

**ADAPTABILITY OF FLEXI HOURS CONCEPT IN THE
GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANCY
ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA**

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Degree of Master of Science in Project Management

Department of Building Economics

University of Moratuwa

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
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DECLARATION

“I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

Further, I acknowledge the intellectual contribution of my research supervisor Ch. QS. Prof. (Mrs.) B.A.K.S. Perera for the successful completion of this research dissertation. I affirm that I will not make any publication from this research without the name of my research supervisor as contributing author, unless otherwise I have obtained written consent from my research supervisor.

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Name of the Supervisor: Ch. QS Prof. (Mrs.) B.A.K.S. Perera

Signature of the supervisor:

Date: 23-Aug-2020

ABSTRACT

Adaptability of flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka

To aid the employees towards balancing their work and personal life (work life balance), most of the organizations (apart to the construction industry) tend to offer flexible working hours. It allows employees to elect their work start and end time, consequently providing them with an opportunity to avoid travelling during peak traffic times. As a solution to overcome from the traffic congestion during peak hours and also to consume energy more efficiently, the selected research topic is essential by being vigilant to the Sri Lankan working culture and economy. Therewith, the timely need of the adaptability of flexi working hours concept to Sri Lankan construction industry is required to address the existing literature gap and to reduce the job stress with in the industry.

The purpose of this research is to grasp the real essence of understanding how employees and employers experience about the usage of flexible working hours and how to adapt it to the government sector construction organisations in Sri Lanka by limiting to consultant organizations. The objectives were achieved with qualitative approach and data were collected from two rounds of semi-structured interviews. Findings were analysed with the use of manual content analysis to encode the collected data from the interviews.

The study originates minimising work stress, minimising work-family conflicts, and improving business continuity to be major enablers of the flexi-hour concept in any sector and that flexible working hours will enable handling of emergencies. Non-availability of public transport, personal attitudes, restricted technology access, and increased expenses were the barriers identified to implement flexi-hours in any sector. Time and employee management related issues are the barriers to implementing flexi-hours in the construction industry. Thus, changing legislation to accommodate flexi-hours, enhancing awareness about flexi working hours among project stakeholders, and introducing monitoring systems were the strategies suggested for implementing flexi-hours in government construction consultancy organisations.

Key Words: *flexitime, construction industry, flexi hours, traffic congestion, work life balance, government construction consultancy organizations, Sri Lanka*

DEDICATION

*I dedicate this research to my beloved family for the
immense love, care, support and encouragement
conveyed to me at all times*

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This research study embraces much dedications and ready assistances received from many people, who contributed in generous ways to ensure the success of the final output. Hence, it is my privilege to honour and acknowledge every individual who contributed to this piece of work in numerous ways.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
A.M.	Ante Merīdiem
DS	Department of Sociology
E.G.	for example
ETC	Et cetera
HRMID	Human Resource Management International Digest
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
P.M.	Post Merīdiem
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
UK	United Kingdom
WLB	Work Life Balance
YRS	Years

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CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Many changes have taken place in the internal environments of organisations because of their dynamic nature, increased competition, and sophisticated customer demands (Podnar & Golob, 2010). As per Olanrewaju (2016), construction industry is an economic investment and its contribution towards the improvement of the national economy is significant. Furthermore, he added that the construction industry in developing countries is in a poor level due to many challenges like changing construction market and diverse clients.

Ergol (2001) reported that working time patterns have become more diversified and flexible. According to Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS, 2012), flexible working is a label for a wide range of working patterns, including compressed hours, part-time, working from home, and flexi-time. As per Yang, Steiner and Srinivasan (2016), flexible work hours (flex time) allow employees to elect their work start and finish time, thus providing them with an opportunity to avoid traveling during peak traffic periods.

DBIS (2012) has defined flexible working as an agreement between an employee and employer for the employee to work in a system that best suits their other responsibilities whilst certifying that the work gets done. Hughes and Parkes (2007) observed that employees who are permitted some flexibility in their work schedules experience only few conflicts between their work and home lives, thereby enhancing their family well-being. Thus, workplace flexibility can be interpreted as previously uncharted challenges, as both employee and employer challenge to create a working relationship that concurrently realizes and recognises the desires of organizations and workforce (Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007).

Organizational flexibility has determined by deviations in the nature of the markets, deviations in technology as a result of increased competition (Johnson, 2004). Further, Johnson (2004) has identified organizational flexibility strategies as external flexibility, internal flexibility, quantitative or numerical flexibility and qualitative or functional flexibility. According to Wickramasinghe and Jayabandu (2007), the external flexibility refers to make the use of external labour when required (for instance by using momentary contracts) whereas the internal flexibility is related for the ability to manage with fluctuations and deviations in the demand for labour by using the prevailing workforce (e.g., flexi working hours, overtime), Also, the authors have stated quantitative flexibility is related to the variation of the amount of work (for instance, number of workers, number of working hours) whereas qualitative or functional flexibility is related to the capability to vary the content of work in connection with the qualification of workers (vertical and horizontal mobility).

Extant studies have acknowledged a range of consequences of flexible working for the employees (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Yang et al. (2016) have mentioned the optimal situation was expanded by reducing the total travel time as a result of that it has increased employees productivity.

However, it is noteworthy to recognize, that while flexible working strategies may ostensibly about allowing employees some choice, in order to accomplish a better work–life balance, in practice this is not always the result (Higgins, Duxbury & Johnson, 2000). Thus, it is important to study on the adaptability of flexi hours with related to the construction industry.

1.2 Problem Statement

Most of the organisations with a diverse workforce are realising that in order to effectively manage diversity, they need to develop work–life balance policies (Aycan, 2008). According to Stavrou (2005), flexi working may be supportive in improving employee’s behaviours and attitudes towards their work being positively linked to job performance.

The term flexible work denotes to a varied range of work practices that differ from traditional employment arrangements (Podnar & Golob, 2010). In respect to Sri Lanka, only few research studies into workplace flexibility have made specific consideration to managerial and specialised employees (Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007). Further, the authors have stated, no studies have been directed specifically on workplace flexibility strategies with regard to Sri Lankan context. Unfortunately, evidence has been conveyed of a conflict between flexi-time and travel-to-work, resulting from the lack of available car parking at many locations (Wheatley, 2012). Accordingly, there has been an accumulating knowledge about the application of flexi working practices and the consequences for both organizations and individuals with regard to foreign countries, but not in Sri Lanka. Hence adapting flexi hours concept can be implemented by conducting trainings with regard to change management, briefing the pros & cons of the concept and the benefits that will gain to organization and as well as an individual wise.

As a solution to overcome from the traffic congestion during peak hours to consume energy more efficiently and to implement work life balances of Sri Lankan working population, it is necessary to implement the selected research topic by being vigilant to the Sri Lankan culture and economy. Therefore, there is a need to carry out a research on the selected topic to address the existing literature gap and the industry need to reduce job stress with regard to Sri Lankan Government Construction Consultancy Organizations.

1.3 Aim

Aim of this research is to identify the adaptability of flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka.

1.4 Objectives

Following objectives were achieved to reach the above main aim of the research.

01. To identify the concept of flexi hours/working hours
02. To identify the nature of working hours in existing Government Organizations
03. To identify the enablers of using flexi hours in Government Construction Consultancy Organizations
04. To identify the barriers of using flexi hours in Government Construction Consultancy Organizations
05. To propose suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka effectively.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This research was limited to Government Consultancy Organizations including Semi-Government Organizations staff who falls in and above the middle management category.

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Literature review

A comprehensive literature survey was carried out with the use of journal articles, conference papers and books about the adaptability of flexi hours concept in the organizations.

1.6.2 Data collection and data analysis

Collected information through literature review were applied by carrying out semi-structured interviews to the top and middle management levels of those who are

currently practicing the flexi working hours concept in their respective industries by contextualizing to Sri Lanka as stage I. In addition, as stage II, semi-structured interviews were carried out to the professionals those who are working in the construction consultancy organizations.

The gathered data were analysed based on manual content analysis such as; job satisfaction, job's suitability to flexibility, attitude towards flexible hours, organizational commitment, job's negative effect and loyalty to the job, impact of traffic congestions, and employee performance in order to identify the suitable strategies for adaption of flexi working hours concept.

1.7 Chapter Breakdown

Figure 1.1 shows the chapter breakdown and the sequence of the research.

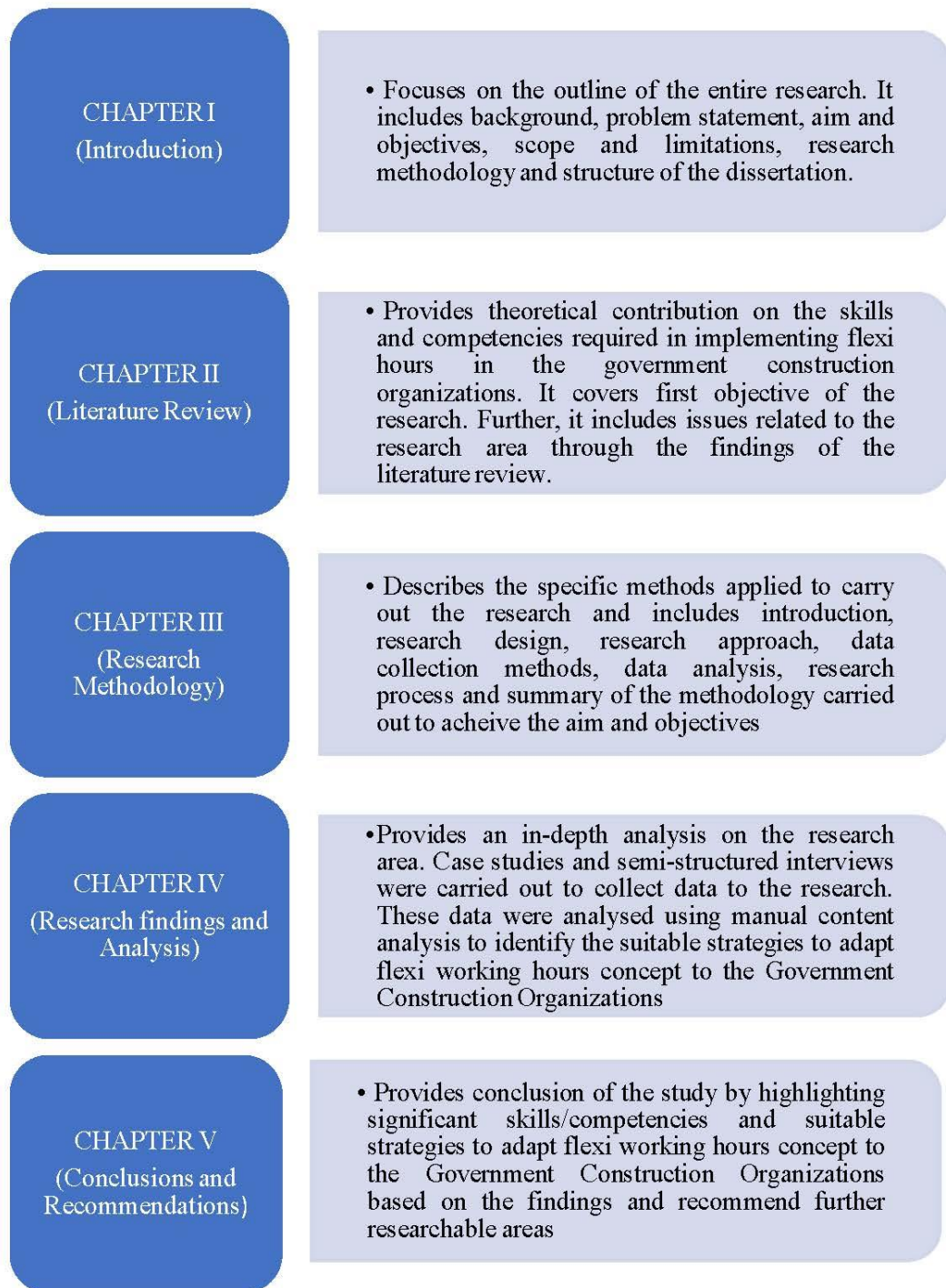


Figure 1.1: Chapter Breakdown

The research started with a comprehensive literature review. Moreover, the selected area for the research was analysed based on the industrial data collected.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provides a brief introduction to the research. This chapter intends to combine the current knowledge and research efforts done regarding the research area and to establish the research problem. The theoretical background of the subject matter identifies flexibility when it comes to work schedule, as a form of advantageous support through organizational initiatives to ease the job stress and to enhance work life balance policies (Wickramasinghe, 2012). All employees seldomly require day-to-day flexibility to manage challenging jobs and family lives. The availability of flexible arrangement gives employee's a greater control over working time, and it has been recognized by the employees as the most valued management prerogative provided by the employers (Cohen & Single, 2001).

2.2 Working Hours

The number of working hours is one of the most important element of a job that an employee consider (Human Resource Management International Digest [HRMID], 2018). Pagan (2018) explored working hours, underemployment, over employment, and matched hours for employees in Germany, aiming on the differences in the number of hours between employees with disabilities and employees without disabilities. Few studies have carried out to quantify how job flexibility is related to work-family balance or how such flexible measures may benefit businesses and individuals (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001).

Bossler and Grunau (2019), state most experimental evidence shows that extent working hours are associated with higher output, even if productivity decreases. Further, HRMID (2018) states, a discrepancy between actual and preferred working hours can lead to reduce dissatisfaction, performance, changing of jobs, and absenteeism. Also, it can lead to poor health in terms of fatigue, stress, alcohol intake and increased smoking among others.

A decent match between actual and preferred working hours leads employee satisfaction, productivity and a good work-life balance (HRMID, 2018). Mariani (2016), have stated that supervisor support, hours worked, and work flexibility obstructed workers level of conflict. In general, nevertheless, there is a constant functional relationship among the working hours and their outcomes on the workers that holds over a great diversity of situations (Raediker, Janßen, Schomann, & Nachreiner, 2006).

2.3. Work Life Balance

Work and family are the two most important aspects of human life (Adisa, Gbadamosi, & Osabutey, 2016). According to Semlali and Hassi (2016), work–life balance (WLB) can be defined as “the absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work demands” or the “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict”. As per Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman (2007), work–life balance denotes how individuals achieve and negotiate the domains among work and personal life, including matters of holding multiple roles and other work–life inconsistent matters. Also, an employee is expected to allocate equal times to his professional and private lives (Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013). Russell, O’Connell, and McGinnity (2009) suggest, however, that flexible working plans might increase work–life issue and aggravate work–life balance instead. Also, work–life balance incorporates a particular element as not everyone wants to give similar weights to work and personal life (Galea, Houkes, & Rijk, 2014).

Further, the authors have stated, employers are experiencing how critical it is for their organizations to offer the right work–life balance strategies to their employees, to accomplish worker productivity. Correspondingly, employees are apprehending how important it is for their personal well-being and family functioning to be in control and to have the ability to manipulate family and work roles (Pedersen, Minnotte, Kiger, & Mannon 2008). In most of the situations, employees normally work lengthier than what they are obliged to do (Panojan, Perera, & Dilakshan, 2019).

