



# Job flexibility as a predictor of organizational commitment

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## ABSTRACT

This research was conducted across nine constituent colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) with the aim to investigate the influence of job flexibility on the organizational commitment by using explanatory (causal) and inferential research design. From the total of 550 populations, 232 samples were drawn proportionately by using Yamane's (1967) formula. The structured survey instrument was used to collect the primary data. The four term variables i.e., time, location, amount of work and continuity flexibility were used to measure job flexibility. Similarly, affective, continuance and normative commitment were used to measure organizational commitment. The mean value analysis and also regression analysis were used respectively to study the degree of job flexibility and organizational commitment, and the relationship between them. The amount of work flexibility has a weak but positive relationship with affective commitment ( $r=158$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and continuance commitment ( $r=283$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The findings revealed that respondents have a high degree of affective commitment and a moderate degree of normative and continuance commitment towards the organization. Respondents perceived that they have a moderate degree of time, amount of work and continuity flexibility and a low degree of location flexibility in the organization. It is concluded that job flexibility is not a strong determinant of organizational commitment. This may be because of the intermediating effect of job security between job flexibility and organizational commitment which needs further investigation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The survival of any educational institution, business, or non-governmental organization is contingent on its ability to perform in the field. A good performance by any organization instils in them a renewed sense of growth and value in society. Organizational performance and employee performance are inextricably linked; organizational performance is the sum of its employees' performance (Toppo and Prusty, 2012). Employees perform better when they feel a sense of belonging to an organization. In other words, the more committed and engaged employees are, the greater the competitive advantage they provide to an organization (Mathur, 2015; Vance, 2006). Furthermore, improved employee commitment and engagement will result in a lower turnover rate and

higher organizational productivity (Ahmad, 2018; Vance, 2006).

Employees are a critical organizational resource because an organization's performance is mainly defined by its employees' capability and efficiency at work (Inuwa, 2016). Besides, an organization cannot achieve its full potential unless its employees are committed to its goals and objectives (Varsha and Bhati, 2012). Therefore, organizations should be primarily concerned about ensuring employees' commitment to the organizational purposes and goals in addition to employees' capability and efficiency at work.

According to DeCuyper et al. (2011), employees' commitment to an organization and their productivity would improve with the adoption of the practice of social exchange by employers. Social exchange is a process of mutual interdependence

between parties/individuals that involves transactions based on their cost-benefit analysis for mutual fulfilment (Hsieh et al., 2019). These transactions involve undefined commitments, which mean that when one person does a favour for another, that person will expect a reward in the future (Nazir et al., 2018). This expectation is founded on a person's belief that the other party will carry out their commitments in a fair manner (Nazir et al., 2018).

In practicing social exchange, it is even possible that if an organization makes work less stressful by offering flexible work schedules to its employees, they will feel obligated to be more loyal to the organization. Kossek and Thompson (2016) define workplace flexibility as "a formal or informal agreement between an employer and an employee to provide individual job control over flexibility in timing, location, amount, or continuity in concert with network needs." In other terms, it is an opportunity or a provision for employees to choose how, where, when, and for how long they want to work to complete their assigned task at work (Bal and De Lange, 2014).

Numerous studies suggest that workplace flexibility benefits both the employees and the organization for which they work (Kossek and Thompson, 2016; Wickramasinghe, 2012). A flexible workplace will encourage employees to participate more in organizational activities and take initiatives in exchange for the additional benefits they obtain in the form of flexibility (Lambert, 2000). In addition to increasing organizational profits (Kesavan et al., 2014) and overall business success (Martínez-Sánchez et al., 2007), it also enhances employee health (Butler et al., 2009) and improves organizational attractiveness (Thompson et al., 2015). Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) note that workplace flexibility is one of the key measures used by both public and private organizations to leverage many benefits associated with work-life balance initiatives i.e., improved productivity, employee morale, customer service, reduced absence from the workstation, and enhanced organizational commitment.

In Bhutan, the increasing teacher attrition rate in recent years has been a concern for the government (Wangchuk and Dorji, 2020). Bhutan places a high priority on education as a foundation for its development. It envisions a holistic educational system that prepares citizens to be globally competitive while maintaining a strong commitment to uphold its traditional values. However, a challenge in retaining teachers has become a threat to the

future of education in Bhutan. Although there is a dearth of literature on reasons for high employee attrition in the country, one of the fundamental reasons could be the lack of organizational commitment. Promoting organizational commitment may seem demanding, but making the system adaptable is not; if workplace flexibility increases organizational commitment, as suggested by Hughes and Bozionelos (2007), this would be the simplest method to avoid perils associated with the lack of organizational commitment.

