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## **ALTERNATİF BİR ÇALIŞMA ŞEKLİ OLARAK ESNEK ÇALIŞMA UYGULAMALARI VE ETKİLERİ\***

*APPLICATIONS AND EFFECTS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING AS AN  
ALTERNATIVE TYPE OF WORK*

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### **Abstract**

Although flexible working does not have a very old background, it has a history of half a century. Flexible working doesn't have a very long history in Turkish Working Life and it is quite new in labour law. This type of working results from a need and this need is sometimes revealed by an employer or sometimes by an employee. Flexible working is a form of working that increases employment for a group of people and provides an opportunity for people who would be out of working life on the condition of strick rules. For some others, flexible working means a work that prevents unionism and acts as a mean of disseparing the benefit obtained before. In spite of criticism,

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\*Bu makale Crosscheck sistemi tarafından taranmış ve bu sistem sonuçlarına göre orijinal bir makale olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

working life progresses in the direction of flexible working application more. In spite of criticism, working life progresses in the direction of flexible working application more. There are many factors that have influenced flexible working in gaining importance recently. Working methods have also become different as a result of changes in the working life especially depending on rapidly developing technology, new types of employment and working methods have revealed. Furthermore, people demand to have more free time and try to balance their working life and family life more. Employees who did not expect such things because of rigid rules and working methods in the past can understand that it is possible now. They also believe that flexible applications can be more flexible. In our current global World, working life is changing, instead of a an arrangement dominated by employers' demands, a system in which demands and expectations of employees are important is developing. One of these expectations is that more flexible working time and types perform in order to balance between work life and family life of employees leaving rigid and standard working types. It can be said that flexible working application revealed with the aim of meeting this need. In this study, it was tried to reveal what these applications were and how organizations and employees were affected by the applications.

**Key Words:** Flexibility, flexible working, types of flexible working, effects of flexible working, organizational flexibility

## Öz

Günümüzde Esnek çalışma dünyada çok da eski bir geçmişe sahip olmasa da yine de yarım asra yakın bir geçmişi bulunmaktadır. Esnek çalışma Türk çalışma hayatında ise çok da uzun sayılmayacak bir geçmişe sahiptir ve iş hukukunda yer alması ise oldukça yenidir. Bu çalışma şekli bir ihtiyaçtan doğmuştur ve bu ihtiyaç, kimi zaman işveren tarafından, kimi zaman da çalışan tarafından ortaya konmuştur. Esnek çalışma bazılarına göre istihdamı artıran ve katı kurallar olduğunda çalışma hayatının dışında kalacak olanlar için bir fırsat oluşturan bir çalışma şeklidir. Bazılarına göre de esnek çalışma sendikalaşmaya engel olan ve elde edilen bir takım kazanımların yok edilmesinde bir araç vazifesi gören bir çalışmadır. Eleştiriler olmasına rağmen çalışma hayatının yönü daha fazla esnek çalışma uygulamalarına doğru ilerlemektedir. Esnek çalışmanın son dönemlerde daha fazla önem kazanmasında pek çok etken etkili olmuştur. Özellikle hızla gelişen teknolojinin çalışma hayatını da değiştirmesi sonucu çalışma yöntemleri de değişmekte, yeni istihdam şekilleri ve iş yöntemleri ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bunun yanında insanlar daha fazla boş zaman talep etmekte, çalışma hayatı ile aile yaşantısını dengelemeye çalışmaktadır. Geçmişte katı kurallar ve çalışma yöntemleri nedeni ile böyle bir beklenti içinde olmayan çalışanlar, şimdi bunun olabilirliğini görmekte ve esnek uygulamaların daha da esnekleşebileceğine inanmaktadırlar. Yeni küresel dünyamızda çalışma hayatı da değişmekte, sadece işverenlerin isteklerinin etkin olduğu bir düzen yerine, çalışanların istek ve beklentilerinin de önemsendiği bir sistem oluşmaktadır. Bu beklentilerden

biri de katı ve standart çalışma şekillerinin terk edilerek, çalışanların iş-yaşam dengesini sağlayacak daha esnek çalışma süreleri ve şekillerinin uygulanmasıdır. Esnek çalışma uygulamaları da tam bu ihtiyacı karşılayabilmek amacı ile doğmuştur denebilir. Bu çalışmada bu uygulamaların neler olduğu ve uygulamadan çalışanların ve işletmelerin nasıl etkilendiği ortaya konmaya çalışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Esneklik, esnek çalışma, esnek çalışma türleri, esnek çalışmanın etkileri, örgütsel esneklik

