

WORK FLEXIBILITY AND SELF-REGULATION PREDICTING THE SUCCESS IN WORK OF PRIVATE COMPANY EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT: This research aimed to 1.) examine the level of work flexibility, self-regulation, and success in work of employees; 2.) examine the relationship between work flexibility and success in work of employees; 3.) examine the relationship between self-regulation and success in work of employees; and 4.) predict the success in work from work flexibility and self-regulation of employees. Samples were 186 private company tech employees. The research instrument was a questionnaire. Statistics used in data analysis were percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, and stepwise multiple regression analysis. Results indicated that 1.) the success in work of employees was in a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.30$, S.D. = .38), work flexibility was in a moderately high level ($\bar{x} = 2.70$, S.D. = .73), and self-regulation was in a moderately high level ($\bar{x} = 3.22$, S.D. = .37); 2.) work flexibility was not related to the success in work of employees; 3.) self-regulation was related to the success in work of employees ($r = .57$) at a statistical significance level of .01; and 4.) self-regulation could predict the success in work of employees at 32.3% at a statistical significance level of .01.

KEYWORDS: Self-regulation, Success in work, Work flexibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic affects health, economy, social, and working in all sectors, including public, private, and entrepreneurial sector. For the reason that social distancing policies were implemented, several organizations and agencies adjusted the way of working in order not only to reduce traffic congestion and the risk of transmission by employees, but also to keep operations going, applying work flexibility and self-regulation of employees to achieve success in work as expected. To succeed in work, employees must be propelled by motivation and be patient with workplace, assigned job, coworkers, or obstacles at work. Employees would succeed if they can confront with problems and always improve themselves in terms of education, strengths, weaknesses, or even own ways of working.

Flexibility is a characteristic needed for all organizations to maintain stability and enhance sustainable development. It can be said that true flexibility of an organization is an individual and organization's particular ability to adapt to change. Concerning environmental factors that encourage flexibility in the workplace than the number of days of annual leave is considered the new normal of work life in today's world. Flexibility in the workplace not only makes employees happy and healthy but also improves their work efficiency which is beneficial to organizations. Self-regulation is one of the concepts discussed in social cognitive theory. Bandura (1986, ascited in Lamsupasit 2006) believed that human behaviors were not the product of only reinforcement or punishment induced by the environment. An individual could perform to control their notions, feelings, and behaviors. An individual with self-regulation would be able to organize oneself which was the brain's ability to control and regulate one's basic competencies and behaviors. It can be explained that one's ability to control and regulate own thinking, behaviors, and learning is a basic characteristic of self-regulation, resulting in success. Therefore, the researchers have realized the importance of work flexibility and self-regulation and have taken an interest in whether both could predict the success in work. In this research, the researchers chose private company employees as a sample group.

Research Objectives

- a. To examine the level of work flexibility, self-regulation, and success in work of employees
- b. To examine the relationship between work flexibility and success in work of employees
- c. To examine the relationship between self-regulation and success in work of employees
- d. To predict the success in work from work flexibility and self-regulation of employees

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Success in work. Childs and Klimoski (1986) revealed that the definition of success in work was self-evaluation in the matter of success in work, career advancement, work efficiency, and perception of positive performance appraisal by coworkers. Regarding self-evaluation, a measurement scale for success in work of Covey (1989) showed that success in work was required to set a standard of the ways of working used for evaluating, the time when evaluation was reported, and how the performance was evaluated. Mutchimanon (2001) proffered that success in work meant evaluating how well one performed a job; whether it was satisfying, effective, and, efficient enough to meet expectations or specific criteria. In this research, the researchers concluded that success in work meant to evaluate oneself and work outcomes which achieved the organization's goals, satisfied one and others' objective criteria, and were effective as expected.