This study is conducted at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), a premier education management institute and the only public university in Bhutan, which plays a fundamental role in parenting its constituent colleges in different aspects such as curriculum design and assessment, and human resource management. RUB being an apex embodiment of faculties to nurture human resources for the country's development, insights drawn from this study could be representative of the whole education system in Bhutan that could aid education policy decisions.

Therefore, this research explores the level of organizational commitment among academics at RUB. Three components of organizational commitment proposed by Mayer and Allen (1991) are explored i.e., affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The paper also investigates the impact of workplace flexibility on organizational commitment. Workplace flexibility is classified into four broad categories: time, location, work amount, and continuity of work flexibility (Kossek et al., 2015). Descriptive tools were used to study academics' level of organizational commitment and their perception of workplace flexibility while inferential statistics such as correlation and regression were used to study the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment. Towards the end, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

## Literature review

### Organizational commitment

Commitment can be defined as a force that binds an individual to a course of actions to achieve relevant targets. Mowday et al. (1979), who are the pioneers in organizational behaviour studies, define organizational commitment as employees' 'strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, with the willingness to employ considerable

effort on behalf of the organization, and have a strong desire to remain in the organization'. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2019) define organizational commitment as the extent to which employees identify with a certain organization and its goals, and desire to remain a member of the organization.

Organizational commitment can result in many positive outcomes, such as continued membership in an organization or willingness to work toward organizational goals (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Several studies have been conducted that demonstrate the advantages of organizational commitment. For example, Liou (2008) attributes an organization's success to its employees' level of participation in organizational affairs and their commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment will result in lower operating costs for the organization and improved employee performance and efficiency (Renyut et al., 2017; Louis, 2008). It also has a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction (Najeeb et al., 2018; Renyut et al., 2017) and affects employees' relationships with the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Besides, it also determines the turnover intention of employees (Vizano et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer and Allen, 1991). Robbins (2001) noted that when compared to job satisfaction, organizational commitment is a better indicator of employee turnover (p. 181-182).

About the constructs of organizational commitment, Mowday et al. (1979) concluded organizational commitment as having three dimensions: 'willingness to exert effort, desire to maintain membership in the organization, and acceptance of organizational values.' Later, Meyer and Allen (1991) improvised the concept of organizational commitment into three distinct components such as 'affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment'.

### **The three-component model of organizational commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1991) classified organizational commitment into three distinct components: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Affective commitment is a tendency of an employee to stay with an organization because of one's emotional attachment to the particular organization (Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi, 2019). Employees' affective commitment stems from feelings that their work helps them to meet their needs and aspirations, as well as satisfaction and a

sense of support from their superiors and the entire organization (Ban'ka, and Hauzin'ski, 2014). An employee, in this case, strongly identifies with the company and is ever willing to assist in the achievement of an organizational goal (Grego-Planer, 2019).

Similarly, continuance commitment is a sense of commitment arising out of the cost-benefit analysis of leaving the organization (Ahmad, 2018). It is characterized as an employee's level of commitment to his or her organization which is subject to his or her compensation (Singh and Gupta, 2015). The degree of continuance commitment is high when employees perceive that leaving the organization would be costlier for them (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Normative commitment is defined as an employee's readiness to stay with an organization because of their sense of obligation to the organization they work for (Grego-Planer, 2019). Normative commitment is founded upon values and duties out of an employee's moral sense (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Employees having a high level of normative commitment are more likely to stay with the organization (Johar et al., 2019).

In summary, affective commitment is the outcome of an emotional attachment of an employee to the organization, continuance commitment is the consequence of the perceived cost of leaving the organization, and normative commitment is the result of a perceived obligation to the organization. "Employees with a strong affective commitment (high ACS scores) stay because they want to, those with a strong normative commitment (high NCS scores) stay because they feel they ought to, and those with a strong continuance commitment (high CCS scores) stay because they have to," (Mayer and Allen, 2004).

### **Measuring organizational commitment**

This study measures organizational commitment using the Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment developed by Mayer and Allen (1991). The three-component model (TCM), in the last decade, was one of the most influential frameworks used for research in organizational commitment (Muda and Fook, 2020). According to Mayer and Allen (2004), the TCM framework measures three forms of organizational commitment i.e., affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The framework was specifically designed for academic research. The affective commitment is "desired-based", the

continuance commitment is "obligation-based" and the normative commitment is "cost-based" (ibid). There are two versions of the commitment scales. The older version has eight items while the new version has six items. Mayer and Allen (2004) suggested that the choice between the two can be made based on "the desired length of the survey". Mayer and Allen (2004) also stated that the scale can be altered, but only if the reliability and the validity of the scale could be ensured.