Literature admits that flexible working provisions can only be positively linked to work–life balance when they are voluntary and not forced by employers (Vandeweyer & Glorieux, 2008). In contrast, Elbing, Gadon and Gordon (as cited in Galea et al., 2014) states when a system is offered on a voluntary basis employees can freely adapt their working hours according to their personal wishes and subjective perceptions. Further, Francis (2009) states perceptions that work interferes with family life are connected with personal life, job satisfaction and organizational commitment as well as higher intention to leave one’s job.

Family commitments, performance and productivity demands, career commitments, competencies, deadlines, gender discrimination, and male dominated culture and sexual harassment at work affect the private lives of the employees and careers of female professionals (Adogbo, Ibrahim, & Ibrahim, 2015). Mete, Unal, and Bilen (2014) have stated work-family conflict occurs when a person carries more than a role or roles that the person should perform showing incompatibility with behaviour and attitude. Further the authors have mentioned the common point in work-family conflict is due to individuals thinking pattern. Johnson (2004) have stated that people those who work longer hours are less productive and that employees with a better work life balance are more productive.

Professionals those who are engaged in construction face difficulties in balancing their work and lives, as construction organizations intends to increase their productivity by reducing staff turnover (Panojan, Perera, & Dilakshan, 2019). Further the authors have stated that the type of work assigned to construction professionals depends on their field of proficiency such as; architects are more concerned about design aspects of a project whereas quantity surveyors are more concerned about the commercial aspects of the project, as they work in a collaborative environment. Casper (2007), states literature on work-life issues examines work-family conflict rather than work-life balance. As such, work–life balance refers to how individuals manage and negotiate the domains between work and personal life, including the issues of holding multiple roles and other work–life conflicting matters (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007).

2.4. Flexi Working Hours

The complexity of today's business market, influenced by globalization and characterized by harsh competition as well as the changes to traditional gender roles require a rethink of conventional work–life patterns (Galea et al., 2014). According to Frame and Hartog (2003), employees should be given flexible working hours to enable them to balance their work and other commitments such as family, hobbies, art, travelling, studies etc., which leads to a “healthy” life. Further, Eaton (2001) states that there is a necessity to offer flex time to the organizations which is broadly defined as the ability to schedule flexible starting and quitting times, sometimes with a core hour requirement with the current traffic congestion, to reduce job stress and to improve work life balance.

2.4.1. Flexibility in work life

Flexibility is a key factor in understanding present day occupation where the technology has made the work more convenient (Galea, Houkes, & Rijk, 2014). Atkinson and Hall (2011) describe flexibility is not about employer's demands for flexibility in scheduling work but rather about providing the employee with control over working time (either in duration, timing or location of work). Conversely, flexible work arrangements can have positive effects on individuals and family outcomes, minimizing work-family conflict and work-related stress and promoting employees' capacity to fulfil their family responsibilities (Powell & Cortis, 2017).

Moreover, flexi-time is one of the most long-standing flexible working practices dating from the mid-1970s (Atkinson & Hall, 2011). Technological developments also have increased the mobility of workers by connecting them to the internet and creating greater work flexibility by making them available all 24 hours of the day (Wajcman, Rose, Brown, & Bittman, 2010). Work time flexibility refers to, whether the respondent can decide the time to start and finish work (Department of Sociology [DS], 2014). Furthermore, flexible working arrangements have been identified as one of the important means of balancing work and personal commitments (Russell, O'Connell, & McGinnity, 2009).

2.4.2. Nature of flexi working hours

Wyss (2007) found out that while an above average number of highly qualified people work flexible hours or without any time restrictions with regard to work, the middle classes works on most regular hours. As a consequence fact, flex time is beneficial to employees at all stages of their careers by enabling a more holistic work/ life balance (Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007).

In most of the countries, a legislation has been introduced by enabling certain groups of employees to request flexible working conditions (Galea et al., 2014). Moreover, the authors have described, both employers and employees are becoming more aware of the potential gains of flexible working arrangements as employers are learning and experiencing how critical it is for their organizations to offer the right work–life balance to their employees, in order to achieve worker productivity.

In spite of time-based work demands (long working hours, inflexible work schedule, shift work and overtime), it interferes with personal life and restrict people’s ability to fulfil home responsibilities and spend time with household members (DS, 2014). Furthermore, with a flexible work schedule a worker is able to adjust working time according to his or her needs, which should decrease work-to-home conflict (Gallie & Russell, 2009).

In the human services, flexible work arrangements, such as part-time and variable hours can help employees to reduce conflict between home and work and to deal with the time pressures of each domain (Brummelhuis & Lippe, 2010). For several years now, work and leisure time have been increasingly reshaped by deregulation and flexibilization measures (Wyss, 2007). Moreover, the authors have mentioned that now a days many organizations offer flexible working hours to help employees to balance work and personal life such as; from family responsibilities.

2.4.3. Concept of flexi working hours

Work schedule flexibility is identified as the most frequently employed and preferred arrangement by employees of the offshore out sourced software development industry in Sri Lanka (Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007). Workplace flexibility shall be defined as “the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks” (Jones, Scoville, Hill, Childs, Leishman, & Nally, 2008), which is associated with a range of benefits for the workers and to the organizations.

The main concept of flexible working hours is to consent employees to freely adapt their working hours according to their personal wishes without going for the traditional (9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) five day a week schedule (Galea et al., 2014). This method of employment is based on a concept which recognizes that a good work–life balance is not simply about limiting the number of working hours but rather about giving people a degree of autonomy as to how their working time is managed (Schabracq, Winnubst, & Cooper, 2007).

On the other hand, flexibility is not limited to autonomy on the job. Increased autonomy is linked with job satisfaction and motivation which will generate higher organizational commitment (Eaton, 2001). As described in above paragraphs, employees can freely adapt their work schedule according to their needs/ necessities, which can be either for professional or personal matters (Galea et al., 2014).

2.5 Types of Flexi Working Hours

Types of flexible working practices are numerous, such as; part-time work, job sharing, flexitime, working from home, time off in lieu, teleworking, term-time working, staggered, annualized or compressed hours, shift swapping, self-roistering, and breaks from work are all flexible working arrangements which may aid to WLB (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell, & MacVicar, 2007). Practices are likely to include part time working, career breaks, job sharing, term time working and sabbaticals (Torrington, Hall, Taylor, & Atkinson, 2010).

Atkinson and Hall (2011), states these practices provide a route to flexible working via contractual variation of working hours, often focusing on time reduction mechanisms. Moreover, the authors have stated that there are also practices which focus on time arrangement rather than reduction, but nevertheless provide an employee with a contractual right to flexibility (such as; compressed working weeks and flexi-time schemes). According to Galea, Houkes, and De Rijk (2014), workplace flexibility offers employees to choose when, where, and for how long they should engage in work-related tasks.

Although there are number of variations as mentioned by Golembiewski and Proehl (as cited in Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007) with regard to flexi times, the basic model of flexible time usually consists of five interrelated components. They are as follows;

- (1) a band within which all hours must be worked (e.g. 6.00 am to 6.30 pm);
- (2) a core time during which all employees are required to be working (e.g. 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 pm);
- (3) a flexible band of hours before, after, or in between core times that allows employees to exercise designated options regarding their presence in, or absence from, the work place;
- (4) banking, which allows a carry-over of surplus or deficient hours worked; and
- (5) Variability of schedule, i.e. the freedom of employees to vary working hours from one period to another without prior approval from their supervisor.

Accordingly, evidence suggests that organizations have also benefitted from flexible work options through increased employee commitment, engagement and attachment through decreased absenteeism (Casey & Grzywacz, 2008).

2.6 Enablers of Flexi Working hours

Literature supports the idea that, on the whole, the positive benefits of flexible working hours outweigh the costs and that only little negative behaviour resulted from their application (Galea et al., 2014). Beauregard and Henry (2009) have found that positive benefits of flexible working hours including organizational commitment, reduced turnover intentions and increased job satisfaction apply only if the employees perceive that the usability of flexibility is to increase their control over time. Yet other researchers who reviewed flexi-time literature determined that there was no clear relationship with organizational commitment (Wang & Walumbwa, 2007).

Jones et al., (2008) in a study about perceived and used workplace flexibility in Singapore have found that the perception of being flexible in where and when one works is a better predictor of work–family fit than its actual application. Wickramasinghe and Jayabandu (2007) have reported that software developers experience reduction in stress with the implementation of flexible work schedules.

Furthermore, Dunne and Teg (2007) also have found the following benefits of adapting flexi hours concept with regard to the business and for the employee.

Business Benefits:

- Greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency, such as savings on overheads when employees work from home or less downtime for machinery when 24-hour shifts are worked.
- Ability to attract a higher level of skills, because the business is able to attract and retain a skilled and more diverse workforce.
- Reduced recruitment costs.
- More job satisfaction and better staff morale.
- Greater continuity as staff who might otherwise have left are offered solutions they can manage.
- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Improved competitiveness with a motivated staff.

- Increased staff efficiency through better motivation and reduced stress and absenteeism through sickness.
- Improved employee relations.

Employee Benefits:

- More flexibility to fit in with lifestyle demands or needs.
- Increased control over working day.
- Ability to choose hours to suit efficiency (e.g., those who are able to work early in the morning can leave earlier in the evening).
- Reduced stress levels.
- Increased motivation and passion for work.
- Opportunity for skilled workers to return to work while balancing social and domestic needs.
- Empowerment of staff.

Table 2.1 discusses the mostly addressed enablers of adapting flexi working hours concept.

Table 2.1: Enablers of flexi working hours

Enabler	Authors																		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
Equalization of personal commitments and work	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Minimizing work-related stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Minimizing conflicts between work and family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Increased employee satisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓					✓	✓		✓	✓
Improving employee relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
Improve organizational cost-effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
Cost-efficiency for employees	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			
Increased employee engagement and commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓					✓	✓		✓	✓
Reduce traffic congestion	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Employees have a greater control over working hours	✓	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓		✓			✓				✓
Ability to have core hour requirement				✓						✓	✓							✓	

A – (Grant, Wallace & Spurgeon, 2013), B - (Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary & Scarparo, 2015), C – (Rao, 2016), D – (HRMID, 2018), E – (Semlali & Hassi, 2016), F – (Galea et al., 2014), G - (Pedersen, Minnotte, Kiger & Mannon 2008), H – (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007), I – (Russell, Connell, and McGinnity, 2009), J - (Vandeweyer & Glorieux, 2008), K - (Eaton, 2001), L – (Atkinson and Hall, 2011), M - (Powell & Cortis, 2017), N – (DS, 2014), O – (Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu, 2007), P – (Dunne and Teg, 2007), Q - (Brummelhuis & Lippe, 2010), R - (Wickramasinghe, 2012), S - (Casey & Grzywacz, 2008).

With above summary of table (Table 2.1), by enabling flexi working hours concept to the organizations, it will result positive effects on individuals and family outcomes such as; employee satisfaction, job flexibility in relation to WLB policies, equalization of personal commitments, employee autonomy and improving of employee relations by minimizing work and family conflicts.

As shown in the above table there are potential advantages for the employee and as well as for the employer. The main advantages from the employees point of view are; employees shall have the ability to modify their working patterns to suit personal circumstances, remuneration is not fixed as the working hours may vary from month to month, the opportunity to have blocks of time off in the quieter periods of the year, easy to work with a settled few team rather than working with so many different kind of people and also will be able to know the expected personal rosters well in advance.

The main advantages for the employers perspective view are; staffing levels can be more easily matched with fluctuations in workload over the course of each year, absenteeism can be reduced because the staff take more responsibility for their own working hours, use of supportive staff (agencies) is reduced, more flexibility in provision for extended shifts and 24 hour services and unforeseen additional staffing costs become lesser.

However, based on literature many authors have found that there are barriers as well to the process of implementing flexi working hours concept. The identified barriers through literature are described in following sections.

2.7 Barriers to Implement Flexi Working Hours

Dunne and Teg (2007) have described the issues behind the decision to implement WLB include: competition for staff in the social care sector continues to be high due to poor perceived WLB and a reputation as a traditionally low-paid sector, retention of skilled staff and the need to increase morale. However, the high proportion of staff who work directly with others can make the human services a particularly difficult context in which to implement employee-driven flexibility (Powell & Cortis, 2017).

Stavrou (2005) has described, flexible work may be helpful in improving employees' attitudes and behaviours towards their work, which is positively linked to work performance. It is very much difficult to implement flexi working hours concept due to insufficient number of workers in an organization (Pitt-Catsouphe, James,

McNamara, & Cahill, 2015). Table 2.2 discusses the barriers to implement flexi working hours concept which were identified through literature synthesis.

Table 2.2: Barriers to implement flexi working hours

Barriers	Authors												
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Managers behaviours and attitudes	✓		✓	✓					✓				
Employee management during the core time			✓	✓	✓							✓	
Conflicts due to mismatch with life partners working hours					✓		✓	✓					✓
Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)					✓							✓	✓
Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements					✓		✓	✓					
Employees behaviours and attitudes									✓	✓			
Retention of skilled staff				✓									✓
Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)		✓				✓							
Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing						✓			✓				
Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	✓												✓
Non- availability of public transportation facilities											✓		
Unavailability of support service providers			✓										

A – (Wyss, 2007), B- (DS, 2014), C - (Powell & Cortis, 2017), D – (Dunne and Teg, 2007), E- (HRMID, 2018), F - (Raediker, Janßen, Schomann, & Nachreiner, 2006), G – (Galea et al., 2014), H - (Vandeweyer & Glorieux, 2008), I - (Pitt-Catsouphe, James, McNamara & Cahill, 2015), J – (Stavrou, 2005), K - (Wheatley, 2012), L – (Casper, 2007), M – (Lakshmi, Ramachandran, & Boohene, 2012)

With summary of Table 2.2, people who have issues in work life such as; managers behaviours and attitudes works with dissatisfaction which may lead to poor performance and tend to seek for another job due to job stress. Therefore, retention of a skilled staff is very much difficult with regard to above tabulated barriers.

2.8 Strategies to overcome the barriers that affect to implement flexi hours

In terms of quality of life, now a days most of the employees are facing many challenges in occupational stress, work family conflict and health. Besides employees are able to face these challenges through various work life balance strategies. Table 2.3 presents a summary of the identified strategies through literature to overcome the barriers to implement flexi working hours.

