



 <p>Journal of Management and Business Innovation (JOMBINOV)  <a href="https://v-learnov.com/index.php/jombinov">https://v-learnov.com/index.php/jombinov</a>          Volume 02          Number 01          March 2026          Page: 64 – 77          ISSN: 3123-6464 (Online)</p>	<h3>Work Arrangement Dynamics and Work–Life Experiences among Online Resellers</h3> <p>Susana M. W. Mustika<sup>1*</sup>, Charliany Hetharia<sup>2</sup></p> <p><sup>1,2</sup> Department of Management, Victory University of Sorong, Indonesia</p>
<p><b>Article History:</b>          Received: 16 Jan 2026          Revised: 30 Jan 2026          Accepted: 08 Feb 2026</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b>          Susana M. W. Mustika</p> <p><b>Corresponding E-mail:</b>  <a href="mailto:susana.mustika@unvisorong.ac.id">susana.mustika@unvisorong.ac.id</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p><b>Research Aims:</b>          This study examines the dynamics of work arrangements and work-life experiences among online resellers in Sorong City, focusing on how flexible work practices shape the management of work and personal life in an informal digital economy context.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b>          A quantitative survey was conducted involving online resellers operating through social media platforms. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression to explore associations between work arrangement practices and work-life experiences.</p> <p><b>Theoretical Contribution/Originality:</b>          This study extends work-life balance and flexible work literature by providing empirical evidence from informal digital work in Eastern Indonesia, highlighting flexibility as both autonomy and responsibility.</p> <p><b>Practitioners/Policy Implications:</b>          Findings inform policymakers and development programs to design digital entrepreneurship initiatives that integrate economic support with worker well-being considerations.</p> <p><b>Research Limitations/Implications:</b>          The study is limited by its cross-sectional design and single-city focus. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative approaches.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Flexible Work Arrangements; Work–Life Experiences; Informal Digital Work; Online Resellers; Emerging Urban Economies</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of contemporary work over the past decade has generated fundamental challenges in how individuals manage the relationship between work activities and personal life. This transformation is not merely driven by advances in digital technology but is also shaped by broader structural shifts in economic systems, labor market dynamics, and the growing prevalence of non-standard work arrangements that increasingly blur the boundaries between working time and non-working time. Within this context, work-life balance has evolved from an organizational concern into a broader socio-economic issue affecting workers beyond formal employment structures, including informal and semi-formal digital workers such as online resellers. Previous studies have demonstrated that imbalances between work and personal roles are associated with

heightened work stress, reduced life satisfaction, and diminished long-term work sustainability (Allen et al., 2015; Haar et al., 2018). However, how these dynamics unfold in non-metropolitan and developing regional contexts remains insufficiently explored.

Sorong City, as one of the emerging economic hubs in Eastern Indonesia, provides a distinctive empirical setting for examining these changing work patterns. The city functions not only as a regional trade and distribution center but has also experienced accelerated growth in digitally mediated economic activities. Small-scale digital entrepreneurship, particularly online reselling conducted through social media and informal digital platforms, has become increasingly prominent. At the same time, Sorong City is characterized by limited formal employment opportunities, a dominant informal sector, and widespread engagement in multiple income-generating activities. These conditions complicate the management of work roles and personal life, suggesting that work experiences in Sorong cannot be directly equated with those in larger metropolitan or national economic centers.

Within the human resource management and organizational behavior literature, flexible work arrangements are frequently conceptualized as adaptive mechanisms that enable individuals to balance work demands with personal responsibilities. Flexibility in terms of working time, location, and workload is often associated with increased autonomy and improved work-life outcomes (Kossek, Thompson, & Lautsch, 2015). Nevertheless, this perspective has been increasingly problematized. Empirical evidence suggests that flexibility may also intensify work demands, extend working hours, and create income insecurity, particularly among non-standard and informal workers (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010; Chung & van der Horst, 2018). Consequently, flexible work arrangements should not be treated as a universally beneficial solution but rather as a context-dependent phenomenon requiring empirical scrutiny.