Mayer and Allen (2004) propose three ways to alter the scale. The first alteration can be made in terms of the number of items on the scale. The number of items across each construct might be reduced to three or four without affecting the validity and reliability of the scale. The second alteration can be made to the response scale. Originally, the measurement was proposed using a 7-point scale, however, they found that a 5-point scale worked just as well. If the researchers are familiar with the organization under study, the third change can be made by rewriting the word "organization" with the precise name of the organization. In addition, there are other recommendations for change of scale suggested by authors if the need arises.

### **Workplace flexibility**

Workplace flexibility is essentially the ability to create and rearrange one's work schedule around the broad guidelines provided by the organization (Hill et al., 2001). It is the employees' liberty to choose 'when, where, and for how long they perform their work-related duties (Jeffrey Hill et al., 2008). Today, workplace flexibility is a popular subject of discussion in organizations all around the world, as it has become a need. It is also because most people today require a break from their regular office schedule due to the increase of dual-earner families and single-parent households which also has to address geriatric and young care requirements (Meyer and Allen, 1991). For modern families where both parents work, workplace flexibility is becoming increasingly vital as it enables parents to change their work hours in the event of an unexpected family emergency (Persson and Rossin-Slater, 2019). Workplace flexibility allows an individual to make changes to the time, location and manner in which employees prefer to work which benefits employers as well as employees. Hill et al. (2001) maintain that many organizations often use workplace flexibility as a strategy to attract, motivate and retain talent pools. Workplace flexibility also

leads to positive outcomes in both personal and professional life. By reducing work-family conflict and improving job satisfaction, workplace flexibility can indirectly reduce employees' turnover intention (Rhee et al., 2019). Flexibility policies are beneficial and cost-effective, and their implementation leads to greater work output from the employee (Hill et al., 2001).

### **Types of workplace flexibility**

In literature, there are four broad categories of workplace flexibility: time flexibility, location flexibility, work amount flexibility, and continuity of work flexibility (Kossek et al., 2015; Kossek and Michel, 2011). These broad categories of flexibility are explained below:

**Time flexibility:** Time flexibility relates to flexibility in employees' choice of work schedule that best suits their needs (Kossek and Michel, 2011). Employees with time flexibility can set their working hours. Compressed work weeks, flextime, seasonal work, flexible shifts, and choice of minimum hours of work in a day are all examples of flexibility in time (Kossek and Thompson, 2015).

**Location flexibility:** Location flexibility relates to location or the place of work. Employees with location flexibility can choose to work remotely from the main place of work with the help of electronic resources for some or all of their work schedules (Kossek and Thompson, 2015). Teleworking, remote working, and need-based off-site office arrangements are all examples of location flexibility (Kossek and Thompson, 2015).

**Amount of work flexibility:** The employees with flexibility in the amount of work have a scope to adjust the amount of work they conduct with the help of job sharing, part-time and reduced-workload policies (Kossek and Michel, 2011). It allows individuals to adjust their tasks or working hours to accommodate other responsibilities associated with personal roles as a parent, student, and many more (Kossek and Thompson, 2015).

**Continuity flexibility:** Continuity flexibility refers to an individual's ability to take time off from work and the provision for taking short-term or long-term breaks in the workplace (Kossek and Michel, 2011). Continuity flexibility allows employees to change their career options to cope with occurrences outside the workplace (such as the death of family members). Policies that encourage flexibility in the continuity of work include sabbaticals, vacation, and leave time (Kossek et al., 2015).

### Outcomes of workplace flexibility

According to Ganster and Rosen (2013), the ability of individuals to control their environment influences their well-being. The amount of control they have over their workplace might be strongly influenced by their organizational policies related to workplace flexibility. Workplace flexibility can help employees gain control over job characteristics such as timing, location, and the amount of work (Fonner and Roloff, 2010). Similarly, workplace flexibility in the form of the possibility of taking a day off, the ability to take breaks, and provisions to leave the office early would help individuals to mitigate conflicts arising out of competing role demands in their life (Buruck et al., 2020). This could be because the workplace flexibility would allow individuals to meet their expected roles in the family, society, and other areas of life by allowing them to schedule their time and location from which they could address various personal and professional demands.

