

Does the availability of schedule flexibility increase employees' affective commitment?



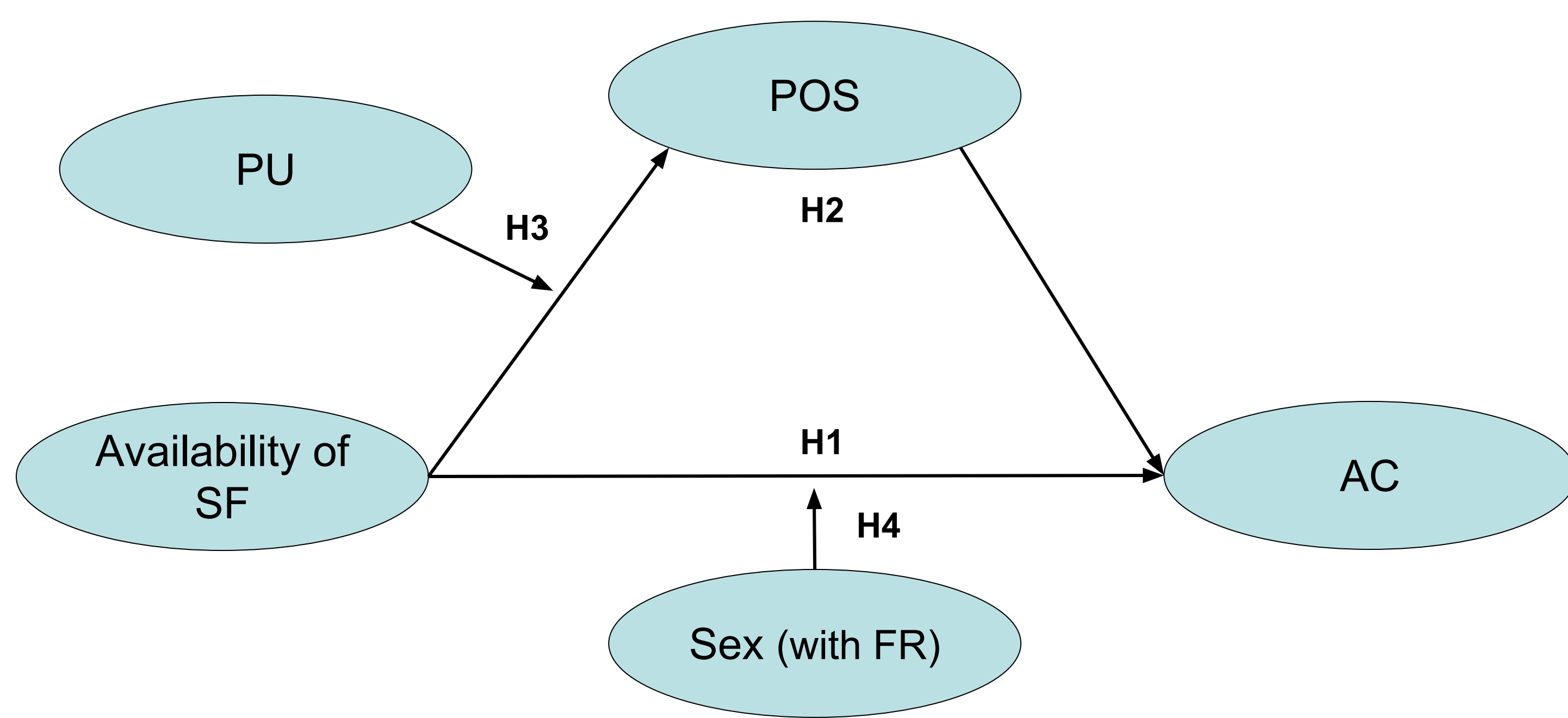
Introduction

This study investigated if the **availability of schedule flexibility (SF)** improves employees' **affective commitment (AC)** as it was found in previous studies (e.g. Butts et al., 2013; Grover & Crooker, 1995). It was suggested that the effect might be indirect and **perceived organizational support (POS)** was proposed as a mediator. This would highlight the importance for employees to feel supported by their organizations in this matter. Another factor is **perceived usability (PU)** which represents the actual possibility of using the offered SF. Studies have

revealed that some employees do not feel comfortable using SF because they fear punishments (e.g. Eaton, 2003). Therefore a moderating effect of perceived usability on the relationship between SF and POS was proposed. Further, it was evaluated if the relationship between SF and AC might be different for **women and men with family responsibilities (FR)** since men still report to invest less time in family responsibilities than women (Hill, 2005). To look at this interaction the participant's gender roles were assessed.

