FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Omondi, A. A., & K'Obonyo, P.

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Omondi, A. A., & K'Obonyo, P.

Ph.D Candidate, Department of Business Administration, University of Nairobi [UoN], Nairobi, Kenya
Prof., Department of Business Administration, University of Nairobi [UoN], Nairobi, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The business case for the provision of flexible work schedules relies on their ability to enhance recruitment and retention, job satisfaction and commitment and reduction of work-life conflict among employees. It makes intuitive sense that offering work-life balance practices would attract individuals to an organization, and that using these practices would result in improved employee attitudes and behaviours within the organization. However, the critical literature review on flexible work schedule revealed that despite the provision of these schedules, employee take-up may be low due to concerns that using work-life practices will result in reduced advancement opportunities or perceptions of the employee as being less committed to the organization. The need for supportive organizational culture, team work, proper communication and training of managers may be at the fore front in addressing this issue. The article offered a critical review of the literature on flexible work schedules through examining the types of flexible work schedules and supporting theoretical foundations. It also examined the conditions necessary for the success of flexible work schedules and the possible outcomes. There was further evaluation of the challenges involved and recommendation therefore.

Key word: Flexible Work Schedules, Work-Life Practices, Employee Commitment & Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Flexible work schedules is a significant issues in this 21st C. Nevertheless, it is not until in the recent past that these practices came to be perceived as beneficial for both employees and employers (Clutterbuck, 2003). Studies supporting the benefits of flexible work schedules recognize the positive although indirect contribution of these practices to organizational profit (Morgan, 2009). Organizations and employees have realized the potential advantages of the practices as far as creating a satisfied workforce, promotion of employee well-being, reducing the rate of absenteeism, employee commitment and improvement in organization citizenship behaviour is concerned (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills & Smeaton, 2003).

Flexible work schedules refer to practices that allow individuals to decide and manage their work schedules (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell & MacVicar, 2006). On the other hand, Gardiner & Tomlinson (2009) observe with regards to hours of work, based on these schedules, the employee is allowed to have some control over their job and can decide on the timing as well as the place where the job should be done (Lambert, Marler, & Gueutal, 2008). Flexible work practices are perceived by organizations as a strategy for obtaining and retaining high quality staff (Cole 2006). This has been a major basis for achieving a competitive advantage given the unique contributions of the highly satisfied and committed workforce (Nadeem & Henry 2003).

On forms of flexible work schedules, flexible work schedules occur in many forms for example teleworking, flexitime, compressed work week, leave, job share, phased retirement, contract work, part time jobs and term time working but the most common forms of flexible working have been categorized as follows:

On flexibility at the place of work, a common form of flexible work schedule relates to the location or place of work. These consist of telework or flexplace, and informal teleworking often combined with nonstandard working time. Under a telework or flexplace schedule, employees work from a location outside of their physical organizational setting. Telework or flexplace is defined as a flexible work schedule that allows employees to work in varied locations, typically using technologies transmitting communication and information (Pérez, Sánchez, & de Luis Carnicer, 2002). Although there are many forms of telework or flexplace, there are four defining types that capture most of these: telecommuting, satellite offices, neighborhood work centers, and mobile workers (Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Telecommuters work from home on a regular basis and may or may not use technology in their work. Employees at satellite and neighborhood work offices work outside the home and organization. However, employees at satellite offices are from a single organization; while employees at neighborhood work centers can be from multiple organizations that share office space in a local suburban area rather than commute to a downtown center. Such opportunities allow employees to engage in regular interactions with work colleagues, while reducing the commuting time and the need to purchase urban office space.

On flexibility in the number of days employees work, this type of flexibility is most often associated with the idea of the compressed workweek. It involves the relocation of time worked into fewer and longer blocks during the week. In a compressed workweek, employees may work for longer hours for a few days, for example, four 10-hours days instead of the normal five 8-hour days. Employees who have access to and use this type of flexibility gain an extra day each week to spend in life pursuits outside of the workplace. Employers who implement such a workplace approach across the organization can realize substantial cost savings as well as higher employee performance (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999). In addition, environmentally-conscious organizations can also produce less pollutants and contaminants by

moving to this type of work schedule. Besides this, there is increased productivity due to decreased absenteeism and turnover; it provides an inexpensive way to improve employee morale and creative opportunity to retain staff.

