. This is because those who place a high value on positive, personal relationships will derive personal satisfaction from cooperating to resolve tensions or conflict over use of work-life flexibility. These examples of tangible and intangible incentives should increase motivation to cooperate within the work group and minimize potential negative cross-level effects of individual use on group performance.

The second factor identified by Pruitt is trusting co-worker relationships, including past interactions and expectations for future behavior. Social dilemma research demonstrates that expected reciprocity increases cooperative behavior

(Van Lange, Liebrand, Messick & Wilke, 1992). For example, matching strategies (such as tit for tat) can be started and reinforced through small opening moves that carry low risk (Pruitt, 1998). This minimizes concerns about the sucker effect and enhances joint cooperation. A related technique is using trust and substitutes for trust such as making decisions reversible (allowing escape if others defect) and asking others to declare their intentions (Kramer & Goldman, 1995). Specific application to work-life flexibility suggests that managers should support low-risk, positive matching strategies such as offering to cover personally and then later asking employees to co-manage flexibility. Managers can encourage employees to develop agreements among themselves to cover for each other when work demands conflict with personal preferences to use flexibility. Enhancing expectations for matching behavior should enhance the positive effects of individual flexibility use on overall group performance. Managers can also intervene to reinforce trusting relationships, with relevance to flexibility use. They can model trust by delegating scheduling and coordination to employees. They can also intervene to make sure that no employees abuse flexibility by using it and never or rarely covering for others. These interventions include stopping inappropriate behavior and clarifying appropriate use of flexibility. Managers also can clearly communicate the belief that cooperation need not be identical or zero sum because responsible use of broad policies will allow all employees to benefit over time.

Third is social control mechanisms such as group norms for cooperation. According to Pruitt (1998), social norms are especially important for managing social dilemmas and can be divided into four basic categories: voluntary compliance, promises and threats, rules, and approvals. Applied specifically to work-life flexibility, managers can enhance voluntary compliance by asking volunteers to cooperate and then publicly recognize this behavior. They can pair experienced employees with newcomers and through peer mentoring socialize cooperation on flexibility use. Another technique is providing clear descriptions of realistic benefits of cooperation (promises) such as adding new flexibility options for education or personal travel. Similarly, managers can clearly communicate realistic threats for non-compliance (Yamagishi, 1988) such as withdrawing a specific flexibility option such as banking hours for future time off. Managers also can ask group members for input when developing new rules or procedures for flexibility. Alternatively, they might put scheduling information on a web page so that everyone has easy access to work schedules and processes for requesting schedule changes for purposes of flexibility. A final set of options relates to approvals. A manager could delegate approval of flexibility requests to a group leader or subgroup so that employees are directly involved in administrative decisions. To facilitate group decision-making, managers might provide procedural justice guidelines and a hierarchy of needs for prioritizing and balancing requests over time.

Pruitt's fourth factor is clear communication of expectations, and he describes six reasons based on prior research for positive effects on cooperation: reinforcing

group norms, creating pressure for conformity, triggering public commitment, promoting group identity, encouraging expectations that others will cooperate, and promoting long-range thinking and common fate. In applying these specifically to work-life flexibility, we suggest that managers have a number of options. After clarifying initial expectations, they can make sure employees understand the benefits of responsible use and the risks of inappropriate use/abuse. They can indicate that both work and life situations change and thus signal a clear expectation that all employees must be flexible in their use and approach to flexibility. In other words, what works at one point in time, may not endure indefinitely. Periodic group discussions could reinforce appropriate use of flexibility. Finally, managers can help employees anticipate changing situations and can help the group develop alternatives for ongoing successful work-life integration for all group members.

In sum, we propose that these facilitating factors have motivation and coordination implications that will moderate the cross-level relationship between individual use of work-life flexibility and group performance, such that the negative effect of reduced face-time on group performance is weakened when facilitating factors are strong.

P8: Group-level facilitating factors (incentives for cooperation, trusting co-worker relationships, social control mechanisms, and clear expectations) moderate the cross-level motivation and coordination effects of individual use of work-life flexibility on group performance (IRB and ERB), such that the relationship will be weaker when facilitating factors are strong.

DISCUSSION

Reduced hours, flextime, and telework influence face-time at work (Bailyn, 1993; Munch, 2001). Since many organizations still use “line of sight” management styles, where visibility signals commitment and effort, face-time can have implications for performance (Wells, 2001). Building on the idea that face-time matters, we have proposed that reduced face-time has both motivation and coordination consequences for individuals and their work groups. Emphasizing the increasingly interdependent nature of work processes and work design (Ilgen, 1999), we developed a cross-level model predicting both positive and negative effects of work-life flexibility use on individual and work group performance. We suggest that acknowledging and actively managing the social and group implications of reduced face-time should help organizations improve the effectiveness of these programs, which, to date, have not been fully integrated into the workplace (Bailyn, 1993).