Table 2.3: Strategies to overcome the barriers to implement flexi hours

Strategies	Authors							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Conducting programmes on soft skill management (e.g., stress management, conflict management, leadership skills, workshops, etc.,)		✓	✓				✓	✓
Conducting health awareness programmes		✓	✓				✓	✓
Building up child care centres	✓	✓				✓		✓
Organize family get-togethers	✓					✓		✓
Provide counselling		✓	✓					✓
Introduce career growth opportunities	✓					✓		✓
Introducing job rotation among staff members	✓					✓		✓
Conducting training and development programmes		✓	✓					
Enabling job sharing among other workers			✓			✓		
Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff	✓							✓
Improve communication with employees	✓				✓			
Safeguard from employee's grievances			✓					
Offering employee assistance programmes			✓					
Adapt emerging technologies			✓					
Provide mode of transportation to employees				✓				
Career breaks for raising children						✓		
Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress							✓	
Enabling working from home			✓					
A - (Lakshmi, Ramachandran & Boohene, 2012), B – (Wilkerson, 2010), C – (Sonawane,2019), D - (Wheatley, 2012), E - (Pitt-Catsouphes, James, McNamara & Cahill, 2015), F – (Nickson, Warhurst, Lockyer & Dutton, 2004), G – (Ghiselli, La Lopa, & Bai, 2001), H - (Panojan, Perera, & Dilakshan, 2019)								

With above summary of Table 2.3, job sharing allows at least two people trained to perform a job, enabling each employee to have a time off without losing the productivity. Also, by offering an expert who can personally address healthcare issues, which enables employees to stay focused on their job. Moreover, counselling (ranked first for a satisfied life) and general and childcare allowances are the

solutions to overcome income related issues (Panojan, Perera, & Dilakshan, 2019). On the other hand, employees' grievance must too shall be handled carefully so that they can mingle up in the working culture of the organization as only a satisfied employee is capable of satisfying the client and client's satisfaction is the priority of any organization, including construction organizations.

2.9 Construction Industry

According to Mariani (2016), construction industry is a competitive industry and is viewed as a high-risk industry. Construction industry being a competitive industry with a history of long working hours have associated with many problems with regard to the workers work-life balance (Sui Pheng and Chua, 2018). Zhang, Mao, and Simaan (2009) elaborated the importance of knowledge within the construction industry due to the project-based nature, which contributes to a remarkable fragmentation. Also, investigations into the construction industry indicate that competitive tendering (MacKenzie, 2008) and tight project programming (Lingard, Francis, & Turner, 2010b), have led to long working hours, which has impacted on work-life balance policies. Moreover, Lingard, Francis, and Turner (2010a) have stated that hours worked, supervisor support, and work flexibility have impacted workers' level of conflict. Construction projects of any country are generally spread throughout the geographical area of the country and thus have to function with temporary arrangements and the professionals involved in the projects will be required to travel long distances and/or stay away from their homes (Lingard, Francis, & Turner, 2012).

2.9.1 Government and private sector industry

Nowadays, government (public) and private organizations tend to operate as a fairly narrow range of industries. The human services are the only area of the labour market where employees can plausibly choose between employments in public, private, or non-profit organizations (Powell & Cortis, 2017). However, comparisons of employment arrangements and conditions across the public, for-profit, and not-for-profit sectors have tended to focus on pay, with only a few studies exploring

whether and how work-time dynamics, including employee control over work-time, varies across the sectors (McNamara, Brown, & Pitt-Catsoupes, 2012).

Parry, Kelliher, Mills, & Tyson (2005) compared private and public sector employment in the United Kingdom (UK) and observed that the private sector has offered a wider range of flexible work arrangements. Further the authors have mentioned flexi-time, part-time work, job sharing, and working from home were used to attract and retain workers from the organizations. Compared with other organisations, public sector organisations can be expected to provide more welfare facilities to their employees, owing to their public visibility and the likelihood of being evaluated against government standards (Lambert, Alysa, Dulk, & Groeneveld, 2013). McNamara et al., (2012) explored whether motivations for employers to offer flexible work arrangements differed across public, private, and non-profit organizations and found that financial considerations, such as; the cost of implementing flexible work arrangements and the returns that could be expected for the organization, were more important in the decision-making of private sector employers, compared with public or non-profit employers.

In addition, cross-sectoral comparisons of employment outcomes have not consistently accounted for the narrow range of industries in which private and public organizations are concentrated, nor for relevant individual, organizational, and industry factors (Gregory & Milner, 2009). Golden and Wiens-Tuers (2006) have suggest that profit-focused employers are more likely to require their employees to work longer hours than their preference. Further, Dex and Bond (2005) have found that private sector employees have a systematic work-life balance than public sector employees. Therefore, public sector investment should have a substantial influence on the private sector (Thomas, Ryan, & Wong, 2011).

Although employees cost of living are increasing day by day, workplace safety is a top priority among employers of all types including construction industry. Even though health and safety programmes can help to reduce construction liabilities, there are some lesser known concerns that can have vicious consequences, such as; frustration and fatigue which commonly result in accidents and needed to be

recognized immediately. Many organizations in contrast to construction industry have changed their working patterns to implement flexible working hours in order to avoid the personal and organizational issues they have come across. Employees in the construction industry need to work longer working hours than the workers in other industries. As a result of that it has led a negative impact for both the employers and employees in the construction industry affecting their mentality, health and work life balance. Therefore, by adopting flexible working hours to their working life will aid the workers in the construction industry to get balance both their work and family life without living in a stressful work life.

2.9.2 Flexi working hours concept of construction organizations

Flexibility in the timing (flex time) is one of the characteristics that are repeatedly seen as a way to achieve balance in work and family life in this challenging construction environment (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Environment in the construction industry generally becomes more complex and competitive with the development of the national economy of country and complexity and the competitiveness mostly depend on globalization, internalization of construction market, deregulation and technology (Galea, Houkes, and De Rijk, 2014).

Studies indicate that flexibility in the timing of work have generally been well received by workers and have contributed to organizational goals (Hill et al., 2001). The level of a country's construction industry productivity and the activity in the sector has been studied from a macro-economic perspective for many years (Ruddock & Lopes, 2006). Construction industry is therefore viewed as a set of autonomous projects (Fulford, 2018). Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu (2007) states Sri Lanka offers a liberal and dynamic investment environment. Akuratiyagamage and Opatha (2004) have found, hours of work caused a high level of grievance to managers and there were slight variations in the level of grievance suffered by gender.

2.9.3. Applicability of flexi working hours concept to government sector construction organizations

The construction industry is well known for a long-hours working culture. Private companies have so far been involved in facilities development, including designing, financing, construction, ownership, and/ or operation of a government sector utility or service (Li, Akintoye, Edwards, & Hardcastle, 2003). Traditionally, government sector organizations have been understood as a source of quality jobs and as model employers of women, especially in health, education, and social care (Rubery, 2013). Government sector organizations can be expected to provide more support for employees to adapt flexible work arrangements, due to their visibility and likelihood of being evaluated against government standards (Lambert, Alysa, Dulk, & Groeneveld, 2013).

However, the adaptability of flexible working hours concept in the construction industry has not been properly researched. The government being the policy maker of the construction industry, government regulations will positively influence the decisions on construction activities (Olanrewaju and Abdul-Aziz, 2014; Lim, 2014; Taofeeq, 2019; Thomas, Ryan, & Wong, 2011). Using appropriate policies, the government can play a crucial role in transforming the construction industry by forming the basis for developing suitable strategies to diffuse desirable characteristics with the private sector (Taofeeq, 2019).

The government can concentrate on its core competencies, and does not need to rely on its own resources for unfamiliar projects (Cumming, 2007). With the participation of the private sector; government assets, data and intellectual property can also be utilized more productively, which leads to substantial improvement in the quality of government facilities and services (Edkins & Smyth, 2006). On the other hand, with the proper use of the private sector's skills, experience, technology and innovation, government services shall be delivered more satisfactorily. Also, government and private sectors can share risks at different stages (Shen, Platten & Deng, 2006), as the private sector brings commercial disciplines into government

projects, the risk of cost overruns and project delays can be drastically reduced (Ho, 2006).

With regard to Sri Lankan context, staff of the private sector companies has the option of starting work at a later hour than the usual 8.30 a.m. and compensating for it at the end of the day. However, most of the government organizations in Sri Lanka insist that employees shall be present during the core hours of work which commence at around 9.30 a.m. Hence, this study aimed to explore the adaptability of the flexi-hour concept in government construction consultancy organisations by identifying the enablers, barriers, and suitable strategies to implement flexi working hour concept in the government construction organisations.

2.9.4 Special characteristics of government construction consultancy organizations

The Sri Lankan construction industry, although still behind in terms of technological innovations, could be seen similar to other construction industries such as those in UK in terms of project managerial methods and approaches (Senaratne & Ruwanpura, 2016).

Since 2010, minimum standards have included the right to request flexible work for parents, carers, employees with a disability, and older employees, although requests can be refused by employers on reasonable business grounds (Cooper & Baird, 2015). Powell and Cortis (2017) states, while this is a national standard that sets a safety net for all employees, the distribution of flexible work arrangements may be uneven among and within organizations and industries, depending on bargaining outcomes and differences in organizational and managerial cultures.

Lambert et al. (2013) found that in the European government sector administration organizations (ministries, federal bodies and local authorities) were more likely to offer flexible work arrangements than welfare government organizations (i.e., those in health, social work, education). Despite crucial conceptual differences between

access to and utilization of flexible benefits, conflation of these concepts is one of the most inescapable problems in the literature on flexibility (Kossek & Michel, 2010).

2.10 Adaption of Flexi Working Hours concept to the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations

Certain government construction consultancy organizations are likely to adapt policies and programmes designed to provide employees with flexible work options rather than working from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. in weekdays. As the government regulates the construction industry (Lim, 2014), previous studies have pointed out number of factors underlying the decision of organizations to provide these options to their employees, including characteristics of managers and top decision makers such as age, workforce characteristics, the percentage of employees in professional occupations, and organizational characteristics such as the number of employees (Mcnamara, Catsouphe, Brown, & Matz-Costa, 2012).

In extreme cases, only a minority or none of the workers will have access to the policies that an organization officially provides (Eaton, 2003). Hence, even when a policy is ostensibly available on the organizational level, individual workers may not have access to adapt the policies (Mcnamara et al., 2012). Panojan, Perera, and Dilakshan (2019) found strategies that can be employed to implement FWH successfully. For instance, job sharing allows employees to have a time off without losing productivity (Pitt-Catsouphe et al. 2015). Also, when employee grievances are handled, the employees get motivated to stay focused on their jobs (Sonawane, 2019; Panojan, Perera, & Dilakshan, 2019). Even though enablers of, barriers to, and strategies for the successful implementation of flexi working hours in sectors such as information technology, apparel, manufacturing, etc., have been extensively discussed in the literature, only few such studies have been done in relation to the construction sector (Bamgbade et al 2017; Setiyani, et al. 2019; Oyewobi, et al. 2019).

However, no studies had focused on the adaptability of flexi-hours in construction organisations, especially in government construction organisations. The existing

literature gap and the industry need have to be filled to enhance the work quality in government construction organisations by adopting the flexi-hour concept.

Accordingly, the following section illustrates the literature frame work developed for the adaption of flexi working hours concept to the government construction consultancy organizations.

2.11 Literature Frame for the Study

The literature frame for this study is based on the findings of theoretical background and it provides a direction to the research design and data analysis (Arambewela & Zuhair, 2003). The theoretical framework developed to this research is shown in figure 2.1.

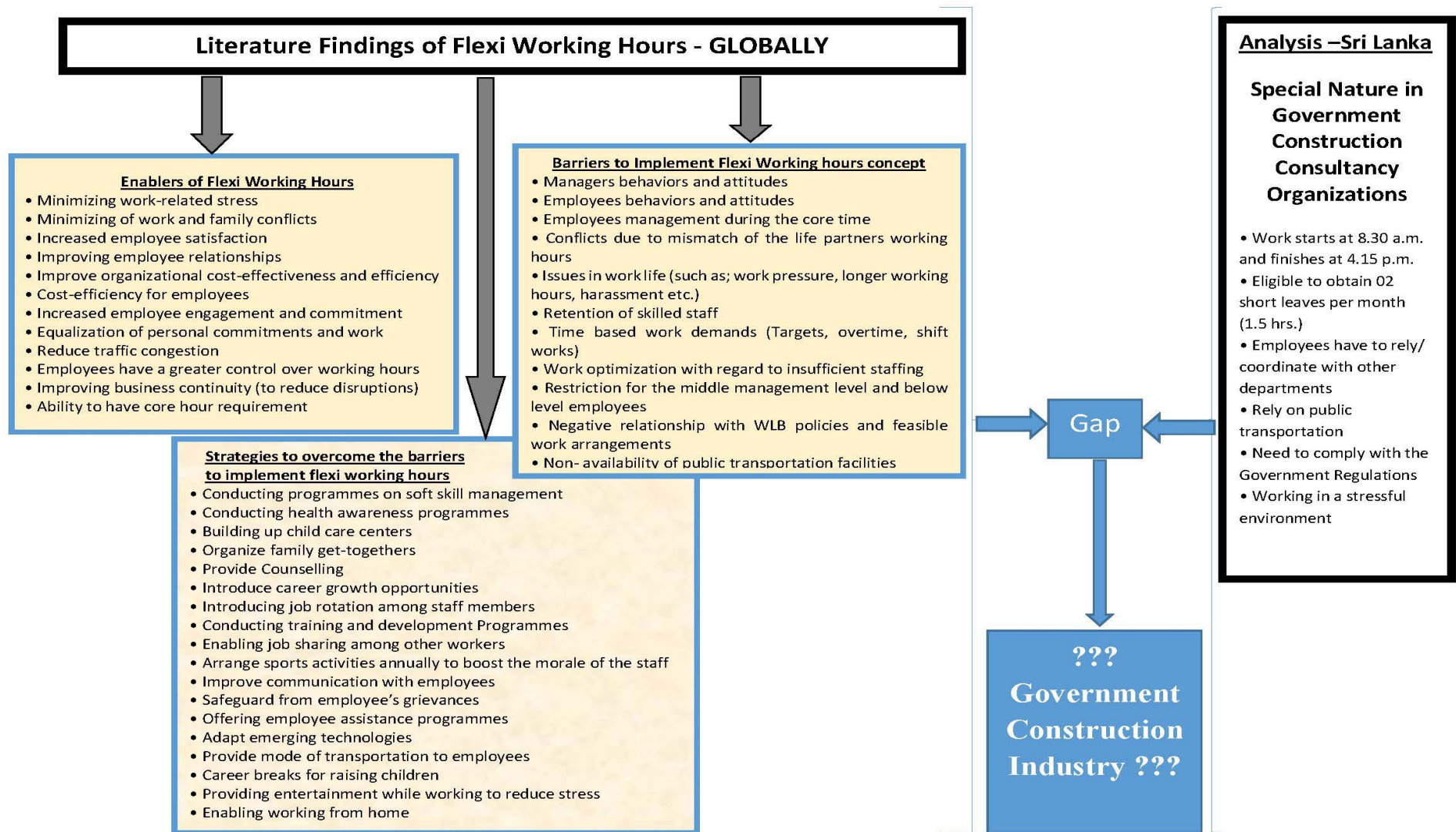


Figure 2.1: Literature Frame work

As per the figure 2.1, it indicates four main sections with regard to adaptability of flexi hours concept in the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka namely; special nature in government construction consultancy organizations, enablers of flexi working hours, barriers to implement flexi working hours concept and the strategies to overcome the barriers to implement flexi working hours.