On flexibility in the number of hours employees work or amount of work, this refers to flexibility in terms of the amount of workload or the amount of working time using some methods such as: Reduced time or workload which is any reduction in the total number of working hours for 40 hours/week in exchange for lower pay (Kossek and Michel, 2011). It includes: Part time jobs under which employees are required to work for less than 35 hours in week (Christensen and Staines, 1990); secondly there is job sharing under which two employees voluntarily share work responsibilities where each works less than full-time (Christensen & Staines, 1990).

On flexibility in timing of work, the most common method used here is flexi-time; others include shift work and contingent work. Flextime is defined as flexible hour's schedules that allow workers to alter workday start and finish times. Here, employees have the discretion to vary the times they arrive and leave work, within management parameters, to meet their personal needs (Avery & Zabel, 2001). Flextime schedules have a predetermined range of times in which employees can arrive and leave, with a core band in between work starting and stopping times when all employees must be present. The need for the core hours is to help managers with the coordination of meetings and supervision (Van Dyne, Kossek & Lobel, 2008). Flextime policies sometimes incorporate daily carryover, where employees can vary their work schedules in regards to daily time spent at work, as long as they spend a predetermined set amount of weekly time at work. This is in contrast to traditional work arrangements that require employees to work a standard time daily. Flexitime is mostly applicable to professional and higher level employees than lower level employees. Workers in service and manufacturing

jobs also have less access than jobs in other industries (Kossek and Distelberg, 2009).

On flexibility to allow for short-term breaks in employment or time off, receiving considerable less attention than other flexible work schedules are part-year work, sabbaticals, vacations, and leaves. These flexible work arrangements allow for short-term breaks in employment without losing one's job. These are increasingly important flexible work schedule forms as they enable individuals to maintain their relationships with their employers, yet have a break from work responsibilities. These breaks help individuals to engage in renewal, undergo new skill development, travel, and attend to care giving, health demands, or prevent burnout. Under a flexible work arrangement that allows sabbaticals, employees take a prolonged paid time away from work and expect to return to their same jobs at the end of the sabbatical (Etzion, 2003). Sabbaticals are traditionally linked to universities and academic positions as a means to allow for skill enhancement or renewal after heavy teaching loads or administrative work. Although less available in the private sector and they are often distributed.

On drivers for the growth of flexible work schedules, the growth and expansion in the use of flexible work schedules can be viewed from macro- organizational perspective, such factors as demographic labor market shift, cost saving, environmental and technological forces are the driving force for flexible work schedule growth, making them vital for employer adoption. Demographic labor market shifts has created a workforce that increasingly needs and values flexibility. Statistics have shown an expansive growth in the number of individuals who must ensure family responsibilities are managed while they are at work. For instance, today's fathers play a greater role in care giving and value flexibility more than those of previous generations (Pleck, 1997). The current generation of workers entering the workforce, the millennials take a

more balanced approach to work than previous generations (Deal, 2007).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Border Theory

The work/family border theory was developed by Clark (2000). The theory tries to explain how people manage to draw negotiation between their life within their families and responsibilities at the workplace and the boundaries between these spheres as they try to strike a balance. The key aspect of this theory is the idea that work and family make up two distinct domains or spheres which however have a bearing on each other. Clarke (2009) observes that this is so due to the fact that there are generally different cultures both at family level and work level which thus means an individual has to transit between these two cultures on a daily basis. Whereas the transition could be slight in cases where acceptable behavior in both cases is more or less similar, there are cases where there is massive contrast between the two spheres of an employee's life (Othman, 2009). This could be due to the fact that individuals are motivated by different things in both spheres like income and accomplishment at work and close relationships and happiness in family (Clark, 2000). For this reason, between work and home, there exist borders which might be temporal, physical or psychological. Clark (2000) observes that these borders might be temporal given the differences in time an individual cross to another domain or physical as elaborated by the walls of a workplace or home. Similarly, a border can be psychological in terms of the difference in thoughts, behavior patterns or emotions one has when in a given domain (Othman, 2009).

Spill over Theory

Spillover theory states that general behavior, emotions, attitudes as well as stress can be carried over from life domain to another (Wilensky, 1960).