Work flexibility. Hill et al., (2008) defined work flexibility as a worker's ability to make options and choices influential in when, where, and how long they participated in work related to work. It can be explained that flexibility in the workplace is a worker's ability to make decisions that influence when, where, and how long they participate in work related to work. Michel and Michel (2015) clarified that work flexibility was related to changes in working hours, work schedules, workplaces, or work responsibilities for convenience of employees and the organization. In this research, the researchers concluded that work flexibility meant the organization allowing employees to regulate their work schedules and workplaces; employees could independently organize their own working including the first day of work and the last day of work. . Employees were given more options and choices which fitted their lifestyles so that job satisfaction was increased. Greenfield and Terry (1995) said that work flexibility consisted of 6 characteristics as follows: 1. flexitime, 2. compressed workweek, 3. flexible location, 4. job sharing, 5. part-time work, and 6. extended or indefinite paid and unpaid leaves of absence. Viorel et al, (2018) tested work flexibility by offering flexible location or compressed working hours, and it was found that work flexibility greatly affected employees' job satisfaction and work efficiency. Pruchno, Litchfield, and Fried (2000) revealed that work flexibility should lead to employees' greater work efficiency. Also, it could help employees reduce stress, improve work efficiency, and encourage work-life balance. Birimisa (2016) conducted a quantitative research to investigate whether work flexibility had a positive effect on work-life balance of Generation Y in Croatia. According to the data analysis, Generation Y had work-life balance and work flexibility, and there was a positive correlation between work flexibility and work-life balance of Generation Y in Croatia at a statistical significant level. Sonprasit (2021) explained that work flexibility had many benefits, for instance, it decreased the amount of time spent getting to work, increased independence in time-management, cut expenses, or opened up an opportunity for organizations to adjust to employment. However, there were some disadvantages needed to be concerned such as an isolation impact: loneliness occurring when being alone and away from employers, coworkers, or even customers needed for coordination, complexity occurring when working alone and having no one to immediately consult with, co-located work force: an employer's ability to remotely supervise and support employees working from distance, and an agreement employees could be unpunctual or hard to reach resulting in workplace disharmony. The 1st hypothesis proposed by the researchers was that work flexibility was related to the success in work of employees.

Self-regulation. Bandura (1986) exposed that one needed more than competencies alone in order to regulate oneself to succeed; self-regulation needed developed sub-elements, and intention of changing for the better. If one lacked intention or willing, goals could not be achieved. Baumeister and Vohs (2004) defined self-regulation as self-control especially leading oneself to quality standards or one's effort to change internal conditions or to satisfy oneself. Zimmerman (1998) noted that self-regulation was the process in which one set personal goals, recorded own behaviors, and designed strategies for achieving goals. The process would be controlled by one's own. Suriya (2007) noted that self-regulation was one of the essential concepts discussed in social cognitive theory of Bandura. The theory explained that human behaviors were caused by reciprocal interaction. With regard to self-regulation, Bandura believed that human behaviors were not the product of only reinforcement or punishment induced by the environment. An individual could perform to control their notions, feelings, and behaviors. The aforementioned ability was called self-regulation by Bandura. In this research, the researchers concluded that self-regulation was an employee being able to control own behaviors and emotions and having intentional effort to change or to satisfy oneself in order to systematically achieve goals as expected.

Self-regulation discussed in social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986) consisted of 3 processes: self-observation, judgement process, and self-reaction. Wongkhan (2010) researched the effects of the relationship between self-regulation and conscientiousness on job performance aligned with key performance