According to Klindžić and Marić (2019), workplace flexibility could also lead to an increase in firm performance. This is because workplace flexibility may be regarded as a favour by employees, and as they wish to repay the favour to their employer, their productivity will rise (Berkery et al., 2017), as will the firm's overall performance. Kossek et al. (2015), on the other hand, identified three types of traps that could emerge when workplace flexibility policies are implemented in the organization. These are "altered work-life dynamics, reduced fairness perceptions, and weakened organizational culture" (ibid). They also suggest some measures that managers can take to achieve a more balanced approach to flexibility. Since the proposed measures are beyond the scope of this research, they are not discussed in this review.

### Relationship between Workplace Flexibility and Organizational Commitment

Many studies suggest a positive relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment. For example, Chen and Fulmer (2017) note that organizational commitment is generally positively affected by individuals' experiences with workplace flexibility, however, the strength of these positive effects varies based on the degree and type of workplace flexibility available to them. Similarly, Richman (2006) confirms that if an organization offers a flexible working policy that enables employees to manage family responsibilities, they

demonstrate a greater organizational commitment. Burud and Tumolo (2004) also found that flexible workplace policies relate to a higher organizational commitment with lower intentions to leave the company. The study conducted by Okemwa (2016) to explore the relationship between flexible work arrangement and organizational commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya also suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment. Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) identified that workplace flexibility is one of the key measures used by both public and private organizations around the world under work-life balance initiatives to leverage many benefits associated with it, such as improved productivity, employee morale, customer service, reduction of absence in the workstation and enhanced organizational commitment. Although these studies identify a positive relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment, no research has been done in the education sector to investigate this relationship.

### Research aim and model

To summarize, this study's theoretical framework includes workplace flexibility as an independent variable and organizational commitment as a dependent variable. There are four parameters in workplace flexibility: time, location, amount of work, and continuity flexibility. Similarly, organizational commitment has three parameters, or essentially three types of organizational commitments: affective, normative, and continuous organizational commitment. Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework of the study.

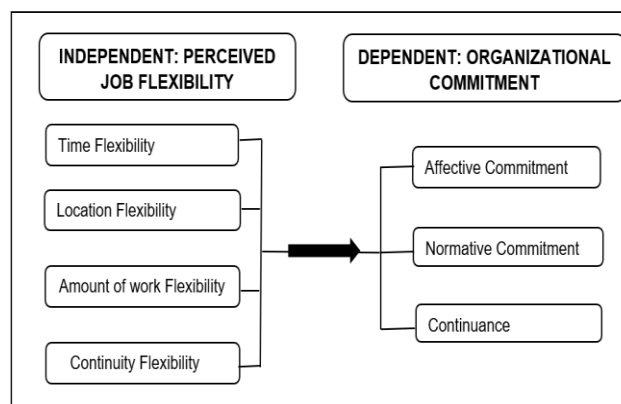


Figure 1. Research model

## METHODOLOGY

### Scope and coverage

The study on the impact of workplace flexibility on organizational commitment was conducted by taking a quantitative approach. The investigation employed an explanatory (causal) and inferential research design. The population of the study includes all the faculty members from the nine sister colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan.

### Source of data

The study used the baseline data gathered through the use of a structured questionnaire. The instrument was adapted from previous publications. The workplace flexibility questionnaire was adapted from [Kossek and Michel \(2011\)](#) and the organizational commitment questionnaire was adapted from [Mayer and Allen \(1991\)](#). The details of the number of items used and associated Cronbach's alpha values are provided in Table 2. The instrument was divided into two sections: one for demographic information and the other for perceptions about workplace flexibility and organizational commitments. The 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the degree of perception across different variables used in the study. The data was collected in 2019.

### Population and sampling technique

A total of 550 members of the faculty working under nine constituent colleges under RUB were identified as the population of the study. The nine

sister colleges are the College of Language and Cultural Studies (CLCS), College of Natural Resources (CNR), College of Science and Technology (CST), Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS), Gyelposhing College of Information Technology (GCIT), Jigme Namgyal Engineering College (JNEC), Paro College of Education (PCE), Samtse College of Education (SCE), Sherubtse College (SC) and Yongphula Centenary College (YCC). The homogeneous convenience sampling technique is used for this study as the study does not intend to draw differences based on demographic characteristics and assumes that the population is homogeneous concerning their profession. Researchers can be confident in the generalizability of findings from homogeneous convenience samples since the samples are more homogeneous than conventional convenience samples ([Jager et al., 2017](#)). The calculated sample size for the study is approximately 232 individuals who are proportionately distributed across nine colleges. [Yamane's \(1967\)](#) formula was used to calculate the sample size. In Table 1, a variation in the proportionate sample size and the actual sample collected across a few colleges can be observed. This is because the required number of responses was not received from some of the colleges. To reach the required number of samples, additional samples were taken from colleges such as GCBS, JNEC, GCIT and SCE. Therefore, the samples collected from each college are representative of the population. Table 1 provides details of population distribution across colleges and samples taken thereof:

**Table 1.** Population distribution and samples

College	No. of Teaching Staff	Proportionate Sample Size	Proportionate Sample %	Actual Sample Collected	Actual Sample Collected %
CLCS	64	27	12%	27	12%
CNR	53	22	10%	22	9%
CST	72	30	13%	25	11%
GCBS	70	30	13%	31	13%
GCIT	23	10	4%	12	5%
JNEC	54	23	10%	24	10%
PCE	67	28	12%	28	12%
SCE	50	21	9%	31	13%
SC	92	39	17%	32	14%
YCC	5	2	1%	0	0%
Total	550	232	100%	232	100%

The College of Language and Cultural Studies (CLCS), College of Natural Resources (CNR), College of Science and Technology (CST), Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS), Gyelposhing College of Information Technology (GCIT), Jigme Namgyal Engineering College (JNEC), Paro College of Education (PCE), Samtse College of Education (SCE), Sherubtse College (SC) and Yongphula Centenary College (YCC).

**Tools of data analysis**

The data collected for the study are tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using various statistical tools with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). For the analysis of the data, descriptive tools such as measures of central tendency and standard deviation, and inferential statistical tools such as correlation and regression were applied.

**RESULTS**

**Analysis and interpretation of data**

**Reliability construct**

To ensure the reliability of the scale that measures perception regarding workplace flexibility and organizational commitment, the internal consistency of all the items in the scale is calculated. Cronbach (1951) suggested that variables with an alpha value above 0.7 have a good internal consistency. Therefore, alpha values as demonstrated in Table 2, indicate a good internal consistency of items as the alpha values of all the term variables are above 0.7.

**Table 2** Reliability Statistics

No	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
1	Time Flexibility	0.804	5
2	Location Flexibility	0.779	4
3	Amount of Work Flexibility	0.730	4
4	Continuity Flexibility	0.736	4
5	Affective Commitment	0.786	8
6	Continuance Commitment	0.713	8
7	Normative Commitment	0.730	8

**Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Table 3 illustrates the demographics of the respondents in terms of age, gender, years of work experience, and education levels. 65.5 percent of respondents are males, while 34.5 percent are females. The age group 26-35 has the most respondents (52.6%), followed by 24.1 percent in the 36-45 age group and 13.8 percent in the 46-55 age group. 7.3 percent of respondents are under the age of 25 and 2.2 percent are over 56. Similarly, 44.4 percent of respondents have work experience of fewer than 5 years, 24.1 percent have 6-10 years, and 20.7 have 11-15 years. Only 6.5 percent and 4.3 percent of

respondents, respectively, had 16-20 years and over 21 years of work experience. Going by the level of education, 29.3 percent of respondents have a bachelor's degree, 64.7 percent have a master's degree and 6 percent have a Ph.D.

**Table 3** Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	152	65.5
	Female	80	34.5
Age	25 and below	17	7.3
	26-35	122	52.6
	36-45	56	24.1
	46-55	32	13.8
	56 and above	5	2.2
Experience	5 years and below	103	44.4
	6-10 Years	56	24.1
	11-15 Years	48	20.7
	16-20 Years	15	6.5
	21-25 Years	10	4.3
Education	Degree	68	29.3
	Masters	150	64.7
	PhD	14	6.0
	Total	232	100

**Perceived workplace flexibility and level of organizational commitment**

The perception of workplace flexibility and organizational commitment is discerned with the help of the guideline provided by Zaki and Ahmad (2017) for interpreting mean scores. When the mean score is between 0 and 1.89 the degree of perception is interpreted as very low; 1.90-2.69 is low; 2.70 - 3.49 is moderate; 3.50 - 4.2 is high; and 4.30 - 5.00 is very high (Zaki and Ahmad, 2017).

The mean scores in Table 4 indicate respondents exhibited high levels of affective organizational commitment (M=3.82, SD=0.71), and moderate levels of continuance and normative organizational commitment (M= 3.36, SD=0.68; M=3.28, SD=0.77). Likewise, mean scores against the workplace flexibility constructs reveal respondents' moderate degrees of perception regarding time, amount, and continuity flexibility, with mean values falling in the range 2.70-3.49 (Table 4). A mean value of 2.69, however, indicates a low degree of perception regarding location flexibility.