This therefore means that in cases of an adult who is working, the emotions, behaviors and attitudes can easily be carried from work to their family and vice-versa. Spillover can be either negative or positive spillover (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). Negative spillover can be illustrated with the type of conflicts it results into. According to Haar & Bardoel (2000) work-life conflict can be typified into three categories, time based, strain based and behavior based conflict. All these conflicts generally sum up the problems that employees undergo as they try to negotiate between work and family. Strain conflict can for instance be exhibited by the divisions caused as one exhibits different behavior within each domain or role. On the other hand, failure to adequately find time to attend to roles in both one's family and at work elaborates time conflict.

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory can be explained by the concept of reciprocity. Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester & Jeong (2010) observe that there are two forms of reciprocity. The first form is the obligation to reciprocate, which is the belief that someone will return a favor or engage in a behavior because they feel obligated to pay someone back. The second form of reciprocity is expected reciprocity. Expected reciprocity is the belief that if a person does something for another person, he or she should get some sort of benefit in return, in the near future. Beham (2011) agree that employees will act in accordance with social exchange theory. Blau (1964) argues that employees are continually participating in a give-and take relationship with their employer whereby one party gives socio-emotional resources that are desired by the other in exchange for others that they desire. This exchange relationship is maintained through principles of mutual reciprocity or gains, that is, if you scratch my back, I will scratch yours, and of trust and respect.

Signaling Theory

According to Grover & Crooker (1995) Signaling theory has been used to explain how flexible work schedules can lead to positive perceptions. By offering flexible work schedules, organizations show that they support employee's well-being by allowing them to attend to their personal needs such as child care or elder care, attendance to health matters like exercise and professional development. In feeling supported by their organizations, employees may experience more control to cope with work–family demands. This will in turn yield into job satisfaction and commitment among the employees and hence higher productivity). Randel, and Stevens (2006) explained that the availability of flexible work schedules may lead to perceptions of control over work–family matters and positive effect, which can help employees cope with work–family conflict.

Psychological Contract Theory

The psychological contract theory explains a two-way exchange process of perceived promises and obligations between employees and their employers. According to Armstrong (2006) it is an open ended agreement about what the individual and the organization expect to give and receive in return in the employment relationship. The contract represents a dynamic and reciprocal deal. Armstrong (2006) posits that the theory holds that employees expect to be treated fairly as human beings, to be provided with work that utilizes their abilities, to be rewarded equitably according to their contribution, to be able to display competence, to have opportunities for further growth, to know what is expected of them and to be given feedback on how well they are doing. On the other hand, employers expect employees to do their best on behalf of the organization, to be fully committed to its values, to be compliant and loyal and to enhance the image of the organization to its customers and suppliers. Bratton and Gold (2007) contend that at the heart of the

psychological contract theory is an exchange of individual employee commitment, motivation and task performance beyond expected outcomes by the organization. According to Lam (2001) these actions which are beyond formally prescribed roles and job descriptions that is extra role behaviour rather than role behaviour is what is called employee productivity. The provision of flexible work schedules is therefore perceived by employees as a favour that deserves to be reciprocated.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

Quality Communication

There should be continuous and advanced communication between employees, clients, colleagues, teams and management. The management should also maintain proper communication with employees on the available work schedules, work locations, work progress, and expected dates for completion of work. Lack of Proper communication of the availability of these practices both to employees and their supervisors may hinder their use and consequently their intended influence on organizational effectiveness. An issue frequently cited in accounts of flexible work schedules implementation is lack of use. Research conducted amongst organizations in the United Kingdom suggests that employees often remain unaware of their entitlement to flexible work schedules (Kodz, Harper, & Dench, 2002). Even when employees are fully informed of the practices available to them, many display a reluctance to use them. Relative to female employees, few men make use of family leave, choosing instead to take vacation or other discretionary days off upon the birth of a child or other family-related event (Pleck, 1993).

Supportive Organization Culture

For effective introduction and implementation of flexible work schedules there must be a work place organization culture that supports and values such practices. Flexible work schedules must be valued and appreciated both at the management level and employee level. The notion that using flexible work schedules will have a negative impact on their career prospects appears to be a powerful demotivator for employees' use of these practices (Kodz et al., 2002). The study by Kirby and Krone (2002) found that working part-time is incompatible with promotion and access to a range of higher status male-dominated occupations, and Junor (1998) study revealed that the proportion of female part-time employees categorized as unprompted was 96.7 percent and this data was similar for male part-time employees. This perception is reinforced by organizational cultures unsupportive of the schedules.

