



Balancing Flexibility and Fairness: Job and Personality Drivers of Hybrid and Remote Work in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Flexible work has reshaped employment relations after COVID-19, raising concerns about fairness in access to hybrid and remote arrangements. This study examines how job characteristics and personality traits influence both access to and alignment with flexible work in Thailand, a context marked by hierarchical management and uneven flexibility adoption. Using survey data from 400 urban employees across multiple industries in Thailand—predominantly female (67.2%), university-educated (74.3%), and concentrated in the Bangkok metropolitan area—ordered and binary logistic regressions models were employed to identify how structural and psychological factors shape current work formats, preferences, and misalignment.

Results show persistent inequalities. Jobs requiring high levels of cooperation and attention to detail are less compatible with remote work, while introverted employees are more likely to experience preference–reality misalignment. Income and job level strongly predict access to flexibility, with managerial and higher-income employees benefiting disproportionately. Women also report greater scheduling mismatches, indicating gendered barriers to temporal flexibility.

By integrating job design, personality, and Person–Environment Fit perspectives, the study highlights flexibility as both a structural and a fairness issue. The findings underscore the need for transparent, flexible policies and trust-based management to ensure equitable access amid evolving employment relations.

Keywords: flexible work, person–environment fit, job characteristics, introversion, Thailand

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Background and Significance of the Research Problem

Remote and hybrid work have become central issues in post-pandemic employment relations, raising questions about how organizations balance operational efficiency with employees' growing demand for flexibility while maintaining fairness and trust (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021). Evidence shows that employees whose work arrangements align with their preferences report higher satisfaction and engagement, whereas imposed on-site work may weaken morale and loyalty (Allen et al., 2021). Flexible work thus functions not only as a productivity tool but also as a signal of organizational respect and inclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed flexible work from a niche HR practice into a mainstream organizational strategy. Post-pandemic research conceptualizes hybrid and remote work as structural features of employment relations that shape performance, trust, and perceptions of fairness (Kniffin et al., 2021; Kossek et al., 2023). When flexibility is granted based on transparent and trust-based criteria, it enhances commitment; when applied inconsistently, it reinforces a new "flexibility divide" between those who can and cannot access remote work (Chung, 2023).

Research increasingly highlights that access to flexibility remains uneven. Managerial and high-income employees benefit disproportionately from hybrid and remote options, while frontline workers and women remain constrained by fixed schedules and locations (Chung and van der Lippe, 2020). This divide reframes flexibility as an issue of fairness and equity in human resource management rather than merely a work-design choice. When flexibility is perceived as unfairly allocated, it may be interpreted as a breach of the psychological contract, with consequences for engagement and turnover intentions (Chung, 2023).

Understanding who gains access to flexibility requires attention to both structural and individual factors. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1976) explains why some jobs are more amenable to remote work than others. Autonomy facilitates remote work, while high task interdependence and coordination constrain it (Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson, 2007; Allen et al., 2015). Although technology can mitigate these constraints, feasibility ultimately depends on whether organizations adopt output-based evaluation rather than relying on physical supervision.

At the individual level, Trait Activation Theory (Tett and Burnett, 2003) suggests that personality traits shape how employees respond to work environments. Introverts tend to prefer remote settings that reduce social stimulation and enhance concentration, whereas extraverts favor in-person collaboration (Cain, 2012; McCrae and Costa, 1997). Empirical evidence indicates

that introversion predicts stronger preferences for remote work, although organizational structures often limit the realization of these preferences (Gavoille and Hazans, 2022).

Bringing these perspectives together, Person–Environment (P–E) Fit Theory (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson, 2005) provides an integrated lens for understanding flexibility. Well-being and performance arise when job conditions align with individual needs and values, while misalignment generates strain and disengagement. In flexible work research, P–E Fit captures the intersection of job feasibility, personality-driven preferences, and perceived fairness, helping explain why mismatches occur and for whom.

Thailand provides a particularly relevant setting for examining these dynamics. Despite the rapid expansion of remote work during the pandemic—the National Statistical Office of Thailand reported that the share of workers performing tasks remotely increased markedly during 2020–2021—and recent legal recognition of remote work rights through amendments to the Labor Protection Act (B.E. 2541, amended 2023), many organizations continue to prioritize physical presence and hierarchical supervision. Cultural norms emphasizing power distance and managerial oversight may constrain flexibility uptake, even where technology makes it feasible (Hofstede, 2001). Prior research in Southeast Asia has focused primarily on productivity and technology adoption, leaving fairness and personality dimensions underexplored.

In this study, “fairness” refers to the procedural and distributive dimensions of organizational justice in the allocation of flexible work arrangements. Procedural fairness concerns whether the criteria used to grant flexibility are transparent and consistently applied; distributive fairness concerns whether the outcomes of those decisions are equitable across employees with similar job demands (Greenberg, 1987). When flexibility is granted informally or based on managerial discretion rather than explicit role criteria, it risks violating both dimensions of justice, reinforcing hierarchical privilege and weakening employees’ psychological contracts.

