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# **Responsive Workplaces for Lower-Wage Hourly Workers: Factors Predictive of Employee Engagement**

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# Background

- Service-producing economy in US to grow by 19.1 million jobs between 1998 & 2008
  - represents nearly 95% of total job growth during (Bowman, 1999)
- Services jobs will account for nearly 75% of jobs
- Low-wage service occupations will be the second fastest-growing occupation through 2012 (Hecker, 2004)

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# Background

- Low-wage jobs in US characterized by:
  - Low wages (\$9.84 US or less)
  - Non-standard schedules
  - Lower-skill requirement
  - Limited access to flexible work options
  - Limited learning opportunities on the job
- Lower-wage workers
  - More complicated work-family issues
  - Limited access to supports to assist with work-family issues

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# Background

- Flexible work options:
    - promotes work-life effectiveness (Golden, Veiga & Simsek, 2006; Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006)
    - contributes to employees' positive feelings of well being (Costa & Satori, 2006; Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006)
    - contributes to employee commitment (Easton,2003; Tg, et al,2006)
  
  - Limited research about flexible work options among employees in hourly jobs
  
  - Limited research about flexibility as a component of job quality (FWI, 2006; Swanberg & Simmons, 2007; Simmons & Swanberg, 2007)
  
  - Limited research about relationship between flexibility and employee engagement
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# Research Objectives

1. Determine the meaning of “flexible work options” for hourly lower-wage workers in retail
2. Identify the job factors that compose a responsive workplace for lower-wage hourly retail workers in retail
3. Examine effects of responsive workplace practices on employee engagement among lower-wage hourly workers in retail

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# Research Methods

## ■ Procedure

- Large Retail Chain with over 6000 stores in US
- Culture of responsiveness and adaptability
- Organizational survey (72% response rate)
- Three regions, 8 districts, 388 stores, 8433 employees

## ■ Total Sample

- N=6,085; Usable surveys=6,047
- 73% hourly worker; 26% Professional
- 63% full-time; 37% part-time

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# Research Methods

- Study sample (n=1344)
  - Full-time
  - Hourly wage position
  - Employed 1 year or more
  - 25 years or older
- Sample description
  - 89% female
  - 79% white
  - 42.5 years
  - Education
    - 49% High school education or less
    - 32% Some college
    - 18.5% 2 year degree or more
  - 59.5% partnered
  - 39% have children <18
  - 37 hours/week
  - 61% earn \$9.84 or more
  - 9 % have a second job
    - 22.95 hours

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# Research Methods

- Analyses
  - Univariate & Bivariate analyses
  - Factor Analysis
  - Hierarchical linear regression

# Findings:

## Defining Flexibility

<b>Temporal Flexibility</b>	<b>Prevalence (N=1344)</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Ability to change schedule when have personal issue always (1-5)	43%	4.09
Ability to modify schedule when unexpected personal matter arises always (1-5)	37%	3.96
Schedule preferences considered always (1-5)	51%	3.14
Satisfaction with weekly schedule always (1-5)	45%	3.04
Willingness of co-workers to swap hours always (1-5)	34%	2.68
A lot of input into # of hours work per week (1-5)	34%	2.4
Ability to change starting & quitting times on daily basis always (1-5)	6%	2.17
Enough time to plan (1-3)	5.5%	1.9

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# Findings:

## Components of Responsive Workplaces

### Factor Analysis:

#### 29 Items Factored into 6 Responsive Workplace Practices

	# of items
1) Supervisor Effectiveness	7
2) Flexibility	8
3) Job Fit & Autonomy	7
4) Opportunity & Development	3
5) Team Work	2
6) Inclusion	2

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# Findings:

## Components of Responsive Workplaces

	# of items	Alpha
1) Supervisor Effectiveness	7	.906
2) Flexibility: Schedule Satisfaction	2	.796
3) Flexibility: Work-Family Matters	2	.846
4) Job Fit & Autonomy	7	.830
5) Opportunity & Development	3	.878
6) Teamwork	2	.746

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## Findings:

# Employee Engagement Measure

Employee Engagement	Alpha=.910
I feel like I am an important part of CitiSales	
I really care about the future of CitiSales	
I feel like my work makes an important contribution to CitiSales' success	
I would highly recommend CitiSales to a friend seeking employment	
I am always willing to give extra effort to help CitiSales succeed	
It would take a lot to get me to leave CitiSales	
I would like to be working for CitiSales one year from now	
Compared with other companies I know about, I think CitiSales is a great place to work	