Hypotheses

- H1:** The availability of SF has a significant relationship with AC.
- H2:** POS mediates the relationship between the availability of SF and AC.
- H3:** PU moderates the relationship between the availability of SF and POS.
- H4:** The relationship between the availability of SF and AC is stronger for women than for men with FR.



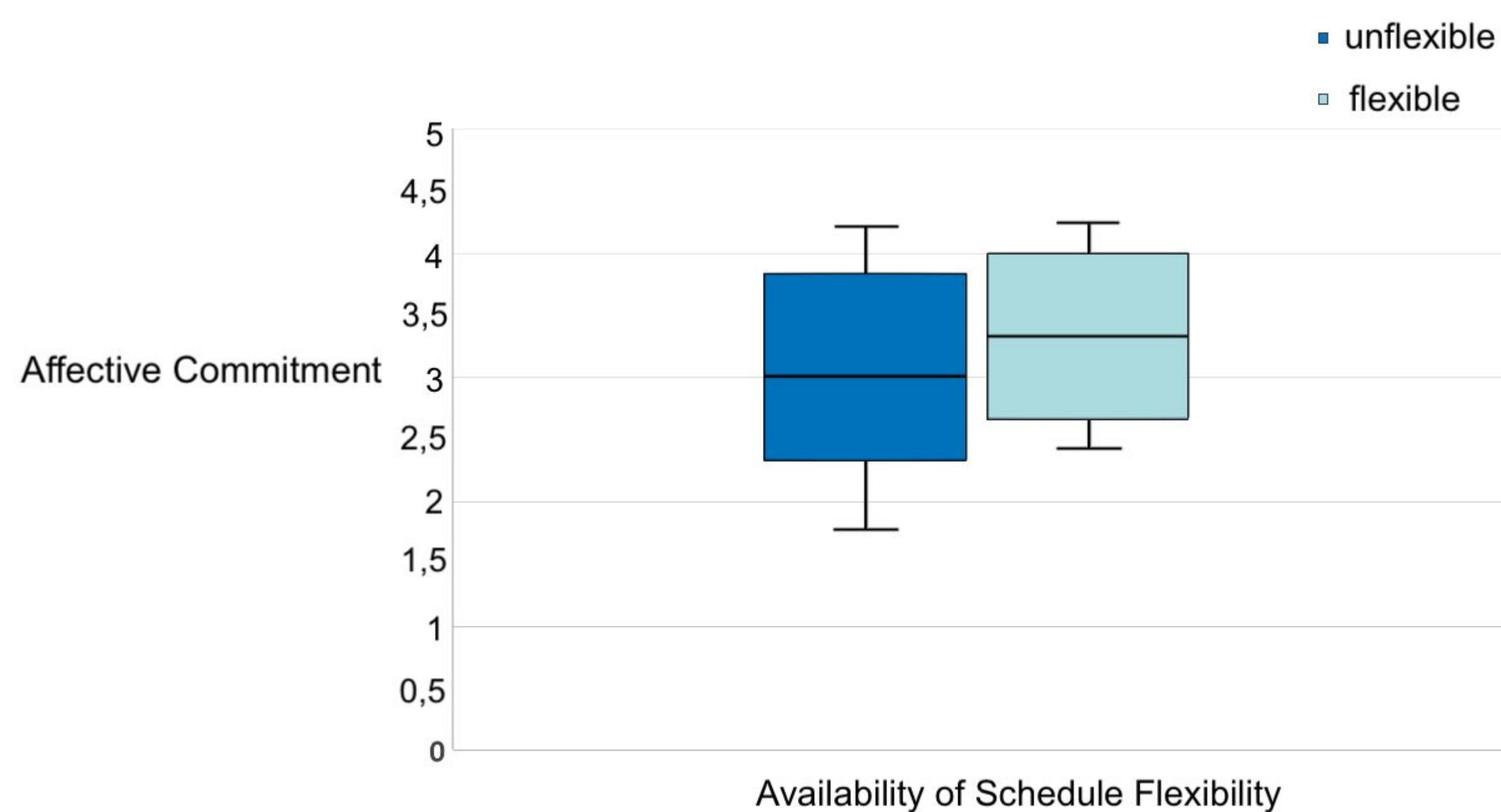
Sample, Method & Instruments

N = 328 (171 clickworker.de, 25 ct/person) | ♂ = 54.6% | age 31-45 = 42.7% > 30 hours per week | no teachers | no self-employed
 Online-Questionnaire | t-Test | Mediation & Moderation in PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013)