Indicators (KPI) of Bank of Ayudhya branch employees. The results have proven that self-regulation was positively related to job performance aligned with key performance indicators (KPI). Gol and Royaei (2013) explored the relationship between self-regulation and work efficiency of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers at language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. The results showed that self-regulation could predict the success in work. Bean (2017) mentioned the research of Nick van der Meulen from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM). She exposed that job performance during working from home was propelled by an employee's self-regulation and freedom in decision-making. According to the positive association between flexible location and working hours, on the average, employees working from home had the success in work as much as employees working in an office. The 2nd hypothesis proposed by the researchers was that self-regulation was related to the success in work of employees. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used by the researchers in order to conclude to what extent predictive variables which were work flexibility and self-regulation could predict a criterion variable which was the success in work of employees. The 3rd hypothesis proposed by the researchers was that at least one variable of work flexibility and self-regulation can predict the success in work of employees.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- (a) **The population** used in this research was 1,200 private company tech employees in Bangkok Metropolitan Region, Thailand, responsible for applications (data collected in April, 2021).
- (b) **The samples** used in this research study were private company tech employees. The researchers determined the sample size using the calculation formula of Yamane (1973); samples were 300 out of 1,200 employees. Then, the researchers selected samples using non-probability and convenience sampling method due to problems about data collection and limited-time result processing. We could collect 186 questionnaires from 300 samples, accounting for 62 % of the total samples.
- (c) **Research instruments** included a 4 part questionnaire which consists of:

Part 1 contained the set of 6 checklists regarding the respondents' general information including gender, age, education, work experience, and monthly income.

The researchers used 4-point rating scale in which respondents could only choose one option. The scale ranged from high, moderately high, moderately low, to low. The index of item-objective congruence (IOC) was used, then items with the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) of 0.5 or more (Piyapimonsit, 2005) from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th part were chosen so that the questionnaire had content validity.

Part 2 contained 11 items about the success in work. The respondents were required to answer to what extent each statement corresponded to their notions, feelings, or behaviors. All items were divided into 5 aspects according to elements of the success in work. The researchers synthesized definitions of the success in work in documents related to concepts of Jankan (2002), Chinnabut (2011), Childs, A. and Klimoski, R. J. (1986), Kwangdendong (1999), Raksana (2000), Mutchimanon (2001), and Alderfer (as cited in Chamnarvej, 2008); aspects were as follows: an ability to achieve the organization's goals, career advancement, work efficiency, job satisfaction, and good relationship with coworkers. All items passed the criteria.

Part 3 contained 13 items about work flexibility. The respondents were required to answer to what extent each statement corresponded to their notions, feelings, or behaviors. All items were divided into 6 aspects according to a concept of elements of work flexibility of Greenfield C. and Terry M. (as cited in Duangkaew, 2017); aspects were as follows: flextime, compressed workweek, flexible location, job sharing, part-time work, and extended or indefinite paid and unpaid leaves of absence. All items passed the criteria.

Part 4 contained 11 items about self-regulation. The respondents were required to answer to what extent each statement corresponded to their notions, feelings, or behaviors. All items were divided into 3 aspects according to a concept of elements of self-regulation of Bandura (as cited in Boonchang2003); aspects were as follows: self-observation, judgement process, and self-reaction. All items passed the criteria.

The researchers tried out the questionnaire of which content validity was fixed with 30 private company tech employees who were not selected samples, then determined the discrimination power using corrected item total correlation. Statements with discrimination power less than 0.2 (Kanchanawasi and Kanchanawasi, 2016) would be eliminated. After that, the reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The questionnaire was analyzed in the matter of overall and each aspect.

Table 1 Corrected item–total correlation and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the questionnaire

Questionnaire	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach’s alpha coefficient
The Success in Work		
An Ability to Achieve the Organization’s Goals	.46 - .76	.89
Career Advancement	.46 - .62	.90
Work Efficiency	.58 - .60	.90
Job Satisfaction	.56 - .76	.90
Good Relationship with Coworkers	.71 - .76	.89
Work Flexibility		
Flextime	.34 - .81	.96
Compressed Workweek	.62 - .76	.89
Flexible Location	.66 - .74	.90
Job Sharing	.65 - .77	.89
Part-Time Work	.64 - .76	.89
Extended or Indefinite Paid and Unpaid Leaves of Absence	.73 - .81 .34 - .74	.89 .90
Self-Regulation		
Self-Observation	.65 - .86	.91
Judgement Process	.69 - .86	.90
Self-Reaction	.67 - .81	.89
	.65 - .79	.89

4. RESULTS

Data analysis of respondents’ general information

In terms of gender, of all 186 samples, there were 98 males or 52.7% and 88 females or 47.3%.