2.12 Summary

It is concluded that when flexible working hours are supported by the management and fit for the work culture, it is highly appreciated by both employee and employer for personal and work-related reasons. Past research in the context with regard to IT sector industry in Sri Lanka provides evidence that work schedule flexibility is offered to software developers as a standard employee benefit (Wickramasinghe and Jayabandu, 2007). Accordingly, this chapter described the concept of adaptability of flexi hours in the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER 03

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the steps undertaken to develop the research in terms of the research objectives. Further this chapter elaborates the process of achieving the aim and objectives for the established research problem and gap using a methodological framework. Research methodology is a systematic way to resolve problems and to study the method of executing the research (Fellows & Liu, 2003). It describes the specific methods applied to carry out the research and includes research design, research approach, data collection methods, data analysis, research process and summary of the methodology.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a logical way of integrating various components of research to address the problems in an effective way (Punch, 2005). Necessary information for this study can be identified through the research design (Mitchell & Jolley, 2012). Further, Bechhofer and Paterson (2000) have mentioned that, the research design gives a clear profile on how the conclusions are drawn from the data in a logical and coherent way. Luis (2012) has stated that, research concept can be developed in the best possible way if the research design is clear, appropriate, conceived and based on logical concepts. Therefore, it is important to develop the research design to increase the validity and viability of the outcome of the research. The research design of this research has been discussed under the headings of research approach and research techniques.

3.3 Research Approach

Thurairajah, Haigh and Amaratunga (2006) describe research approach as a procedure of organizing research activities and integrating data collection in order to achieve the objectives and aims.

3.3.1 Types of research approaches

Research approach mainly categorized as under three main approaches namely: quantitative, qualitative and finally a combination of the both called mixed (Gunnell, 2016). Table 3.1 describes the available research approaches.

Table 3.1: Available research approaches

Quantitative Methods	→ Mixed Methods ←	Qualitative Methods
Pre- determined	Both pre – determined and emerging methods	Emerging Methods
Instrument-based questions	Both open- and closed-ended questions	Open- ended questions
Performance, attitudes, observational and census data	Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities	Interview, observation, document and audio-visual data
Statistical analyses	Statistical and text analyses	Text and image analyses
Statistical interpretation	Across databases interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation

Source –Grover (2015)

Quantitative approach

Quantitative approach is a statistical approach to the research design (Williams, 2007) which concerns about the numerical data, rather than divergent reasoning (Sibanda, 2009).

Qualitative approach

Qualitative research approach can be regarded as expletory research technique which allows to understand the underlying the subjective data such as opinions and behaviour (Mauch & Park, 2003). This approach is more concerned about the descriptive data where respondents more actively engaged on discussion process (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2009).

Mixed approach

This can be regarded as a type of research approach where there are combinations of elements in quantitative approach as well as qualitative approach (Caruth, 2013). However, mixed approach comprises both philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2013).

3.3.2 Selected research approach for this study

This research intends to identify the adaptability of flexi working hours concept to the Sri Lankan government construction consultancy organizations to enhance the satisfaction factor of both the employee and the employer following a qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative approach enable researcher to highly involve in the scenario to collect data. Harrison, Lin, Carrol, and Carley (2007) describe that qualitative research is best suited in developing theoretical goals. Qualitative research approach mainly focusses on exploring and clarifying the situations and experience of the people (Kumar, 2011). As per MacDonald and Headlam (2011), qualitative approach is a subjective approach where you rely on individual's interpretation on the study event. Since flexi working hours concept is not implementing currently with regard to construction industry in Sri Lanka, it is unable to collect data from an enormous sample. As a result of that it is unable to carry out a quantitative data.

Once the implementation started, then it is possible to approach the sample using quantitative data. Accordingly, this research depends on a subjective matter. Therefore, the selected research approach for this study is following the qualitative approach.

3.4 Data Collection Method

This study with a qualitative approach is to determine whether the Sri Lankan government organizations can adapt the flexi working hours concept, how it can be done with the identified enablers and barriers and how the identified barriers should be solved.

Once the most suitable approach is selected, then the appropriate research techniques have to be determined. Research techniques basically identified as data collection techniques and data analysing techniques (Amarathunga, Heigh, & Thurairajah, 2007). As per Patton (2005), the techniques that can be identified as data collection techniques are in-depth interviews, direct observations and written documents. However, direct observations are not practicable as this study is not implementing currently in the government organizations in Sri Lanka except in year 2017 for a period of six month time in Battaramulla area of the Colombo district. Therefore, few observations have been carried out based on the pilot project which was took place in Battaramulla area for nearly 06 months in year 2017.

Collected information through literature review were applied by carrying out semi-structured interviews in two phases for the top and middle management levels. The first phase was carried out to validate the gathered data from literature to develop the interview guideline for phase II by contextualizing to Sri Lanka. Accordingly, first phase was carried out from nine different professionals who are working in organizations that are not related to construction industry and five people from the pilot project in Battaramulla area from those who have implemented this concept for a period of six months. The second phase of semi-structured interviews were carried out for 23 professionals, who are practicing in the government construction consultancy industry after reviewing the phase I results.

Cohen & Crabtree (2006) have emphasized, most of the semi-structured interviews are open-ended questions which enables the researcher to understand and explore new ways to see the research topic. According to Yin (2009) generally documentary act as a method to cross validate information gathered from interview and observation that sometimes, what people said different from what people do. Hence, documentation review is used to validate the data gathered from semi-structured interviews and used to get access to information that would be difficult to get in any other way, such as people or cases who might not be willing to talk in a formal research interview or might be difficult to track down.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the next step in research methodology and the analysis method depends on the selected research approach; quantitative or qualitative. Accordingly, the gathered data were analysed based on manual content analysis such as; job satisfaction, job's suitability to flexibility, attitude towards flexible hours, organizational commitment, job's negative effect and loyalty to the job, impact of traffic congestions, and employee performance to identify the most suitable strategies to adapt flexi working hours concept in the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka.

Content analysis is a methodology that can be used for academic disciplines as a means to extract quantitative measures from textual information (Mir, Lu, Cantor, & Hofer, 2018). According to Kumar (2011), qualitative data analysis starts with coding data and identifying themes in data to ease the work. Accordingly, a manual content analysis was conducted to encode the collected data from the interviews.

3.6 Research Process

A proper research process is essential to minimize the errors which can be occurred throughout the research. The research process for the topic of “Adaptability of flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka” is illustrated in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 shows how/ at which levels, the objectives are achieved throughout the research and the selected approach, method and techniques used to collect and analyse data.

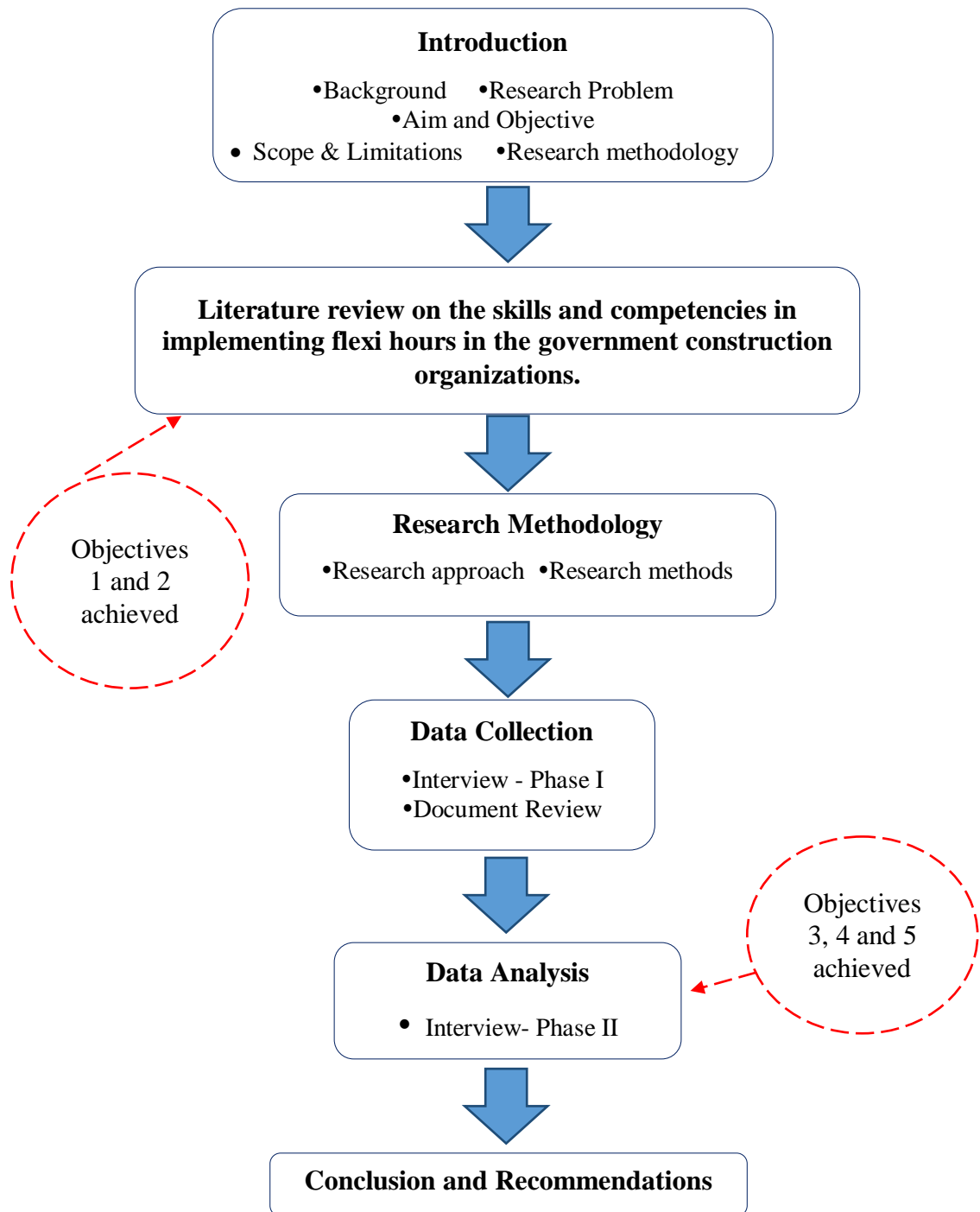


Figure 3.1: Research Process

As shown in figure 3.1, the research was conducted with identification of the research problem and research objectives and aim. A comprehensive literature review was carried out by referring journals, articles, books, and web pages. Research data collection was carried out in two phases with semi-structured interviews.

3.7 Summary

This chapter described the research process and the methods executed to gather data in deeply such as; research design, research approach, research methods and analysis techniques. Further, it explained the steps in the process of the study in order to achieve the established objectives in chapter 01. The Qualitative approach was used in order to achieve the objectives as described in above sections. Data was collected from the primary and secondary sources through the findings of literature review followed by interviews and questionnaire survey. The interview was used to validate the findings of literature review and to identify the suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka effectively. Moreover, the aim and the objectives of this study were accomplished through the processes described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 04

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Previous chapter described the data collection methods and analysing techniques. This chapter broadly describes the analysis of research findings. Data collection was carried out in two phases to validate the gathered data from literature and to collect additional information related to last four objectives which was described in chapter 01. Based on the literature findings presented in chapter 02, a semi-structured interview guideline was developed for both phase I (Appendix A) & phase II (Appendix B) with the aim of addressing the third, fourth & fifth objectives of this research study. The outcome of this chapter is to identify the suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept to the government construction organizations (which is the fifth objective of the research).

4.2 Findings and Analysis of Semi-Structured Interviews at Phase I

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with fourteen (14) professionals who are practicing/ have practiced flexi hours concept in Sri Lanka. The interviews were conducted through face to face with the interviewees averagely 60-75 minutes. The findings of semi-structured interviews were analysed by using manual content analysis technique, which was described under section 3.5 of chapter 03.

4.2.1 Objectives of interview phase I

The main objective of phase I interviews was to achieve the first part of the research objective three, four and five while discussing their applicability to government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka, and to identify the gaps of the interview guideline developed through literature findings. Further, these interviews were useful to validate the findings from literature synthesis and as well as the collected information were used to develop the interview guideline for the phase II considering Sri Lankan context which was the next stage of the study.

4.2.2 Respondents details of the semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out as described earlier with fourteen (14) professionals who have more than 05 years of working experience in the relevant industry. The attention was paid to the professionals those who are actively engaged/ was engaged with flexi working hours concept. The respondents were directed to give their opinions and comments considering the nature of using flexi working hours for their life. The respondents' profile who contributed in empowering this research from their wholesome industrial experience and opinions are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Details of interviewees of phase I

Respondent's Code	Designation	Working Experience (in years)	Organization	Type of Organization	Number of months/years worked under flexi hrs.	Nature of Flexi hours used by the Respondent
A	Director	22	Government	*Construction	06 months	Subjected to government circular.
B	Director	17	Government	*Construction	06 months	Subjected to government circular.
C	Deputy Project Director	28	Government	*Construction	03 months	Subjected to government circular.
D	Senior Manager	24	Private	IT	23 years	Subjected to +/- 01hr tolerance from starting/finishing time
E	Senior Manager	15	Private	Consumer	01 year	Partially
F	Manager	23	Private	IT	10 years	Subjected to +/- 01hr tolerance from starting/finishing time
G	Business Systems Analyst	16	Private	IT	09 years	Subjected to +/- 01hr tolerance from starting/finishing time
H	Deputy Manager	15	Private	Banking	01 year	Organization has allocated slots of working hours
I	Civil Engineer	13	Government	*Construction	06 months	Subjected to government circular.
J	Staff Assistant	23	Government	*Construction	06 months	Subjected to government circular.
K	Senior Banking Associate	09	Private	Banking	06 months	Organization has allocated slots of working hours
L	Senior Banking Associate	14	Private	Banking	1.5 years	Organization has allocated slots of working hours
M	Accountant	15	Private	Apparel	02 years	Subjected to +/- 01hr tolerance from starting/finishing time
N	Software Engineer	15	Private	IT	10 years	Depends, based on client/project requirements.

* Construction sector professionals are from the pilot project conducted in Battaramulla area of Colombo district

The letters from A to N in the first column of the Table 4.1 are used to represent the interviewees. As per the Table 4.1, one (01) interviewee having more than 25 years of hands on working experience, four (04) respondents having more than 21 years of experience, two (02) interviewees having more than 16 years of working experience, one (01) interviewee having more than 05 years of experience and the rest six (06) interviewees having more than 11 years of experience in their perspective professional fields. Five of them are from the pilot project in Battaramulla area and are related to the construction industry those who have implemented this concept for a period of six (06) months as described in chapter 03.

The interviewees having industrial exposure were selected from the government, semi government and private organizations having great experience in expediting flexi hours to their work life. New implication factors were highlighted in respect of executing flexi hours concept in Sri Lanka in apart to the recognized factors from literature review.

4.3 Identified Factors from Phase I

As per the responses of the interviewees, the findings of the literature review in adaptability of flexi hours concept were similar to the Sri Lankan government construction industry.