**Analysis of correlation between variables**

The Pearson R correlation coefficient is used to test for the strength and association of variables. Table 5 shows the correlation of study variables. Observations testify that the time flexibility and the location flexibility do not appear to be statistically significant predictors of any of the organizational commitment constructs. The amount of work flexibility has a weak but positive relationship with affective commitment ( $r=158, p<0.05$ ) and continuance commitment ( $r=283, p<0.05$ ). However, it has no statistically significant relationship with normative commitment. Similarly, continuity flexibility has weak positive relationships with all three types of organizational commitment: affective ( $r=.152, p<0.05$ ),

continuance ( $r=.200, p<0.05$ ), and normative ( $r=.155, p<0.05$ ).

As evident from Pearson’s correlation analysis, time flexibility and location flexibility have no statistically significant relationship with any of the types of organizational commitment. The amount of work flexibility has a statistically significant association with the affective and continuance organizational commitment. On the other hand, continuity flexibility has a statistically significant relationship with all three types of organizational commitment. Considering these relationships between variables, the conceptual framework of the study, therefore, would appear as shown in Figure 2.

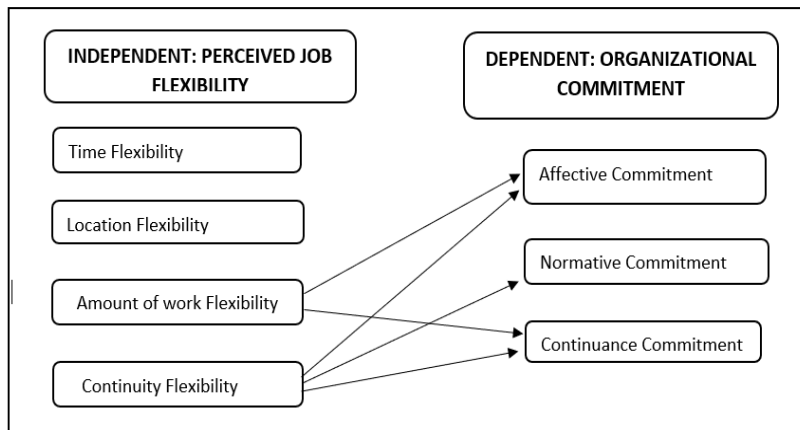
**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affective commitment	232	1.80	5.00	3.8267	0.71264
Continuance commitment	232	1.20	5.00	3.3560	0.68853
Normative commitment	232	1.00	5.00	3.2862	0.77726
Time flexibility	232	1.00	5.00	2.8767	0.83442
Location flexibility	232	1.00	4.75	2.6918	0.89965
Amount of Work Flexibility	232	1.00	5.00	3.2608	0.78431
Continuity flexibility	232	1.00	5.00	3.2716	0.79267
Valid N (listwise)	232				

**Table 5.** Correlation

		Affective	Continuance	Normative	Time	Location	AW	Continuity
Affective	Pearson correlation	1						
Continuance	Pearson correlation	0.522**	1					
Normative	Pearson correlation	0.557**	0.419**	1				
Time	Pearson correlation	0.063	0.111	0.122	1			
Location	Pearson correlation	-0.009	0.119	0.062	0.466**	1		
AW	Pearson correlation	0.158*	0.283**	0.122	0.327**	0.141*	1	
Continuity	Pearson correlation	0.151*	0.200**	0.155*	0.023	-0.067	0.139*	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



**Figure 2.** Redefined conceptual framework



**Influence of perceived workplace flexibility on organizational commitment**

Regression analysis is used to investigate the impact of perceived workplace flexibility on organizational commitment.

**The influence of amount of work flexibility (AoW) and continuity flexibility on affective commitment:** The multiple regression model is used to study the effect of the amount of work flexibility and continuity flexibility on affective commitment. The multiple regression analysis presented in Table 5 produced the Adjusted  $R^2=0.034$ ,  $F(2, 229)=5.038$ ,  $p<0.05$ . Although the predictor variables have a statistically significant effect on affective commitment, it is evident by the adjusted  $R^2$  value that these variables explain only 3.4% of the variance in affective commitment. Table 6 also exhibits the regression weight of each predictor variable used in the study model. The influence of each predictor variable in the model is measured by the standard coefficients Beta. It is evident from Table 5 that the continuity flexibility and amount of work flexibility have a significant positive regression weight of 0.132 and 0.140 respectively. A unit change in continuity flexibility results in a 0.132-unit change in affective commitment and a unit change in the amount of work flexibility will lead to a 0.140 unit change in affective commitment.