In terms of age, of all 186 samples, there were 69 people or 37.1% aged between 25-34 years old, 61 people or 32.8% aged under 25 years old, 26 people or 14% aged between 35-44 years old, 19 people or 10.2% aged between 45-54 years old, and 11 people or 5.9% aged more than 55 years old.

In terms of education, of all 186 samples, there were 151 people or 81.2% who graduated with a bachelor’s degree and 35 people or 18.8% who graduated with a master’s degree.

In terms of work experience, of all 186 samples, there were 110 people or 59.10% who had 0-5 year(s) of work experience, 42 people or 22.60% who had more than 10 years of work experience, and 34 people or 18.30% who had 6-10 years of work experience.

In terms of monthly income, there were 62 people or 33.3% who got a monthly income of 15,001-20,000 Baht, 38 people or 20.4% who got a monthly income of 50,001 Baht or more, 29 people or 15.6% who got a monthly income of 20,001-30,000 Baht, 27 people or 14.5% who got a monthly income of less than 15,000 Baht, 17 people or 9.1% who got a monthly income of 40,001-50,000 Baht, and 13 people or 7% who got a monthly income of 30,001-40,000 Baht.

The level of work flexibility, self-regulation, and success in work

According to the study, the overall success in work of samples was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.3, SD. = .38). When considering each aspect, an ability to achieve the organization’s goals was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.34, SD. = .41), career advancement was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.28, SD. = .56), work efficiency was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.30, SD. = .43), job satisfaction was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.30, SD. = .54), and good relationship with coworkers was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.27, SD. = .48).

The overall work flexibility of samples was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.70, SD. = .73). When considering each aspect, flextime was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.77, SD. = .72), compressed workweek was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.70, SD. = .83), flexible location was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.82, SD. = .91), job sharing was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.87, SD. = .84), part-time work was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.59, SD. = .85), and extended or indefinite paid and unpaid leaves of absence were in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.36, SD. = .82).

The overall self-regulation of samples was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 3.23, SD. = .41). When considering each aspect, self-observation was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 3.23, SD. = .41), judgement

process was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 3.21, SD. = .41), and self-reaction was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 3.21, SD. = .40).

The relationship between work flexibility, self-regulation, and success in work of employees

Table 2 The relationship between work flexibility, self-regulation, and success in work of employees

Variables	Success in Work	Work Flexibility	Self-Regulation
Success in Work	1		
Work Flexibility	.08	1	
Self-Regulation	.57**	.08	1

** Statistically significant at .01 level

According to the study, there was no relation between work flexibility and the success in work of employees, and self-regulation was positively related to the success in work at a statistical significance level of .01 ($r = .57$).

Data analysis of the prediction of success in work from work flexibility and self-regulation of employees

The researchers used stepwise multiple regression analysis to create an equation for the prediction of success in work of private company employees. In this research, 2 predictive variables, work flexibility and self-regulation, were used in stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Table 3 The prediction of success in work of employees using stepwise multiple regression analysis

Predictive Variable	R	R ²	Adj R ²	SE	F	Sig
Self-Regulation	.57	.32	.32	3.49	87.59**	.000

** Statistically significant at .01 level

According to data analysis, it was found that the correlation coefficient of self-regulation and success in work equaled to .568, predicting the success in work of private company employees at 32.3% at a statistical significance level of .01. The prediction error equaled to 3.49.

Table 4 Equation for the prediction of success in work of employees

Predictive Variable	b	SE	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	15.54	2.24		6.93**	.000
Self-Regulation	.59	.063	.57	9.36**	.000

** Statistically significant at .01 level

According to data analysis, the equation for the prediction of success in work of employees was created as follows: success in work = 15.54 + .59 (self-regulation).

When converting a raw score to a z-score, the z-score equation for the prediction was success in work = .57 (self-regulation).