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## Effects of Responsive Workplace Practices on Employee Engagement (N = 1344)

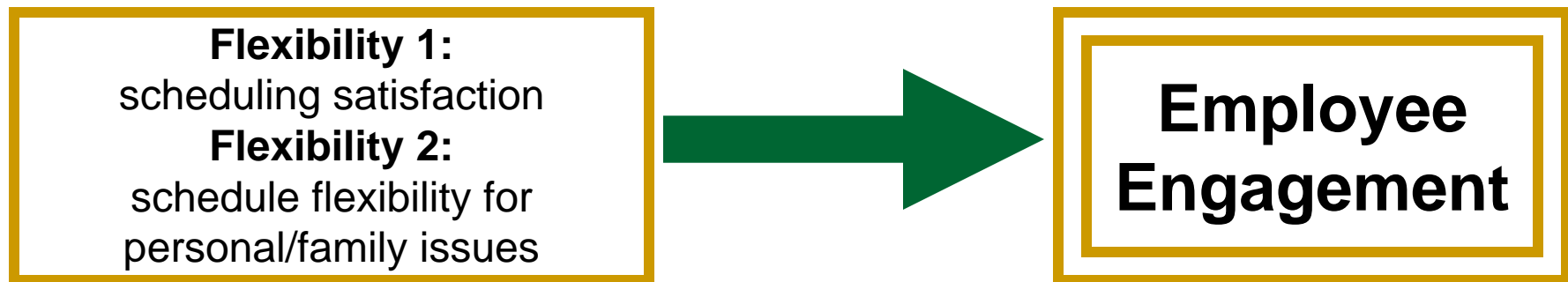
<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
<b>Step 2</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>.084</b>	<b>.017</b>	<b>.159***</b>
Race	-.815	.501	-.050
Education (<= high school or GED)	reference category		
Education 1 (some college/2yr degree)	-.488	.412	-.038
<b>Education 2 (bachelors or higher)</b>	<b>-1.836</b>	<b>.652</b>	<b>-.088**</b>
Low wage	-.540	.393	-.041
Sandwich generation	.148	.407	.012
Partner status	.646	.404	.050
<b>Schedule Satisfaction</b>	<b>.722</b>	<b>.108</b>	<b>.225***</b>
<b>Schedule Flexibility</b>	<b>.582</b>	<b>.107</b>	<b>.183***</b>

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
<b>Step 3</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>.100</b>	<b>.013</b>	<b>.191***</b>
Race	-.696	.396	-.043
Education (<= high school or GED)		reference category	
Education 1(some college/2yr degree)	.036	.328	.003
Education 2 (bachelors or higher)	-.835	.519	-.040
Low wage	-.392	.311	-.030
Sandwich generation	.495	.322	.039
Partner status	.476	.319	.037
<b>Schedule Satisfaction</b>	<b>-.009</b>	<b>.092</b>	<b>-.003</b>
<b>Schedule Flexibility</b>	<b>-.149</b>	<b>.091</b>	<b>-.047</b>
<b>Supervisor Effectiveness</b>	<b>.230</b>	<b>.038</b>	<b>.222***</b>
<b>Job Fit/Autonomy</b>	<b>.430</b>	<b>.043</b>	<b>.325***</b>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>.369</b>	<b>.068</b>	<b>.154***</b>
<b>Opportunity for Development</b>	<b>.292</b>	<b>.056</b>	<b>.150***</b>

# Findings:

## Flexibility is Mediated by Other Factors

<b>Supervisor Effectiveness:</b>	Adj R <sup>2</sup> = .336***
<b>Opportunity for Development:</b>	Adj R <sup>2</sup> = .100***
<b>Job Fit / Autonomy:</b>	Adj R <sup>2</sup> = .204***
<b>Team Work:</b>	Adj R <sup>2</sup> = .113***



\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

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# Implications

- Creating responsive workplaces have positive effects for organizations
- Flexibility is just one important factor in creating responsive workplaces for hourly workers
- Further evidence to expand the discussion beyond flexibility

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# Future Research Directions

- Next steps for this study:
  - Path analysis to examine relationship of same factors to multiple outcomes
  - Multi-variate analyses using objective store outcomes
- Further research needed to capture the meaning of flexibility for hourly workers
- Further research needed to understand relationship between temporal flexibility and work function flexibility.

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# Responsive Workplaces for Lower-Wage Hourly Jobs

## Discussion Questions

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