## INTRODUCTION

A type of working including state intervention and rigid legal regulation less, flexible working form came up from developing and changing needs in working life and increased in importance more in time. Employers understood that the change in the number of employees or working times is more advantageous for themselves with regard to varying market conditions and supply-demand balance. Thus, employers believed that they could use working time in a more productive way and adjust to cyclical changes. Employees accepted flexible working as an alternative method because they evaluated it as a more flexible and appropriate working form for their own situations instead of rigid and standard one for their specific condition.

Having various demographic features, people such as women, students and retirees who do not think long and standard working time is not ideal for themselves and doctors, some technical specialists and ones who can complete their works out of offices are more enthusiastic about choosing types of flexible working. It is possible to observed flexibility more in management application, working times and working forms in the working life. However, flexibility in working time comes to mind more as flexibility is mentioned generally. Existing flexible working in the working life of a country has an influence on employers, employees and unions of the employees. The meaning and expectations of flexibility differ for all these sides.

### 1. FLEXIBLE AND THE TERM OF FLEXIBILITY

“Flexible” can be described as an object is affected from external power, it can be changed formally and turns into the elastic form at the beginning. Apart from this definition, the term of flexible can be defined as being open for different comments or being serious for view and attitude (Türk Dil Kurumu Türkçe Sözlük, 2010). In this sense, flexibility defined as the opposite of strict can be related to the ability to adjust for changing conditions. The term of flexible which has various types and fields of application is accompanied with flexibility.

Generally flexibility means acting quickly and taking the opportunities or avoiding dangers as much as possible in changing conditions (Bahrami, 1992: 35; Nemli, 1998: 79). According to employee and employers, flexibility can be explained determining restricts by law without ruining financial structure of business and without causing employees damnification, possessing the ability of the business to behave freely in staff employment or finishing the employment relationship. (Ekonomi Türk İş, 1994: 60). Flexibility is described as a reply to economic conjuncture fluctation, discharging the employees by employers temporary or permanent in Europe, freedom of spreading employees in business in North America. (Güven, 1993: 159). The term of flexible working that is defined in different ways from past to present is attributed various meanings by the sides in working life.

Many factors have effect on development of flexibility term which can be described in different ways according to various sides and countries and which has different types/kinds. In addition, it is seen that technologic and economic factors influence basically arising of the flexibility (Brewster, Mayne ve Tregaskis, 1997: 134). Changes have revealed in the process of working life as a result of reflection of the innovations appearing in time.

Although the importance of flexibility has increased in our country recently, the development of flexibility dates back to older times in the World. The need of flexibility has increased depending on competition that has revealed with the event of globalization and has developed continuously, technological and economical developments, changes in product systems and management models, and changes in employment types (Okur, 1997: 27). These changes need flexibility in time, payment, permission, production and so on and types of flexible working in working life, practice of flexibility started in The United States and European Union (Sabancı, 1999: 4).

## **1. ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILTY AND TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILTY**

It is possible to describe organizational flexibility as the ability of organization to arrange its intenal structures and processes as a reply to changes in the environment. (Ceylan, 2001: 6; Reed ve Blunsdon, 1998: 457). Volberda emphasized that organizational flexibility origaneted from the organizations' ability of response to change, and it call organization that can adjust in competetion environment as flexible organization. adlandırmıştır (Ceylan, 2001: 12; Volberda, 1996: 360). It is indicated that organizational conditions such as technology, culture and structure have an effect on organizational flexibility (Ceylan, 2001: 29; Volberda, 1996: 361). Organizations in which working will take places and employees will exist are required to have flexibility at first in order to talk about flexible working.

Organizational flexibility has types such as strategical, structural and employment flexibility. It is possible to describe strategical flexibility as the ability of organization to devolop and go on competetion advantage opposite of changing competetion condition by taking precautions. (Hitt, Keats ve De Marie, 1998: 26).

Structural flexibility is described as the competence in technology design and arrangement to be able to adjust successfully to business process change. Technological flexibility is defined as the ability of adaptation to opposite of radical change with minimum time, effort, cost and performance (Nelson, Nelson ve Ghods, 1997: 78-79).. Employment flexibility indicates as not having definite starting and finishing time of working and determining the working time in the direction of with the desire and the aim of the sides in order to adapt changing condition. (Başkan, 1999: 37). In some sources, this type of flexibility is also called working times flexibility. Employment flexibility has types such as, numerical, functional and pay flexibility, distancing, flexitime (Uyanık, 2003: 8).

Numerical flexibility means the change in the number of employee in order to adapt for economic and technologic conditions. Numerical flexibility practice can be adjusted with the number and quality of employee in accordance with the level of demand (Kara, Kayis ve O'Kane, 2002: 109; Riley ve Lockwood, 1997: 413; TİSK, 1999: 9). Functional flexibility can be described as an ability of using working skills in different ways in order to meet the demands. (Iles, Forster ve Tinline, 1996: 21). Wage flexibility can be described as the determination of its wage structure and level in business related to the market conditions. (TİSK, 1999: 9; Tuncay, 1995: 42). Distancing is explained as carrying out a part of the production of good or service in their business by means of another employer. It is explained that some works are performed by the employer on their own instead of the other person or organization. (Işık, 2001: 18). In some sources, this type of flexibility is also called employment flexibility. Organizations that do not have a flexible structure is less likely to have success especially in an environment where technological innovations and global competition have increased nowadays.

## 2. FLEXIBLE WORKING AND TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

Like flexibility term, flexible working term can be described in different ways according to various sides and countries. Flexible working is known/described as "an sudden or unexpected job" in United States, "uncharacteristic of working" or "family-friendly employment" in European Union, a "flexible working" in England, a "flexible employment or part-time" in our country. (Tregaskis, vd., 1998: 535). Flexibility in working life changes depending on the term of employment, the way of work, the working place and method.

Flexible working was started to perform firstly in Federal Germany also in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, England, Italy, France, Spain, Japan, United States of America, Canada and Australia. Arrangement related to flexible working especially after 1970 spread out all over the world. (Armağan, 2008: 50). In addition to having an economical base of flexible working practice, interest in flexible working increased

after 1990s in Turkey. In our country, Labour Law No.4857 related to flexible working was passed in 2003. (Noyan, 2007: 159).

Flexible working can be defined as a type of working that employee and employers can arrange the working conditions by the way of legal tool in a different way instead of working with the rules that were determined before by means of arrangement and preservation of the rules by the employees. (Çamlı, 2010: 6).It is possible to explain flexible working hours as an arrangement providing freedom for employees to some extent related to the choice of time when they will work everyday. According to this explanation, an employee has to complete a determined number of hours in a particular range as the number of their working hours can change in every single day. (Olorunsola ve Ibegbulam, 2003: 71).Flexible working that is a non-standart working method has become more systematic with using flexible working methods in practice also in legal texts.

Flexible working types that can be classified in various ways are called in respect of employment form, working times and other flexible working. Flexible working types in regard to employment forms are investigated as part-time working, tele working, home-working, job sharing, on call work, temporary employment relationship (Armağan ve Bozkurt, 2008: 51).

**Part-time work:**According to the definition proposed by the International Labor Organization (ILO), part-time work is defined as regular employment in which working time is substantially less than those of comparable full-time workers. (Desarrollo, 2000: 16, Tisk, 1999: 31).

**Table1:TheImportanceofPartTime in a Tripartite Structure**

	<b>Employer</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>Positive Aspects</b>	*Allowsemployerstoadjust hoursworkedtocyclicalconditions *Adjustmentofproductionandlabourcostsleadtoproductivitygains *Maymeetthepreferenceof workers	*Solution for work-life balance (childcare-education) *Facilitatesprogressiveentrance toor withdrawalfromthelabourmarketover thelifecourse *Mayincreaselife satisfaction	*Increaseslabourparticipation, especiallyforwomen
<b>Negative Aspects</b>	*Fixed costs(e.g.recruitment, training, socialsecurity)may increase overall labourcosts	*Hourlyearning ofpart-timeislowerthanthatoffull-time *Reducedbenef	*Wastageofresources,under-useofinvestmentin humancapital,asm anypart-

ts		its *Reducedcareerprospects *Transitiontoandfromfull-timeworkintopart-timemaybedifficult	timeworkersarehighlyeducated *Part-timejobsmaycrowdoutfull-timepositions
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Source:European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2011), 6.

The first aspect that comes to mind with flexible working being part time positive and negative effects of part-time working from the point of employers, employees and government are shown as a summary in the table below. The positive and negative sides indicated in this table are generally valid for all the other types of flexible working.

**Tele working:** An International Working Organization ILO described tele working as an off-centered type of working practiced separately from employees which is obtained by the opportunities of the new technologies. (Tokol, 2003). In teleworking, employees work in places supported with technological connection rather than permanently in a normal working place (Fitzer, 1997: 65; Pinsonneault, 1999: 4). Classified differently in literature, teleworking has also various types such as home-based telecommuting, satellite offices, neighborhood work centers, and mobile working (Kurland ve Bailey, 1999: 55).

**Home-working:** ILO describes home-working as a type of working that employees can do their office works at home rather than going to office regularly. (Güven, 1993: 219).Home-working means employees work at home rather than at work (Uşan, 2003: 61).

**Job sharing:** Job-sharing is defined as an arrangement consisting two employees assigned to fulfill the work of one-full-time position together and sharing the earnings from that work (Humphreys, Fleming ve O’Donnell, 2000: 18).

**Work on call:** Employment relationship which foresees the performance of work by the employee upon the emergence of the need for his services, as agreed to in the written employment contract, qualifies as a part-time employment contract based on work on call (Yavuz, 1995: 68).

**Temporary employment relationship:** According to Law number 4857; a temporary employment relationship is established when, in order to have work performed similar to what the employee was doing, the employer transfers the employee, upon obtaining his written consent at the time of transfer, to another establishment within the structure of the same holding company or the same group of companies, or to another employer (İren, 2011: 283).

Flexible working types in regard to working times are investigated as compressed workweeks, shift working, gliding flexible work time, annual working period, compensation work.

**Compressed working week:** In compressed work week, weekly working hours are unchanged but rather weekly working days are reduced. This type of working arrangement compresses the classic form of weekly working time of 5-6 working days to 3-4 working days (Çelenk ve Atmaca, 2010: 189).

**Shift work:** Shift work is defined as a form of working arrangement carried out by businesses actively operating all day (week) time due to their nature of the work or the workplace, thereby employing different work groups in different (consecutive) time periods of the work day (Korkusuz, 2005).

**Gliding flexible work time:** Floating working hours is defined as working arrangement that employees can determine their daily working time not exceeding the duration of time worked per day provided that the employees' daily work hours remain sam (Günay, 2004: 9).

**Annual working period:** Annual working period is defined as a type of flexible working applied in the form of measuring average working time by balancing the time of full and extra works done for one-year-period and the minimum time (Hekimler, 2000: 769; TİSK, 1999: 25).

**Compensation work:** Compensation Work is the type of work that employees who are on leave before perform the task working later for the period paid (Çelik, 2007: 105). Other flexible working types are investigated as sub-contract work, soft transition to retirement, work under contract.

**Sub-contract work:** Sub-contract Work can be defined as the realisation of service or production by other organizations apart from that organizations or other employees belonging to subcontractor for different purposes in the same organization (Çelik, 2007: 31).