**The influence of continuity flexibility on normative commitment:** A simple linear regression model is used to evaluate the impact of continuity flexibility on normative commitment. The adjusted  $R^2=0.020$ ,  $F(1,230)=5.667$ ,  $p<0.05$  indicates that the predictor variable only explains 2% of variance in normative commitment. The adjusted  $R^2$  value is presented in Table 7. Similarly, Table 7 also shows the regression weight of the predictor variable which determines the variability of the outcome variable. The standard coefficient Beta value of 0.155 indicates that a unit change in continuity flexibility will result in a 0.155 unit change in normative commitment.

**The effect of amount of work flexibility and continuity flexibility on continuance organizational commitment:** The multiple regression model was used to study the effect of the amount of work flexibility and continuity flexibility on continuance commitment. The model fits well with the adjusted  $R^2=0.098$ ,  $F(2, 229)= 13.612$ ,  $p<0.0005$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  value as depicted in Table 8 indicates that the predictor variables explain 9.8% of the variability in continuance commitment. Similarly, the unstandardized coefficient value presented in Table 8 implies that a unit change in continuity flexibility will result in a 0.142 unit change in continuance commitment. A unit change in the amount of work flexibility will result in a 0.228 unit change in the continuance commitment.

**Table 6** Coefficients and model summary for affective commitment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Model summary			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. the error of the estimate
						0.205	0.042	0.034	0.70050
1	Constant	3.024	0.257		11.759				
	AoW Flexibility	0.127	0.059	0.140	2.142				
	Continuity Flexibility	0.119	0.059	0.132	2.022				

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment; AoW = Amount of work flexibility

**Table 7.** Coefficients and model summary for normative organizational commitment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Model summary			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
						0.205 <sup>a</sup>	0.042	0.034	0.70050
1	Constant	2.789	0.215		12.97				
	Continuity Flexibility	0.152	0.064	0.155	2.380				

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: Normative Organizational Commitment; AoW = amount of work flexibility

**Table 8.** Coefficients and model summary for continuance organizational commitment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Model summary			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
						0.326 <sup>a</sup>	0.106	0.098	0.65376
1	Constant	2.146	0.240	8.943	0.000				
	Continuity Flexibility	0.142	0.055	0.164	2.599	0.010			
	AoW Flexibility	0.228	0.055	0.260	4.120	0.0001			

<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Continuance Organizational Commitment; AoW = amount of work flexibility

## DISCUSSION

### Summary of the key findings

#### Organizational commitment

The findings of the study imply that the teaching fraternity in the Royal University of Bhutan demonstrates a high degree of affective commitment towards the organization. As suggested by Mayer and Allen (2004), it would indicate that the teachers identify themselves with the organization and have an emotional attachment to it, therefore, they prefer to stay with the organization for a long time.

Teachers, on the other hand, demonstrate a moderate degree of continuance and normative commitment to the organization. Individuals with a moderate degree of continuance commitment do not feel an extreme need to be with the organization. They have a moderate degree of perception that the benefit associated with staying with the organization outweighs the cost associated with leaving the organization. Similarly, teachers also demonstrate a moderate degree of normative commitment which would mean that they have a moderate level of obligatory feelings towards the organization. They have a moderate belief that leaving the organization is not the right thing to do; however, it does not indicate their apprehension.

#### Workplace flexibility

The findings suggest that the teachers have a moderate degree of perception regarding time flexibility, amount of work flexibility, and continuity flexibility. Time flexibility is related to the flexibility in the timing of the work that includes flextime, compressed work time, compressed workweeks, or a choice of minimum hours of work in a day. The amount of work flexibility is associated with reduced hours of work and the amount of workload. It is subject to part-time work and job sharing. Continuity

flexibility relates to provisions available to employees for taking time off work, and the availability of short-term or long-term breaks in the workplace.

In the case of location flexibility, teachers demonstrate a low degree of perception. They believe that they are required to be in the workstation to discharge their work responsibilities. They perceive that they do not have provisions for remotely performing their jobs.

