

Impact of Flexible Work Hours on the Productivity of the Employees

Ashwini Chavan¹, Kalyani Nankar²

^{1,2} Department of MBA, MES IMCC Pune

¹apc.imccmba@mespune.in, ²kalyani.nankar1451@gmail.com

<p>Peer Review Information</p> <p><i>Type: Article</i> <i>Received: 22 March 2026</i> <i>Revised: 18 April 2026</i> <i>Accepted: 06 May 2026</i> <i>Published: 29 May 2026</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>The modern workplace practices have evolved and significantly transformed with the emergence and acceptance of flexible work arrangements. Among these changes, flexibility in working hours has become particularly important for Generation Z employees, who prefer autonomy, work-life balance, willingness and the competency to manage their own schedules. This study examines and analyses the impact of flexible working hours on the productivity and efficiency of Generation Z employees, with productivity being defined through energy levels and focus rather than only traditional output measures.</p> <p>The fundamental objective of this research is to analyse how time flexibility influences the energy, concentration, and overall work performance of younger workforce. This research also explores the function of Goal-Setting Theory in explaining how employees maintain productivity when the employees are permitted to choose their own working hours as per their convenience.</p> <p>The research adopts a quantitative and descriptive research design. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms to gather responses from participants. A total of 131 respondents belonging to Generation Z participated in the survey. The questionnaire included Likert scale and close-ended questions measuring flexible work hours, goal-setting behaviour, and productivity indicators such as energy and focus.</p> <p>The findings indicate that flexible work hours positively influence the productivity of young employees by allowing them to work during their personal high-energy periods. However, flexibility is most effective when supported by clear goals and structured guidance from managers. Employees who regularly set personal goals reported higher levels of motivation, focus, and work engagement.</p> <p>This research concludes with the suggestion that flexible working hours can significantly enhance the outcomes of Gen Z employees when organizations balance autonomy with clear expectations and goal-setting practices. These research findings offer important insights for HR professionals designing modern workplace policies that encourages both employee well-being along with organizational productivity.</p> <p>Keywords: Flexible Work Hours; Generation Z; Productivity; Goal-Setting Theory; Employee Energy; Work Flexibility.</p>
---	---

How to Cite This Article

Chavan, A., & Nankar, K. (2026). Impact of Flexible Work Hours on the Productivity of the Employees. *International Journal of Research and Development – A Management Review*, 15(2), 56–63.

Introduction

Context and Background

In recent years, the nature of work has significantly evolved due to technological advancements, digital communication, and evolving employee expectations. A major and notable development in modern organizations is the adoption of flexible work arrangements, particularly Adjustable working schedules. Instead of following rigid timings, employees are increasingly given the freedom to choose when they can complete their work responsibilities.

This trend is particularly meaningful and relevant for Generation Z, a generation that has grown up in a highly digital and fast-paced environment. Individuals belonging to Generation Z generally value autonomy, independence, and a healthy work–life balance. For many of them, productivity is not determined simply by the number of hours spent at work, but by how energized, focused, and mentally prepared they feel while completing their tasks.

Choosing their working hours enable employees to organize their work schedules with their natural energy cycles. Some employees perform better during the beginning of the day, whereas others are more productive later in the day. Permitting the workforce to choose their preferred working hours may therefore enhance their concentration, motivation resulting in overall performance of their work.

Nevertheless, flexible work schedules may also introduce some challenges and difficulties. Without clear expectations or structured guidance, employees may struggle with managing their time in alignment with their responsibilities, distractions, or coordination with team members. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the importance of setting clear goals in maintaining productivity within flexible work environments.

Goal-Setting Theory, introduced by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, explains that clearly defined objectives can improve employee performance. When individuals are provided with well-structured and challenging goals, they tend to show higher levels of motivation, commitment, and task focus. Such goals help employees understand what needs to be achieved and encourage them to direct their efforts toward specific outcomes. In workplaces where employees have flexibility in deciding their working hours, clearly established goals become especially important because they provide guidance and maintain accountability.