Favourable Job Characteristics

Part-time workers and small business owners report greater schedule flexibility than do wage and salaried employees (Golden 2001). Many studies have found that workers who have access to flexible schedule tend to be exempted from overtime regulation and to hold jobs characterized by high status, high earnings, and opportunities for advancement (Bond and Galinsky, 2006). The nature of occupation and organization determine whether or which schedule is feasible. For example, assembly line workers must be present on a given shift to produce products. Flextime is not a practical option for these workers; however, other types of alternative work schedules such as compressed workweeks are possible (Christensen & Staines, 1990). In contrast, employers who handle customer calls from a variety of time zones may use flextime to staff extended work hours. Management or professional workers generally have greater job autonomy than other types of workers in beginning and ending their days. Smaller businesses may not have sufficient staffing to allow workers discretion in work scheduling.

Supportive Legislation

Legislation can dictate whether or not an employer can offer employees a flexible schedule. Some state legislation establishes the minimum and maximum number of hours an employee can work within a seven-day period (Olmsted & Smith, 1994). At the federal level, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 currently precludes offering private sector employees any flexible schedule that involves working more than 40 hours per week without overtime compensation. This restriction was amended for government workers in the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978. Consequently, federal government employees should have greater access to flexible work schedules as compared to state and local government or private sector employees. According to the Kenyan Employment Act, Cap 226, every employee is entitled to at least one rest day in every period of seven days. After every twelve consecutive months of service with his or her employer, an employee is entitled to not less than twenty-one working days of leave with full pay; others include maternity leave and paternity leave.

Employee Involvement

When employees have input into decision-making processes in their organization, initiatives are more likely to have their intended effect (Grawitch, Ledford, Ballard, & Barber, 2009). Employee involvement early in the process can also help to build ownership over new initiatives, leading to a desire to utilize new programs and less resistance during implementation. Finally, encouraging employees to provide feedback on evaluation and refinement instead of merely communicating results and potential changes, sustains feelings of ownership throughout the change process.

Employee Demographic Characteristics

The employee characteristics determine the need for and the use of flexible work schedules among the employees that would result into an improvement in organization performance. The aspects of employee demographic characteristics that have been linked to flexible work schedules include gender, age, education, and marital and family status. Balancing work and family is often more difficult for women compared to men because of the disproportionate burden of the family responsibilities (Bird, 2006). Women often face uneven distribution of child care and other domestic responsibilities which become a major challenge in their work and a barrier in their career advancement (Cross and Linehan, 2006). In many African societies women are expected to share the large responsibility of family care. There is also a notion that work family roles are largely shipped by stereo typical gender roles (Gutek et. al. 1991) due to the traditionally held belief of men as bread-winners and women as house maker. This social construction of gender makes motherhood therefore less negotiable as compared to fatherhood. These therefore imply that women rather than men are inclined to use more of flexible work schedules in order to balance between work and family responsibilities. Although in the current generation men are increasingly appreciating the need for a more balanced life in order to take up their parental responsibilities.

OUTCOMES OF FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

Previously flexible work schedules were perceived to benefit only employees at the expense of the organization; however, research has since proved that these practices have a positive impact to both the employer and employee. Such benefits include: Job satisfaction and organization commitment, lower turnover intentions, reduced work–family conflict, organization performance, employee growth and development, improved employee health and safety and employee job autonomy.

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are among the most commonly studied outcomes of flexibility. Scholars have defined job satisfaction as an employee's affective or emotional reaction to a job, based on comparing actual outcomes with desired outcomes (Cranny, Smith & Stone 1992). Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982). Employees with access to flexible work schedules report high morale and job satisfaction (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999), as well as high levels of company loyalty, discretionary effort, and organizational commitment (Bond and Galinsky 2006). Flexible work schedules is likely attributable to employee perceptions that their organizations value and have concern for them (McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010). It increases the employees control over their lives due to other opportunities to work during times more suitable to personal needs. In addition to this it improves employee's perception about their employer and the overall positive feeling towards the employer which in turn imparts on organization commitment and employee job satisfaction. Although the provision of flexible work schedule is perceived to enhance job satisfaction and commitment, it is possible that the employee may derive satisfaction from other thing such as compensation and promotion and not necessarily from these schedules.