#### Effect of perceived workplace flexibility on organizational commitment

In general, the findings of the study vindicate that workplace flexibility is a weak predictor of organizational commitment. Two categories of workplace flexibility, namely time flexibility and location flexibility, were found to have no statistically significant association with any of the organizational commitment types. However, while there was a statistically significant association between the degree of workplace flexibility and the affective and continuance commitments, the strength of the relationship was negligible. Similarly, while there is a positive association between continuity flexibility and all three forms of organizational commitment, the relationship appears to be trivial. The regression analysis also confirms this claim. Besides the amount of work flexibility and continuity flexibility which combined account for 10.6% of the variation in continuance commitment, the influence of other workplace flexibility types on organizational commitment is negligible.

Contrary to the findings of this study which indicate a trivial relationship and influence of workplace flexibility on organizational commitment, numerous studies suggest that workplace flexibility generally explains higher organizational commitment (Chen and Fulmer, 2017; Okemwa, 2016, Hughes and Bozionelos, 2007, Richman, 2006). All of these studies,

however, are carried out in manufacturing and healthcare organizations. In the education sector, fewer studies have been undertaken to investigate the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment. The difference in the context of studies could explain the inconsistency of this study's findings with those of other studies.

### **Theoretical implication**

This article makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge on workplace flexibility, organizational commitment, and their relationships. Specific to the education sector, few studies have explored the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment, and the impact of workplace flexibility on organizational commitment. Therefore, this study is instrumental in bridging the gap.

### **Practical implication**

This study could provide practical insights to the Royal University of Bhutan and its sister colleges on the teaching fraternities' level of organizational commitment and the perception of workplace flexibility. By and large, the research has shown that teachers demonstrate a moderate level of organizational commitment, which might be a matter of concern for the RUB in the long run as teacher attrition has become a national concern in Bhutan, with its annual trend on the rise (Dorji, 2020). Concerning workplace flexibility, the RUB could work on improving location flexibility, which will rely on support from the university's blended learning environment. Although the study indicates a weak relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment, neither of these is unimportant as they explain many other positive outcomes in the organization. Therefore, the HR professionals in RUB could use the insights from this study for incremental HR planning and decision-making.

### **Limitations of the study**

This study used cross-sectional and self-reported data. Acknowledging that the self-reported survey could be subject to cognitive and situational issues leading to response biases, the survey questionnaire was carefully designed. Researchers ensured that the terms used while framing items were simple to understand, and the context of the study was

explained to the respondents to minimize the socially desirable response. Furthermore, since all the respondents are proficient in the English language by the virtue of being university teachers, the likelihood of such biases may be negligible.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **8. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study examined the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment at Royal University of Bhutan. Four types of workplace flexibility postulated by Kossek et al. (2015) were the predictor variables. It includes time flexibility, location flexibility, amount of work flexibility, and continuity flexibility. Similarly, the components of organizational commitment proposed by Mayer and Allen (1991) such as affective, normative, and continuance commitment were the outcome variables.

The findings indicate that teachers in the RUB have a moderate degree of perception regarding their workplace flexibility. This result holds across different types of workplace flexibility. Many studies have shown that workplace flexibility is an important determinant of employee performance (Govender et al., 2018; Martínez-Sánchez et al., 2007; Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008; Lepak et al., 2003) and turnover intention (Rhee et al., 2019; Ahmad, 2018). This could be a source of concern for the Royal University of Bhutan as the education system in the country is grappling with teacher attrition issues (Wangchuk and Dorji, 2020).

Similarly, teachers in the RUB demonstrate a high degree of affective commitment, and a moderate degree of continuance and normative commitment to the organization. The high degree of affective commitment would suggest that employees remain in the organization because they want to (Grego-Planer, 2019). Employees who demonstrate a moderate degree of normative and continuity commitment do not believe it is their responsibility to stay with the organization, but they are willing to do so (Muda & Fook, 2020).

Although flexible work arrangements are becoming more popular owing to the growing culture of dual earners in the family and the rising number of single parents in general (Bond, 2003), the findings demonstrated it does not have a considerable amount of influence on organizational commitment. Except

for the level of work flexibility combined with continuity flexibility, which accounted for 9.8% of the variation in continuance organizational commitment, other factors had a negligible impact on any categories of organizational commitment. Besides, the time and location flexibility had no relationship with any of the types of organizational commitment. This could be because the majority of teachers at the RUB are regular employees, giving them a sense of security, and thus the degree of workplace flexibility has little bearing on their commitment to the organization. Future studies could explore the intermediating effect of job security on the relationship between workplace flexibility and organizational commitment.

## ■ DECLARATION

### Authors' contribution

All authors contributed equally to this work.

### Ethical compliance section

- The authors have no funding to disclose.
- All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the research committee of University of Calcutta and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

- Informed consent was obtained from all individual adult participants included in the study.

### Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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