

Flexible Work and Job Design for Stress Management in Changing Work Environments

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Abstract

In today's dynamic work environment, organizations increasingly use alternative work arrangements (AWAs) to enhance adaptability and resilience. This study explores the relationship between AWAs, job design, and stress management in promoting employee well-being and sustainable performance. Employing a qualitative approach grounded in the Job Characteristics Model, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, it examines relevant literature and Indonesian workplace contexts. Key findings highlight the importance of role clarity, participative job design, and psychological support in reducing stress and boosting motivation. Organizations with flexible yet well-structured systems demonstrate higher engagement and resilience. The study proposes a strategic model to help businesses and policymakers design human-centered, adaptive, and effective work environments that support long-term organizational success.

Keywords

employee motivation; reward systems; organizational performance; psychological contract; leadership behavior

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, global business dynamics have undergone rapid transformation driven by technological shifts, pandemic-induced disruptions, and evolving employee expectations. These pressures have compelled organizations to adopt more flexible and adaptive strategies, particularly through alternative work arrangements (AWAs), innovative job design, and integrated stress management approaches. As firms seek agility, the way work is structured and managed plays a pivotal role in determining both organizational resilience and employee well-being (Spreitzer, Cameron, & Garrett, 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 134).

The rise of remote work, hybrid schedules, and gig economies has revolutionized traditional workplace norms, challenging conventional management models and prompting renewed interest in strategic human resource frameworks (Choudhury, Foroughi, & Larson, 2021). Despite the potential of these changes to drive performance and engagement, they also bring risks of isolation, burnout, and role ambiguity if not managed effectively (Schermerhorn, Osborn, Uhl-Bien, & Hunt, 2023, p. 278).

The theoretical significance of this research lies in its integration of classical job design theories—such as Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics Model—with modern views on employee autonomy, flexibility, and psychological resilience (Grant, Fried, & Juillerat, 2011). Empirically, this study adds to emerging literature that examines how AWAs affect employee stress levels and productivity outcomes.

While past research has explored aspects of job design and workplace stress in isolation, few studies have examined how the synergy of AWAs and job design can serve as a stress mitigation tool in volatile environments (Giorgi, Lecca, & Alessio, 2020; Robbins & Coulter, 2020, p. 169). Therefore, a comprehensive framework that unifies these perspectives is essential for developing sustainable human capital strategies.

Numerous studies indicate that well-structured job roles, when combined with autonomy and flexibility, lead to increased motivation, lower absenteeism, and enhanced psychological well-being (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017). However, significant gaps remain in understanding how specific AWA models—such as telecommuting, job sharing, or compressed workweeks—interact with individual job characteristics to influence stress responses.

Particularly in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian economies, there is a scarcity of context-specific research addressing how job design and stress management are co-constructed within evolving work formats (Rachmawati & Pratiwi, 2022). This lack of localized insights limits the practical applicability of global management theories in these settings and presents an urgent research opportunity.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the normalization of AWAs across sectors, making it imperative to investigate their implications on job satisfaction and mental health. As organizations increasingly rely on virtual collaboration, the need for adaptive leadership and proactive stress interventions has grown (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Yet, despite the growing discourse, many enterprises lack a cohesive strategy linking structural flexibility to mental health safeguards and performance metrics. This disconnect highlights the need for an integrated study that addresses job architecture, stress dynamics, and adaptive success mechanisms in tandem (Schermerhorn et al., 2023, p. 279; Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 146).

This study seeks to answer three research questions: (1) How do alternative work arrangements influence job design effectiveness in modern organizations? (2) In what ways does job design contribute to employee stress management under dynamic work conditions? and (3) What adaptive strategies can organizations adopt to align AWAs, job roles, and mental well-being for sustained success? By addressing these questions, the research aims to develop a theoretical and practical framework that guides managers and HR professionals in navigating the complexities of the contemporary work environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alternative work arrangements (AWAs) have evolved from peripheral practices into mainstream organizational strategies, driven by advances in information technology and shifting labor demographics. Robbins and Coulter (2020, p. 148) underscore that flexibility in work arrangements promotes agility, reduces operational costs, and aligns with the preferences of an increasingly mobile workforce. Schermerhorn et al. (2023, p. 275) expand this view by identifying telecommuting, freelancing, and hybrid scheduling as integral components of modern organizational design.

Early frameworks like Taylor's Scientific Management and the Human Relations Movement laid the groundwork for structured job roles, but contemporary research emphasizes fluidity, autonomy, and purpose-driven work (Grant et al., 2011). The evolution of work has thus prompted a redefinition of job characteristics and employee expectations, especially regarding control over time and task execution (Fried & Ferris, 1987).

Job design theory has similarly progressed from mechanical models toward more holistic perspectives that incorporate psychological and social dimensions. The Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham, for instance, emphasizes task identity, autonomy, and feedback as critical elements influencing motivation and performance (Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 155). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further suggests that

job enrichment—rather than mere job enlargement—is essential to foster intrinsic motivation and reduce stress (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Recent literature affirms that employees experiencing role clarity, autonomy, and task significance are less susceptible to burnout and more engaged in their tasks (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013). This suggests that effective job design functions not only as a productivity enhancer but also as a stress buffer.

The intersection of AWAs and stress management remains underexplored, particularly in non-Western contexts. While studies in the United States and Europe have linked AWAs to improved work-life balance and job satisfaction (Choudhury et al., 2021), Indonesian literature has primarily focused on job insecurity and digital overload (Rachmawati & Pratiwi, 2022).

Moreover, organizational stressors such as role ambiguity, workload, and lack of control have been consistently identified as predictors of emotional exhaustion (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Integrating these perspectives into a unified model offers both theoretical refinement and practical guidance. Thus, this research positions itself at the convergence of AWAs, job design, and stress management, aiming to contribute to the discourse by offering an integrative and culturally sensitive framework for managing employee well-being in complex work environments.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research integrates multiple established frameworks to explain how alternative work arrangements (AWAs), job design, and stress management interact to support employee well-being and organizational performance. Central to this foundation is the Job Characteristics Model developed by Hackman and Oldham, which identifies five core job dimensions—skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback—as predictors of motivation and performance (Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 155).

In environments shaped by AWAs, these job characteristics may take new forms. For instance, autonomy becomes more pronounced in remote work contexts, where employees have greater discretion over time and task management. However, the same autonomy can induce ambiguity if not coupled with clear feedback and task identity (Schermerhorn et al., 2023, p. 285). Thus, the Job Characteristics Model provides a foundational lens to examine both the benefits and challenges of AWAs in job design.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory serves as a complementary framework that distinguishes between hygiene factors (e.g., salary, supervision, company policies) and motiva-

tors (e.g., achievement, recognition, job enrichment) (Herzberg et al., 1959). Within AWAs, hygiene factors such as digital infrastructure and managerial support become critical, while motivators are often linked to meaningful work and recognition in virtual settings.

Robbins and Coulter (2020, p. 165) argue that the absence of hygiene factors leads to dissatisfaction, whereas the presence of motivators enhances engagement. This dual structure aligns with stress management literature, where a supportive work environment can mitigate stress, but true resilience and satisfaction stem from intrinsic motivators. In flexible work models, ensuring both hygiene and motivator factors is essential to manage stress while enhancing productivity.

Role Theory also underpins the study by emphasizing the significance of role clarity and role conflict in stress development. According to Kahn et al. (1964), unclear expectations and overlapping responsibilities contribute to role stress, which negatively impacts both mental health and job performance. AWAs often obscure traditional role boundaries, increasing the potential for role conflict.

Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 147) highlight that virtual and hybrid teams frequently experience coordination challenges, making explicit communication and expectation setting vital. By incorporating Role Theory, this research addresses how role design in AWAs influences stress levels, and how clarity and boundary setting can serve as preventive mechanisms.

Additionally, the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) Model by Karasek and Theorell (1990) posits that stress arises when job demands exceed an individual's control, and when social support is lacking. This model is particularly relevant to the AWA context, where high autonomy (control) must be balanced against job complexity (demand) and the availability of support structures.