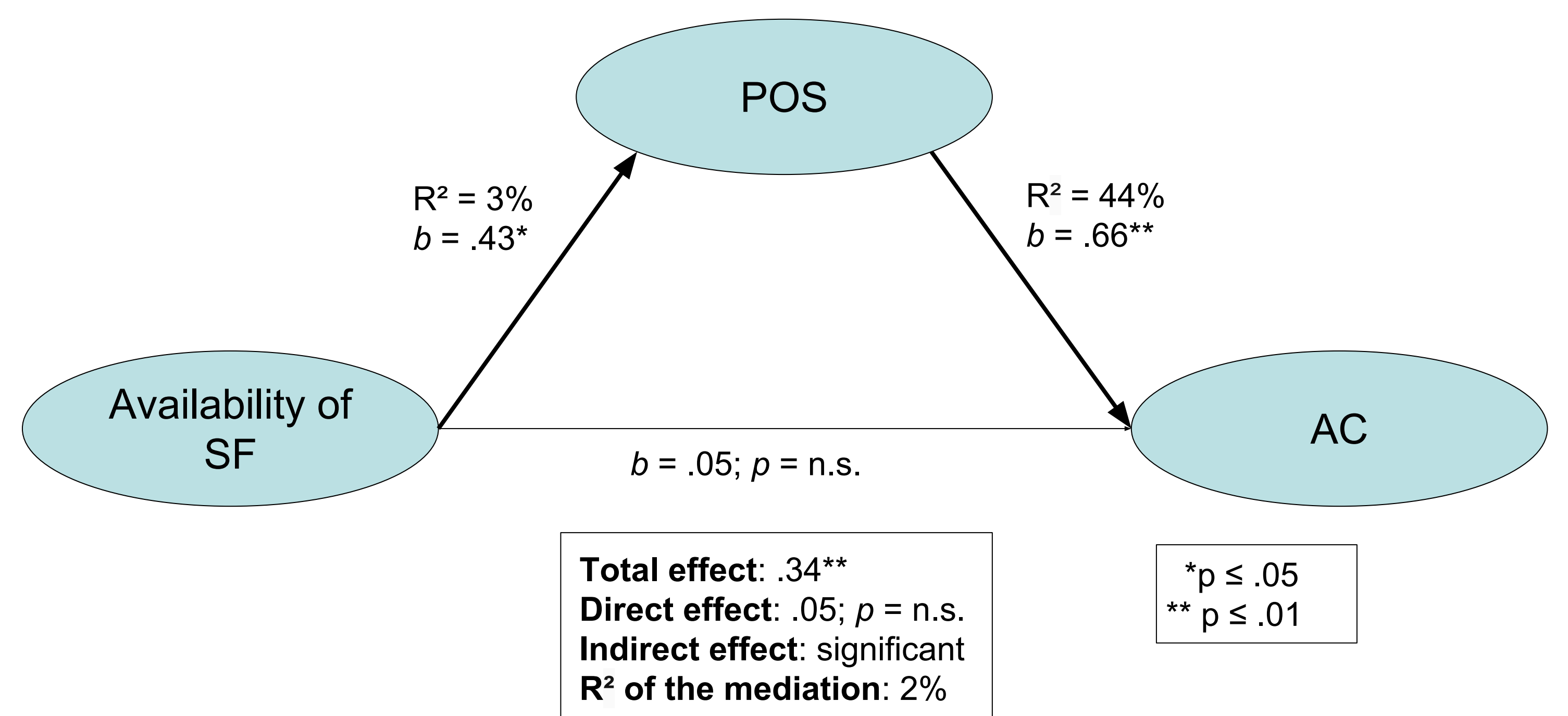
Dimension	Mean	SD	α	Scale	Items	Sample item
Availability of Schedule Flexibility (SF) (self-constructed)	-	-	-	dichotomous	4	fixed hours, flexitime with/without core hours, trust-based hours
Affective Commitment (AC) (Allen & Meyer, 1990)	3.34	.98	.73	metric	3	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.
Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 1986)	3.28	.91	.84	metric	4	The organization really cares about my well-being.
Perceived Usability (PU) (self-constructed)	3.72	.99	.84	metric	2	The firm culture supports me in making use of flexible work arrangements.
Family responsibilities (FR) (Shockley & Allen, 2007)	-	-	-	dichotomous	3	childcare, care of the elderly, household
Gender Roles (Braun, 2014)	-	-	-	dichotomous	4	A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.