**Soft transition to retirement:** Soft transition to retirement means that people are employed after a particular age in decreasing time to prevent employees from retiring (Armağan ve Bozkurt, 2008: 56).

**Work under contract:** Work under contract is a type of working that is temporary and depends on a contract and features of employees, and is caused from



the features of work such as seasonal employment. Some situations in which the contract gains continuity can be seen in application (Alkan, 2007: 53).

### 3. THE EFFECTS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ON EMPLOYEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

There are advantages and disadvantages of flexible working types for organizations and individuals.

**Table 2. Positive and Negative Effects of Flexible Working for Individual and Organization**

	POSITIVE EFFECTS	NEGATIVE EFFECTS
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	Greater productivity (1)	Control (14)
	Family/work balance (2)	Lower loyalty (15)
	More job satisfaction/motivation/loyalty (3)	Lower job satisfaction/motivation (16)
	Less time commuting (4)	
	Lower absenteeism (5)	
	Better morale (6)	
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Cost advantage (7)	Increased overhead (17)
	Competetion advantage (8)	Control/Managerial Control (18)
	Quality service (9)	
	Customer satisfaction (10)	
	Greater Productivity (11)	
	Reduced labour turnover (12)	
	Qualified personnel (13)	

**Source:** 1-Doğan ve Türk, (1997). 121., 2-Doğrul, Ş. B. & Tekeli, S. (2010). 2., 3-Doğan ve Türk, (1997). 121., Scandura, T., Melenie, J., Lankau, J. (1997). 377-391.,4-5-Rogier, S. A.& Padgett, M. Y. (2004). 89-106., 6-Kirel, Ç. (1999). 116., 7-8-9-10-11-Humphreys, P.C, Fleming, S. & O'Donnell, O., (2000). [http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/Research SurveysAndStatistics/FamiliesResearchProgramme/Documents/work\\_fam.pdf](http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/Research SurveysAndStatistics/FamiliesResearchProgramme/Documents/work_fam.pdf).,12-13-Çelenk, H. (2008). 14-Sennett, R. (2008). 15- Doğan, S. ve Kılıç, S. (2007). 37-61., 16-17-Yavuz, A. (1995). 18-Özkan, M. (2005). [www.danismend.com/konular/lojistikyon/LOJESNEK%20CALISMA%20SAATLERI.htm](http://www.danismend.com/konular/lojistikyon/LOJESNEK%20CALISMA%20SAATLERI.htm),(13/07/2013)., 18-Sharpe, A. (2007). 1-29. <http://www.ukwon.net/files/kdb/fe880e20eee4d5bb9be2640542a64fcd.pdf>.

Positive and negative effects of flexible working on both employees and organizations are shown as a summary in the table above. Organizations and employees will indicate an attitude of willingness or reluctance for flexible working with regard to this effects.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Flexible working has increased the importance gradually in modern working life as a result of the reflections of changing market conditions, new work description and technological innovation in working life. Flexible working methods are seen and adopted as a tool for changing this negative situation especially in the countries where labour force participation of women is low. Flexible working types applied in various ways are involved in labour law now. As flexible working has started to be within the scope of work law and social security, the possibility of occurring any legal equality or loss of a right has disappeared among flexible employees. These developments have affected employees unwilling to work in a flexible way, and people have begun to incline to one of the non-standart working methods.

Flexible working has been increasing rapidly in these days and especially it is preferred by sides considering that family-work balance is important. The rate of part-time workers which was around 15 % in European Union countries in 1990s is around 20% nowadays. The rate of part-time workers is quite high in some countries such as Holland, England, Germany and Belgium. The rate of part-time workers is around % 12 in Turkey. It is preferred especially by young people and women, and informal employment is considerably prevailed in types of flexible working.

One criticism of the flexible working is that unionism is at very low levels among flexible workers. In a country where traditional family structure dominates and women are not enthusiastic about participating in working life, such as Turkey, it is seen that they prefer jobs protecting the balance between their work and family. Flexible working functions as an important tool in providing employment for more people. Both demographic and cultural properties and new working types influence the development of flexible working in working life more, the number of flexible employees has increased every passing year.

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