Online resellers occupy an ambiguous position within the contemporary digital economy. On the one hand, online reselling is commonly perceived as flexible work due to its lack of fixed working hours and physical workspace constraints. On the other hand, this form of work often requires constant availability, rapid responsiveness to customers, and the simultaneous management of multiple roles, especially when undertaken alongside primary employment or domestic responsibilities. Existing studies tend to frame online resellers within discussions of digital entrepreneurship and economic opportunity, emphasizing income generation and market access (Sussan & Acs, 2017; Nambisan et al., 2019). However, such approaches frequently overlook the lived experiences of resellers in managing everyday work demands and personal life responsibilities.

Moreover, the majority of empirical research on work-life balance continues to be dominated by studies situated within formal organizational contexts, focusing primarily on salaried employees in corporate or institutional settings. Research by Haar et al. (2018) and Delecta (2015), for instance, underscores the importance of work-life balance in enhancing employee well-being and performance, yet these findings are largely derived from relatively stable organizational environments. Applying these theoretical frameworks to informal digital workers raises critical questions regarding their relevance and explanatory capacity. Do online resellers experience work-life balance in ways comparable to formal employees, or do their experiences reveal alternative dynamics that challenge existing theoretical assumptions?

The socio-economic conditions of Sorong City further accentuate the need for such inquiry. Online reselling activities are commonly pursued by individuals with diverse primary occupations, **Journal of Management and Business Innovation (JOMBINOV) Volume 02, Number 01, March 2026.**



including private-sector employees, civil servants, students, and homemakers. This prevalence of multi-role engagement intensifies the blurring of boundaries between primary work, secondary income activities, and personal life. Prior research indicates that such conditions can increase role conflict and psychological strain when not managed effectively (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Michel et al., 2019). At the same time, flexibility may be interpreted by individuals as a survival strategy and a means of economic risk management in regions with constrained employment opportunities.

Despite these realities, empirical studies specifically addressing the dynamics of work arrangements and work–life experiences among online resellers in Eastern Indonesia remain scarce. Most existing research concentrates on major urban centers in Western Indonesia, limiting the generalizability of findings across diverse regional contexts. This situation reveals a clear research gap, both geographically and conceptually. Geographically, the lack of studies in cities such as Sorong restricts understanding of how local socio-economic conditions shape digital work practices. Conceptually, the dominance of linear, causal research designs often fails to capture the relational and context-sensitive nature of flexible work experiences.

Furthermore, prior studies frequently conceptualize flexible work arrangements as independent variables exerting direct effects on work–life balance. Such an approach risks oversimplifying social realities in which flexibility simultaneously generates opportunities and vulnerabilities. Chung and van der Horst (2018) argue that flexible work is inherently ambivalent, with its outcomes contingent upon individuals' social and economic positioning. For online resellers, flexibility may be experienced as autonomy while simultaneously functioning as an unbounded responsibility. This duality underscores the need for a more reflective and contextually grounded analytical approach.

The urgency of this research is further reinforced by its policy and practical implications. Local governments and development stakeholders increasingly promote digital entrepreneurship as a strategy for job creation and economic resilience, particularly in regions with limited formal employment. However, without adequate understanding of the social and psychological consequences of digitally mediated work, such initiatives risk neglecting worker well-being. This study seeks to address this concern by moving beyond purely economic narratives and examining work and life experiences as interconnected social phenomena.