Within this framework, the present study explores the influence of flexible working hours on the productivity levels of individuals belonging to the Generation Z workforce. The research also considers how the principles of Goal-Setting Theory can help explain the connection between flexible scheduling and employee performance. Examining this relationship can assist organizations in developing workplace practices that support employee well-being while also ensuring consistent productivity and overall organizational effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this research is to analyse how flexible working hours influence the productivity of individuals belonging to Generation Z. The study aims to explore whether giving employees greater flexibility in deciding their work schedules contributes to improved productivity outcomes, particularly with respect to energy levels, concentration, and overall work efficiency.

To support this objective, the study draws on recognised theoretical perspectives, especially the Goal-Setting Theory introduced by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham. This theory explains that employees generally achieve better performance when they work toward clearly defined and meaningful objectives. In situations where employees have the freedom to organise their working hours, establishing well-structured goals becomes increasingly important. Clear goals provide guidance, encourage responsibility, and help individuals stay focused on completing their tasks even when they have greater autonomy over their schedules.

Through the examination of the connection between flexible work arrangements and employee productivity, the research seeks to understand how workplace flexibility affects the working patterns and performance of the Generation Z workforce. The study also evaluates whether flexible working hours can strengthen motivation, attention, and involvement in work when employees are able to organise their schedules according to their personal productivity rhythms.

Ultimately, the research aims to generate useful insights that may assist organizations and HR professionals in developing workplace policies that support flexible working practices while maintaining consistent employee productivity and overall organizational effectiveness.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim

The purpose of this study is to examine the consequences of flexible working hours on the productivity of Generation Z employees and to understand how time flexibility influences their energy levels, focus, and overall work performance.

Objectives

- To identify the function of flexible working hours in influencing the productivity of young employees
- To analyse the connection between flexible work schedules and employee energy and focus
- To analyse the contribution of goal-setting behaviour to employee productivity in flexible work environments
- To explore the working style preferences of Generation Z employees such as flexible, hybrid, or fixed schedules

Literature Review

Recent research on workplace flexibility indicates a noticeable change in the expectations and working preferences of individuals belonging to Generation Z. As organizational structures continue to evolve and digital technologies increasingly shape modern workplaces, flexible work arrangements especially flexible working hours have become an important topic in both academic discussions and organizational practices. A number of studies have explored the effects of work flexibility on factors such as employee productivity, engagement, and overall well-being. These aspects are particularly relevant for younger employees, who often value autonomy, adaptability in work schedules, and a better balance between professional and personal life.

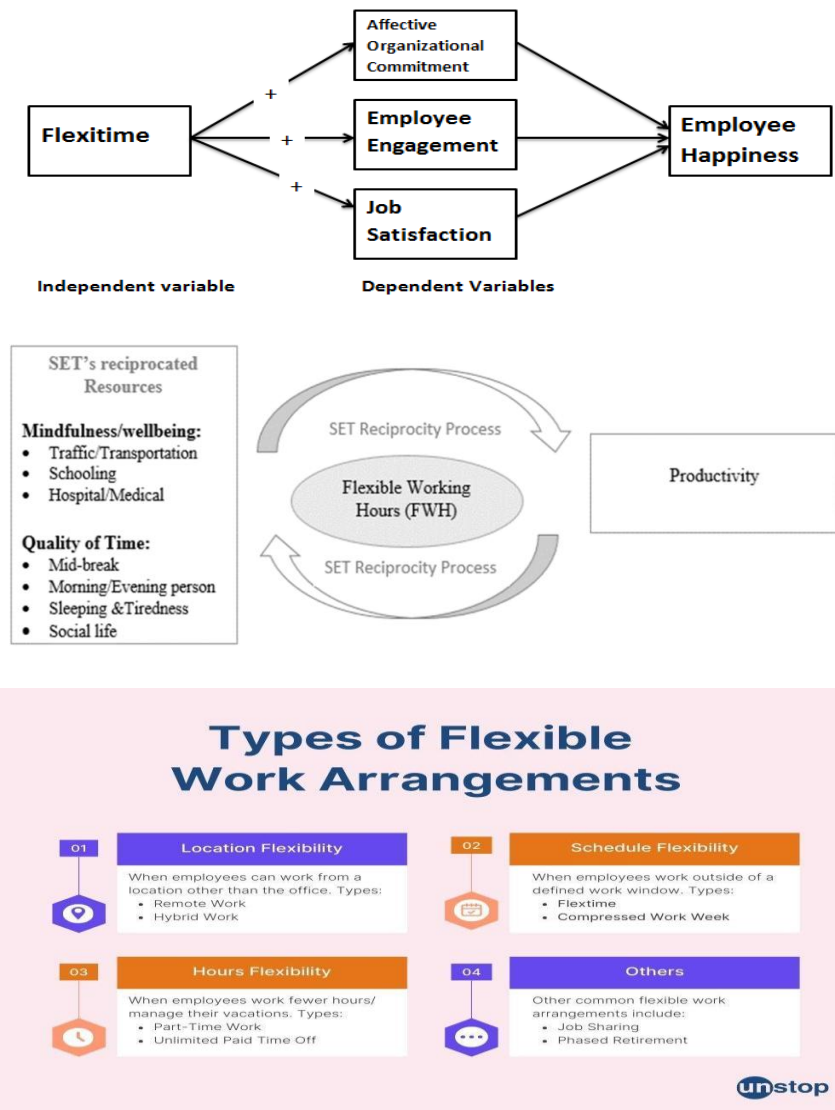


Fig. 1. Conceptual Relationship Between Flexible Work Hours and Productivity

Studies suggest that flexible work timings permit workforce to align their work schedules with their natural productivity cycles. Employees may experience peak energy and concentration at different times of the day, and convenient working hours enables them to work during these optimal periods. Evidence from previous studies highlights that autonomy in scheduling can positively influence attention, productivity, and task effectiveness. This is particularly relevant for the Generation Z workforce, who tend to value flexibility as a driver of motivation and work engagement.

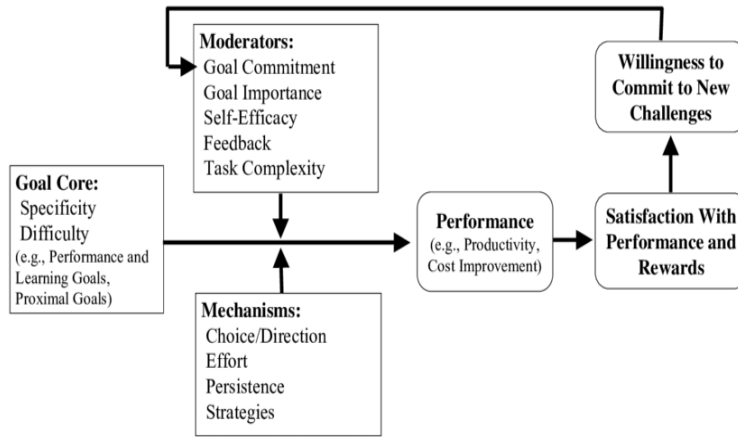


Fig. 2. Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham)

Goal-Setting Theory provides a theoretical explanation for how productivity can be maintained in flexible work environments. According to Locke and Latham, individuals are likely to perform more efficiently whenever they are given clear and specific goals. These goals guide employee behaviour, increase motivation, and improve task performance. In flexible work systems where employees manage their own schedules, clear goals and deadlines help maintain discipline, focus, and accountability.

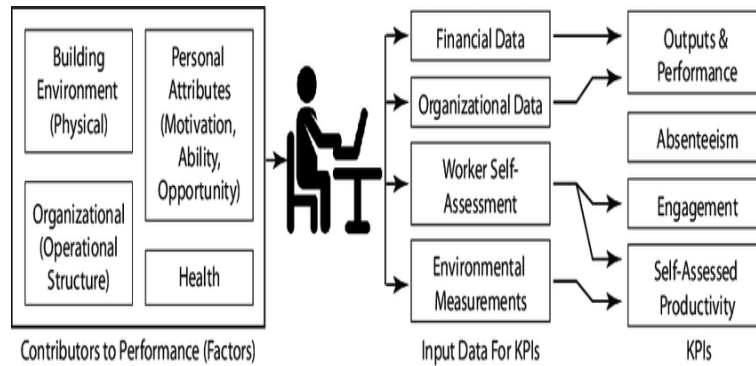


Fig. 3. Components of Employee Productivity: Energy, Focus, and Efficiency

Recent research indicates that employee productivity is shaped more by elements such as energy availability, level of focus, and cognitive engagement than by the total number of hours spent working. In this context, flexible scheduling enables individuals to align their tasks with periods of peak alertness and efficiency, thereby supporting better performance outcomes. Such arrangements have also been associated with reduced psychological strain, improved balance between professional and personal life, and higher levels of job satisfaction.

At the same time, scholarly discussions emphasize that flexibility in work schedules must be supported by well-defined objectives and effective coordination mechanisms. Without these structures, organizations may face challenges including inefficient time utilization and weakened collaboration among team members. Overall, the body of existing literature generally supports the view that flexible working hours can contribute positively to employee productivity, especially when implemented alongside clear performance expectations and structured work guidelines.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional and descriptive design to investigate the effect of flexible working hours on the productivity levels of Generation Z employees. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire developed on a five-point Likert scale and administered online using a convenience sampling technique.

The study sample comprised 131 respondents from Generation Z, mainly including students and early-career professionals based in Pune. The survey instrument incorporated items assessing preferences for flexible work arrangements, scheduling patterns, goal orientation, and productivity-related aspects such as concentration levels and work-related energy.

The collected responses were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques to summarise the data and identify emerging trends associated with work flexibility and employee productivity. Overall, the analysis focused on understanding the relationship between flexible work schedules and key productivity indicators, including attention span, energy levels, and overall work effectiveness among Generation Z participants.

Results

Demographic Profile

Table 1: Gender Distribution (N = 131)

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	75	57.30%
Male	56	42.70%
Total	131	100%

Interpretation: The sample consists of a slightly higher proportion of female respondents compared to male respondents. This indicates that female participants form the majority of the study, though the representation of both genders is relatively balanced, allowing the analysis to reflect perspectives from different groups of Generation Z workforce of the organisation.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
21–23 years	106	80.90%
24–26 years	15	11.50%
27–29 years	10	7.60%
Total	131	100%

Interpretation: The largest proportion of respondents is in the 21–23 age bracket which shows that most participants represent early-stage Generation Z individuals who are either students, interns, or in the initial phase of their professional careers.

Table 3: Current Work Type of Respondents

Work Type	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Internship / Trainee	55	42.00%
Full-time Job	54	41.20%
Freelancer / Self-employed	19	14.50%
Part-time Job	3	2.30%
Total	131	100%

Interpretation: A large portion of respondents are interns/trainees and full-time employees, showing that many participants are either entering the workforce or have recently begun their careers. This makes the sample highly relevant for studying the work preferences and productivity patterns of Generation Z.

Table 4: Availability of Flexible Work Hours

Flexibility Category	Percentage (%)
Sometimes (Partial Flexibility)	38.80%
Yes, Totally Flexible	31.60%
No, Strict Fixed Hours	29.60%
Total	100%

Interpretation: The findings show that a majority of respondents experience some level of work flexibility, either partially or completely. However, nearly one-third of respondents still follow strict fixed work schedules, indicating that adaptive work arrangements are not uniformly implemented across all organizations.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 5: Descriptive Findings of Key Variables

Statement	Mean	SD
Flexible work hours improve my productivity	3.68	1.18
I feel more energetic when I can choose my working hours	3.74	1.14
Flexible schedules help me maintain better focus on tasks	3.59	1.21

Fixed work hours reduce my productivity	3.11	1.27
Flexibility helps maintain work–life balance	3.81	1.09

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally show moderate to high agreement with statements suggesting that flexible work hours positively influence productivity, energy levels, and work–life balance. The highest mean value is observed for work–life balance (Mean = 3.81), suggesting that flexibility significantly contributes to maintaining alignment between work and personal priorities. The standard deviation values indicate moderate variation in responses among participants.