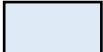
4.3.1 Enablers to flexi working hours

The summary of responses for the identified enablers through literature review and the newly identified enablers to implement flexi working hours are presented in the Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Enablers to flexi working hours

	Enabler	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
E01	Equalization of personal commitments and work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E02	Minimizing work-related stress	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E03	Minimizing conflicts between work and family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E04	Increased employee satisfaction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E05	Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E06	Ability to have core hour requirement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E07	Cost efficiency for employees	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E08	Improving employee relationships	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E09	Increased employee engagement and commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
E10	Ability to manage, plan and control a balanced roster of employees in sudden peak situation (election days, new year celebration days, Christmas holidays, etc.,)					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
E11	Reducing environmental impact from emissions and sustainable behaviours					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
E12	Reduce traffic congestion	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓

LF = Literature Findings

 = Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

	Enabler	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
E13	Employees have a greater control over working hours	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
E14	Having competition to provide best customer service in aid of flexi working hours					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
E15	Meeting globally recognized standards as required by the customers to serve the customer's needs at any time					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
E16	Improve organizational cost-effectiveness	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E17	Reducing travelling time and other expenses with the use of modern technology					✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
E18	Enabling to attract and retain a top-quality workforce with flexible work arrangements					✓		✓	✓							
E19	Adapting new technologies to support remote and hybrid meetings					✓		✓	✓							

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

According to the summary given in the Table 4.2, the agreed statements were marked as “✓” and disagreed statements were marked as “x”. In apart to the above mentioned two signs few respondents convey their opinions as neutral which was marked in the summary table as “-” symbol. The enablers identified by the interviewees in apart from literature review are presented in bold letters.

Provided that, all the respondents said that flexible working hours have enabled them to combine professional life with personal life. Their intention about flexible working hours are constructed on practical reasoning such as to avoid traffic jams while going to work or coming back from work. Also, the respondents mentioned that their mentality is calm and quiet when driving to work by themselves as no need to rush to their workplaces when adapting flexi working hours.

As per the views of the respondents, adapting flexible working hours have motivated the employees towards work due to high satisfaction factor involved. As a result of that employees are willing to work committedly as there is no pressure from the supervisor nor from other colleagues. Also respondents highlighted that due to the team spirit among the workers, handing over of works have become easier with the roster schedule. Moreover it has enabled to focus on the job when at workplace. On the other hand, respondents stated that, there is an advantage to involve with higher education after office hours which has lead towards their career progression.

All the respondents agreed on the statement of “Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)”. That is because all the government institutions shall work in accordance to a common plan to achieve the desired objectives. On the other hand, it will lead to increase the motivation factor among the workers by building up team spirit. As a result of that handing over of works will become easier in order to keep the functional continuity of the assigned works to deliver a task at the required quality successfully.

As shown in the Table 4.2, comparable number of respondents from the pilot project were not in favour of “improving employee relationships” as an enabler to implement flexi working hours concept, as there wasn’t anyone for job sharing. In

other words, respondents mentioned that if the responsible officer for a particular task leaves the office after fulfilling his/her office hours, there won't be anyone to carry out the specified task. And when it comes to the cost effectiveness of adapting flexi working hours concept due to longer working hours of stay than the normal working hours; the cost incurred for the utility charges are high due to high consumption. Therefore, all the employers (representing their organization) disagreed with that statement.

Hence, the pilot project was implemented only in few organizations in Battaramulla area all the respondents disagreed with the "Reduce traffic congestion" during flexi working hours as an enabler. That is mainly because they had to face so many difficulties with the traffic jam in Colombo city limits. On the contrary, all the other respondents agreed to this fact as it saves both time and money (as no need to travel during peak time, because most of the people have left to work during flexi employees arrival time & cost saving due to less vehicle accident damages).

As mentioned earlier, there has been a circular issued by the government for a period of six (06) months as an initiative of planning future measures to solve the heavy traffic congestion in Colombo as the pilot project to implement flexible working hours in government offices in Battaramulla area. Therefore, the respondents from the pilot project did not agree to the statement of "Employees have a greater control over working hours". The other respondents stated that it is subjected to the employee's agreement between their supervisors as they should be available when required due to team work with overseas relationship. Few respondents said that it is not fully controllable (partially), as when it comes to participation for meetings, all the responsible officers shall be present at the meetings.

Ultimately when it comes to Sri Lankan context, there is no labour law in Sri Lanka that addresses the concept of flexi working time. Therefore, government organizations are reluctant to adapt flexible working hours concept to their organizations. Also, there are no laws to regulate part-time work or seasonal work. Seasonal work is usually available in the informal economy which is not regulated by

Labour Law. Part-time work on the other hand is sometimes allowed by the private sector on strict contract basis, mainly linked to deliverables.

Since the concept of flexitime is more ad hoc to the construction industry and not a recognized method of work, the issue of flexi time and work/ life balance is not a labour issue at the moment. As mentioned above, some institutions hire the services of technical professionals on contract basis, payment is based on deliverables, the achievement of work/ life balance is for the individual, rather than the institution.

As per the summary of the responses given by the interviewed sample, several enablers were highlighted proving the applicability of literature findings and the feasibility of flexi working hours concept to the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka. The newly identified enablers from the selected sample of respondents are discussed in following paragraphs.

Most of the respondents mentioned about the environmental pollution which leads to global warming with respect to carbon footprint. “Reducing environmental impact from emissions and sustainable behaviours” as motor vehicles comes to the road at different times as sound and air pollution is minimized and balanced throughout 24 hours. Therefore, it aids the carbon footprint and on the other hand it enables to implement flexi working hours concept. All of the IT professionals highlighted the fact of freedom to work in an organization like where the working hours are flexible and therefore, they can work even from home as they vend with international clients.

Due to the extended working hours the demand is spread throughout the day, without any restrictions whether it is peak hours or off-peak hours. Therefore, it aids to provide best customer service in a competitive manner. Most of the IT professionals stated that “Providing globally recognized standard service will ease the customer’s expectations as desired by them”. Accordingly, this fact was pointed out as an enabler (meeting globally recognized standards as required by the customers to serve the customer’s needs at any time) from those who are currently implementing flexi hours.

New technologies should be used to support remote and hybrid meetings with remote collaboration the default option rather than travel and conducting physical meetings, except where it will add significant value. Few respondents among IT professionals recognized “adapting new technologies to support remote and hybrid meetings” as an enabler and gave the opinions on that as described above.

All the respondents who have been implementing this for more than a year agreed to the fact of “reducing travelling time and other expenses with the use of modern technology” as an enabler which would empower representatives to remain more closely connected to their organizations. In addition, they mentioned that, they can schedule the meetings considering the foreign working hours without restricting to flexi working hours. When employees are able to select their working patterns, there is a positive impact on job satisfaction. On the other hand it can be seen as a gain in employee rights. Moreover, respondents highlighted that designing a flexitime system requires better collaboration between employer and trade unions to accomplish employee administration successfully.

4.3.2 Barriers for implementation of flexi working hours

The summary of responses for the identified barriers through literature review and the newly recognized barriers through interviews to implement flexi working hours are presented in the Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Barriers for implementation of flexi working hours

	Barrier	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
B01	Non- availability of public transportation facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B02	Misuse of permitted benefits		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
B03	Employee management during the core time	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	-	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
B04	Health issues due to abnormal working hours					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
B05	Limited access to advanced technologies (network, speed), but unable to perform a task completely					✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
B06	Increased expenses compared to standard working hours such as; transport cost, utility charges (water, electricity, security services)		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
B07	Managers behaviours and attitudes	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
B08	Troubles due to undefined meetings and discussions		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓				
B09	Mismatch with government plan of traffic monitoring		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓				
B10	Mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules		✓	✓	✓						✓	✓				
B11	Conflicts due to mismatch with life partner’s working hours	✓	×	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	-	✓	✓	×
B12	Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

	Barrier	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
B13	Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
B14	Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
B15	Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
B16	Retention of skilled staff	✓	-	-	×	×	×	×	×	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	×
B17	Employees behaviours and attitudes	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×
B18	Unavailability of support service providers	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×
B19	Difficult to engage with children school work					✓		✓	✓							✓
B20	Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×
B21	Mismatch with common office transport arrangements when adapting flexi hours										✓	✓				

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

As shown above table 4.3, the agreed statements were marked as “✓” and disagreed statements were marked as “x”. In apart to the above two signs few respondents convey their opinions as neutral which was marked in the summary table as “-” symbol. The enablers identified by the interviewees in apart from literature review are presented in bold letters.

Interviewees from the government and banking sector highlighted that, “Managers behaviours and attitudes” as a barrier when implementing flexi hours concept as the managers behaviour becomes weird when the relevant officer is not available when required. The reason they conveyed was, they didn’t have a clear understanding regarding the flexi hours concept during the implementation stage of the pilot project (for an example; when scheduling the employee roster). Further the government sector respondents stated that their managers were not that much aware about the employees agreed working hours and therefore they were not in favour of implementing this concept at their organizations.

On the other hand, one respondent stated that “*when you come early no one is at work and when you leave early all the employees stair at you*” with respect to the statement of “Employees behaviours and attitudes”. Moreover, a respondent mentioned that, most of the supervisors doesn’t like when an employee leaves office early, after completing office hours (not supportive).

Interviewees from the government sector (representing the employer) highlighted that “Employees behaviours and attitudes” as a barrier due to the change management concepts. All the other respondents (IT sector, consumer & apparel) mentioned it as a non-barrier due to their organizational culture, such as high level of knowledge sharing among co-workers. All the respondents from the government sector highlighted making the employees available during the core time as a barrier to implement flexi working hours due to the difficulty of monitoring. As it is unable to make available employees in the core time as most of the meetings and discussions will extend after their agreed office hours. But on the other hand, all IT, banking and apparel sector interviewees mentioned it as a non-barrier to implement flexi working hours.

Most of the respondents in apart to few IT sector professionals (those who use their personal vehicles to travel without using the transport service provided by their organizations) identified “conflicts occurrence due to mismatch of the life partner’s working hours” as a barrier. Because it is difficult to come along with the life partner when she/he works in a government sector organization, as both the partners need to travel in different times where the expenses become higher.

All the government sector respondents identified “issues in work life” as a barrier to implement flexi hours due to longer stay at office than normal working hours. On the contrary, other respondents mentioned it as a non-barrier because they can work from home when required. Flexitime could likely to contribute an oversupply of worker skills as it enables more people to enter to the work force. However, a significant number of employees under flexitime system will take a second job due to the fatigue factor involved. On the other hand, an organization cannot ask from the skilled employees to work longer hours though there was a necessity. Since the workers have signed for a flexi working hour agreement he/she tries to leave the office according to the agreed terms. Therefore, banking, consumer and apparel sector respondents mentioned “retention of skilled staff” as a barrier to implement flexi working hours for their organizations. But the IT sector professionals stated that though they are binding upon a flexi hour agreement, they can discuss with the top management and get changed the working hours as he/she needs. The government sector employees were neutral about this statement.

All the government sector workers identified “time based work demands” as a barrier to implement flexi working hours as pre-defined meetings and gatherings will cause for the real usage of flexi hours (e.g., meetings will drag or will have to come early on the next day if there was a meeting though the departure time is late). On the other hand if the workers stay longer hours for a board meeting, the organization has to pay an allowance for the work and provide a mode of transportation to them. On the contrary, all the other workers didn’t mention it as a barrier because they can work from home in order to cover their KPI (Key Performance Indicators) targets.

Only the government sector workers mentioned “work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing” as a barrier. That is because not everyone is available when there is anything to get clarified. The respondents from the pilot project mentioned “restriction for the middle management level and below level employees” as a barrier because only the minor staff gets the best outcome of it (by performing overtime hours) and it is unable to implement to the top management and middle management based on their job description. Due to lack of a proper implementation plan the maximum usage of flexi hours (e.g., once the meetings start at 2.00 p.m. it won’t end up at 3.00 p.m., therefore unable to leave from office) would not be able to achieve. Further they mentioned that if it was a part of the company policies there won’t be any restriction for all the employees to implement.

Most of the respondents disagreed to the “Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements” as a barrier as it is always positive with respect to WLB policies. Because it is not imposed by the employer. They are mutually agreed to work on extended working hours. As though all the respondents agreed to the statement of “Non- availability of public transportation facilities” as a barrier with regard to flexi working hours due to; always need to look up for a mode of transportation and it will incur additional cost to provide private transportation from the organization on behalf of the employees.

All the IT professionals and other professionals (in apart to government sector workers from the pilot project) mentioned “unavailability of support service providers.” as a non- barrier. But the government sector respondents mentioned the above fact as a barrier because the service providers are unable to be available always (with in the day) as different organizations have different policies. Therefore, there is a mismatch between the working hours between the service providers and the employees. In apart to the literature findings newly identified barriers from the selected sample of respondents were discussed under following paragraphs.

Most of the IT professionals who work longer hours than normal working hours mentioned the difficulty of engaging with children's school work. Few respondents from the pilot project stated that there is a mismatch with common office transport arrangements, as the working hours differs from one organization to another and it was unable to catch up the office transportation as it is functioning on usual working hours.

The pilot project was implemented only for a period of 06-month. Therefore, the identified barriers from 06 months period could not be implemented as process solutions after the trial period (process problems). Therefore, they had to face many troubles when participating to undefined meetings and discussions. All the respondents from the pilot project stated that it is unable to work individually as government servants rely on each other's work section. Since people tend to have various working hour schedules, the clashing of timings could cause disagreements of communication and availability issues.

Respondents from the pilot project highlighted the fact of non-availability of responsible officer at the required time as a barrier, because they had to face so many difficulties in group works with the involvement of number of people who doesn't have expertise knowledge related to the subject matter. All the interviewees from the pilot project stated that they had to face for traffic jams due to not having dedicated bus lanes and comfort public transportation. Further, they highlighted the fact of moving heavy vehicles during peak hours. Though there were elevated highway piers on the main road, the required outcome could not be achieved as planned. Traffic is same as off-peak hours (Dematagoda, Dehiwala, Nugegoda and Rajagiriya) due to more traffic lights in Colombo area. All the other respondents apart from the pilot project mentioned that they had to claim considerable additional medical expenses for the doctor channelling fees and drugs due to their health issues (when working in abnormal working hours).

All the respondents agreed to the fact of misuse of the benefits by the workers as a barrier, as all of them have seen and faced how others misuse the permitted benefits. Further, all the respondents who are currently practicing flexi working hours

conveyed the difficulty they face once they work from home. Because, most of the companies does have information access policies and poor domestic internet and intranet connections. Furthermore respondents stated that due to longer working hours of stay of the employees, organizations had to bear the costs of high utility charges than the normal working hours utility charges.

4.3.3 Strategies to overcome the barriers to implement flexi hours

The summary of responses for the identified strategies through literature review and the newly identified strategies to implement flexi working hours are presented in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Strategies to overcome the barriers to implement flexi hours

	Strategies	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
S01	Conducting programmes on soft skill management (e.g., stress management, conflict management, leadership skills, workshops, etc.,)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S02	Building up child care centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S03	Introduce career growth opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S04	Introducing job rotation among staff members	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S05	Conducting training and development programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S06	Enabling job sharing among other workers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S07	Improve communication with employees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S08	Safeguard from employee's grievances	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S09	Offering employee assistance programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S10	Adapt emerging technologies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S11	Provide mode of transportation to employees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S12	Career breaks for raising children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S13	Enabling working from home	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S14	Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

LF = Literature Findings

 = Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

	Strategies	LF	Interviewee Response													
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
S15	Allowing employees to fill out time sheets which relies upon the honesty of the employees					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S16	Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S17	Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S18	Conducting health awareness programmes	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S19	Organize family get-togethers	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S20	Provide counselling	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
S21	Delegation of authority		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓					
S22	Introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane		✓	✓	✓				✓						✓	
S23	Introducing a proper remote access system (only for permitted user access)							✓	✓							✓

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase I

As per the summary given in the table 4.4, the agreed statements were marked as “✓”. The strategies identified in apart from literature review are presented in bold letters. Most of the respondents from the government sector didn't have much knowledge with regard to the implementation process as this is a new concept. Though this was implemented for a six (06) month period of time, government sector employees haven't had the opportunity of improving the identified barriers as this was suddenly stopped by a cabinet decision of Sri Lanka. On the contrary, most of the IT professionals are getting the benefits of adapting flexi working hours concept to their personal life and work life.