The two primary goals of this chapter were (1) to introduce a cross-level model that links the reduced face-time of work-life flexibility use with individual and group performance and (2) to advance work-life flexibility research by developing a richer conceptualization of types of flexibility and differentiating motivation and coordination consequences of reduced face-time for performance. Our approach differs from past perspectives by emphasizing the implications of work-life flexibility use for performance, rather than the more traditional focus on individual attitudes such as satisfaction, commitment, strain, and turnover intentions. The approach also follows the advice of Bailey and Kurland (2002) and incorporates both individual and group level effects on performance. Theoretically, the chapter provides a framework that can guide future research by providing a more precise conceptualization of the face-time implications of work-life flexibility and testable propositions for empirical analyses. Practically, the chapter suggests that type of flexibility and group-level facilitating factors can help managers implement progressive work-life flexibility programs in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from performance.

From a theoretical perspective, we provide a framework that can guide future research in two ways. First, we differentiate three types of work-life flexibility (time, timing, and place) and emphasize the importance of intensity. One of the key points of our framework is that place flexibility and heavy intensity of work-life flexibility use are especially detrimental to face-time and create more severe coordination challenges for employees. In contrast, time, timing, and light intensity are less likely to detract from group performance because they facilitate ongoing interaction among work group peers. Second, we developed an initial model of propositions depicting the effects of work-life flexibility use on performance that can be tested in future empirical analyses. In the first part of the model, we focused on consequences of use to individual users, and in the second part of the model we focused on cross-level consequences of individual use on group performance. We consider inclusion of both individual and group effects as a strength of this framework because it integrates prior work-life flexibility research that has considered individual and group levels separately.

We suggest a number of specific next steps for future research. Before firm recommendations can be made to management, it will be important to test the proposed relationships in the model. Given our emphasis on cross-level effects, this implies research that spans a number of organizations with varying breadth in their work-life flexibility practices. It also implies analysis across a range of groups so that differences between groups (such as differences in trust, incentives for cooperation, social control mechanisms, and expectations) can be assessed. Finally, testing the model will also require nested data from individuals (in work groups) who differ in their use of work-life flexibility and face-time at work. Overall, this suggests a research program that would best be accomplished by a research team, rather than by a single individual.

Another important future research consideration is the need for careful attention to the level of conceptualization and operationalization for each construct in the model. Following recommendations of Kozlowski and Klein (2000), we have explicitly incorporated two types of cross-level relationships in our theorizing. Proposition 1 acknowledges that individuals are nested within organizations and proposes top-down, contextual effects on individual behavior. In contrast, propositions 5–8 propose a bottom-up, cross-level emergence process. Kozlowski and Klein use group performance as a classic example of emergence relationships because group performance emerges from group processes and interactions when work is interdependent. In these situations, group performance is more than the sum of individual performance. Instead, it is a cross-level collective phenomenon that is shaped by individual behavior (P6 and P7) and constrained by the context (P5 and P8). In sum, our propositions specify the level of conceptualization and operationalization for future research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The conceptual framework also has implications for practice. Given advances in information technology and the invasiveness of 24/7 work demands that exist in many organizations, the model suggests important factors for managers to consider in implementing and managing work-life flexibility programs. For example, careful attention to group-level facilitating factors should be especially relevant to managers of Generation X workers who value work-life balance more than previous generations and thus are more likely to use flexibility programs (Hochschild, 1997; Smola & Sutton, 2002). The model suggests four specific interventions based on the social dilemma literature that managers can use to enhance cooperation among group members with direct relevance to reduced face-time and successful use of work-life flexibility. This should facilitate implementation of progressive work-life flexibility programs in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from group performance. Table 17.2 described these facilitating factors and highlights specific practical applications.

Another practical implication is the importance of cross-level coordination and motivation issues. These are particularly salient in contemporary work organizations that use flexibility benefits to attract and retain highly skilled employees and that also use groups and teams to organize work. If reduced face-time seems inequitable, peers may become demotivated and may not cooperate. This can lead to negative cross-level effects on in-role and extra-role group performance. On the other hand, if organizations manage social dilemma factors proactively such that they create and reinforce cooperation, the cross-level effects of work-life flexibility use on group performance are more likely to be neutral or positive. Rapoport and colleagues (2002) described a flexibility coordination board

that a high technology team used to encourage members to coordinate their use of flexibility. When members had shared values, performance improved. Increased communication and coordination helped minimize negative consequences from misreading face-time social cues and discouraged detrimentally high use.

Another practical implication of the model is the differential face-time effects of work-life flexibility based on type and intensity of use. Organizations and work groups can benefit from emphasizing time and timing flexibility as well as low-moderate types of intensity (reduced hours, flextime with core hours, periodic telework).

As for limitations of this chapter, besides the boundary conditions noted earlier, our model is incomplete. It does not include all factors (e.g., nonwork) that influence the effectiveness of work-life flexibility usage and does not include feedback loops or reciprocal effects. We view this as material for future research.

In conclusion, we have proposed that work-life flexibility programs have implications for face-time at work and important implications for individual and work group performance. Acknowledging the interdependent nature of contemporary work, we have developed a model that emphasizes cross-level relationships and factors that are most likely to increase the positive performance consequences of work-life flexibility programs. We hope that our model stimulates future research that integrates two contemporary issues in work organizations: employee preferences for increased flexibility, and the social and performance implications for work groups. To our knowledge, this is the first cross-level model to consider the challenges of managing work-life flexibility so that use enhances rather than detracts from individual and group level performance. We hope our chapter stimulates future research and serves the goal of ultimately helping employees benefit from responsible use of work-life flexibility policies while helping group members work effectively together.

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