Despite growing interest in flexible work globally, a clear research gap remains in the Thai and broader Southeast Asian context. Specifically, no prior study has jointly examined how job characteristics and personality traits shape both access to flexible work and the alignment between employees’ preferences and actual arrangements within a high-power-distance, hierarchically managed setting. This study addresses that gap by investigating the structural and psychological determinants of flexibility in Thailand.

Literature Review

Job Characteristics and Flexible Work

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model (JCM) identifies autonomy, skill variety, task identity, task significance, and feedback as core dimensions shaping employee motivation and satisfaction. Research extending the JCM to remote work contexts demonstrates that autonomy facilitates flexibility by reducing the need for direct supervision, while high task interdependence and coordination requirements constrain it (Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson, 2007; Allen et al., 2015). Work requiring close collaboration, precise attention to detail, or continuous co-presence with colleagues remains less amenable to remote formats, even when information technology can partially bridge the gap. Conversely, autonomous, knowledge-intensive roles enable remote work because output can be evaluated independently of physical presence. A key limitation of earlier JCM research, however, is its development in Western organizational contexts, raising questions about applicability in high power-distance cultures where supervisory control is embedded in managerial identity regardless of task demands (Hofstede, 2001).

Personality, Trait Activation, and Preferences for Flexible Work

Tett and Burnett's (2003) Trait Activation Theory (TAT) proposes that stable personality traits are expressed behaviorally only when situational cues are present to activate them. Applied to flexible work, introversion—characterized by preference for reduced social stimulation and focused individual work—is theorized to activate stronger preferences for remote settings (Cain, 2012; McCrae and Costa, 1997). Empirical evidence supports this: introversion is positively associated with preferences for remote work and higher self-reported productivity in home-based settings (Gavoille and Hazans, 2022). Conversely, extraversion predicts preferences for in-person arrangements, where social interaction provides motivational and cognitive stimulation. However, TAT also acknowledges that personality can influence preference without determining outcomes; organizational constraints may prevent introverted employees from actualizing their preferred work arrangements, creating a preference–reality gap. Prior research has largely examined this dynamic in Western individualist contexts, leaving underexplored the extent to which collectivist norms and conformity pressures in societies such as Thailand suppress personality-driven flexibility choices.

Person–Environment Fit, Gender, and Flexibility

Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson's (2005) Person–Environment (P–E) Fit Theory holds that well-being and performance are maximized when the characteristics of an individual align with those of the work environment. In the flexible work context, fit encompasses the alignment between job demands and task feasibility for remote work, as well as between

personality-driven preferences and available arrangements. Misfit generates stress, disengagement, and turnover intentions. Chung and van der Lippe (2020) demonstrate that gender systematically moderates P–E fit in flexible work: while women often have stronger preferences for temporal and locational flexibility due to domestic caregiving responsibilities, they simultaneously face greater organizational barriers and career penalties when they exercise such flexibility (Williams et al., 2013). This “flexibility stigma” is particularly pronounced in patriarchal or hierarchical organizational cultures, where women’s requests for flexibility may be interpreted as signals of lower career commitment.

Flexible Work Policy and the Thai Labor Context

Internationally, flexible work policy has evolved from discretionary HR practice toward legal entitlement. Countries including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia have introduced statutory “right to request” frameworks that empower employees to formally request flexible arrangements (Kossek et al., 2023). In Thailand, amendments to the Labor Protection Act now formally recognize employees’ rights to work remotely and to request flexible schedules, representing a significant shift in labor regulation. However, statutory recognition alone does not guarantee equitable access; implementation depends on managerial discretion, organizational culture, and awareness of legal rights among both employers and employees. Research specifically examining the gap between policy provision and lived experience of flexibility in the Thai labor market remains sparse. This gap is particularly relevant because Thailand’s organizational culture is characterized by high power distance (Hofstede, 2001), meaning that formal entitlements may be difficult to invoke without managerial support or fear of social and career repercussions.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how job characteristics influence employees’ likelihood of working in hybrid or remote formats.
2. To analyze how personality traits, particularly introversion, shape employees’ preferences for flexible work arrangements.
3. To investigate how structural (job-related) and psychological (personality-related) factors contribute to misalignment between preferred and actual work arrangements, and what this implies for fairness and inclusion in employment relations, including inequality by job level and income.
4. To examine how socioeconomic factors—specifically income, job level, and gender—moderate access to and satisfaction with flexible work arrangements, and what these patterns imply for distributive justice in employment relations.

Scope of the Research

This study focuses on urban employees in Thailand whose job roles potentially allow for hybrid or remote work arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic. The following scope boundaries define what is and is not addressed.

Content Scope: The study examines four specific job characteristics derived from the O*NET database (attention to detail, coordination, cooperation, and autonomy) and one personality dimension (introversion–extraversion). It does not analyze all dimensions of the Big Five personality model or all O*NET job characteristic domains. Dependent variables are limited to work-location format (on-site, hybrid, remote), work-schedule flexibility (regular versus flexible hours), and the alignment between current and preferred arrangements across both dimensions.

Time Scope: Data were collected in January–February 2023, capturing the immediate post-pandemic period, approximately two to three years after widespread remote work adoption in Thailand during 2020–2021. The study therefore reflects a transitional phase in which organizations were in the process of formalizing or revising their flexible work policies following pandemic disruption.

Industry and Organizational Scope: Respondents span multiple industries, including business and finance, sales, office administration, engineering, computing, management, education, and health. The findings primarily reflect the experience of employees in white-collar or knowledge-based occupations in the Bangkok metropolitan area, where technological readiness and flexible work practices are more prevalent. The study does not aim to generalize to rural workers, occupations requiring full physical presence (e.g., manufacturing, retail, healthcare frontline), or informal employment sectors.

Theoretical Scope: The study is grounded in three complementary frameworks—the Job Characteristics Model, Trait Activation Theory, and Person–Environment Fit Theory—with Person–Environment Fit serving as the primary integrative lens that connects job feasibility, personality-driven preferences, and perceived fairness. The study does not employ organizational justice theory as a primary framework, though fairness implications are discussed within the P–E Fit perspective. Participants are defined as urban employees whose roles are functionally compatible with remote or hybrid work, excluding those in roles requiring continuous physical presence.

Research Hypotheses

Drawing on the Job Characteristics Model, Trait Activation Theory, and Person–Environment Fit framework, this study proposes that access to and alignment with flexible work arrangements

are shaped not only by individual preferences but also by structural job constraints and organizational hierarchies. In contexts where managerial control and physical presence remain culturally embedded, certain job demands may systematically restrict flexibility regardless of employee desire. The following hypotheses reflect this integrated perspective.

H1: Jobs requiring high levels of cooperation and attention to detail are more likely to be associated with on-site work and fixed schedules, reflecting structural constraints that limit access to remote or hybrid work arrangements.

H2: Employees with higher levels of introversion are more likely to experience misalignment between their preferred and actual work arrangements.

H3: Access to flexible work arrangements is unequally distributed across job levels and income groups, with higher-status and higher-income employees more likely to experience alignment between their preferences and actual work conditions.

Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design based on data collected through an online questionnaire administered between January and February 2023. The final sample comprised 400 respondents from various industries across Thailand. Women made up 67.2% ($n = 272$) of the sample, and men 32.8% ($n = 133$). The sample was predominantly single (80%), with the remainder being married, widowed, or divorced (20%). Educational attainment was high, with 74.3% holding a bachelor's degree, 21.0% possessing postgraduate qualifications, and 4.7% reporting lower levels of education. Most respondents (67.4%) were in employee-level positions, while 32.6% held supervisory, managerial, or executive roles. A majority (78.8%) resided in the Bangkok metropolitan area.

Occupationally, the sample was diverse. The largest segments worked in business and finance (17.53%), sales (14.07%), and office/administrative support (12.60%). Engineering and architecture, computer and mathematics, and management roles each comprised about 10% of the sample. Other sectors included education and library sciences (8.64%), health professionals (6.67%), health support workers (5.93%), and legal occupations (2.96%). The demographic and occupational profile reflects the urban workforce most likely to engage in or be affected by flexible work arrangements. The average monthly income among respondents was 38,045 baht ($SD = 36,588$), reflecting a wide variation in earnings across the sample.

Variables and Measurement

Dependent Variables:

1. Work Format (Location): A categorical variable coded as 1 (on-site), 2 (hybrid), and 3 (remote/home-based), reflecting the employee's current or preferred work location.
2. Work Schedule (Time Flexibility): A binary variable coded as 1 for regular working hours (e.g., 9 am–5 pm) and 0 for flexible schedules (e.g., staggered hours, compressed workweeks).
3. Alignment Indicator: A binary variable coded as 1 when an individual's current work format or schedule differs from their stated preference and 0 if the two align. Separate alignment indicators were constructed for location and time flexibility.

Independent Variables:

1. Job Characteristics: To capture job-level predictors, participant occupational data were mapped to the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) database using Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. Four continuous variables reflecting core job characteristics were extracted: *Attention to Detail* (Work Styles), *Coordination* (Social Skills), *Cooperation* (Work Styles), and *Autonomy* (Work Values/Context). Because raw O*NET descriptors utilize varying underlying metric scales (typically 1–5 or 1–7), scores were standardized to ensure comparability. Raw values were converted into a normalized 0–100 continuous scale using the standard linear transformation formula: $S = [(O - L) / (H - L)] * 100$, where O represents the raw score and L and H represent the minimum and maximum possible values of the original scale. Higher final values denote greater relevance or intensity of the characteristic within the respondent's occupation.

2. Personality Trait-Introversion: Measured using a 20-item binary-response questionnaire adapted from Serebriakoff's personality scale. Scores ranged from 0 (most introverted) to 20 (most extroverted). For interpretability, the score was reversed, so higher scores indicate greater introversion.

Control Variables:

Standard demographic and job-related covariates included gender (1 = male), age (in years), marital status (1 = single), educational attainment, monthly income (in baht), geographic location (1 = Bangkok), and employment level (1 = employee-level; 0 = managerial or executive).