Based on the literature findings, all the interviewees agreed with regard to conducting programmes on soft skill management; as it enables to build up the minds and behaviours of both the managers and employees. Moreover, by conducting training programmes and workshops such as; stress management, conflict management, leadership skills workshops, etc., the employees excessively will get to know their responsibilities and their commitment to the organization. As a result of that it will solve the issues in work life too. Furthermore, by conducting proper workshops and training programmes as required, employees will gain knowledge of how to meet the deadlines/ targets. As a consequence, both the employee and the employer will gain in accomplishing the desired objective efficiently and effectively.

All the respondents from the IT sector agreed to the statement of “conducting health awareness programmes”. The reason they mentioned was that since they work longer working hours than usual working hours (to match with the clients in abroad), they are facing the difficulty of channelling doctors during the afternoon session. Therefore, they stated that by conducting health awareness programmes within the organization will enable them to work in good health. Interviewees also agreed to the fact of building up child care centres at the organization or adjacent to the organization, as they can take the child when they leave office. Especially, IT sector professionals mentioned that they currently do have this service which has been provided by their organizations, but they highlighted that it should be 24 x 7 in order to match with their working hours.

To minimize the work pressure, currently most of the organizations are organizing family get to-gethers annually by arranging annual trips, reunions, avrudu festival, christmas parties, arranging sports activities, etc.. By organizing such events, it will aid to build up the morale among the workers and to satisfy the employee and as well as the employer. Once the employee is satisfied, he/she intends to give his/her fullest support to the work which enables the work life balance too.

By introducing job rotation among staff members, flexi working hours can be implemented successfully, as it enables shift working. Respondents from the IT sector stated that they are currently implementing this strategy and they mentioned that it is very effective to both the employer and employee. Also, it aids to share the job among co-workers and as a result of that it shares the knowledge too. Based on the literature findings providing of counselling also can be identified as a strategy to overcome the identified barriers to implement flexi working hours concept as it will aid to change the minds and attitudes of both the employers and employees. Also it will aid to safeguard from employee's grievances.

Further, respondents those who are currently implementing flexi hours concept stated that, by identifying the loopholes and establishing proper communication channels with the employees have led to prevent mishandling the allowed benefits to employees. Furthermore, respondents conveyed about the mode of transportation provided by the government of Sri Lanka, as it shall be improved comfortably to provide a better staff service, such as; introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane, implementing LRT (Light Rail Transport) service for a reasonable amount, introducing taxi services and introducing cycling system (which will benefit for the physical, mental, and emotional health) with proper traffic plans and regulations. Moreover, few respondents suggested to allow employees to travel by their own mode of transportation by granting employees an additional allowance (as fuel allowance).

In spite of, respondents from the IT sector conveyed that by enabling working from home have resulted positive gains with many advantages. Also, they mentioned that in order to carry out a task at home, proper infrastructure (hardware & software) shall

be given by the employer to enable the employees to work from home. Such as provision of fastest internet connection, laptops, routers, etc.,.

4.4 Findings and Analysis of Semi-Structured Interview Phase II

Under the phase II, twenty two (22) professionals were selected to carry out semi-structured interviews, who are practicing in the government construction industry of Sri Lanka. All of the interviews were semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted through face to face with the interviewees of averagely 60-75 minutes. The findings of semi-structured interviews were analysed by using manual content analysis technique which was described under 3.5 of chapter 03.

4.4.1 Objectives of interview phase II

The main objective of the phase II interviews was to achieve the second part of the research objective three, four and five while discussing their applicability to government construction industry in Sri Lanka. Also, to identify the gaps of the interview guideline developed through literature findings and phase I interviews.

4.4.2 Respondents details of the semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out (with 22 professionals), who have more than ten (10) years of working experience in the construction industry and it increases the validity of the information collected through the literature and phase I. The attention was paid to the professionals belongs to the middle management and above level categories. The respondents were directed to give their opinions and comments considering of adapting flexi working hours for their life. The respondent's profile who contributed in empowering this research from their wholesome construction experience and opinions are presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Details of interviewees at phase II

Respondent's Code	Designation	Profession	Work Experience (in years)	Type of Organization
A	Civil Engineer	Chartered Engineer	13	Government
B	Senior Quantity Surveyor	Quantity Surveyor	28	Semi - Government
C	Deputy Project Director	Chartered Engineer	30	Semi - Government
D	Project Accountant	Chartered Accountant	20	Semi - Government
E	General Manager	Chartered Engineer	24	Semi - Government
F	Senior Engineer	Chartered Engineer	15	Semi - Government
G	Civil Engineer	Chartered Engineer	15	Semi - Government
H	Quantity Surveyor	Quantity Surveyor	18	Semi - Government
I	Civil Engineer	Chartered Engineer	25	Semi - Government
J	Civil Engineer	Chartered Engineer	19	Semi - Government
K	Staff Assistant	Staff Assistant	23	Semi - Government
L	Quantity Surveyor	Quantity Surveyor	15	Semi - Government
M	Project Manager	Chartered Engineer	22	Semi - Government
N	Project Director	Chartered Engineer	29	Semi - Government
O	Chief Quantity Surveyor	Chartered Quantity Surveyor	30	Semi - Government
P	Senior Quantity Surveyor	Chartered Quantity Surveyor	19	Semi - Government
Q	Chief Quantity Surveyor	Quantity Surveyor	21	Semi - Government
R	Architect	Chartered Architect	18	Semi - Government
S	Architect	Chartered Architect	12	Semi - Government
T	Director General	Chartered Architect	20	Semi - Government
U	Architect	Chartered Architect	33	Semi - Government
V	Architect	Chartered Architect	16	Semi - Government

The letters from A to V in the first column of the table 4.5 are used to represent the respondents of the semi-structured interviews. As per the above table, seven (07) interviewees are more than fifteen (15) years of working experience, five (05) interviewees are having more than twenty (20) years of working experience, another five (05) respondents having more than ten (10) years of working experience, one (01) interviewee has more than thirty (30) years of experience and the rest four (04) respondents from more than twenty five (25) years of working experience in the construction industry as professionals.

The interviewees having industrial exposure were selected from the government, and semi government organizations having great experience with regard to construction field. Newly identified implication factors from phase I were also incorporated to the questionnaire in apart to the recognized factors from literature review.

4.5 Identified Factors from Phase II

According to the responses of the interviewees of phase II and the findings from the phase I and literature review, proved the adaptability of flexi hours concept to the Sri Lankan government construction industry as well.

4.5.1 Enablers of using flexi hours in government construction organizations

The summary of responses for identified enablers through literature review and the newly identified enablers to implement flexi working hours concept from phase I are presented in the Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Enablers of using flexi hours in government construction organizations

	Enabler	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																				
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
E01	Minimizing work-related stress	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E02	Minimizing conflicts between work and family	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E03	Equalization of personal commitments and work	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E04	Reduce traffic congestion	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E05	Cost efficiency for employees	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E06	Ability to have core hour requirement	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E07	Competition to provide best customer service in aid of flexi working hours		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E08	Meeting globally recognized standards as required by the clients to serve the client's needs at any time		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E09	Enabling to attract and retain a top-quality workforce with flexible work arrangements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

LF = Literature Findings



= Newly identified by interviews at Phase II

	Enabler	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																				
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
E10	Adapting new technologies to support remote and hybrid meetings		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E11	Improving employee relationships	✓		×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E12	Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)	✓		×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E13	Reducing travelling time and other expenses with the use of modern technology		✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E14	Increased employee engagement and commitment	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E15	Reducing environmental impact from emissions and sustainable behaviours		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E16	Increased employee satisfaction	✓		×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E17	Improve organizational cost-effectiveness	✓		✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓


LF = Literature Findings



= Newly identified by interviews at Phase II

	Enabler	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																				
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
E18	Ability to manage, plan and control a balanced roster of employees in sudden peak situation (election days, new year celebration days, Christmas holidays etc.)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
E19	Employees have a greater control over working hours	✓		✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

LF = Literature Findings

 = *Newly identified by interviews at Phase II*

As per the summary given in the table 4.6, the agreed statements are marked as “✓” and disagreed statements are marked as “x”. In apart to the above two signs few respondents convey their opinions as neutral which is marked in the summary table as “-” symbol. The enablers found in phase II interviews (apart from literature review and phase I interviews) are presented in bold letters.

Most of all the respondents in the construction industry conveyed in favour of adapting flexi working hours concept mentioning that it will enable them to combine professional life with their personal life. On the other hand, few respondents conveyed the negative impacts that may occur when adapting flexi working hours to the construction industry. As per the summary of the responses given by the interviewed sample (as shown in table 4.6), the identified enablers through interview phase I & literature synthesis; proved the applicability of literature findings and the feasibility of flexi working hours concept to the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka. The explanations why the interviewees positively replied for the identified enablers for the adaption of flexible hours to the construction industry are described in following paragraphs.

All respondents agreed to the fact of minimizing work related stress by adapting flexi working hours as it will enable travelling leisurely to work without a traffic congestion. Also, few respondents stated that by adapting this concept it will be ideal for those who travel from long distance to work, as both the employee and the employer are benefitted by allowing them to come late and leave late as some employees may find it difficult to report to work sharp at 8.00 am or 8.30 a.m. (if travelling from a quite long distance). But employees should not make an advantage of the given control over the working hours. Therefore, all the rules and limitations should be well rested and defined prior to setting up the flexi-system to the organization.

Two respondents stated that as most of the labourers who are involved in the construction industry are from rural areas. Therefore, when there is a long weekend, usually most of the sites are declaring a shutdown period due to lack of labour force to carry out the construction works. In such a scenario supervisory staff, those who

are living in rural areas too seeking to obtain a leave when they get an opportunity. As a consequence, respondents stated that once there is an emergency case they can work from home through online system (e.g., a change in the design drawings, costing for a revised drawing, etc.). Thereby, it will avail the ability to better meet personal and family needs without conflicts between work and family.

All the respondents stated about the time saving fact that they will get by adapting flexible working hours. Because it will take only a lesser travelling time from home to office and vice versa without facing for a traffic congestion. On the other hand, it will save money (fuel expenses). Further, the respondents agreed for the statement of greater cost efficiency as the employees will commit to work as there is no work pressure from the colleagues nor from the supervisor. As a result of that a closure supervision will not be required.

Most of the respondents agreed for a core hour requirement mentioning that determining of core and flexi hours shall be done by a team in order to get identified the required hours of coverage needed. This team shall include the management and employee representatives as it may lead to internal issues within the organizations once it is established. Further, the respondents mentioned that legal and regulatory requirements must be examined to assure that working hours do not conflict with the requirements of implementing flexi working hours. Few respondents stated that employees should be available when required as they work in a team, whereas the employees can work from home at a convenient time. Also, it will aid in solving the construction issues by meeting up the relevant professional promptly.

Further, by adapting flexi working hours will aid in globally recognized quality standard which are required by the clients at any time by achieving the desired milestones promptly and by adapting new technology. As a result of adapting new technologies will reduce the communication gaps between the co-workers and the management.

With regard to the equalization of personal commitments and work, one respondent added her own opinion as follows,

“Personal commitments never can be equalled to work commitments. One should try only to have a healthy balance between the two”.

Also employees will be able to involve with higher education after office hours rather than requesting leave from office when adapting flexi hours which leads to satisfy the employees. As a result of that, respondents stated that the satisfaction fact will aid to build up team spirit among employees. Because the team work is a must when it comes to construction industry as all the construction works are connected with one another. Further, respondents stated that it is better to consult with union leaders of the organizations prior to implementing this concept.

Most of the respondents consider having young children a major responsibility which requires a substantial amount of their time and which affects both their personal and work life. The younger the children, the more time is needed for their care, therefore, the use of flexible working schedules has become a necessity to their work life. Also a married man said:

“It is important to look after the children because someone must care for the children as time flies with the children growth, therefore if we adapt flexible working hours it will become a necessity rather than a benefit, as a result of that it will motivate the employees towards work”.

As it motivates employees toward work with in the team, the team players will be able to share their knowledge while sharing their job among the co-workers. In order to better meet with the customer service, a proper record keeping system is a must to compete with the other organizations. Another respondent stated,

“Once the client is satisfied only there will be more opportunities/contracts for the supervision organizations”.

Another advantage of adapting flexi hours is the save in both time and money as the fuel expenses and other expenses (such as vehicle accident damages) will be lesser due to less traffic jams. And when it comes to staff assistants (leave clerk), there will

be lesser work load for them as employees by themselves shall maintain their own attendance records accurately. By introducing a proper recording system with the emerge technology this concept can be implemented successfully as there is no need to physically be available at the office for the meetings/ discussions. Thereby will enable to reduce the communications gaps.

All the respondents agreed to the fact of lesser global warming because the usage of energy is distributed throughout the day. Further, respondents stated that due to competitiveness of the construction industry, most of the employees tend to leave and join with a new job whenever they found a better place with better benefits. Therefore, in order prevent employees getting resigned, employer should treat their workers well. On the other hand, most of the respondents disagreed with regard to following enablers stating the mentioned facts as described in following paragraphs.

Employees are unable to adjust their working hours as they wish, because employees shall be available when required due to the involved team work when it comes to construction industry. All the employees are dependent on each other's support. Further, due to extended working hours of the employees, cost of maintenance as the utility charges might become higher than the usual working hours. Therefore, there won't be any cost saving in adapting flexi hours to the construction industry organizations.

Furthermore, some employees might not be able to reach others once they select two different time slots to work. Therefore, there is a difficulty in improving employee relations.