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research revealed that overall success in work of samples was in a high level (\bar{x} = 3.30, S.D. = .38). The aspect having the highest mean was an ability to achieve the organization's goals (\bar{x} = 3.34, S.D. = .40). The overall work flexibility of samples was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 2.70, S.D. = .73). The aspect having the highest mean was job sharing (\bar{x} = 2.87, S.D. = .84). The overall self-regulation of samples was in a moderately high level (\bar{x} = 3.22, S.D. = .37). The aspect having the highest mean was self-observation (\bar{x} = 3.23, S.D. = .41).

Research hypothesis testing

- (a) hypothesis was that work flexibility was related to the success in work of private company tech employees. It was found that work flexibility was not related to the success in work of private company employees, so the 1st hypothesis was rejected.
- (b) hypothesis was that self-regulation was related to the success in work of private company tech employees. It was found that self-regulation was positively related to the success in work of private company employees at statistical significance level of .01, so the 2nd hypothesis was accepted.
- (c) hypothesis was that at least one variable of work flexibility and self-regulation can predict the success in work of private company tech employees. It was found that self-regulation could predict the success in work of private company employees at 32.3%, so the 3rd hypothesis was accepted.

In this research, hypothesis was that work flexibility was related to the success in work of private company tech employees. However, it was found that work flexibility of employees was in a moderately high level, and there was no relation between work flexibility and success in work. Therefore, the results were not consistent with the proposed hypothesis. The researchers thought that work flexibility was not related to the success in work of employees because employees with more work flexibility tended to have more stress and overwork. They cannot separate their work and personal life. Also, working in a different place from coworkers might easily cause miscommunication. If employees were not able to effectively manage time, it can have negative effects on their health. Thus, the success in work of employees was not related to work flexibility. This was not consistent with the concept of Sonprasit (2021) effects of work flexibility were as follows: loneliness occurring when being alone and away from employers, coworkers, or even customers needed for coordination, inability to immediately consult with coworkers resulting in employees' unpunctuality and workplace disharmony, and employers' inability to supervise or support employees due to distance work. On the other hand, the findings of Pruchno, Litchfield, and Fried (2000)'s research showed that work flexibility should lead to employees' greater work efficiency. Also, it could help employees reduce stress, improve work efficiency, and encourage work-life balance.

Hypothesis was that self-regulation was related to the success in work of private company tech employees. It was found that self-regulation was positively related to the success in work of employees at a statistical significance level of .01, so the 2nd hypothesis was accepted and consistent with the proposed hypothesis. Lastly, the 3rd hypothesis was that at least one variable of work flexibility and self-regulation can predict the success in work of employees. According to stepwise multiple regression analysis, self-regulation could predict the success in work of private company tech employees at 32.3% at a statistical significance level of .01, so the 3rd hypothesis was accepted and consistent with the proposed hypothesis. Therefore, an employee with self-regulation will be self-confident, can work and live a life in order to achieve goals, and can work in order to succeed. This was consistent with the research of Wongkhan (2010) in which she investigated the relationship between self-regulation and conscientiousness on job performance aligned with key performance indicators (KPI) of Bank of Ayudhya branch employees. The results had proven that self-regulation was positively related to job performance aligned with key performance indicators (KPI). In addition, it was consistent with Gol, and Royaei (2013) who explored the relationship between self-regulation and work efficiency of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers at language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. The findings have proven that self-regulation could predict the success in work.

6. SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions for applying results of the research

The results revealed that mean of overall self-regulation was in a moderately high level, showing the positive relation to the success in work and an ability to predict it. Thus, executives should develop ways to encourage employees to realize the importance of self-regulation such as formulating policies or designing training programs for employees to understand more about self-regulation and establishing goals for employees to be self-confident, observe own behaviors and systematically regulate themselves. The aforementioned ways were guidelines for enhancing employees' work efficiency and leading to success in work.

Suggestions for future research

The extension of the qualitative research on success in work, work flexibility, and self-regulation should be conducted in order to fully explain these variables. Future research may also investigate other factors influencing the success in work, namely work-life balance, work motivation, workplace environment, and teamwork, so that these factors could be used for achieving employees' full potential for success in work.

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