Previous studies have shown that flexible work schedules availability is negatively related to turnover intentions (McNall et al., 2010). Grover and Crooker (1995) found that individuals with access to family-responsive policies such as flexible hours and community childcare services reported significantly lower turnover intentions than did employees without access to these policies. Signaling theory (Casper & Harris, 2008) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) have been used as explanations as to flexible work

schedules relate to attachment to the organization. Organizations offering flexible work schedules provide a signal that they care about their employees' well-being. Such signs promote greater psychological commitment and lower tendency to quit (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These results suggest that availability of policies can influence turnover intentions when people perceive these policies as a sign that the organization cares for their well-being. Despite these findings, it can be argued that not all the employees may perceive these policies as a signal for organizations' care of their welfare, others may feel that it is the obligation of the organization to provide them with these programme and thus they will have no impact on their intentions to leave the organization, furthermore, it is difficult to predict whether the employees will perceive these schedules as priviledges or rights.

Flexible work schedules were created to help employees cope with work–family conflict (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008). There are two types of work–family conflict: Strain-based conflict, which occurs when participating in one role produces stress that is carried into the other and time-based conflict, which happens when participating in one role impedes time spent in another role. This interference can occur from work-to-family and from family-to-work. Drawing on the notion of domain specificity (Frone, 2003), predictors that reside in the work domain tend to be more highly related to work–family conflict while predictors that reside in the family domain tend to be more highly related to family-to-work. A previous meta-analysis examining the antecedents of work–family conflict showed that work practices were more strongly related with work-to-family than with family-to-work (Byron, 2005). By offering flexible work schedules, organizations show that they support employees' well-being. In feeling supported by their organizations, employees may experience more control to cope with work–family demands (Wayne, Randel & Stevens, 2006). Nevertheless, even with availability of

flexible work schedules there is still likelihood of negative spillover from either side of the domains especially for those employees who are not able to plan their time properly; they will still find their work encroaching into their family life as they try to meet the deadlines. Moreover, other forms of flexible work schedules for example telework has resulted into work being diffused over all hours of the day or week extending later into the night and starting earlier in the morning, and also spreading into vacations and weekends (Hamermesh, 1999). Similarly, more and more individuals are casually teleworking in planes, trains, and automobiles, or in public places like coffee shops and restaurants thereby enhancing work- family conflict.

Kelly, Kossek, Hammer, Durham, Bray, Chermack, Murphy & Kaskubar (2008) posit that flexible work schedules like flexitime can have an impact on organizational Performance through two processes: firm revenues and firm costs. Flextime can increase firm revenues through attracting higher-quality candidates and increasing the marginal productivity of existing employees. Flextime can also decrease costs through the reduction of turnover and absenteeism. Flexible work arrangements when properly managed, create a win-win scenario for the organization and employees (Rousseau, 2001). Thus, organizational justice can be maintained without standardization by building trust among organizational members, clarifying responsibilities and role requirements, and providing transparent and concrete performance appraisals that inform the provision as well as continued provision of those work arrangements (Greenberg, Roberge, Ho, & Rousseau, 2004). Moreover, publicly recognizing high performers with work flexibility may send a message to employees that such arrangements are a reward for consistent high performance, are only continued given consistent performance results. On the contrary, the provision of these programmes alone is not a guarantee that there will be an improvement in

the performance of the organization, there must be Professional discipline among the employees. There is also need for control and measurement; proper guidelines for managing the use of flexitime and for disciplining employees immediately and effectively for misuse are necessary, measurements of outcomes or outputs and productivity to control misuse are necessary and the programmes themselves must also be tailed to the employee's needs (Downes, & Koekemoer, 2011).

Work flexibility may also provide employees with much-needed flexibility or time to engage in healthier lifestyles thereby resulting in improved health and safety. For example, there are strong empirical links between flexible work schedules and physiological or psychological health outcomes (Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). Perceived work flexibility predicts better sleep behaviors, physical activity, and participation in stress management practices (Grzywacz, Carlson & Shulkin, 2008)). Moreover, control over time away from work counteracts job stress and helps to maintain a person's well-being. Therefore, worker's well-being significantly increases with each additional day off from work. With improvement in employee health the rate of absenteeism is likely to reduce and this is an added advantage to the organization as it possible that the employees will meet their production targets leading to improved organization performance. On the contrary, the full implications of work-life initiatives on worker wellbeing have yet to be fully explored. For example, a compressed workweek may have adverse health outcomes due to long hours (Knauth, 2007), but many studies find no such health detriments and substantial improvements in work-life balance (Bambra, Whitehead, Sowden, Akers, & Petticrew, 2008). In addition to the fore mentioned, flexible work schedules such as informal telework that forces employee to extend working hours even up to late in the night and double shifts raises health questions that need to be explored for examples employees rarely have regular

hours of sleeping time which can be dangerous to their health.