4.5.2 Barriers of using flexi hours in government construction organizations

The summary of responses for the identified barriers through literature review and the newly recognized barriers through interviews of phase I & phase II, to implement flexi working hours are presented in the Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 : Barriers of using flexi hours in government construction organizations

	Barrier	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																				
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
B01	Retention of skilled staff	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B02	Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B03	Non- availability of public transportation facilities	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B04	Mismatch with common office transport arrangements when adapting flexi hours		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B05	Mismatch with government plan of traffic monitoring		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B06	Misuse of permitted benefits		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B07	Limited access to advanced technologies (network, speed), but unable to perform a task completely		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B08	Increased expenses compared to the standard working hours, such as; transport cost, utility charges (water, electricity, security services)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

LF = Literature Findings

 = Newly identified by interviews at Phase II

	Barrier	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																					
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
B09	Troubles due to undefined meetings and discussions		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B10	Health issues due to abnormal working hours		✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B11	Difficulty in calculating overtime			✓	✓				✓					✓	✓	✓		✓			✓				
B12	Employee management during the core time	✓		×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	×
B13	Conflicts due to mismatch of the life partner's working hours	✓		×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
B14	Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)	✓		×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	×
B15	Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing	✓		×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
B16	Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements	✓		×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	×
B17	Unavailability of support service providers	✓		×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×
B18	Managers behaviours and attitudes	✓		×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	×	×

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase

	Barrier	LF	Phase I	Interviewee Response																				
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
B19	Employees behaviours and attitudes	✓		×	✓	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	×	×
B20	Mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules		✓	×	×	×	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	×
B21	Lack of harmony between the project team				✓				✓										✓					
B22	Conflicts with the permitted 02 short leaves per month			✓										✓										
B23	Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)	✓		×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
B24	Difficult to engage with kids school work		✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

LF = Literature Findings

 = Newly identified by interviews at Phase

According to the summary given in the table 4.7, the agreed statements are marked as “✓” and the disagreed statements are marked as “x”. The barriers found in phase II interviews (apart from literature review and phase I interviews) are presented in bold letters. The responses for the above tabulated barriers which were identified through literature review and phase I are described in following paragraphs. Majority of the respondents disliked to the identified barriers as tabulated in table 4.7.

Most of the respondents disagreed to the barrier of managers/employees behaviours and attitudes to implement flexi working hours concept in the government construction organizations. The reason they stated that employees shall make aware about their working hours to their immediate supervisors in order to contact the required person at the required time through e-technology. By implementing job sharing will aid to make an employee available during the core hour time. Nevertheless it will enable to build team spirit among the co-workers. Though it is difficult to monitor, making the employees available during the core time, but once the rules and regulations are set up, it will not become a barrier to implement the concept of adapting flexi working hours.

Respondents disagreed to the identified barrier of conflicts can be occurred due to mismatch of the life partner’s working hours mentioning that it will reduce the problem of looking after kids by having an assistance from family spouses to take care of the children. As a result of that it will aid to work life balance and relaxation of mind for the professionals who are involved with the construction industry as they are suffering with a lot of construction matters daily with the work pressure. Further respondents stated that, work pressure and longer stay of working hours will not be a barrier to implement flexi working hours as employees shall work from home when there is an emergency. On the other hand, it will reduce the work pressure of the employee.

According to respondents’ views, time-based work demands will not be a barrier, once the online services are introduced. Also, insufficient staffing too will be disregarded after implementing online access to the employees. Then all the employees can get together through internet (conference call) using a software (such

as; Skype, Microsoft teams, Lync, etc.,) even though they are at home in order to cover up the KPI targets. Also if the project is at critical stage and the responsible employee is unable to come and report to work due to some unavoidable reason he/she can work from home.

With the aid of job sharing, confusion between the government construction offices due to unavailability of support service providers at the required time shall be eliminated. Health issues will not occur once the employee is satisfied with the job he/she carries. In order to maintain that it is the employer's responsibility to make sure that all the employees working under him are not heavy loaded with work. And when it comes to recording the employees' attendance, respondents stated that, it will not be a barrier to implement this concept once a system is developed to maintain all the records (attendance, leave, etc.,) by the employees. Then the staff assistants do not need to face any difficulties in preparing employees attendance, as it will be maintained by the employees.

In contrast, few respondents agreed to the identified barriers as described in following paragraphs. One respondent conveyed her thoughts as follows;

“Flexi hours is good for employees and not for the employer. As it will be very difficult to organize an internal meeting with everyone. Some people used to work till late hours just to cover up their minimum man hours per month. Neither the team spirit nor the expected commitment to the concept will come out as the output. It may be good for some areas where the tasks are very clear, no need creativity thinking and no need to depend on others contribution. I know many IT firms having flexi hour system. Their tasks can be performed individually. But for construction industry I cannot imagine”.

Further, all the respondents agreed to the fact of “restriction for the middle management level and below level of employees”. By introducing strict rules this identified barrier can be eliminated to implement flexi hours concept to the government organizations. Expenses are high when compared to the standard working hours, due to misusing of the benefits. When flexi hours concept is adapted to the construction industry, middle management category shall have to be alert on

24 hours. And due to the mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules, the lower level employees will have to work overtime once their supervisors are at work in office. As a result of that it will cause extra costs (e.g. utility charges) to the organization.

As the construction industry is one of the competitive industries in the global, employees who have a better demand with his/her work capacity, tend to seek for a better job once they are dissatisfied with the heavy work load they get. Therefore, retention of skilled workers is a barrier to implement flexi working hours concept. Moreover, many respondents stated that a better WLB has a positive impact on staff retention and on employee relations, motivation, and commitment. In order to effectively manage, a potential number of skilled staff shall be distributed even in the extended working hours.

Moreover, respondents stated that, public transportation shall be improved in a comfortable way by allowing dedicated lanes. Due to the uncomfortable service of public transportation, employees tend to look for a private mode of transportation which is costly. As a result of that, the expenses are high compared to the standard working hours. In order to mitigate from misusing the allowed benefits supervisors shall have a close supervision, as most of the lower level management employees tend to misuse the benefits allowed by the employer. Also, an allowance should be granted rather than providing facilities. As an example, transport allowance instead of providing an office vehicle. Furthermore, as a result of lack of access to the company information from outside the organization, employees cannot work from home always due to the problems of accessing of the advanced technology. Therefore, it can be identified as a barrier to implement flexi hours concept.

As per the summary of the responses given by the interviewed samples through interview phase I and phase II, proved the feasibility of flexi working hours concept to the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka. But, in order to get the real usage of flexi hours concept with respect to the government construction organizations, a reasonable attention to the following tabulated strategies shall be considered prior to implement.

4.5.3 Suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka

The responses for the identified barriers through literature review and the newly recognized barriers through interviews of phase I & phase II were analysed against the identified strategies to adapt flexi working hours concept. Table 4.8 denotes the responsible authority to adapt the identified strategies to use flexi working hour concept.

Table 4.8: Responsible authority for adapting flexi working hours concept

	Strategies	LF	Phase I	Employer	Employee	Government
S01	Conducting programmes on soft skill management (e.g., stress management, conflict management, leadership skills, workshops, etc.,)	✓		✓		
S02	Conducting health awareness programmes	✓		✓		✓
S03	Building up child care centres	✓		✓		
S04	Introduce career growth opportunities	✓		✓		
S05	Introducing job rotation among staff members	✓		✓		
S06	Conducting training and development programmes	✓		✓		✓
S07	Enabling Job sharing among other workers	✓		✓		
S08	Improve communication with employees	✓		✓	✓	
S09	Safeguard from employee's grievances	✓		✓		
S10	Offering employee assistance programmes	✓		✓		
S11	Adapt emerging technologies	✓		✓	✓	✓
S12	Provide mode of transportation to employees	✓		✓		✓
S13	Career breaks for raising children	✓		✓		
S14	Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress	✓		✓		

LF = Literature Findings

	Strategies	LF	Phase I	Employer	Employee	Government
S15	Enabling working from home	✓		✓		
S16	Delegation of authority		✓	✓		
S17	Introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane		✓			✓
S18	Introducing a proper remote access system (only for permitted user access)		✓	✓		
S19	Allowing employees to fill out time sheets which relies upon the honesty of the employees		✓	✓	✓	
S20	Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home		✓	✓		
S21	Organize family get-togethers	✓		✓	✓	
S22	Provide counselling	✓		✓		✓
S23	Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff	✓		✓	✓	
S24	Rewarding for the excellent service provider			✓		✓
S25	Introducing a reward system to value the employees after achieving a given target/deadline			✓		
S26	Involve with sports activities representing the organization				✓	
S27	Benchmarking employee performance with best practices			✓		
S28	Introduce stipulations to monitor and control during implementation			✓	✓	

LF = Literature Findings

= Newly identified by interviews at Phase II

According to the summary given in the table 4.8, the strategies found in phase II interviews (apart from literature review and phase I interviews) are presented in bold letters.

Table 4.9: Suitable strategies against the identified barriers to adapt flexi hours concept in the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
B01	Retention of skilled staff	• Introduce career growth opportunities		
B02	Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	• Delegation of authority		
B03	Non- availability of public transportation facilities	• Provide mode of transportation to employees		
B04	Mismatch with common office transport arrangements when adapting flexi hours	• Provide mode of transportation to employees		• Provide mode of transportation to employees
B05	Mismatch with government plan of traffic monitoring			• Introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane
B06	Misuse of permitted benefits	• Introduce stipulations to monitor and control during implementation		
B07	Limited access to advanced technologies (network, speed), but unable to perform a task completely	• Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home		

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
B08	Increased expenses compared to the standard working hours, such as; transport cost, utility charges (water, electricity, security services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling working from home • Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home 		
B09	Troubles due to undefined meetings and discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up child care centres • Enabling Job sharing among other workers • Enabling working from home • Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home 		
B10	Health issues due to abnormal working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting health awareness programmes • Safeguard from employee’s grievances • Offering employee assistance programmes • Adapt emerging technologies • Career breaks for raising children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress 	

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress 		
B11	Difficulty in calculating overtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering employee assistance programmes • Adapt emerging technologies • Allowing employees to fill out time sheets which relies upon the honesty of the employees 		
B12	Employee management during the core time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewarding for the excellent service provider • Introducing a reward system to value the employees after achieving a given target/deadline • Benchmarking employee performance with best practices 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane
B13	Conflicts due to mismatch of the life partner's working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mode of transportation to employees 		



= Newly identified by interviews at Phase II

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
B14	Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling working from home • Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home • Adapt emerging technologies • Delegation of authority 		
B15	Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegation of authority 		
B16	Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing job rotation among staff members • Conducting training and development programmes • Enabling Job sharing among other workers 		
B17	Unavailability of support service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting training and development programmes • Improve communication with employees • Offering employee assistance programmes 		

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a proper remote access system (only for permitted user access) 		
B18	Managers behaviours and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide counselling • Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize family get-togethers • Involve with sports activities representing the organization 	
B19	Employees behaviours and attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize family get-togethers • Provide counselling • Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff • Rewarding for the excellent service provider • Introducing a reward system to value the employees after achieving a given target/deadline • Benchmarking employee performance with best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve with sports activities representing the organization 	
B20	Mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce stipulations to monitor and control during implementation 		

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing job rotation among staff members • Enabling Job sharing among other workers • Improve communication with employees 		
B21	Lack of harmony between the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce career growth opportunities • Introducing job rotation among staff members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize family get-togethers • Involve with sports activities representing the organization 	
B22	Conflicts with the permitted 02 short leaves per month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing job rotation among staff members • Enabling Job sharing among other workers 		
B23	Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting health awareness programmes • Introduce career growth opportunities • Conducting training and development programmes • Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to 		

	Barriers	Suitable Strategies – Responsible Authority		
		Employer	Employee	Government
		enable the employees to work from home		
B24	Difficult to engage with kids school work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building up child care centres • Enabling Job sharing among other workers • Adapt emerging technologies • Enabling working from home • Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home 		

As shown above Table 4.9 presents the most suitable strategies to overcome from the identified barriers of using flexi working hours in government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka. Following paragraphs describe the respondents' further views with regard to the above tabulated facts in a descriptive way.

Few respondents suggested a fact of introducing a reward system to value the employees after achieving a given target/deadline as a strategy to enable flexi hours concept. Moreover, when introducing roster scheduling, it shall consist with skilled and non-skilled staff in each shift. Benchmarking employee performance with best practices in aid of the latest available technologies to enable remote access was suggested by few respondents as strategies to implement flexi hours concept to the construction industry. Moreover they mentioned, once the concept is implemented in the government sector it shall be well monitored and controlled to get the expected results.

Furthermore, once a proper remote access system is introduced to the government sector construction organizations, only permitted users shall have the access to the system. And it is the top management's responsibility to review, monitor and control the system continually. Also, the respondents highlighted that when recruiting the employees, the working hours shall be briefed thoroughly during implementing flexi hours concept in the respective organization.

The respondents conveyed that by adapting proper change management approaches, few facts of the tabulated barriers under table 4.9 can be eliminated from the government workers. Further the respondents mentioned the following causes that are currently affected to employees;

- ❖ Stressful work life in the industry
- ❖ Involved work pressure in the industry
- ❖ Cultural attitudes and behaviours of the employees/employers
- ❖ Lack of staff transportation service
- ❖ Less motivation due to the involved fatigue factor
- ❖ Dealing with a heavy work load daily
- ❖ Working environment is not as same as everyday
- ❖ Scarcity of the jobs

- ❖ Less rewards and recognition
- ❖ Lack of super-fast technology knowledge
- ❖ Need to achieve the desired milestones on time
- ❖ Have to look after children work after office
- ❖ Domestic & social responsibilities
- ❖ Family commitments
- ❖ Need to spend more time to the road while travelling to work and vice versa

4.6 Summary

This chapter provided the findings which gathered from semi-structured interviews and analysis of the findings of the research to achieve the objectives and ultimate aim of the research. The findings of interviews were analysed using manual content analysis and concluded with the analysis of identified enablers, barriers, suitable strategies through literature synthesis and newly identified enablers, barriers, suitable strategies through semi-structured interviews to find out the feasibility of adapting flexi working hours concept to the government construction consultancy organizations in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the respondents tend to perceive flexible working hours as a necessity rather than an extra benefit.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates a comprehensive explanation regarding the final outcomes of the research findings which were described in previous chapter. Further the conclusions of this research are discussed at this chapter which were derived from research findings and analysis as described in the preceding chapters. Similarly, the conclusions to be derive from each research objectives of this research are discussed in this chapter. The aim of this research is to identify the adaptability of flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka. Additionally, recommendations have been provided for the adaptability of flexi hours concept to the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka. In order to achieve that, the initially identified sets of objectives were accomplished with the research findings. In addition to conclusions and recommendations, limitations to research and further research areas were addressed in this chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

To achieve the foremost aim of the research, different objectives were established. Hence, conclusions are declared as per objectives together with research findings in detail which conclude the study.

Objective 1 - To identify the concept of flexi hours/working hours

This objective was disclosed in the literature synthesis and in the semi-structured interviews carried out at phase I. Under subsection 2.4.3, the knowledge on concept of identification of flexi working hours was attained and described by the literature review (refer chapter 2). Based on the gathered data from literature and the interviews at phase I, the concept of flexi working hours shall be interpreted as the work schedule flexibility which enables employees to choose their preferred working hours with a core hour requirement with the consent of the employer. Also employees have the option to adjust their start and end working times subjected to a maximum of 01 hour band with the core

hour requirement of the organization. Conversely, the employees are allowed to perform their tasks even from working home to avoid travelling during morning and afternoon traffic times (only for a permitted time with the consent of the employer) whilst ensuring that the job gets done. Moreover, once there is a discrepancy between the actual working hours and the preferable working hours it shall lead to reduce work performance and dissatisfaction of the employees. Accordingly, this concept enables to have a better work life balance without limiting to the required number of working hours (e.g. 40 hours a week) but to have a degree of sovereignty to manage the working time which leads to job satisfaction and associated benefits to both the employer and employee.

