

# **Nonstandard Work and Structural Arrangements: Implications for Work Organizations**

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Labor market surveys around the globe clearly give evidence of rising numbers of nonstandard workers (Fu, 2012; Houseman & Osawa, 2003; McCourt and Eldridge, 2003; Ozeki & Wakisaka, 2006; Wooden and Warren, 2003), while proving the increasing adaptation and facilitation of nonstandard work arrangements in the work organizations. Further, the trend toward greater use of nonstandard work is likely to continue (Gleason, 2006). Nonstandard work, which is also known as ‘non-regular work’ (Fu, 2012), ‘contingent work’, (Barker and Christensen, 1998; Lundy, Roberts, and Becker, 2006), or ‘shadow work’ (Gleason, 2006), continue to evolve in response to global economic challenges and consequent employer decisions (Zeytinglu and Cooke, 2002). Strategic staffing (integrating nonstandard workers into corporate plan) (Christensen, 1998) proves that arranging nonstandard work within organizations has become a strategic decision (Ghosh, Willinger, and Ghosh, 2009).

Structural arrangements within organizations determine organizational and individual performance outcomes (efficiency - profitability, productivity, market standing - morale, adaptability etc.) (Pugh and Hickson, 2007), internal health (Nadler and Tushman, 1984), and thus, assure proper functioning of organizations. Division of work, grouping of work, standardization, formalization, centralization or decentralization, and coordination and integration become focal concepts in arranging work effectively. The role structures (or different configurations) would be resultant to such arrangements (Mintzberg, 1979). Thus, the knowledge of diverse structural arrangements for work within organizations informs organizational practitioners the better use of their workforce. Ample writings in management and organization studies have been devoted to theorization and empiricism-based discussions of structural arrangements of standard (or regular) work in organizations. Structural dimensions, contextual dimensions, contingencies, configurations (Pugh and Hickson, 2007; Mintzberg, 1979; 1989; Donaldson, 2002; Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) stand to be some of the examples for them. However, the structural dimensions those facilitate or accommodate nonstandard work at work organizations remains yet to be investigated. The present study attempts to fill this void.

Accordingly, the research question addressed in this study is: What type of organizational structures would facilitate nonstandard work arrangements in work organizations. At the present stage, it is conducted as a review, which examines the theoretical underpinnings that would inform possible directions for understanding the structural dimensions and diverse configurations of nonstandard work. This review basically composites two sections, namely, the literature related to occupational categories, nature and characteristics, and functional, numerical, temporal and spatial flexibilities of nonstandard work (Atkinson, 1984; Blyton, 1998; Lahteenmak, 2002; Skorstad, 2009; Smith, 1997; Voudouris, 2007), and the theoretical background of structural dimensions and organizational configurations.

This search will lead to reveal possible structural arrangements for nonstandard work, thus providing implications for organizational practitioners for better configuring their work organizations still adhering to cost effectiveness, while allowing diverse work styles for workers.

In line with that, converging two research areas such as nonstandard work arrangements and organizational structure, this study makes two major contributions to the existing practice and theory. First, it accords attention to the structural imperatives in designing nonstandard work arrangements. Moreover, the possibility of new arrangements of nonstandard work with new configurations (or role structures) will be suggested. Second, it opens avenues for researching into new directions of structural arrangements for diverse working styles.

**Keywords:** nonstandard work, organizational structure, configuration, flexibility

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