A flexible work schedule enhances employee job autonomy. Autonomy is the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in doing the work. It is considered fundamental in building a sense of responsibility in employees. Although most employees are willing to work within the broad constraints of an organization, employees want a certain degree of freedom. Autonomy has become very important to people in the workplace. For example, a salesperson is considered to be highly autonomous by scheduling his or her own work day and deciding on the most effective approach to use for each customer without supervision. As predicted by the job characteristic model, employee job autonomy is significant as it enhances employee job satisfaction and motivation and consequently his or her performance on the job (Hackman and Oldham 1975). In as much as the employees would like to decide on where, when and how they want to carry out their jobs, the management must provide proper guidance and establish proper measures and control to ensure that the employees do not abuse these priviledges and work towards achievement of the goals of the organizations. This calls also for professional discipline among the employees to ensure that they meet their individual targets (Downes, & Koekemoer, 2011).

CHALLENGES OF FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

Flexible work schedules have been observed to have a number of challenges. For instance, Grzywacz, Carlson & Shulkin (2008) argue that although it enables organizations to extend working hours, setting up and maintaining a time keeping systems will always come up with additional costs which might not necessarily be associated with remuneration. This may include power and water costs that are incurred

during the extended working hours. Furthermore, measuring the productivity of those employees who use flexible work schedules has always been considered a challenge. The success of these schedules will therefore require proper assessment on the feasibility and sustainability of these programmes and proper budgeting in line with the foreseeable costs. There is also need for proper training of the managers on areas to do with implementation, supervision and control measures of these schedules to boost the managers' competence and skills in these related areas to enhance the achievement of the objectives in the use of these schedules.

In addition to the above, managers are likely to be burdened more with this kind of arrangement especially, with regard to communication; supervision and dealing with scheduling of employees working time (Towers-Perrin, 2001). This is occasioned by the fact that employees' reporting and leaving time differs and therefore the management has to organize for different schedules during which they can supervise the workers. In fact, this is one of the reasons that make some managers not to embrace this kind of work arrangement (Sweet, Pitt-Catsouphes, & Besen, 2014). Furthermore, managers and organizational leaders may discourage flexible work schedules implicitly or explicitly because of their reluctance to relinquish control (Dancaster, 2006). The need for training of managers on the implementation and supervision of employees' using these schedules is therefore paramount for the success of these programmes. A part from this, there should be programmes specifying time periods where all the employees are expected at work stations to make it easier for communication and supervision. There is also need for the management to find out the type of jobs within the organization that will allow for flexibility since in most cases flexibility is easier to achieve in routine jobs as opposed to non-routine ones.

Besides the foregoing, the employees themselves might also resist flexible work schedules, if a certain kind of freedom and tolerance accompanies the already existing system and if there are no proper communication on the benefits in the use of such schedules (Podnar & Golob, 2010). Above this, is the fact that even though, flexible work schedules have been known to reduce the frequency of workplace conflicts, resentment might arise if the nature of work does not allow other employees to practice this arrangement for the need of business continuity especially with the customer service staff (Al-Rajudi, 2012). For successful implementation of these schedules, therefore there must be effective communication to the employees on the benefits that will be realized from using these programmes, for those whose nature of work may not allow for the use the available schedules, other alternatives should be provided in order to win their support for these programmes.