The originality of this study lies in several dimensions. First, it foregrounds Sorong City as an under-researched context within the literature on flexible work and digital labor in Indonesia. Second, it positions online resellers not merely as economic actors but as individuals navigating complex work–life dynamics. Third, it conceptualizes work arrangements and work–life experiences as interrelated and dynamic processes rather than linear causal relationships. In doing so, the study aims to enrich theoretical discussions on flexible work and work–life balance within informal digital economies.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the expansion of flexible work and work–life balance literature by incorporating empirical insights from informal digital work settings and regionally diverse contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to inform policymakers, local governments, and digital entrepreneurship programs in developing interventions that integrate economic development objectives with considerations of worker well-being.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the purpose of this study is to analyze the dynamics of work arrangements and work–life experiences among online resellers in Sorong City. Specifically,

the study seeks to examine how work arrangements are enacted in daily practices, how these arrangements shape individuals' experiences of managing work and personal life, and how local socio-economic conditions influence these dynamics. Through this approach, the study aims to provide meaningful empirical and theoretical contributions to the discourse on flexible work and work-life balance in emerging digital economies.

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach. Survey research is appropriate for examining patterns, perceptions, and relationships among variables within a defined population through structured instruments (Singarimbun, as cited in Ekawati, 2012).

Consistent with Nazir (2005), survey methods allow researchers to capture factual information related to social and economic phenomena as they occur within a particular group. In this study, the survey approach was used to investigate the dynamics of work arrangements and work-life experiences among online resellers operating in Sorong City.

### Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised individuals engaged in online reselling activities through social media platforms, particularly those acting as resellers for various product categories such as fashion, beauty, digital goods, and culinary products. Given the dispersed nature of online resellers and the absence of an official registry, the exact population size could not be determined with certainty. Therefore, a non-probability sampling technique was employed.

Specifically, purposive sampling was applied, whereby respondents were selected based on predefined criteria relevant to the research objectives. Following Pandiangan (2018), purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on participants who possess specific characteristics aligned with the phenomenon under investigation. The criteria for inclusion in this study were individuals who actively functioned as online resellers, either as a primary or secondary occupation, and who conducted transactions through online or hybrid (online-offline) channels in Sorong City. A total of 100 valid responses were collected and included in the analysis.

### Data Source and Collection Techniques

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. According to Sugiyono (2008), primary data refer to information collected firsthand by researchers for specific research purposes. In line with Sekaran (as cited in Wicaksono, 2019), primary data provide direct insights into respondents' perceptions and experiences related to the main variables of the study.

The questionnaire was administered both offline and online using Google Forms to facilitate broader participation and efficiency in data collection. The online distribution was conducted via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, which are commonly used by online resellers. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), following Sugiyono (2002).

Secondary data were collected from academic journals, books, official reports, and prior empirical studies relevant to flexible work arrangements and work-life balance. As noted by Sugiyono (2008), secondary data serve as complementary sources that support and contextualize

primary findings.

### **Measurement of Variables**

The study examined two main constructs: work arrangement practices and work-life experiences. Work arrangement practices were conceptualized based on flexible work arrangement dimensions, including flexibility in scheduling, location, and working time. This conceptualization aligns with prior frameworks that emphasize time flexibility, timing flexibility, and place flexibility (Posseried & Plantenga, 2011; Carlson et al., 2010).

Work-life experiences were operationalized through dimensions of time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance, consistent with the framework proposed by McDonald and Bradley (2005). Each construct was measured using multiple indicators adapted to the context of informal digital work. Responses were treated as ordinal data, consistent with Likert-scale measurement practices.

### **Validity and Reliability Testing**

Instrument validity was assessed using item-total correlation analysis. Following Ghozali (2009), an item is considered valid when the calculated correlation coefficient ( $r$ -count) exceeds the critical  $r$ -table value at a 5% significance level. Validity testing was conducted using Pearson's bivariate correlation in SPSS version 21. Items that failed to meet the validity threshold were excluded from further analysis to ensure measurement accuracy.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A construct was considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value exceeded 0.60, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Ghozali, 2009). The results showed that both work arrangement and work-life experience constructs met the reliability criteria, suggesting that the instruments consistently measured the intended concepts.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarize respondents' characteristics and to describe patterns in work arrangement practices and work-life experiences. To examine the relationship between work arrangement practices and work-life experiences, simple linear regression analysis was applied.

Regression analysis was selected because it allows for the examination of functional relationships between one independent variable and one dependent variable (Sugiyono, 2008).

## **RESULT**

### **Respondent Profile**

Of the 100 respondents, the majority were female (79%), while males accounted for 21%. This predominance indicates that, beyond a higher tendency to shop, women are also actively involved in selling activities. Multitasking abilities, cautious decision-making, and strong communication skills support women's engagement as resellers. Furthermore, the increasing participation of women in flexible and home-based work contributes to this trend. These findings are consistent with Beja (2012) and Kotler and Armstrong (2009), who argue that gender and culture influence economic behavior and buying-selling activities.

Of the 100 respondents, 55% had a senior high school/vocational (SMA/SMK) education, followed by 30% with a bachelor's degree, 12% with a diploma (D3), and 3% with a master's degree. The predominance of SMA/SMK respondents suggests that flexible jobs with low educational

requirements are more attractive, particularly to students. These findings indicate that educational background influences job choice; higher education levels are associated with limited time availability and sufficient income, reducing the need for additional work. This result is consistent with Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), who argue that education, occupation, and income are causally related.

Based on age characteristics, the majority of respondents were aged 20–30 years (78%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (15%), and 41 - 50 years (7%). This indicates that reseller activities are predominantly undertaken by individuals in their most productive age. Individuals aged 21–30 are generally at their peak physical and intellectual development and tend to make firm decisions, which aligns with the demands of reseller activities. Economic needs, student status, and interest in trendy fashion products further motivate this age group to engage in reselling. These findings are consistent with Hurlock (1986) and Lamb et al. (2002), who emphasize age as a key demographic factor influencing economic behavior and buying–selling decisions.

All 100 respondents had a primary occupation in addition to working as resellers. The majority were students (49%), followed by private-sector employees (17%), employees (16%), civil servants (13%), laborers (1%), and other occupations (4%). The predominance of students reflects the appeal of flexible working hours and locations, particularly to meet academic and personal needs. Respondents with other primary occupations also engage in reselling due to the opportunity for daily income without relying solely on monthly salaries. These findings suggest that primary occupation influences the choice of secondary work, consistent with Beja (2012) and Kotler (2010), who argue that occupation affects economic behavior and buying–selling activities.

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

Characteristics	Description	Percentage
Gender	Male	79%
	Female	21%
Education Level	Senior High School/Vocational	55%
	Bachelor's Degree	30%
	Diploma	12%
	Master's Degree	3%
Range of Age	20 - 30 Years	78%
	31 - 40 Years	15%
	41 - 50 Years	7%
Main Job	Students	49%
	Private-Sector Employees	17%
	Employees	16%
	Civil Servants	13%
	Other Occupations	5%

Source: Primary Data (2025)

### Validity Test

Validity testing is conducted to assess whether a questionnaire accurately measures the intended constructs. An item is considered valid if the *correlated item–total correlation* ( $r$  calculated) is positive and exceeds the  $r$  table value (Ghozali, 2009).

The test was performed using Pearson's bivariate correlation with SPSS version 21. With a

sample size of 100 and a significance level of 5%, the r table value is 0.196 (n-2). Therefore, each questionnaire item is deemed valid if its r calculated value exceeds 0.196.

**Table 2. Validity Test Result**

Item	Variable (Flexible Working Arrangement)		
	r-Value	r-Table	Description
WLB 1	0,633**	0,196	Valid
WLB 2	0,720**	0,196	Valid
WLB 3	0,630**	0,196	Valid
WLB 4	0,710**	0,196	Valid
WLB 5	0,568**	0,196	Valid
WLB 6	0,704**	0,196	Valid
WLB 7	0,726**	0,196	Valid
WLB 8	0,602**	0,196	Valid
WLB 9	0,595**	0,196	Valid
WLB 10	0,669**	0,196	Valid
Item	Variable (Work-Life Balance)		
	r-Value	r-Table	Description
WLB 1	0,687**	0,196	Valid
WLB 2	0,606**	0,196	Valid
WLB 3	0,667**	0,196	Valid
WLB 4	0,534**	0,196	Valid
WLB 5	0,661**	0,196	Valid
WLB 6	0,734**	0,196	Valid
WLB 7	0,090**	0,196	Not Valid
WLB 8	0,712**	0,196	Valid
WLB 9	0,710**	0,196	Valid
WLB 10	0,049**	0,196	Not Valid

Source: Primary Data (2025)

Based on the data presented in the table, two items of the *Work-Life Balance* variable were found to be invalid and therefore excluded. Consequently, only items that passed the validity test were retained for further analysis, ensuring that the remaining statements accurately measure the intended variable.

### Reliability Test

Reliability testing aims to assess the consistency of the questionnaire as an indicator of the research variables. A variable is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.60, indicating stable and consistent responses over time (Ghozali, 2009).

Conversely, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.60 or below suggests low reliability and may lead to inconsistent conclusions in repeated measurements. The following table presents the reliability test results for the *Flexible Working Arrangement* and *Work-Life Balance* variables among online shop resellers in Sorong City.

**Table 3. Reliability Test Result**

Variable	Result	Criteria	Description
Flexible Working Arrangement	0,852	> 0,60	Reliable
Work-Life Balance	0,859	> 0,60	Reliable

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The reliability test results indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the *Flexible Working Arrangement* variable is 0.852 and for the *Work-Life Balance* variable is 0.859. Both values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.60, indicating good internal consistency. Therefore, the research instrument used to measure both variables can be considered reliable.

**Partial Test (t-Test)**

The t-test was conducted to examine the significance of the effect of the independent variable *Flexible Working Arrangement* on the dependent variable *Work-Life Balance*. The results of the t-test are presented in the following table.

**Table 4. Partial Test Result**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3,025	3,114		,971	,334
1					
Flexible_work_arrangement	,709	,068	,724	10.380	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Work\_life\_balance

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The t-test results show a calculated t-value of 10.380. Based on the testing criteria, this value exceeds the t-table value (1.660) with a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, indicating that *Flexible Working Arrangement* has a positive and significant effect on *Work-Life Balance*. This finding suggests that greater work flexibility leads to better balance between work and personal life.

**Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is used to indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variable *Work-Life Balance* that can be explained by the independent variable *Flexible Working Arrangement*. The R<sup>2</sup> value is presented in the following table.

**Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) Result**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,724 <sup>a</sup>	,524	,519	2,846

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexible\_work\_arrangement

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) ranges between 0 and 1, where values closer to 1 indicate a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while values closer to 0 indicate a weak relationship. The results show an  $R^2$  value of 0.524, meaning that *Flexible Working Arrangement* explains 52.4% of the variance in *Work-Life Balance*. This value suggests a relatively strong relationship between the two variables. The remaining 47.6% of the variance is explained by other factors outside the research model, such as job satisfaction, work motivation, individual and family characteristics, job characteristics, attitudes, and other related factors.

## DISCUSSION

Within the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), work arrangements are understood as strategic mechanisms that shape how individuals allocate time, energy, and commitment across work and non-work roles. The findings of this study indicate that work arrangement practices among online resellers in Sorong City cannot be interpreted merely as technical forms of flexibility. Instead, they represent socially constructed arrangements shaped by local economic conditions, digital market demands, and individuals' livelihood strategies. This interpretation aligns with Kossek, Thompson, and Lautsch (2015), who argue that flexibility in contemporary HRM should be understood as an outcome of interactions between institutional practices, individual agency, and contextual constraints rather than as a neutral managerial tool.

Unlike formal organizational settings—where work arrangements are typically designed and regulated by institutions—online resellers in Sorong largely self-design their work patterns. While this autonomy offers perceived freedom, it simultaneously transfers the responsibility for managing work-life boundaries entirely to individuals. From an HRM standpoint, this reflects a broader shift from organization-centered human resource management toward self-managed work systems, a defining feature of contemporary careers (De Vos, Van der Heijden, & Akkermans, 2020). However, this shift also increases vulnerability to work intensification and role overload, particularly in the absence of adequate institutional or social protection mechanisms.

### Work-Life Experiences as a Well-Being Issue in HRM

The findings further demonstrate that online resellers' work-life experiences are highly heterogeneous and contingent upon individuals' capacity to manage fluid and unpredictable work demands. In HRM literature, work-life balance is widely positioned as a core dimension of employee well-being with implications for long-term work sustainability (Haar et al., 2018). This study extends that discourse by revealing that, within informal digital work contexts, work-life experiences are shaped not only by workload intensity but also by income uncertainty and continuous emotional engagement with customers.

Synthesizing these findings with Michel et al. (2019) suggests that blurred boundaries between work and personal life generate latent psychological strain rather than overt stress symptoms. Among online resellers, this strain often manifests as a persistent sense of being "on call," reflecting an ongoing cognitive attachment to work. Such evidence challenges traditional HRM assumptions that flexibility inherently serves as a protective factor against work-related stress, emphasizing instead that flexibility may produce new forms of strain when boundary control is weak.

### Flexible Work as Both Autonomy and Vulnerability

A key contribution of this study lies in uncovering the ambivalent nature of flexible work within online reselling practices. Contemporary HRM theories often associate flexibility with increased autonomy and enhanced control over work and personal life (Allen et al., 2015). However, this study reveals that flexibility experienced by online resellers in Sorong City is largely structurally embedded, granting discretion over working time while simultaneously binding individuals to digital market logics that demand rapid responsiveness and continuous availability.

These findings resonate with Chung and van der Horst's (2018) argument that flexibility is inherently conditional and shaped by individuals' socio-economic positioning. For online resellers, flexibility functions less as a privilege and more as an adaptive survival strategy in contexts characterized by limited formal employment opportunities. From an HRM perspective, this underscores the necessity of situating flexible work within broader discussions of power relations and inequality, rather than treating it as a universally beneficial arrangement.

### Cross-Study Synthesis and Comparative Insights

When compared with studies conducted in formal employment contexts, the findings of this research reveal notable divergences in how flexibility and work-life balance are experienced. Haar et al. (2018) reported that flexible work arrangements tend to enhance job satisfaction and well-being in organizations with structured policies and support systems. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that among online resellers, flexibility often coexists with blurred boundaries and increased role demands.

Further synthesis with Nambisan et al.'s (2019) work on digital entrepreneurship highlights a recurring paradox: digital micro-entrepreneurs enjoy high levels of autonomy while simultaneously facing substantial uncertainty. This study strengthens that insight by providing empirical evidence from a non-metropolitan region in Eastern Indonesia, thereby broadening the geographical and contextual scope of HRM and digital work literature that has traditionally centered on advanced economies and major urban areas.

### Theoretical Implications for HRM Scholarship

Theoretically, this study calls for a reconceptualization of flexible work within HRM research. Flexibility should no longer be treated as a universally positive attribute but as a context-sensitive phenomenon with differentiated consequences across worker groups. This position is consistent with Akkermans and Kubasch (2017), who emphasize the importance of contextualized approaches in understanding career and work dynamics.

Moreover, the findings challenge linear HRM models that position work arrangements as direct determinants of work-life balance. Instead, the relationship appears dynamic and mediated by structural factors such as local economic conditions, social norms, and individual coping strategies. By highlighting these mediating processes, the study contributes to the development of more holistic HRM frameworks capable of capturing the complexity of informal digital work.

### Practical Implications for HRM Practice and Public Policy

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer important insights for HRM practitioners and policymakers involved in digital economic development initiatives. Programs promoting digital entrepreneurship often emphasize technical skills and market access while neglecting issues related to workload management and well-being. This study suggests that such approaches may

inadvertently reinforce an illusion of flexibility that exacerbates work intensification.