Objective 2 – To identify the nature of working hours in existing Government Organizations

The identification of the nature of working hours in the existing government organizations were attained with the literature review and semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, most of the government organizations in Sri Lanka commences their working time at 8.30 a.m. and ends at 4.15 p.m. And most of the workers rely on the public transportation such as busses, trains, etc. Public servants are eligible to obtain two short leaves per month with the approval of their supervisors. Moreover, government organizations allow 0.5 hour from the working hours as lunch break on every working day.

Objective 3 - To identify the enablers of using flexi hours in Government Construction Consultancy Organizations

Identifying the enablers of using flexi hours in the government construction organizations were the 3rd objective of this study. Eventually the enablers found in phase I were validated using manual content analysis. Respondents validate and gave their opinions on several factors that an organization must consider before adopting this concept as described in sub section 4.5.1 under chapter 04. It revealed that factors like, *having competition to provide best customer service in aid of flexi working hours , meeting globally recognized standards as required by the customers to serve the customer's needs at any time, reducing environmental impact from emissions and sustainable behaviours and balanced throughout 24 hours, adapting new technologies to support remote and*

hybrid meetings, reducing travelling time and other expenses with the use of modern technology, enabling to attract and retain a top-quality workforce with flexible work arrangements and enables the ability to manage, plan and control a balanced roster of employees in sudden peak situation (election days, new year celebration days), were found additionally to the literature findings with regard to Sri Lankan context.

Likewise, the outcomes of the validated benefits and newly identified enablers can be used when adapting this concept to the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka. The main finding of this study was, if supported by the management, working with flexible hours will be beneficiary for both personal reasons and as well as for work related reasons.

Objective 4 – To identify the barriers of using flexi hours in government construction organizations.

It has been identified globally that there are several restrictions for the undisturbed success of the implementation process of flexi hours concept. In literature, there are several barriers which have been identified based on implementation of flexi working hours concept. Due to the socio-cultural, legal and regulatory concerns the identified barriers could not be directly applicable to Sri Lankan context. Hence, with the aid of the professional's experience in the construction industry of the government organizations, the identified barriers have been analysed for the applicability to Sri Lanka. Apart from the literature findings, several other barriers that are significantly observed in Sri Lanka with regard to government construction organizations were identified and have discussed in sub section 4.5.2 under chapter 04.

Further, the barriers identified to implement this concept for government construction consultancy organizations may vary from organization to organization based on worker's and organization's culture. Among the validated barriers, *difficult to engage with children school work, mismatch with common office transport arrangements when adapting flexi hours, troubles due to undefined meetings and discussions, mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules, mismatch with government plan of traffic monitoring, health issues due to abnormal working hours, misuse of benefits, limited access to advanced technologies (network, speed), due to that unable to perform a task*

completely & increased expenses compared to the standard working hours (such as; transport cost, utility charges), conflicts with permitted two (02) short leaves per month, difficulty in calculating overtime and lack of harmony between the project team were found to be significant among the specific barriers observed in Sri Lanka other than in the literature findings.

Once the flexi hours concept systematically adapted to the construction industry, the identified barriers won't reflect as obstacles to implement flexi working hours concept like as in the IT sector organizations currently engaged with.

Objective 5 - To propose suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka effectively.

For the continuation of a process, suitable strategies shall be addressed to mitigate the identified barriers to implement flexi hours concept. Hence the last objective was proposing suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka effectively. To achieve this objective, the findings from the interviewees, literature findings, secondary data resources and accepted social norms have been used to derive conclusions of suitable strategies which are based on the *delegation of authority, introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane, introducing a proper remote access system (only for permitted access), allowing employees to fill out time sheets which relies upon the honesty of the employees, provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home, rewarding for the excellent service provider, and benchmarking employee performance with best practices* were found to be the major concerns. Such identified suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka effectively are described in sub section 4.5.3 under chapter 04.

5.3 Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to grasp the real essence of understanding how employees and employers experience about the usage of flexible working hours and how to adapt it to the government sector construction organisations in Sri Lanka limiting to consultant organizations. As described in above sections both the organization and the employees get a degree of stability and flexibility that makes adaption of flexible working hours to the government organizations as a win-win situation. For many organizations managing the working time of their employees is extremely demanding.

The benefits of the system will enhance the positions of both employees and employers. The employees perceive increased rights and benefits and the management perceives gains from lower absenteeism, greater productivity and more efficient operations.

5.4 Limitations

Due to lack of awareness about the flexi hours concept within the construction industry, semi-structured interviews were carried out in two phases with the professionals those who are currently practicing the concept (or who have practiced) and with the professionals of construction industry in Sri Lanka. Moreover, this research was limited to government consultancy organizations including semi-government organizations staff who falls in and above the middle management category.

5.5 Further research

Suggestions given in the following enablers extending research areas and exploring of untouched aspects encountered in this research. Therefore further studies are encouraged on the areas as follows;

- Utilization of flexible working hours and cultural diversity
- Suitability of adapting flexi hours concept to construction site staff
- Skills and competencies required to work life balance

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Appendix A – Semi-Structured Interview Guideline for Phase I

ADAPTABILITY OF FLEXI HOURS CONCEPT IN THE GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANCY ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

Conducting an Interview for the MSc in Project Management Research

I am Udyogi Wanniarachchi, currently reading for the MSc. in Project Management at the University of Moratuwa. I'm currently conducting a research under the module of "Dissertation".

The topic I have selected is "**Adaptability of Flexi Hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka**". As the first step, through the literature synthesis, I have identified the enablers of adapting flexi hours concept, barriers to implement flexi working hours and strategies to overcome the barriers that affect to the implementation of flexi working hours. Semi- structured interviews will be carried out only for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the dissertation. Through these interviews I hope to validate the findings of literature synthesis and to identify the suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept effectively in the government construction organizations in Sri Lanka.

The interviews will be conducted with the currently and generally reputed experts in the industry. I have identified you as a potential participant who could provide me valuable information to this research. Therefore, I would like to interview yourself, for **about 60-75 minutes approximately**, since I have recognized you as a potential source of knowledge on my research area. Further, I would like to kindly inform that audio recording and note taking would be incorporated (with your due permission) for accurate and reliable data collection. I strongly believe that you would support to my research by providing your opinions related to my research topic. **The information collected through this interview will be kept strictly confidential and should be used only for**

the purpose of the research. Any of your personnel information will not be disclosed within the research.

Thank you!

Yours faithfully,

U. Wanniarachchi

University of Moratuwa

PART 01 – GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Title of the Research

Adaptability of Flexi Hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka

1.2 Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to identify the adaptability of flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The aim is achieved through the following objectives;

- To identify the concept of flexi hours/working hours.
- To identify the nature of working hours in existing Government Organizations.
- To identify the enablers of using flexi hours in Government Construction Consultancy Organizations.
- To identify the barriers using flexi hours in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations.
- To propose suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka effectively.

1.4. Scope

This research is limited to Government Consultancy Organizations including Semi-Government Organizations staff who falls in and above the middle management category.

PART 02 – RESPONDENTS DETAILS

1. Organization : Consultant, Client, Other
2. Type of Organization : Government, Semi-Government, Private
3. Profession :
4. Designation :
5. No. of years of experience :
6. How many years you have worked under flexi hours?
7. Can the employee choose working hours or not? If so, how?
8. What are the advantages of using flexible working hours:
9. What are the disadvantages in flexi working hours:

PART 03 – DATA FOR THE RESEARCH

3.1) Describe the existing nature of working hours of the Organization

a. 8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

b. 8.30 a.m. -4.15 p.m.

c. Other (.....)

3.2) Identification of the enablers of using flexi working hours –**Employer / Employee**

Enabler	Literature	Response	Remarks
Equalization of personal commitments and work	✓		
Minimizing work-related stress	✓		
Minimizing conflicts between work and family	✓		
Increased employee satisfaction	✓		
Improving employee relationships	✓		
Improve organizational cost-effectiveness	✓		
Cost efficiency for employees	✓		
Increased employee engagement and commitment	✓		
Reduce traffic congestion	✓		
Employees have a greater control over working hours	✓		
Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)	✓		
Ability to have core hour requirement	✓		

Enabler	Literature	Response	Remarks

3.3) Identification of the barriers to implement flexi working hours –
Employer/Employee

Barrier	Literature	Response	Remarks
Managers behaviours and attitudes	✓		
Employee management during the core time	✓		
Conflicts due to mismatch with the life partners working hours	✓		
Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)	✓		
Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements	✓		
Employees behaviours and attitudes	✓		
Retention of skilled staff	✓		
Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)	✓		
Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing	✓		
Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	✓		
Non - availability of public	✓		

Barrier	Literature	Response	Remarks
transportation facilities			
Unavailability of support service providers	✓		

3.4) Strategies to overcome barriers to implement flexi working hours – **Employer/Employee**

Strategies	Literature	Response	Remarks
Conducting programmes on soft skill management (e.g., stress management, conflict management, leadership skills, workshops, etc.,)	✓		
Conducting health awareness programmes	✓		
Building up child care centres	✓		
Organize family get-togethers	✓		
Provide counselling	✓		
Introduce career growth opportunities	✓		
Introducing job rotation among staff members	✓		
Conducting training and development programmes	✓		
Enabling Job sharing among other	✓		

Strategies	Literature	Response	Remarks
workers			
Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff	✓		
Improve communication with employees	✓		
Safeguard from employee's grievances	✓		
Offering employee assistance programmes	✓		
Adapt emerging technologies	✓		
Provide mode of transportation to employees	✓		
Career breaks for raising children	✓		
Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress	✓		
Enabling working from home	✓		

3.5) Any other improvements:

Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Guideline for Phase II

ADAPTABILITY OF FLEXI HOURS CONCEPT IN THE GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION CONSULTANCY ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

Dear Sir/Madam,

Conducting an Interview for the MSc in Project Management Research

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The interviews will be conducted with the currently and generally reputed experts in the industry from Government Consultancy and Client Organizations. I have identified you as a potential participant who could provide me valuable information to this research. Therefore, I would like to interview yourself, for **about 60-75 minutes approximately**, since I have recognized you as a potential source of knowledge on my research area. Further, I would like to kindly inform that audio recording and note taking would be incorporated (with your due permission) for accurate and reliable data collection.

I strongly believe that you would support to my research by providing your opinions related to my research topic. **The information collected through this interview will be**

**kept strictly confidential and should be used only for the purpose of the research.
Any of your personnel information will not be disclosed within the research.**

Thank you!

Yours faithfully,

U. Wanniarachchi
University of Moratuwa

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The aim is achieved through the following objectives;

- To identify the concept of flexi hours/working hours.
- To identify the nature of working hours in existing Government Organizations.
- To identify the enablers of using flexi hours in Government Construction Consultancy Organizations.
- To identify the barriers using flexi hours in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations.
- To propose suitable strategies to adapt flexi hours concept in the Government Construction Consultancy Organizations in Sri Lanka effectively.

1.4. Scope

This research is limited to Government Consultancy Organizations including Semi-Government Organizations staff who falls in and above the middle management category.

PART 02 – RESPONDENTS DETAILS

1. Organization : Consultant, Client,
2. Type of Organization :Government, Semi-Government
3. Profession :
4. Designation :
5. No. of years of experience :

PART 03 – DATA FOR THE RESEARCH

3.1) Describe the existing nature of working hours of the Organization

a. 8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

b. 8.30 a.m. -4.15 p.m.

c. Other (.....)

3.2) Identification of the enablers for using flexi working hours – **Employee / Employer**

Enabler	Literature	Response	Remarks
Equalization of personal commitments and work	✓		
Minimizing work-related stress	✓		
Minimizing conflicts between work and family	✓		
Increased employee satisfaction	✓		
Improving employee relationships	✓		
Improve organizational cost-effectiveness	✓		
Cost-efficiency for employees	✓		
Increased employee engagement and commitment	✓		
Reduce traffic congestion	✓		
Employees have a greater control over working hours	✓		
Improving business continuity (to reduce disruptions)	✓		
Ability to have core hour requirement	✓		

Enabler	Literature	Response	Remarks
Competition to provide best customer service in aid of flexi working hours			
Meeting globally recognized standards as required by the customers to serve the customer's needs at any time			
Reducing environmental impact from emissions and sustainable behaviours			
Adapting new technologies to support remote and hybrid meetings			
Reduced travelling time and other expenses with the use of modern technology			
Enabling to attract and retain a top-quality workforce with flexible work arrangements			
Ability to manage, plan and control a balanced roster of employees in sudden peak situation (election days, new year celebration days, Christmas holidays, etc.,)			

3.3) Identification of the barriers to implement flexi working hours - **Employee / Employer**

Barrier	Literature	Response	Remarks
Managers behaviours and attitudes	✓		
Employees management during the core time	✓		
Conflicts due to mismatch of the life partners working hours	✓		
Issues in work life (such as; work pressure, longer working hours, harassment etc.)	✓		
Negative relationship with WLB policies and feasible work arrangements	✓		
Employees behaviours and attitudes	✓		
Retention of skilled staff	✓		
Time based work demands (targets, overtime, shift works)	✓		
Work optimization with regard to insufficient staffing	✓		
Restriction for the middle management level and below level employees	✓		
Non- availability of public transportation facilities	✓		
Unavailability of support service providers	✓		

Barrier	Literature	Response	Remarks
Difficult to engage with children school work			
Mismatch with common office transport arrangements when adapting flexi hours			
Troubles due to undefined meetings and discussions			
Mismatch between the employees and supervisors work schedules			
Mismatch with government plan of traffic monitoring			
Health issues due to abnormal working hours			
Misuse of permitted benefits			
Limited access to advanced technologies (network, speed), but unable to perform a task completely			
Increased expenses compared to the standard working hours, such as; transport cost, utility charges (water, electricity, security services)			

Barrier	Literature	Response	Remarks

3.4) Strategies to overcome the barriers to implement flexi working hours - **Employee**
/ **Employer**

Strategies	Literature	Response	Remarks
Conducting programmes on soft skill management (e.g., stress management, conflict management, leadership skills, workshops, etc.,)	✓		
Conducting health awareness programmes	✓		
Building up child care centres	✓		
Organize family get-togethers	✓		
Provide counselling	✓		
Introduce career growth opportunities	✓		
Introducing job rotation among staff members	✓		
Conducting training and development programmes	✓		
Enabling job sharing among other workers	✓		
Arrange sports activities annually to boost the morale of the staff	✓		
Improve communication with	✓		

Strategies	Literature	Response	Remarks
employees			
Safeguard from employee's grievances	✓		
Offering employee assistance Programmes	✓		
Adapt emerging technologies	✓		
Provide mode of transportation to employees	✓		
Career breaks for raising children	✓		
Providing entertainment while working to reduce stress	✓		
Enabling working from home	✓		
Delegation of authority			
Introducing mass transport, delegating light vehicles to a particular lane apart to the bus lane			
Introducing a proper remote access system (only for permitted user access)			
Allowing employees to fill out time sheets which relies upon the honesty of the employees			
Provide laptops and other infrastructure (hardware & software) to enable the employees to work from home			

3.5) Any other improvements: