



WHO ARE WE HELPING?
IMPRACTICALITY OF WORK-
LIFE INITIATIVES FOR
LOWER SES EMPLOYEES

CURRENT RESEARCH

- Teleworking / hybrid work arrangements (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Shifrin & Michel, 2021)
- Results-only work environment (Barbosa et al., 2015)
- Reduced-load work (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2020)
- Job crafting (Ilies et al., 2024)
- Boundary control (Park et al., 2020)
- Stable scheduling (Kesavan et al., 2022)
- Family-supportive supervisor behaviors (Guo et al., 2024)

KOSSEK & LAUTSCH (2018)

Work-Life Flexibility Dimensions:

- When (variability)
- Where (location)
- For how long (volume)
- How continuously (continuity)

But... for whom? Occupational differences may exist between the upper 20%, middle 50%, and lower 30%



FOUR KEY CHALLENGES

1. Inability to Telework
2. Pay by the Hour
3. Reliance on Customer Demand
4. Growth in Alternative Work Modes

INABILITY TO TELEWORK

- 76% of lower-SES workers had jobs with responsibilities that could not be performed remotely, compared to just 44% of upper-SES workers (Parker et al., 2020)
- Exacerbated by COVID in “frontline” or “essential” jobs (Kossek & Lee, 2020)
- Other jobs may be capable of teleworking but lack the resources to support effective remote work (Leonardi et al., 2024)

HOURLY PAY

- 56% of all US employees in 2022 paid by the hour (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023)
- Disincentivizes results-only work or working ahead/faster (Kesavan et al., 2014)
- Reduction of responsibilities implies reduction of pay; lower-SES workers more often report multiple jobs or needing more hours, not less (Jacobs & Padavic, 2015)
- Pay for specific actions, not necessarily results; potentially activates dark side of job crafting (Lazazzara et al., 2020)
- Hours worked often during “unsocial” times (Henly & Lambert, 2014)

RELIANCE ON CUSTOMER DEMAND

- 2/3 of workers receive work schedules less than two weeks in advance (1/3 less than one week); workers experience 32% variation in hours worked due to just-in-time/on-call scheduling (Schneider & Harknett, 2019)
- Inability to offer stable scheduling
- Low profit margins mean fewer opportunities to offer family-supportive behaviors; managers caught in the middle (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2010; Crain & Stevens, 2018)

GROWTH IN ALTERNATIVE WORK MODES

- Some estimates as high as 36% of US workers now in “gig” or independent contract work (Wu & Huang, 2024)
- Creates many new challenges on how work is designed, boundaries, evaluation, and stability (Fraccaroli et al., 2024)
- Changes the supervisor-supervisee and traditional HR management paradigm (Kuhn et al., 2021)



WHAT DO WE DO?

Explore new options, such as:

- Emergency backup scheduling (e.g., www.shiftgig.com)
- Machine learning advancements in predicting customer demand (Easley, 2019)
- Managerial training and new technology (SHRM, 2017)



THANK YOU

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