Accordingly, policy interventions should integrate HRM-informed perspectives on work sustainability, including training on boundary management, time regulation, and psychological well-being. Local governments may also consider providing institutional support mechanisms that help digital micro-entrepreneurs manage work-related risks more effectively. From an HRM lens, these interventions are critical to ensuring that digital economic growth does not come at the expense of individual well-being.

### **Contextual Reflection: HRM in Informal Digital Economies**

Reflectively, this study underscores that HRM principles are no longer confined to formal organizational settings but are increasingly relevant to understanding work dynamics in informal digital economies. Online resellers in Sorong City effectively act as HR managers for themselves, responsible for regulating work intensity, time allocation, and personal well-being without formal organizational support. This reality necessitates an expansion of HRM scholarship to more inclusively address emerging forms of work outside traditional employment relationships.

By foregrounding local context as an analytical lens, this study demonstrates that HRM practices and experiences are deeply embedded in socio-economic realities. Generalizing HRM theories without contextual sensitivity risks producing policies and managerial practices that fail to address workers' actual needs. Consequently, this research reinforces the importance of contextually grounded and critically informed HRM scholarship in the era of digital and informal work.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study provides empirical and theoretical insights into the dynamics of work arrangements and work-life experiences among online resellers operating within an informal digital economy context in Sorong City. The findings demonstrate that flexible work arrangements, as experienced by online resellers, cannot be simplistically interpreted as either beneficial or detrimental. Instead, flexibility emerges as a context-dependent and ambivalent phenomenon shaped by local socio-economic conditions, market expectations, and individuals' self-management capacities.

From a Human Resource Management perspective, the study reveals that online resellers exercise substantial autonomy in structuring their work, yet this autonomy simultaneously transfers the responsibility for managing work intensity and work-life boundaries entirely to individuals. As a result, flexibility functions not only as a source of control but also as a mechanism that may intensify work demands and blur role boundaries. These findings challenge dominant HRM assumptions that position flexible work as a uniformly positive resource and underscore the importance of contextualizing flexibility within informal and non-standard employment settings.

The study contributes to the broader HRM and work-life balance literature by extending empirical evidence beyond formal organizational environments and metropolitan regions. By foregrounding the experiences of online resellers in Eastern Indonesia, the research highlights the need for HRM frameworks that are sensitive to regional disparities, informal labor structures, and digitally mediated forms of work. Conceptually, the findings support a dynamic and relational understanding of work arrangements and work-life experiences rather than a linear, cause-effect interpretation.

Practically, the results suggest that policies and development initiatives promoting digital entrepreneurship should move beyond narrowly defined economic objectives. Integrating HRM-informed considerations of workload regulation, boundary management, and well-being is essential to fostering sustainable digital work practices. Without such integration, flexibility risks becoming a source of hidden vulnerability rather than empowerment for informal digital workers.

### LIMITATION

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single city, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic and cultural characteristics. While Sorong City provides a valuable empirical context, future studies should consider comparative designs across multiple cities or regions to capture broader variations in informal digital work experiences.

Second, the study relies on self-reported data collected through a cross-sectional survey. Such data may be influenced by respondents' subjective perceptions and are susceptible to common method bias. Longitudinal research designs would enable a more robust examination of how work arrangements and work-life experiences evolve over time, particularly in response to changing market conditions and life stages.

Third, the quantitative approach adopted in this study limits the depth of understanding regarding the subjective meanings and coping strategies employed by online resellers. Future research could benefit from mixed-method or qualitative approaches to explore how individuals interpret flexibility, negotiate role boundaries, and manage well-being in greater detail.

Finally, this study focuses primarily on work arrangements and work-life experiences without explicitly incorporating other relevant HRM constructs such as social support, career sustainability, or digital labor regulation. Integrating these variables in future research may offer a more comprehensive understanding of informal digital work and further advance theoretical development within HRM scholarship.

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Work Arrangement Dynamics and Work–Life Experiences among Online Resellers  
Susana M. W. Mustika, Charliany Hetharia



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