Data Analysis

The data analysis proceeded in two stages. First, ordered logistic regression was used to estimate the determinants of work-location format and the alignment between current and preferred arrangements. Second, binary logistic regression was employed to examine the likelihood of flexible versus regular work schedules and schedule alignment. All models were

tested for proportional odds (for ordered logit models), and variance inflation factor (VIF) scores were examined to assess multicollinearity. All VIFs were below 2, indicating no significant multicollinearity among predictors. Model fit was assessed using Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2 and log-likelihood statistics, which are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

A key methodological consideration is the use of O*NET, which was developed for the United States labor market. Occupational characteristics in Thailand may differ from O*NET classifications due to structural differences in job design, division of labor, and industry composition between the two economies. To mitigate this limitation, the mapping between Thai respondent occupations and O*NET Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes was conducted conservatively, matching respondents only to the most directly corresponding SOC category for their stated occupation. Where occupations were ambiguous or cross-cutting, the modal SOC code for that occupational group was applied. Readers should interpret O*NET-derived variables as approximations of job characteristics, acknowledging that some deviation from Thailand-specific occupational profiles is possible.

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous; no personally identifiable information was collected. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose prior to completing the survey and consented to participation by proceeding with the questionnaire. Data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes. No ethical approval from a formal institutional review board was required under the applicable institutional guidelines for anonymous survey research; however, all procedures adhered to standard ethical norms for social science research.

Results

Descriptive results reveal a clear mismatch between preferred and actual work locations. While 60.7% of respondents preferred hybrid work, only 36.3% were in such arrangements. Conversely, over half worked fully on-site despite far fewer preferring this format (Figure 1).

Regression results (Table 1) show that job characteristics strongly shape work location. Attention to detail was negatively associated with both remote work and alignment, suggesting that high-focus roles face practical or institutional barriers to flexibility. Cooperation similarly reduced the likelihood of both current and preferred remote work. For current arrangements, this reflects that socially intensive tasks remain tied to physical presence. Notably, the negative association also extends to preferred arrangements, suggesting that employees in high-cooperation roles may genuinely prefer on-site settings—not merely due to institutional constraint, but

because social interaction is intrinsic to how they define effective work. This is consistent with Person–Environment Fit Theory: individuals in collaboration-intensive roles may internalize co-presence as a core job need, making remote work feel incongruent with their work identity. Coordination showed a small positive effect, suggesting that some interdependent tasks can be supported digitally. Autonomy had weak and inconsistent effects, implying that independence alone does not guarantee access to flexibility.

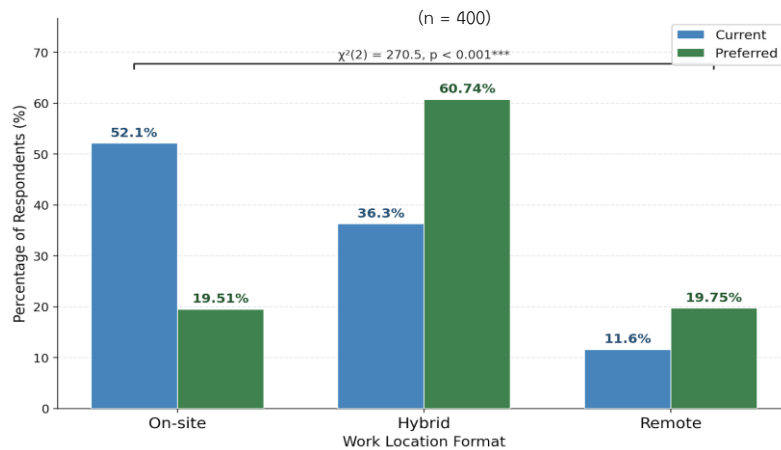


Figure 1 Comparison of Current and Preferred Work Location Formats

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ (chi-square test)

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

Table 1 Determinants of Work Location (Ordered Logit) and Alignment (Logit)

Variables	Estimated Coefficients					
	Current B	Current OR	Preferred B	Preferred OR	Alignment B	Alignment OR
Job Characteristics						
Attention to Detail	-0.2632***	0.7686	-0.0276	0.9728	-0.1017**	0.9033
Coordination	0.0302**	1.0307	-0.0007	0.9993	0.0124	1.0125
Cooperation	-0.0404**	0.9604	-0.0228*	0.9775	-0.0014	0.9986
Autonomy	-0.0372*	0.9635	0.0005	1.0005	-0.0077	0.9923
Personality						
Introversion (high score)	-0.0547	0.9468	-0.0279	0.9725	-0.1194*	0.8875
Demographic and other work-related factors						
Gender (1 for male)	0.2149	1.2397	-0.0186	0.9816	0.1536	1.1660
Age	-0.0106	0.9895	-0.0171	0.9830	0.0271	1.0275
Marital Status (1 for single)	-0.0530	0.9484	0.0362	1.0369	0.3197	1.3767
Education	0.0111	1.0112	-0.2030	0.8163	0.0135	1.0136
Income	0.3951*	1.4845	0.4576*	1.5803	-0.0054	0.9946

Table 1 (Continue)

Variables	Estimated Coefficients					
	Current B	Current OR	Preferred B	Preferred OR	Alignment B	Alignment OR
Job position (1 for employee-level)	-0.3186	0.7272	-0.2366	0.7893	-0.5863*	0.5564
Location (1 for working in Bangkok)	-0.1137	0.8925	0.0887	1.0928	-0.4594	0.6317
Nagelkerke Pseudo R²	0.1200		0.0759		0.0608	
Log-Pseudolikelihood	-341.237		-352.544		-263.574	
N	400		400		400	

Note: *Significance: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

Introversion did not predict current or preferred work location but was negatively associated with alignment in regression analysis, suggesting that introverted employees are less likely to work in their preferred setting after accounting for other factors. Although the bivariate difference in misalignment rates between introverts (35%) and extroverts (31%) did not reach statistical significance (Figure 2), the regression finding is consistent with Trait Activation Theory: personality shapes preferences, but organizational conditions determine whether they can be realized.