In a remote work environment, the absence of face-to-face interaction can erode social support, thereby intensifying stress even when autonomy is high. Schermerhorn et al. (2023, p. 292) note that the DCS Model helps explain why some employees thrive in AWAs while others struggle—differences in personal resources and organizational support determine individual outcomes.

Finally, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan adds a motivational dimension, proposing that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are basic psychological needs that must be fulfilled to foster well-being and intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2017). SDT complements the above models by framing job design and AWAs not merely as structural changes but as environments that either support or hinder psychological needs.

Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 142) affirm that satisfaction of these needs leads to sustained motivation and resilience, which are critical in high-change environments. In this study, SDT provides an interpretive lens to evaluate how job roles and organizational policies support these fundamental needs in diverse AWA settings.

Previous Research

In 2017, Spreitzer, Cameron, and Garrett examined the evolving concept of alternative work arrangements (AWAs) in their influential study on positive organizational scholarship. They found that AWAs—such as remote work and flexible scheduling—enhanced employee engagement and resilience when integrated with supportive organizational cultures. The study employed a qualitative design based on interviews and document analysis, concluding that job control and meaning were crucial mediators of AWA success. Their findings align with Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, confirming that autonomy plays a central role in employee motivation and stress management.

In 2018, Tims, Bakker, and Derks explored job crafting and its implications for stress reduction in flexible job settings. Their longitudinal study used self-reported surveys across Dutch organizations to assess how employees reshape their job roles proactively. The results showed that job crafting was significantly associated with decreased burnout and increased work engagement. The study is relevant to the current research because it provides empirical evidence that job design is not static, and employees can influence stress levels by reshaping their tasks and relationships.

A 2019 study by Giorgi, Lecca, and Alessio focused on the psychological risks of modern work environments. They assessed how work overload, role ambiguity, and digital stress contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Using structural equation modeling, the authors demonstrated that stressors were more prevalent in loosely defined work arrangements, including freelancing and remote work. This study supports the role theory framework and emphasizes the need for structured role definitions within AWAs to minimize psychological strain.

In 2020, Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson analyzed productivity changes among employees shifting to remote work. Using natural experiments at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, they found that remote workers were more productive due to reduced commuting and fewer distractions. However, the benefits were contingent on access to resources and managerial support. This research underlines the DCS Model's point that autonomy without adequate support can be counterproductive—an insight that directly supports the design of stress-resilient job models in AWA settings.

Kniffin et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive interdisciplinary review on COVID-19's impact on work and organizations. Their findings highlighted that while AWAs became a necessity during the pandemic, organizations were unprepared for their psychological and structural implications. The authors emphasized that successful transition required not just technological adaptation but also revised job roles and explicit stress management protocols. Their work provides real-time empirical validation of the present study's core hypothesis—that adaptive work structures are integral to resilience in volatile environments.

Most recently, Rachmawati and Pratiwi (2022) investigated the Indonesian context of remote work. They conducted a mixed-methods study examining employee well-being during forced remote working conditions. Their study revealed heightened digital fatigue and feelings of isolation among employees, especially where job roles were poorly defined. The results indicate that cultural factors, such as collectivism and hierarchical expectations, influence stress outcomes in AWAs. This highlights a contextual gap in existing literature, particularly the lack of region-specific frameworks integrating AWAs, job design, and stress mitigation.

Despite the rich body of work addressing AWAs, job design, and stress independently, there is a notable research gap in the integration of these three domains. Specifically, limited studies offer a cohesive theoretical and empirical framework that accounts for the interplay among work flexibility, job role structuring, and psychological health across different cultural and organizational contexts. Moreover, few studies link these insights to strategic success factors in dynamic, high-change environments. This research thus aims to fill this gap by exploring how adaptive job design and stress-sensitive AWA strategies can jointly enhance organizational performance and employee well-being.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach, relying on textual and conceptual data derived from scholarly literature, official publications, and theoretical frameworks. Unlike numerical or statistical data, qualitative data allows for interpretive understanding of complex, interconnected themes such as stress, job structure, and work flexibility. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize that qualitative research is suitable for exploratory inquiries where the goal is to uncover patterns, meanings, and lived experiences rather than quantify behaviors. For the present study, data are thematically organized to investigate how alternative work arrangements and job design relate to stress management across different organizational contexts (Schermerhorn et al., 2023, p. 287).

The data in this study originate from a triangulated range of peer-reviewed international journals, global institutional publications (e.g., World Bank, IMF), Indonesian SINTA-Garuda accredited journals, and internationally recognized books by scholars such as Stephen P. Robbins and Richard L. Daft. For instance, Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 146) offer empirical models on job satisfaction and stressors, while Indonesian sources provide region-specific insights into workplace dynamics (Rachmawati & Pratiwi, 2022). This diverse sourcing ensures both global relevance and local contextualization, enhancing the validity and depth of analysis (Yin, 2018, p. 109).

Data were collected through systematic document analysis, focusing on literature published from 2017 to 2025. Bowen (2009) outlines document analysis as a method that involves skimming, reading, and interpreting texts to extract meaningful insights. All selected documents were screened for relevance to the research theme using keywords such as "alternative work arrangements," "job design," and "stress management." Attention was paid to the theoretical contribution, methodological rigor, and contextual relevance of each source. The selected texts include both conceptual frameworks and empirical case studies, which serve to ground theoretical discussion and enrich interpretive claims.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and interpret recurrent patterns and themes across the data corpus. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic analysis is a flexible yet rigorous method for analyzing qualitative data, especially when exploring underlying assumptions and concepts. In this study, themes such as autonomy, role clarity, motivation, and psychological safety were inductively coded and linked to constructs from theoretical models like the Job Characteristics Model and the Demand-Control-Support Model. This analytical approach allowed for cross-case synthesis and theoretical triangulation, reinforcing the robustness of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conclusions were derived through interpretive synthesis, connecting theoretical constructs with observed patterns in the data. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) propose that drawing conclusions involves the identification of regularities, explanations, and causal mechanisms across themes. For this study, findings were aligned with the research questions to assess how alternative work models and job design strategies contribute to stress mitigation. These insights were further validated by cross-referencing with theoretical models and previous research, enabling both theoretical contribution and practical application. The final conclusions thus represent a coherent narrative that bridges conceptual frameworks with actionable organizational strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preceding methodological framework enabled an in-depth exploration of how alternative work arrangements (AWAs), job design, and stress management interact within contemporary organizational systems. Building upon theoretical models such as Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the Demand-Control-Support Model, the findings establish a multi-dimensional understanding of work-related stress and adaptability. Existing literature has emphasized these variables in isolation, but this study presents an integrated view that captures the dynamic interplay of structural, psychological, and social elements (Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 153; Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

The general analysis reveals that AWAs serve not merely as logistical adaptations but also as cultural and structural reinventions of the workplace. For instance, studies show that while remote work enhances autonomy, it can simultaneously reduce feedback and social interaction, heightening emotional fatigue (Choudhury et al., 2021; Kniffin et al., 2021). This reinforces the need for balanced job design that incorporates role clarity, support systems, and intrinsic motivators. The results also confirm that when job enrichment aligns with psychological needs—as identified in Self-Determination Theory—stress levels decline and engagement improves (Deci et al., 2017; Robbins & Coulter, 2020, p. 170).

Furthermore, these findings contribute to addressing the previously identified research gap: the absence of a unified framework that links AWA strategies to stress management and job design. By synthesizing theoretical models and empirical insights, the study proposes a holistic framework that integrates flexibility, role structure, and well-being, especially for hybrid and virtual organizations in transitional economies like Indonesia. This positions the current research as both a conceptual refinement and a practical guide for decision-makers.

1. Designing Job Roles for Success in Alternative Work Structures

Addressing the first research question, the study finds that alternative work arrangements significantly influence job design effectiveness by transforming traditional structures of authority, autonomy, and accountability. When job roles are clearly redefined to suit AWA models—such as hybrid, remote, or project-based contracts—employees exhibit higher task engagement and lower emotional exhaustion (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Schermerhorn et al. (2023, p. 280) note that clearly outlined roles enhance both performance and satisfaction in virtual teams, supporting the Job Characteristics Model's emphasis on task identity and feedback.

Evidence also shows that AWAs demand increased coordination between human resource departments and line managers to reengineer roles and responsibilities. Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 146) argue that without structured delegation, employees experience decision fatigue and role ambiguity—key triggers of workplace stress. Similarly, Herzberg’s framework warns against underestimating hygiene factors in job design, such as managerial communication and workload clarity, which are often compromised in flexible setups (Herzberg et al., 1959). Therefore, effective job design within AWAs requires not only autonomy but also intentional support systems and feedback mechanisms.

Choudhury et al. (2021) provide quantitative support showing that structured yet flexible job roles improve productivity in remote teams. Their study found that patent examiners working remotely outperformed their office-based peers when provided with role clarity and asynchronous feedback systems. This affirms the argument that job design must adapt not just in form but in function to suit AWA demands. Theoretical integration with Role Theory reveals that stress arises less from flexibility itself and more from undefined expectations and misaligned goals (Kahn et al., 1964).

Indonesian data echoes this need for structured adaptability. Rachmawati and Pratiwi (2022) found that in the absence of formal role documentation, Indonesian remote workers reported higher stress and decreased motivation. Cultural expectations of collectivism and hierarchy amplify the need for clarity in distributed teams, reinforcing the relevance of cross-cultural adaptations to job design models. Hence, the answer to the first research question lies in the strategic redesign of job roles that embed clarity, feedback, and autonomy as cornerstones of successful AWAs.

2. Job Design as a Stress Management Mechanism in Dynamic Work Contexts

In addressing the second research question, the analysis reveals that job design significantly contributes to employee stress management, especially within dynamic and evolving work conditions. When job roles are intentionally structured to include autonomy, task significance, and appropriate feedback loops, employees report lower levels of occupational stress and greater psychological well-being (Robbins & Judge, 2022, p. 153). The Job Characteristics Model offers a clear framework for understanding how each component directly moderates stress responses. For example, autonomy empowers employees to make decisions aligned with their workflow, reducing the tension

associated with micromanagement and rigid scheduling (Schermerhorn et al., 2023, p. 289).

Moreover, stress management benefits from the inclusion of role clarity and competence development within the design of modern jobs. According to Role Theory, uncertainty and conflicting demands are among the strongest stressors in organizational settings (Kahn et al., 1964). These issues are intensified in AWA contexts, where traditional feedback channels and peer interactions are often diluted. Organizations that restructure job roles to clarify expectations, workflows, and performance metrics can substantially buffer against these stressors. Giorgi et al. (2019) confirm that lack of defined expectations in remote and hybrid models increases anxiety and emotional fatigue, highlighting the urgency for proactive job design strategies.

Integrating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further supports the notion that intrinsic motivation elements, such as achievement and recognition, are essential in reducing stress. While hygiene factors like salary and job security prevent dissatisfaction, it is the presence of motivators that enables employees to experience fulfillment and resilience (Herzberg et al., 1959). Robbins and Coulter (2020, p. 172) note that job enrichment—through adding meaningful responsibilities and opportunities for growth—has been linked with improved mental health and organizational commitment.

Additionally, the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) Model demonstrates that high job demands must be counterbalanced with high control and adequate support to avoid stress escalation (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). In AWA environments, where demands may increase due to blurred work-life boundaries, structured job roles with built-in autonomy and peer support mechanisms are even more critical. Choudhury et al. (2021) show that remote employees who have control over their work schedules and access to digital peer networks report lower stress levels than their more constrained counterparts.

Indonesian studies provide further evidence supporting this conclusion. Rachmawati and Pratiwi (2022) found that stress among remote workers was notably lower in organizations that provided detailed role guidelines and digital collaboration tools. This suggests that job design not only shapes productivity but also acts as a lever for emotional well-being. Integrating Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017), the findings suggest that when jobs satisfy basic psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—stress decreases while intrinsic motivation increases.

Hence, the second research question is answered through a multi-theoretical understanding: job design in dynamic work environments must be both

structurally sound and psychologically enriching to effectively manage stress. This highlights a pressing need for organizations to go beyond superficial flexibility and invest in strategic job architecture that promotes well-being and performance.

3. Integrating Adaptive Strategies for Holistic Organizational Success

This section addresses the third research question by identifying and evaluating adaptive strategies that align alternative work arrangements (AWAs), job roles, and employee mental well-being. Findings indicate that organizations achieving long-term success in dynamic environments are those that adopt integrative strategies—combining job flexibility with structural clarity and mental health support. Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 160) emphasize that without alignment among these elements, organizations risk disjointed operations and disengaged employees. The integration of adaptive strategies thus requires a balanced configuration of structure and flexibility, grounded in strategic human resource management.

Effective strategies begin with participative job design, where employees are involved in shaping their roles and responsibilities. This approach fosters ownership, improves alignment between personal strengths and tasks, and enhances resilience in times of change. Tims et al. (2018) demonstrated that job crafting—encouraging employees to proactively redesign aspects of their jobs—resulted in lower stress levels and higher motivation, especially in decentralized teams. This finding is corroborated by Herzberg’s model, which notes that enriched roles drive job satisfaction and reduce stress (Herzberg et al., 1959). Schermerhorn et al. (2023, p. 291) also affirm that participative strategies enhance role commitment in virtual settings by making job responsibilities more meaningful and self-determined.

The second layer of adaptive strategy involves embedding psychological support into organizational design. Self-Determination Theory suggests that psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness must be met for employees to thrive (Deci et al., 2017). Strategies such as regular virtual check-ins, mentoring systems, and stress management training help fulfill these needs, particularly in remote or hybrid contexts.

Kniffin et al. (2021) reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations that invested in emotional and social support mechanisms observed significantly better engagement and retention. Robbins and Coulter (2020, p. 168)

argue that mental health should be a core component of organizational strategy—not merely an HR initiative.

A third strategic element is the use of performance metrics tailored for AWAs. Traditional key performance indicators (KPIs) often fail to capture the nuances of remote productivity, leading to misaligned evaluations and increased stress. Robbins and Judge (2022, p. 173) advocate for outcome-based appraisal systems that focus on results rather than time or presence. In Indonesia, Rachmawati and Pratiwi (2022) observed that employees felt more valued and less anxious when performance assessments were transparent and output-oriented. This points to the necessity of evolving evaluation models in line with flexible work formats.

Additionally, adaptive strategies include leadership reconfiguration. Leaders in AWA systems must act more as facilitators than directors, fostering trust, autonomy, and cohesion. Spreitzer et al. (2017) argue that empowering leadership styles reduce hierarchical rigidity and support individual initiative. These leaders also play a vital role in ensuring that job design and stress management protocols are effectively implemented across diverse and dispersed teams. Schermerhorn et al. (2023, p. 293) confirm that the success of adaptive strategies largely depends on leadership that is responsive, communicative, and psychologically attuned.

In conclusion, the third research question is answered through the synthesis of theoretical and empirical insights that reveal a triadic model of success: (1) participative job design; (2) embedded psychological support; and (3) adaptive leadership and evaluation systems. These interconnected strategies offer a blueprint for aligning AWAs, job roles, and stress management in a way that enhances organizational adaptability and long-term resilience.

This study provides a comprehensive synthesis of how alternative work arrangements (AWAs), job design, and stress management coalesce to influence organizational effectiveness in dynamic work environments. The first research question revealed that AWAs significantly alter job design by amplifying autonomy and decentralizing decision-making structures. However, this shift demands strategic redesign of roles to ensure clarity, feedback, and alignment with performance outcomes. The second research question showed that thoughtfully constructed job designs serve as critical tools for stress mitigation, particularly when they incorporate autonomy, task significance, and structured support. The third research question identified three adaptive strategies essential for organizational resilience: participative job structuring, embedded psychological support, and leadership models tailored to distributed

teams. Together, these findings confirm the need for a unified framework that integrates flexibility, role design, and mental well-being to enhance employee satisfaction and performance.

Theoretically, the study makes a significant contribution to the academic discourse by synthesizing and bridging five foundational frameworks—Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics Model, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, Role Theory, the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) Model, and Self-Determination Theory (SDT)—into a cohesive analytical lens suited for the complexities of transitional and modern work contexts. While each of these models has traditionally been applied in isolation, this research integrates their structural and psychological dimensions to create a comprehensive understanding of how work is experienced in alternative work arrangements (AWAs).

For instance, the Job Characteristics Model emphasizes autonomy, task identity, and feedback as motivators; Herzberg’s theory differentiates between hygiene and motivational factors; Role Theory explains how ambiguity and conflict shape stress outcomes; the DCS Model highlights the balance between job demands and control; and SDT underscores the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

By uniting these perspectives, the study not only refines the theoretical conceptualization of job design in dynamic environments but also fills a critical gap by providing a multi-layered model that reflects the realities of hybrid and distributed workforces. This integrated framework allows researchers to explore the dynamic interplay between organizational structures, individual agency, and environmental stressors in a more holistic and context-sensitive manner.

Practically, the study offers a robust set of insights and strategies that assist organizations in designing job roles that are not only compatible with flexible work models but also responsive to employee mental well-being and motivation. It shows that stress management must be embedded into the very architecture of job design, rather than treated as a separate wellness initiative.

Organizations that fail to account for role clarity, psychological support, and performance feedback mechanisms in AWAs risk higher turnover, disengagement, and burnout. These findings are particularly useful for human resource practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers tasked with implementing sustainable work strategies in a post-pandemic era.

In practical terms, the study outlines how participative job structuring, emotional support systems, and outcome-oriented evaluations can collectively drive employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Moreover, in emerging economies such as Indonesia—where work culture is often shaped by collectivist values, hierarchical

communication, and a growing digital economy—the study emphasizes the need for culturally adapted models of work.

It reveals that stress responses and job expectations are mediated not just by organizational policy but also by societal norms and employee identity. By presenting a unified, adaptable strategic framework, the research equips organizations with the tools to navigate rapid transformation, manage workforce diversity, and build resilient, high-performing teams suited for both global and local challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the interplay among alternative work arrangements (AWAs), job design, and stress management constitutes a critical determinant of organizational success in the era of constant change. Through theoretical integration and qualitative analysis, the research demonstrates that when AWAs are supported by participative job structuring and psychological support systems, organizations can mitigate employee stress while enhancing engagement and performance.

The research confirms that clearly defined roles, intrinsic motivation, and autonomy are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are synergistic elements of effective modern workforce design. Moreover, the findings affirm that stress management is not an ancillary concern but a core strategic function embedded within organizational design frameworks.

Theoretically, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how classical management models must evolve to address the demands of increasingly flexible, distributed, and dynamic work environments. It highlights the relevance of models such as the Job Characteristics Model, Herzberg's motivation theory, and the Demand-Control-Support Model when applied to contemporary organizational contexts.

The research advances these theories by demonstrating their applicability across cultures and within hybrid organizational forms. It provides a holistic framework that unites role clarity, flexibility, and emotional well-being as central components of resilient job design.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers actionable strategies for organizations and policymakers seeking to improve both employee well-being and organizational outcomes. These strategies include redesigning job roles to enhance clarity and purpose, implementing well-being initiatives that address stress proactively, and adopting leadership styles that empower rather than micromanage.

Organizations must shift from viewing flexibility as a perk to embedding it as a structural and strategic element, supported by coherent job designs and robust support systems. Future research is encouraged to test these frameworks in diverse cultural and sectoral settings, particularly with empirical data, to further validate and expand upon the integrative model proposed in this study.

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