Correlation Analysis

Table 6: Correlation between Flexible Work Factors and Productivity

Flexible Work Factor	Correlation (r)	Strength
Work–Life Balance	0.71	Strong
Energy Levels	0.67	Strong
Focus and Concentration	0.62	Moderate–Strong
Autonomy in Work Schedule	0.54	Moderate
Reduced Stress	0.41	Moderate

Interpretation: The correlation analysis suggests that work-life balance and employee energy levels exhibit the most significant association with productivity among Generation Z employees. Flexible working hours enable individuals to better coordinate their personal and professional commitments, which in turn enhances their overall performance outcomes. Additionally, variables such as concentration and autonomy demonstrate a moderately positive relationship with productivity, indicating that these factors also contribute to improved work effectiveness, although to a lesser extent.

Regression Analysis

Table 7: Regression Results

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	p-value	Significance
Work–Life Balance	0.39	0	Significant
Energy Levels	0.31	0.002	Significant
Focus and Concentration	0.24	0.006	Significant
Autonomy in Schedule	0.15	0.041	Significant
Reduced Stress	0.09	0.118	Not Significant

Model Summary

$R^2 = 0.64$ | Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$

Interpretation: The regression results indicate that work-life balance and employee energy levels serve as the most influential predictors of productivity among Generation Z employees. Flexible working arrangements enable individuals to schedule tasks during their peak performance periods, thereby enhancing concentration and overall work output. Although factors such as autonomy and reduced stress also play a role in improving productivity, their influence is relatively less pronounced in comparison to the primary predictors identified.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Variable	r	β	p-value	Result
Work–Life Balance	0.71	0.39	0	Significant

Energy Levels	0.67	0.31	0.002	Significant
Focus & Concentration	0.62	0.24	0.006	Significant
Autonomy in Schedule	0.54	0.15	0.041	Significant
Reduced Stress	0.41	0.09	0.118	Not Significant

Interpretation: The hypothesis testing results indicate that work-life balance, energy levels, focus, and autonomy have a statistically strong influence on productivity among Generation Z workforce. Flexible work timings enables the employees to organise their schedules more effectively, which improves concentration and overall work performance. However, reduced stress alone does not show a statistically significant impact on productivity, suggesting that productivity is influenced more strongly by factors such as balance, focus, and energy rather than stress reduction alone.

Discussion

The findings suggests that flexible working schedule positively influence the productivity of Generation Z employees. Respondents reported better energy levels, focus, and work-life balance when they were allowed to manage their schedules.

The results support Goal-Setting Theory, which suggests that clear goals combined with autonomy improve performance. They also align with Self-Determination Theory, highlighting autonomy as an important factor in motivation and engagement. Overall, the study shows that flexibility enables the workforce to complete the required work during their most productive periods which leads to enhanced efficiency and performance.

Implications

For Organizations

Organizations should adopt flexible or hybrid work policies to improve productivity, employee satisfaction, and retention.

For Educators

Educational institutions should focus on time management, adaptability, and self-discipline, which are essential for flexible work environments.

For Policymakers

Policies supporting flexible work schedules and employee well-being can help create a more productive workforce.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of flexible working hours on the productivity levels of Generation Z employees. The results suggest that work flexibility contributes to improved work-life balance, enhanced concentration, and higher energy levels, all of which collectively support better productivity outcomes.

The findings further reveal that although structured work environments continue to hold importance, flexible working arrangements are more closely aligned with the preferences and work styles of Generation Z. Accordingly, organizations that adopt effectively managed flexible work policies are likely to experience improvements in employee performance as well as overall workplace satisfaction.

References

1. Maslow, A. H. (1943). *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Psychological Review, 50(4), 370–396.
2. Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The Motivation to Work*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
3. Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and Motivation*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
4. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.
5. Deloitte. (2020). *Global Millennial Survey 2020: Millennials and Gen Zs Hold the Key to Creating a "Better Normal"*. Deloitte Insights.
6. McKinsey & Company. (2022). *True Gen: Generation Z and its Implications for Companies*. McKinsey & Company Report.