Income was positively associated with both current and preferred flexible arrangements. The extension to preferred arrangements is notable: it suggests that higher-income employees do not merely gain access to flexibility through bargaining power, but have also developed stronger normative expectations for flexible work. This may reflect greater exposure to remote-capable work cultures, better home office resources, and professional networks in which flexibility is the norm — making preference itself a function of socioeconomic experience rather than job design alone. In contrast, employee-level workers were significantly less likely to experience alignment than managerial staff, revealing a structural flexibility divide across job hierarchies (Figure 3). Other demographic factors were largely insignificant, suggesting that task and occupational status matter more than personal characteristics in determining flexibility access.

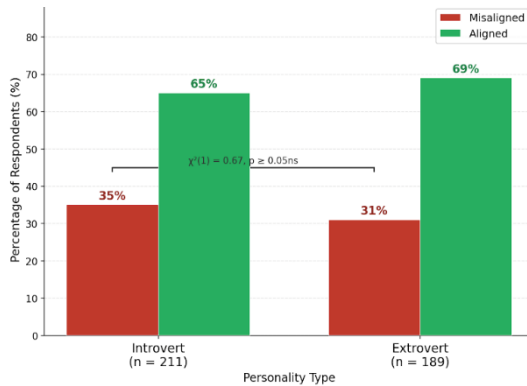


Figure 2 Misalignment of Work Location by Personality Type

Note: $p \geq 0.05$ (χ^2 test, $df = 1$). Misaligned = Current work location differs from preferred location.

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

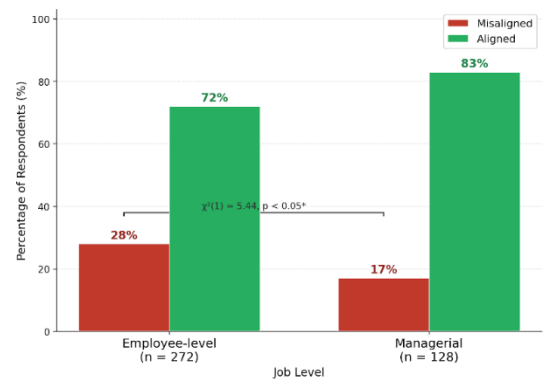


Figure 3 Misalignment of Work Location by Job Level

Note: $*p \geq 0.05$ (χ^2 test, $df = 1$). Misaligned = Current work location differs from preferred location.

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

A similar mismatch appears in work schedules. While most respondents worked regular hours, the majority preferred flexible schedules (Figure 4). Regression results (Table 2) show that attention to detail, cooperation, and introversion were associated with regular schedules, indicating that structured jobs constrain temporal flexibility. The introversion finding requires clarification. Although introverts might be expected to prefer flexible arrangements, their association with regular schedules likely reflects an indirect occupational channel: introverted individuals tend to concentrate in structured, detail-oriented roles — such as data analysis, research, and technical work — that organizations typically associate with fixed hours. Additionally, some introverts may value the predictability of routine schedules as a mechanism for managing social energy, treating structured time boundaries as a form of environmental control consistent with their preference for low-stimulation settings.

Age and income were negatively associated with regular hours, suggesting that older and higher-income workers have more schedule flexibility. This pattern does not conflict with the earlier finding that cooperation and attention to detail are associated with regular schedules, because the two effects operate through distinct mechanisms. Job characteristic effects operate at the occupational level — constraining tasks that inherently require synchronized presence — whereas age and income effects operate at the individual level, reflecting accumulated bargaining power and managerial discretion over scheduling. Even within cooperation-intensive occupations, more senior and higher-earning individuals retain greater discretion over when and how they work. Gender played a notable role in alignment: men were more likely to have work hours matching their preferences. Descriptive patterns confirm that women experienced a larger gap between actual and preferred schedules (Figure 5), indicating gendered disparities in temporal flexibility.

Overall, the results show that job demands, occupational status, and personality play a greater role than demographics in shaping access to and satisfaction with flexible work. These patterns are consistent with the Job Characteristics Model and Person–Environment Fit framework. Coordination showed a small positive association with remote work in some specifications, suggesting that certain forms of interdependence—particularly those amenable to digital mediation—do not categorically prevent remote work. This nuances the prediction that all coordination-intensive roles require on-site presence. However, autonomy showed weak and inconsistent effects across models, as discussed further in the Discussion section.

Table 2 Determinants of Work Schedule (Logit) and Alignment (Logit)

Variables	Estimated Coefficients					
	Current B	Current OR	Preferred B	Preferred OR	Alignment B	Alignment OR
Job Characteristics						
Attention to Detail	0.1378*	1.1477	0.0669	1.0692	-0.0164	0.9837
Coordination	0.0059	1.0059	0.0006	1.0006	-0.0237	0.9766
Cooperation	0.0341**	1.0347	0.0111	1.0112	-0.0138	0.9863
Autonomy	0.0012	1.0012	0.0340	1.0346	0.0267	1.0271
Personality						
Introversion (high score)	0.0912*	1.0955	0.0515	1.0528	0.0001	1.0001
Demographic and other work-related factors						
Gender (1 for male)	-0.3872	0.6790	-0.1444	0.8655	0.4193*	1.5209
Age	-0.0316**	0.9689	-0.0451**	0.9559	0.0060	1.0060
Marital Status (1 for single)	0.3076	1.3602	0.0471	1.0482	-0.2207	0.8020
Education	0.2690	1.3087	0.1702	1.1855	-0.1384	0.8708
Income	-0.5556*	0.5737	-0.6374*	0.5287	0.2372	1.2677
Job position (1 for employee-level)	0.0592	1.0610	-0.3036	0.7382	-0.0846	0.9189
Location (1 for working in Bangkok)	0.4122	1.5101	0.0307	1.0312	-0.2048	0.8148
Nagelkerke Pseudo R ²	0.1197		0.0838		0.0316	
Log-Pseudolikelihood	-230.426		-213.306		-269.644	
N	400		400		400	

Note: *Significance: *p<0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

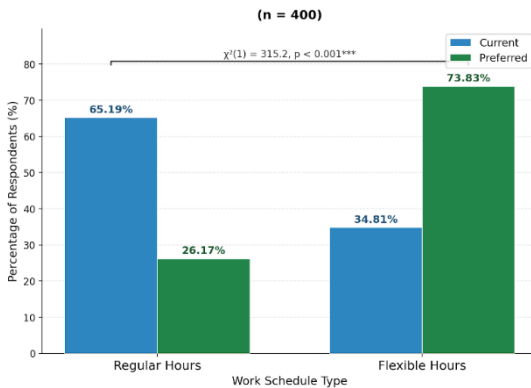


Figure 4 Comparison of Current and Preferred Work Schedules

Note: *** $p < 0.001$ (chi-square test)

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

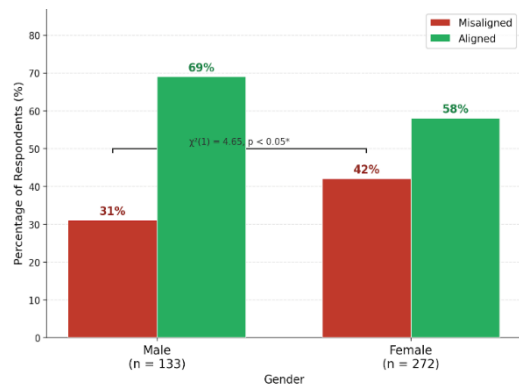


Figure 5 Misalignment of Work Schedules by Gender

Note: * $p \geq 0.05$ (chi-square test) Misaligned = Current schedule differs from preferred schedule.

Source: Author's calculations based on survey data

Hypothesis Testing Summary

H1 (jobs requiring high cooperation and attention to detail are associated with on-site work) is supported. Both cooperation and attention to detail were significantly and negatively associated with the likelihood of hybrid or remote work in the work-location model (Table 1), confirming that high-coordination and high-focus roles face structural barriers to remote flexibility.

H2 (introverted employees are more likely to experience preference–reality misalignment) is supported. Introversion was negatively and significantly associated with alignment in the work-location alignment model (Table 1), indicating that introverted employees are more likely to be working in a format that does not match their preference. Introversion also predicted working in regular rather than flexible hours (Table 2), further supporting the hypothesis that personality-driven preferences are frequently unrealized under prevailing organizational conditions.

H3 (access to flexible work is unequally distributed, with higher-status and higher-income employees more likely to experience alignment) is supported. Income was positively and significantly associated with both current flexible work arrangements and alignment across location and schedule models. Employee-level workers were significantly less likely to achieve alignment than managerial or executive staff, confirming the existence of a structural flexibility divide along occupational hierarchy lines. Taken together, these results provide consistent empirical support for all three hypotheses.

Discussion

This study examined how job characteristics, personality traits, and demographic factors shape both access to flexible work and the alignment between employee preferences and

actual arrangements in post-pandemic Thailand. The findings reveal structural and psychological asymmetries in flexibility distribution, reflecting both global patterns and Thailand's institutional context.

Consistent with the Job Characteristics Model, tasks requiring high attention and cooperation were less compatible with remote or hybrid work (Allen et al., 2015). In Thailand, the finding that employee-level workers were significantly less likely to achieve alignment than managerial staff is consistent with the presence of hierarchical norms that may equate physical presence with diligence, suggesting that flexibility depends not only on job design but also on organizational trust and culture. While this study does not directly measure managerial attitudes toward presence, the structural divide across job levels provides indirect evidence for such norms, and the interpretation is supported by Thailand's documented high power-distance context (Hofstede, 2001). A notable unexpected finding is the weak and inconsistent effect of autonomy across models. The Job Characteristics Model predicts that autonomous roles should be strongly associated with greater flexibility access, yet this study finds autonomy to be a limited predictor of either current work format or alignment. One plausible explanation is that, in the Thai organizational context, formal job autonomy may be more constrained by managerial culture and hierarchical oversight than in Western settings where the model was originally developed. Even roles nominally classified as autonomous in the O*NET framework may be subject to close supervision in practice, limiting the behavioral expression of autonomy. An alternative explanation is measurement: O*NET autonomy captures structural features of occupational design rather than experienced autonomy, which may diverge from employee perception. Future research using subjective autonomy measures could clarify this discrepancy.

Introversion was associated with greater misalignment between preferred and actual arrangements. While Trait Activation Theory predicts such preferences, cultural norms emphasizing conformity and oversight limit the realization of personality-driven choices, extending Person–Environment Fit by highlighting cultural constraints.

Managerial and higher-income employees were more likely to access hybrid work and report alignment with preferences, reflecting a structural flexibility divide also observed in Western contexts (Chung, 2023). Flexibility thus functions as a symbolic resource linked to trust and status, reinforcing occupational hierarchies.

Women were more likely to experience schedule misalignment despite stronger preferences for flexibility. This pattern aligns with flexibility stigma research (Williams et al., 2013) and reflects gendered bargaining power within hierarchical workplaces. In the Thai context specifically, gendered schedule misalignment likely operates through at least two mechanisms.

First, women in Thailand bear a disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities, generating stronger demand for temporal flexibility. Yet, in hierarchical organizational cultures characterized by high power distance, women may perceive greater career risk in formally requesting schedule adjustments, anticipating that such requests signal lower commitment to supervisors (Chung and van der Lippe, 2020). Second, the concentration of women in certain occupational sectors (e.g., education, healthcare support, administrative roles) may mean that their roles are disproportionately subject to fixed scheduling requirements, reducing the feasibility of flexible schedules independently of individual preferences. These mechanisms differ from those observed in Western contexts primarily through the amplifying role of power-distance culture, where formal entitlements are difficult to exercise without managerial endorsement.

Alignment between preference and practice serves as an indicator of relational trust. Misalignment signals procedural unfairness and may weaken the psychological contract, linking flexibility to perceptions of respect and reciprocity (Kelliher and Anderson, 2010).

By integrating job design, personality, and fairness perspectives, the study shows that flexibility is shaped by structural feasibility, psychological needs, and cultural norms. This supports emerging views of flexibility as a justice-oriented issue rather than a purely technical one.

Effective hybrid policies require transparent criteria and attention to groups systematically excluded from flexibility, such as lower-status employees and women. In Thailand, formalizing eligibility rules may improve trust and fairness in hybrid implementation.

Overall, flexibility in the post-COVID workplace emerges as both an operational and relational issue, requiring alignment between job feasibility, individual needs, and perceptions of fairness.

Limitations

Several limitations should be noted. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. While the study identifies associations between job characteristics, personality, and flexibility outcomes, it cannot establish whether these relationships reflect stable structural conditions or transitional patterns specific to the early post-pandemic period. Second, job characteristic data were derived from O*NET, which was developed for the US labor market; Thai occupational profiles may differ, introducing potential measurement error in structural predictors. Third, personality was measured using a binary-response instrument (Serebriakoff scale), which captures introversion broadly but may not fully differentiate nuanced dimensions of personality relevant to work preferences. Fourth, the sample is primarily composed of urban, educated, Bangkok-based employees, limiting generalizability to other demographic and

regional groups in Thailand. Finally, the reliance on self-reported work formats and preferences introduces social desirability bias, particularly for employees who may be reluctant to report dissatisfaction with their current arrangements. These limitations notwithstanding, the study offers the first joint examination of job characteristics and personality as determinants of flexible work alignment in the Thai context.

Recommendations

The findings carry important implications for human resource professionals, organizational leaders, and policymakers seeking to balance operational performance with fairness and employee well-being in the post-COVID workplace. In Thailand and comparable emerging economies, flexible work is no longer a temporary response to crisis but a permanent feature of employment relations. How organizations institutionalize it will determine whether flexibility becomes a source of empowerment or a new form of inequality. The evidence from this study points to five interrelated priorities.

Flexibility should not remain an informal privilege negotiated by high-status employees. Organizations need explicit and transparent criteria for determining eligibility for hybrid or remote work, based on job characteristics rather than hierarchy. Formal policies can mitigate perceptions of favoritism and reinforce procedural justice—both central to positive employee relations. HR departments should audit current practices to identify patterns of exclusion and develop clear, role-based guidelines defining which tasks require on-site presence and which can be performed remotely. These audits should be updated periodically to reflect technological changes and shifting employee expectations.

Managerial discretion plays a decisive role in how flexibility is experienced. The pattern of misalignment identified in this study—particularly the gap between employees' stated preference for hybrid or flexible arrangements and their actual on-site, regular-hours reality—may partly reflect presenteeism norms in which physical visibility is equated with productivity. While direct measurement of managerial attitudes falls outside the scope of this study, the structural gap between preference and practice provides indirect evidence consistent with such norms. Training programs should therefore focus on building managerial trust in output-based assessment and digital collaboration tools. Evidence from global firms shows that managers who receive structured training in virtual supervision and inclusive communication are more likely to support hybrid teams effectively (Kossek et al., 2023). This principle is arguably more critical in high power-distance cultures such as Thailand, where supervisory discretion carries greater weight in determining employees' experienced access to flexibility, and where cultural

deference to authority may otherwise prevent employees from invoking formal flexibility entitlements even when these are legally recognized. Embedding trust-building practices—such as regular check-ins, transparent goal setting, and feedback loops—can shift the managerial mindset from control to collaboration.

The gendered patterns identified in schedule misalignment highlight the need for targeted interventions. Employers should ensure that women can access temporal flexibility without career penalties. Although the study did not explicitly measure caregiving responsibilities as an independent variable, the gender-schedule misalignment finding is consistent with research documenting that women disproportionately bear domestic and caregiving burdens (Chung and van der Lippe, 2020), making temporal flexibility particularly salient for this group. Practical strategies include offering formal right-to-request mechanisms, compressed workweeks, and outcome-based evaluation systems that decouple performance from time visibility. HR analytics should monitor gender differences in flexibility uptake and career progression to detect hidden biases. From a broader employee-relations perspective, equity in temporal flexibility contributes directly to perceptions of distributive justice and organizational legitimacy.

Roles demanding high attention to detail or cooperation often operate under rigid structures, yet redesigning tasks to increase autonomy and digital collaboration can improve both performance and satisfaction. Organizations can experiment with modular work processes, asynchronous coordination, and shared accountability models to make even interdependent jobs more adaptable. Aligning task structure with individual dispositions—such as providing focused, distraction-free work time for introverted employees who prefer remote settings—supports psychological well-being and reduces misalignment. These initiatives operationalize Person–Environment Fit theory by translating it into practical job-design interventions that address the needs of personality groups who are currently underserved by standardized work arrangements.

Employee-level workers, who are the most systematically disadvantaged group in accessing flexible work, require targeted organizational attention. Where job characteristics do not preclude flexibility entirely, organizations should proactively explore partial remote arrangements (e.g., one or two remote days per week) or staggered work schedules for non-managerial staff. Transparent, written criteria specifying which roles qualify for different types of flexibility—and clear appeal mechanisms where flexibility is denied—are essential to prevent perceptions of arbitrary exclusion and to operationalize procedural fairness at the organizational level.

At the policy level, the Thai government's amendments to the Labor Protection Act recognizing the right to work remotely and to request flexible schedules represent a meaningful legislative step. However, statutory recognition must be complemented by enforcement mechanisms and broader employee awareness. Policymakers should consider requiring employers to maintain and publish written flexibility policies specifying eligibility criteria, application procedures, and appeal processes. Labour inspectors should be authorized to audit flexibility practices within workplace compliance reviews. Targeted awareness campaigns—particularly aimed at lower-level employees who may be unaware of their legal rights or reluctant to invoke them in hierarchical workplaces—are essential to translate formal entitlements into realized access.

Further Studies

Several directions for future research are warranted. First, a longitudinal study tracking the same employees over multiple years would allow investigation of how flexibility preferences, access, and alignment evolve as organizational policies mature following the pandemic. Second, comparative research across Southeast Asian countries—comparing Thailand with Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore—would enable systematic analysis of how cultural, institutional, and regulatory differences moderate the patterns identified here. Third, future studies should incorporate Thailand-specific occupational characteristic data, potentially derived from the National Statistical Office's labour market surveys, rather than relying solely on U.S.-developed O*NET classifications. Fourth, in-depth qualitative or mixed-methods research would provide richer insight into the mechanisms by which personality traits and organizational power-distance culture interact to shape flexibility outcomes, particularly for introverted employees whose preferences are consistently unrealized. Fifth, sector-specific research—particularly in education, healthcare, and public administration, where the on-site constraint operates differently than in private-sector knowledge work—would extend the generalizability of the findings. Sixth, studies examining the moderating role of direct supervisors' attitudes and trust orientations would illuminate how managerial discretion shapes the gap between formal flexibility policy and employees' experienced access.

Conclusion

This study examined how job characteristics and personality traits shape employees' access to and satisfaction with flexible work arrangements in Thailand's post-pandemic labor market. The findings show that tasks requiring cooperation and detailed attention are less compatible with remote formats, introverted employees experience greater preference–reality misalignment, and structural divides by income, job level, and gender continue to determine who benefits from hybrid work.

Theoretically, the study extends Job Characteristics Theory, Trait Activation Theory, and Person–Environment Fit by demonstrating that flexibility is shaped not only by task design and personality but also by organizational trust and fairness. Flexibility, therefore, emerges as a relational and justice-oriented construct rather than merely a work-design choice. Practically, the results suggest that hybrid work should be governed by transparent criteria and managerial capacity to ensure fairness across roles. At the policy level, the findings support emerging Thai labor reforms recognizing employees' rights to request flexible arrangements.

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design. Future research could adopt longitudinal or comparative approaches to examine how flexibility equity evolves across organizational and cultural contexts.

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