Results

✓ **H1:** The means of affective commitment for flexible employees were **significantly higher** (3.41) than for non-flexible employees (3.00).



✓ **H2:** POS **fully mediates** the relationship between availability of SF and AC.



✗ **H3:** The moderating effect of perceived usability on the relationship between the availability of SF and POS was **not significant**.

✗ **H4:** The moderation analysis of sex on the relationship between SF and AC was **not significant**.

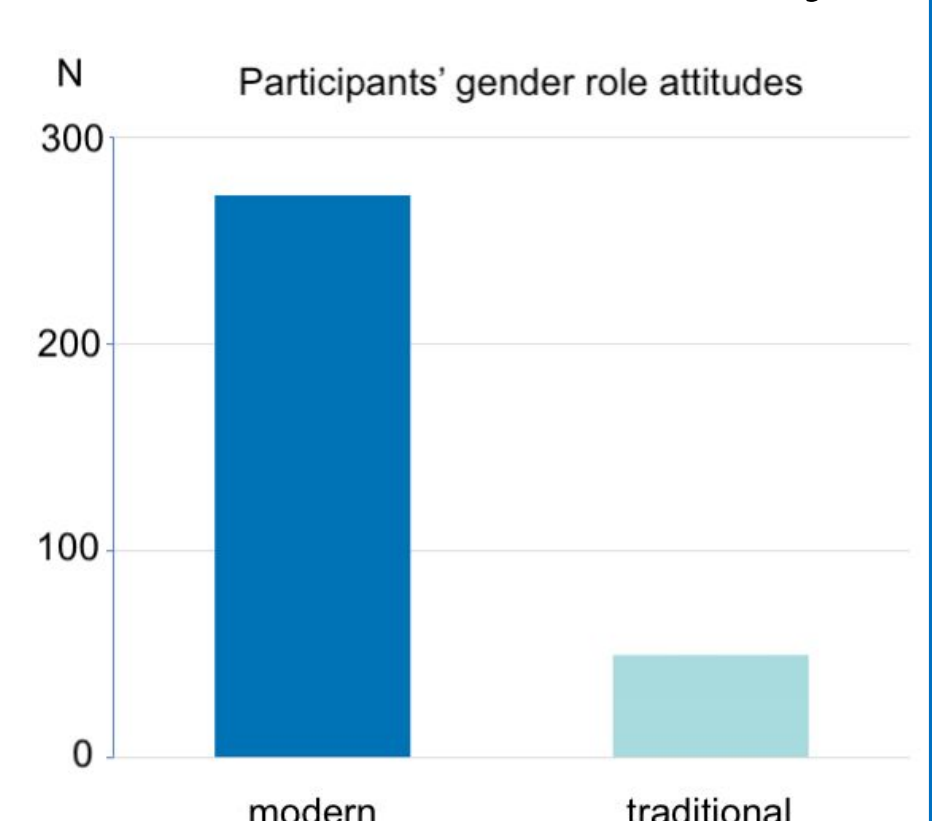
Discussion & Implications

Due to the many **positive effects of AC**, e.g. a stronger feeling of belonging to the organization and fewer turnover intentions (Grover & Crooker, 1995), its promotion via SF is beneficial for employees and employers. The results highlight the **importance of POS**, which fully mediated the connection between SF and AC. Providing SF can be interpreted as a sign that the organization (Spence, 1973) cares about its employees' well-being (Grover & Crooker, 1995).

Nevertheless, **PU** was not found to moderate the interaction between SF and POS. Explanations could be scale inconsistencies and a smaller sample. It is still important to mind that positive outcomes could be smaller or even missing if supervisors or coworkers do not support the offered SF (Grover & Crooker, 1995). No differences between men and women with family responsibilities were found. An explanation could be the **changed gender role attitude in today's society** (see chart), where a positive social view about working mothers and caring fathers has emerged (Pongrácz, 2011).

- ❖ Employers should try to offer support to their employees by showing interest in their well-being (e.g. **counselling, focus groups**).
- ❖ Employees should be given the possibility to adapt time schedules to their individual needs, which stresses the importance of **informal policies** where a **bigger scope in terms of time management** is available (Eaton, 2001).
- ❖ It is recommended to focus on performance than solely on working hours.

- ❖ When offering SF, women and men should be therefore addressed equally.



References

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