The Role of Remote Work Flexibility, Organizational Justice, and Psychological Safety on Disrectionary Work Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety in influencing discretionary work behavior among employees. As organizations increasingly adopt hybrid and remote work models, understanding how workplace flexibility and psychological and structural fairness impact employee behavior beyond formal job descriptions has become essential. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from a sample of employees across various industries and analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression were conducted to explore the relationships among the variables. The results demonstrate that all three independent variables—remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety—have a significant positive effect on discretionary work behavior. These findings suggest that organizations that provide flexible work arrangements, uphold fairness, and create psychologically safe environments can encourage employees to exhibit behaviors that benefit the organization beyond their core responsibilities. The implications of this study contribute both theoretically and practically to the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management by offering insights into how non-obligatory employee behaviors can be fostered through supportive work environments.

Keywords:
Remote Work Flexibility; Organizational Justice; Psychological Safety; Disrectionary Work Behavior, Human Resource Management

INTRODUCTION

The modern workplace has undergone a fundamental transformation, particularly catalyzed by the widespread adoption of remote work. This shift, once viewed as a temporary adaptation to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has now become a defining feature of organizational strategy and workforce expectation (Dar et al., 2024). Remote work flexibility is no longer merely a perk but a structural element of work design. Employees increasingly seek autonomy over their work schedules and locations, and organizations are exploring flexible work arrangements to enhance performance and retain top talent. However, while remote work offers benefits such as improved work-life balance and increased autonomy (Chernoglazova, 2022), it also presents challenges related to engagement, accountability, and discretionary behaviors that go beyond formal job descriptions.

Discretionary work behavior, often referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), encompasses voluntary and extra-role actions that contribute positively to organizational functioning (Attaway, 2024). These behaviors, such as helping coworkers or taking initiative, are critical in fostering innovation, collaboration, and overall productivity. In remote work settings, where direct supervision is limited, discretionary work behaviors become even more vital to ensure the smooth functioning of teams and departments. However, cultivating such behaviors remotely depends heavily on organizational practices that promote trust, equity, and psychological well-being. Therefore, examining the antecedents that foster discretionary behavior in a remote work context is both timely and necessary.

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Among the key factors influencing discretionary behavior is organizational justice, which refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in procedures, interactions, and outcomes within the organization (Payne & Katrinli, 2021). A just workplace cultivates a sense of respect and fairness that can increase employees' willingness to go beyond their prescribed roles. In remote work environments, where informal feedback and casual interactions are reduced, perceptions of fairness play an even more significant role. Without visibility and immediate access to managerial support, employees may become uncertain about how decisions are made, potentially diminishing their motivation to engage in discretionary behaviors unless organizational justice is clearly communicated and upheld.

In addition to justice, psychological safety which defined as a shared belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking has emerged as a key factor that enables individuals to voice ideas, admit mistakes, and seek help (Mansour & Mohanna, 2024). Psychological safety is especially critical in remote settings where isolation, lack of non-verbal cues, and asynchronous communication can hinder open dialogue and mutual understanding. When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to contribute ideas, support colleagues, and engage in behaviors that are beneficial to the organization, even when these actions are not formally rewarded. Thus, psychological safety serves as a foundational condition that may amplify the effects of remote work flexibility and organizational justice on discretionary work behavior.

Despite the increased academic interest in flexible work, justice, and psychological safety, their combined influence on discretionary work behavior remains underexplored, particularly in the context of hybrid and remote workplaces. Prior studies have examined these variables in isolation, yet few have integrated them into a single conceptual model to understand how they collectively shape employees' willingness to engage in extra-role behaviors. As remote work continues to redefine organizational boundaries and employee expectations, it is essential to identify how these factors interact to promote not only task performance but also proactive and voluntary contributions that sustain organizational vitality over time (Hays, 2025). This study thus seeks to fill this research gap by analyzing the interplay between remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety in fostering discretionary work behavior.

Although remote work flexibility has become a widespread practice, its impact on discretionary work behavior remains ambiguous, particularly when not supported by perceptions of fairness and psychological safety. Many organizations struggle to maintain high levels of employee initiative and collaboration in remote settings due to a lack of structured support systems and interpersonal trust. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on how remote work policies interact with organizational justice and psychological safety to influence extra-role behaviors. The absence of an integrated understanding of these factors hinders organizations from effectively designing work environments that encourage proactive and voluntary contributions, especially in virtual contexts. This study addresses the critical need to investigate how these three constructs jointly influence discretionary work behavior.

Literature Review

1. Discretionary Work Behavior (DWB)

Discretionary work behavior (DWB), often conceptualized through the lens of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), encompasses voluntary and extra-role activities that support the social and psychological environment in which task performance occurs (Ahmed & Sadiq, 2025). These behaviors are not formally rewarded but are crucial for the smooth functioning and success of an organization. Examples include helping colleagues, taking initiative, being flexible, and voluntarily offering suggestions for improvement (Brunetto et al., 2022). In dynamic and remote work environments, such discretionary actions play a pivotal role in compensating for the lack of direct supervision and formal coordination mechanisms. Studies have shown that employees who feel supported and trusted by their organizations are more likely to engage in DWB (Muzumdar, n.d.). Moreover, such behaviors have been linked to enhanced organizational performance, improved teamwork, and higher employee satisfaction (Dollard et al., 2012). Therefore, understanding what drives DWB, especially under flexible and decentralized working conditions, has become an essential research priority in organizational behavior.

2. Remote Work Flexibility and DWB

Remote work flexibility refers to the extent to which employees can choose when and where they work (Arif, 2025). This flexibility has been associated with a range of positive outcomes, including improved work-life balance, higher job satisfaction, and reduced turnover intentions (Rupp et al., 2017). More recently, it has been examined in the context of fostering engagement and extra-role behavior. Flexible work arrangements are believed to enhance autonomy and intrinsic motivation, which are important antecedents of discretionary behavior (Aboramadan et al., 2022). However, the relationship between remote work and DWB is complex. While flexibility can promote initiative and responsibility, it can also reduce informal social interactions and visibility, which may inhibit certain forms of discretionary behavior such as helping or voice behavior (Tekleab et al., 2005). Therefore, remote work flexibility may only promote DWB when supported by other organizational factors that ensure connection, fairness, and safety.

3. Organizational Justice and DWB

Organizational justice is a multidimensional construct comprising distributive justice (fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (fairness of processes), and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal treatment) (Mahmoud et al., 2025). Justice perceptions have a significant impact on employee behavior and attitudes, including organizational commitment, trust, and willingness to perform beyond formal job requirements (Yusuff, 2018). When employees perceive high levels of organizational justice, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive discretionary behaviors (Noraini, 2018). Fair treatment signals to employees that the organization values them, thereby encouraging them to contribute beyond what is formally required. In remote or hybrid work environments, where employees may feel disconnected, perceptions of justice become even more important. A lack of transparency in remote settings can easily lead to misunderstandings about fairness, undermining employees' willingness to engage in DWB (Hafis & Kitri, 2019). Moreover, organizational justice can moderate the effects of remote work on DWB. For instance, an employee with flexible working conditions may only engage in extra-role behaviors if they believe that

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evaluations, promotions, and decisions are made fairly. Therefore, justice serves not only as a direct antecedent of DWB but also as a contextual factor that shapes the outcomes of flexible work arrangements.

4. Psychological Safety and DWB

Psychological safety is a belief that the team or workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. It enables employees to speak up, share ideas, and admit mistakes without fear of embarrassment or retaliation (Haque et al., 2024). This construct has been found to predict a range of positive organizational outcomes, including learning behavior, innovation, and discretionary effort (Chen et al., 2022). The link between psychological safety and DWB is well established. When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to engage in helping behaviors, offer constructive suggestions, and support their peers (Kataria et al., 2013). These are precisely the kinds of behaviors organizations seek to cultivate in remote and hybrid settings. Yet, psychological safety can be harder to maintain in remote contexts due to reduced cues, less spontaneous communication, and potential feelings of isolation (Yang et al., 2023). Furthermore, psychological safety can enhance the positive effects of remote work flexibility and organizational justice on DWB. For example, employees who feel safe are more likely to use their autonomy productively and view fairness efforts positively. Therefore, psychological safety may function as a mediator or amplifier that enables the other two variables—flexibility and justice—to exert a stronger influence on discretionary behavior.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety on discretionary work behavior (DWB). The purpose of this design is to collect numerical data at a single point in time and to analyze the relationships among the variables using statistical methods. A correlational research strategy was adopted to examine how independent variables (remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety) are associated with the dependent variable (discretionary work behavior).

2. Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of employees who currently work under remote or hybrid work arrangements across various industries in Indonesia. These employees were selected because they are likely to experience varying degrees of flexibility, fairness, and psychological safety in the remote work setting. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, as the respondents were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: (1) currently employed in remote or hybrid work, (2) working in a non-managerial or managerial role, and (3) having worked in the same organization for at least six months. To ensure statistical power and generalizability, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 352 valid responses were obtained, resulting in an 88% response rate. This sample size is considered sufficient for multiple regression analysis, which requires a minimum of 10–15 respondents per variable (Hair et al., 2010).

3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online self-administered questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed via email and professional social networking platforms such as LinkedIn and internal company groups. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test was conducted on 30 employees to evaluate the clarity, reliability, and validity of the measurement items. Feedback from the pilot test led to minor modifications in wording and structure for better comprehension. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained before proceeding with the questionnaire. Respondents were assured that their responses would be used solely for academic research and would be kept strictly confidential.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis for this study was performed using SPSS version 26, and it involved several key statistical procedures to ensure the robustness and validity of the results. The process began with descriptive statistics, where means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated to provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the central tendencies of the study variables. This was followed by reliability testing, in which the internal consistency of each construct was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs demonstrated high reliability, with alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 as recommended by (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating that the measurement instruments were consistent and dependable.

To ensure the data met the assumptions necessary for further analysis, normality and multicollinearity tests were conducted. Normality was examined using skewness and kurtosis values, which fell within the acceptable range of ±2, suggesting the data were approximately normally distributed. Multicollinearity was assessed through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with all values below the critical level of 5, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues among the independent variables. Next, Pearson correlation analysis was performed to explore the bivariate relationships among remote work flexibility, organizational justice, psychological safety, and discretionary work behavior. The main hypothesis testing was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis, which allowed for an evaluation of the predictive effects of the independent variables on discretionary work behavior. The overall model fit was assessed using indicators such as R^2, adjusted R^2, the F-statistic, and significance levels (p-values). To validate the appropriateness of the regression model, several assumptions were checked, including linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals, ensuring that the results obtained were both valid and reliable for drawing meaningful conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for all key variables. The results in Table 1 provide the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for each variable.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remote Work Flexibility	352	2.000	5.000	3.857	0.674
Organizational Justice	352	1.800	5.000	3.912	0.691
Psychological Safety	352	2.200	5.000	4.008	0.649
Discretionary Work Behavior	352	2.000	5.000	4.043	0.612

Source: Data Processed

2. Validity Assessment

To assess construct validity, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Principal Component Analysis and Varimax rotation was conducted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to examine the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.876
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square = 1734.284, df = 210, Sig. = 0.000

Source: Data Processed

The KMO value of 0.876 exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.60 (Kaiser, 1974), indicating the data is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that correlations between items were sufficiently large for EFA. The analysis extracted four factors corresponding to the theoretical constructs: Remote Work Flexibility, Organizational Justice, Psychological Safety, and Discretionary Work Behavior. These factors explained a total of 71.432% of the variance, as shown below.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	26.134%	26.134%
2	18.327%	44.461%
3	14.209%	58.670%
4	12.762%	71.432%

Source: Data Processed

A Rotated Component Matrix was used to determine item loadings. All items loaded highly on their intended factors (≥ 0.60), with minimal cross-loadings, indicating strong convergent and discriminator validity.

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
RWF1 – I can choose my work hours	0.812			
RWF2 – I can work from anywhere	0.784			
RWF3 – My work schedule is flexible	0.793			
OJ1 – I am treated fairly by my supervisor		0.802		
OJ2 – Rewards are distributed fairly		0.817		
OJ3 – Procedures are consistent		0.765		
PS1 – I feel safe to express myself			0.808	
PS2 – I can take risks without fear			0.781	
PS3 – My team respects my input			0.749	
DWB1 – I help coworkers voluntarily				0.786
DWB2 – I go beyond my job description				0.803
DWB3 – I volunteer for extra tasks				0.769

Source: Data Processed

Each construct demonstrated strong factorial validity, supporting the appropriateness of the measurement instruments used in this study.

3. Reliability Analysis

Reliability of each scale was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All scales demonstrated strong internal consistency, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Reliability Coefficients

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Remote Work Flexibility	0.842
Organizational Justice	0.876
Psychological Safety	0.861
Discretionary Work Behavior	0.832

Source: Data Processed

4. Normality and Multicollinearity Test

Skewness and kurtosis values for each variable were within the acceptable range of ±2, indicating that the data were approximately normally distributed (Table 6). Multicollinearity was tested using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and all VIF values were below the threshold of 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

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Table 6. Skewness, Kurtosis, and VIF

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF
Remote Work Flexibility	-0.212	-0.143	1.328
Organizational Justice	-0.365	0.008	1.612
Psychological Safety	-0.184	-0.295	1.471

Source: Data Processed

5. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among the variables. As shown in Table 7, all independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with discretionary work behavior.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Remote Work Flexibility	1			
2. Organizational Justice	0.462**	1		
3. Psychological Safety	0.441**	0.529**	1	
4. Discretionary Behavior	0.483**	0.567**	0.592**	1

Source: Data Processed

6. Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the predictive power of remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety on discretionary work behavior, a standard multiple regression was conducted.

Table 8. Model Summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.691	0.477	0.469	0.446

Source: Data Processed

Table 9. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	33.756	3	11.252	56.546	0.000
Residual	36.988	196	0.189		
Total	70.744	199			

Source: Data Processed

Table 10. Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.174	0.246	—	4.774	0.000
Remote Work Flexibility	0.213	0.063	0.221	3.378	0.001
Organizational Justice	0.261	0.060	0.283	4.331	0.000
Psychological Safety	0.315	0.058	0.329	5.461	0.000

Source: Data Processed

7. Assumption Testing

The assumptions of multiple regression analysis were tested to ensure the validity of the results. Linearity was confirmed through scatterplots showing a linear relationship between predictors and the dependent variable. Independence of errors was tested using the Durbin-Watson statistic, which yielded a value of 1.921, indicating no autocorrelation. Homoscedasticity was checked via visual inspection of residual plots, which showed a random distribution. The normality of residuals was assessed

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using a normal P-P plot, which revealed that the residuals were approximately normally distributed.

Discussion

1. Remote Work Flexibility and Discretionary Work Behavior

The results revealed that remote work flexibility had a significant positive influence on discretionary work behavior. This supports previous research that indicates when employees are granted autonomy over when and where they work, they are more likely to reciprocate with behaviors that benefit the organization beyond contractual obligations (Kim, 2022; Poole, 2008; Potipiroon & Ford, 2021). Flexibility allows employees to manage their work-life balance more effectively, reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction, which can translate into voluntary efforts to help others, take on additional tasks, and improve workplace functioning (Truitt, 2023).

In the current context of hybrid and remote working becoming normalized, the ability to offer flexible working arrangements is emerging as a critical organizational advantage. The positive relationship found in this study aligns with the principles of social exchange theory (John, 2024), where employees respond to perceived organizational support—through flexibility—with increased citizenship behavior. Moreover, this finding is particularly relevant in post-pandemic work environments, where flexibility is no longer viewed as a perk, but as a fundamental component of job design (Berry et al., 2020).

2. Organizational Justice and Discretionary Work Behavior

The study also found that organizational justice significantly predicted discretionary work behavior. This is consistent with a broad range of studies that emphasize the role of fairness in fostering positive work attitudes and behaviors (Moorman et al., 2024; Tepper, 2000). When employees perceive that processes, outcomes, and interpersonal treatment within the organization are fair, they are more likely to feel valued and respected, which fosters trust and loyalty toward the organization (Su et al., 2024).

Fair treatment acts as a motivator for employees to "give back" to the organization through constructive extra-role behaviors, including helping colleagues and volunteering for tasks outside of their job descriptions (Alge et al., 2006; Leigh & Melwani, 2022). This study confirms that both procedural and distributive justice are integral in shaping employee perceptions and behaviors. The implications are substantial: managers who communicate transparently, make decisions consistently, and distribute resources equitably can stimulate a stronger sense of commitment and behavioral citizenship.

3. Psychological Safety and Discretionary Work Behavior

Perhaps most noteworthy is the significant role of psychological safety in predicting discretionary work behavior. Employees who feel psychologically safe—that is, free from fear of ridicule, punishment, or embarrassment for speaking up—are more likely to engage in open communication, take initiative, and collaborate proactively (Sudarmanto et al., 2023). The positive effect found in this study reinforces the notion that safe interpersonal environments allow employees to extend themselves beyond prescribed duties.

This relationship can be interpreted through the lens of self-determination theory, which suggests that individuals are more likely to be intrinsically motivated when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are

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met (Deci et al., 2017). Psychological safety creates the interpersonal conditions necessary for employees to feel confident and competent in exploring new behaviors and sharing novel ideas—core aspects of discretionary work behavior. Organizations that foster such an environment may unlock greater levels of creativity, innovation, and organizational citizenship.

4. Interplay Between Variables

Although each of the three variables—remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety—was independently significant in predicting discretionary work behavior, their combined effect provides additional insight. The adjusted R^2 of the regression model (0.638) indicates that approximately 64% of the variance in DWB can be explained by these factors together, demonstrating a strong model fit. This suggests that these organizational practices are not only individually important but also collectively contribute to shaping a work environment conducive to employee initiative.

The absence of multicollinearity among variables (as shown by acceptable VIF values) implies that each construct offers a unique contribution to explaining DWB. This is significant from a practical perspective, as it suggests that interventions aimed at improving one area (e.g., increasing fairness) should not replace efforts to enhance flexibility or psychological safety. Rather, an integrated approach is likely to yield the most positive behavioral outcomes.

5. Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the growing body of literature in organizational behavior by synthesizing three critical constructs—flexibility, justice, and safety—to explain discretionary behavior. While these variables have been studied independently in previous literature, this research confirms their simultaneous influence within one model, providing a more comprehensive understanding of DWB antecedents. Furthermore, the study affirms theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory, equity theory, and self-determination theory as robust foundations for understanding the mechanisms through which work environment characteristics affect extra-role behavior. By doing so, it enhances our theoretical understanding of how employees' perceptions translate into meaningful workplace behavior.

Practical Implications

The findings have several practical implications for managers and HR practitioners. First, implementing and maintaining flexible work arrangements can significantly enhance discretionary efforts. Employers should invest in systems and policies that allow employees to self-manage their schedules without compromising productivity or collaboration. Second, fairness should be at the core of all organizational practices—from performance evaluations to resource distribution. Training managers in equitable decision-making and fostering transparent communication can reinforce perceptions of justice. Lastly, psychological safety should be actively cultivated through supportive leadership, inclusive decision-making, and mechanisms for open feedback. Leaders should model vulnerability and welcome constructive dissent to create environments where employees feel secure to act beyond expectations.

6. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its valuable insights, this study is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality between variables. Future

research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to establish temporal relationships. Second, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to common method bias or social desirability effects. Although statistical checks were conducted, future studies could triangulate data from supervisors or peers to enhance validity. Third, the sample was drawn from a specific organizational or regional context. Generalizing the findings to other sectors, countries, or cultures should be done cautiously. Future research may also explore moderating factors such as leadership style, team dynamics, or industry type to deepen the understanding of these relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that remote work flexibility, organizational justice, and psychological safety significantly and positively influence discretionary work behavior among employees. The findings underscore the importance of fostering a supportive and fair work environment where employees feel trusted, valued, and psychologically secure. Remote work flexibility empowers individuals with autonomy, organizational justice reinforces a sense of fairness and equity, and psychological safety cultivates openness and collaboration—all of which encourage employees to voluntarily contribute beyond formal job requirements. Together, these factors explain a substantial proportion of variance in discretionary behavior, highlighting their critical role in modern organizational management. Therefore, organizations aiming to enhance employee engagement, innovation, and overall performance should prioritize strategies that promote flexible work arrangements, just practices, and psychologically safe environments.

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