A part from the foregoing, there is possible stigma or career penalties associated with using flexible work schedules. A number of previous research support the notion that workers who make use of flexible work schedules suffer negative perceptions from colleagues and superiors (Allen, 2001). These employees are perceived by co-workers as having lower levels of organizational commitment, which was thought to affect the subsequent allocation of organizational rewards such as career advancement opportunities and salary. Participation in flexible work schedules makes an employee less visible at work, which in turn, may form the obstacle for their career development and promotion prospects (Campbell & Clark, 2000). Furthermore, employees using flexible work schedules may be perceived as less committed to their organization and work (Allen, 2001), which may also jeopardize their career development. A study by Kirby & Krone (2002) found that working part-time is incompatible with promotion and access

to a range of higher status male-dominated occupations. The negative career consequences make more employees reluctant to use these schedules despite their availability. The success of flexible work arrangement will hence call for a change of attitude of both the employees and management towards those who opt for these schedules and supportive relationships right from the management to the employees. The culture of team work must be inculcated in the employees and management for those organizations planning to offer flexible work schedules.

The other challenge is on genders perceptions: Perceptions that flexible work schedule is developed only for women is a factor related to their use. A review of men's use of family friendly employment provisions argues that barriers to men's use arise from three major sources (Gutek et. Al. 1991). First the culture in many workplaces casts doubt on the legitimacy of men's claims to family responsibilities; secondly, the business environment is imposing competitive pressures on business and firms to maintain market share and increase earnings; and thirdly, the domestic organization in employees' own homes often precludes men from taking up available flexible work schedules options. Some flexible work provisions, such as paternity leave, are intended specifically for men and aim to foster a greater sharing of responsibilities between men and women. For the success of these schedules, therefore, there is need to encourage   universality in the use of these practices, this will see more men taking up these opportunities for flexible work and more importantly there is need for a supportive work environment as well as change in attitudes and expectations in the wider community.

In summary, for effective development and implementation of flexible work schedules, there should be supportive organization culture that will encourage employees to adapt these programs. In line with this the human resource department should make executive and organizational leaders aware of the importance of organizational culture in the implementation of flexible work schedules. Organization' leaders can show their commitment to flexible work schedules by allocating the needed resources (Rayman, Bailyn, Dickert, Carre, Harvey & Read, 1999). At the same time, top management support can give employees the security they need to commit themselves to the effort since it encourages participation and input, and fosters the belief that risk-taking will be rewarded (Rayman et al., 1999). Human resource managers may need to serve as communication channel between users of the programs and top management (Nord, Fox, Phoenix & Viano, 2002). They should communicate with high-level mangers about how the new programs are affecting employees' life and organizational performance, and encourage them to support more to the use of flexible work schedules.

Secondly, supervisors and line managers should be cautioned that some of their traditional practices may undermine the effectiveness of flexible work schedules (Nord et al., 2002). Human resource department should therefore offer new training for them to accept the change in the workforce and the new job arrangement as a means of helping managers and supervisors overcome difficulties involved in supervision and monitoring the performance of employees utilizing these schedules and generally to change their attitudes towards the different employees with gender, position and family responsibility. It is only when organizational management respects employees' needs by balancing their work and family, respect demands from all employees (Glass & Finley, 2002), that these schedules can achieve the effectiveness and utilization. In addition, HR department should offer Line managers some assistance in adapting their managerial approaches to the new work arrangements.

Thirdly, new performance evaluation methods should be established by human resource department. In order for the effective utilization of flexible work schedules, the assumption that a worker out of sight is a worker out of control that prevails in many organizations must be changed (Rayman et al., 1999), and this demands new performance evaluation methods. In other words, the organization should establish the performance based assessment which measure employees' contribution and commitment by performance rather than face time (Glass & Finley, 2002). Organization should therefore loosen managerial control while fostering high productivity through outcome oriented evaluation for their employees (Glass & Finley, 2002). Furthermore, new evaluation procedures may be needed to reflect alterations among different kinds of contracts, concerning not only the short-term evaluations of employees, but overall career paths as well (Nord et al, 2002).

Lastly, the human resource department should make these programs to be perceived as fair by both users and non-users, consideration must be taken to avoid subtle penalties with respect to task assignments, compensation and promotion (Nord et al, 2001). In this regard, managers and supervisors should share control and responsibility of flexible work schedules with employees. Dialogue among employees in the workplace is critical to overcoming both subtle resistance among supervisors and resentment of and to benefit acquired through the establishment of flexible work schedules. Only by motivating employees in efforts to change the prevailing workplace culture, will fear of using flexible work options be overcome (Bailyn et al., 2001).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Flexible work practices are often associated with improved organizational performance. Making these practices available to employees appears to give organizations a competitive advantage in terms of recruitment, by enhancing perceptions of anticipated organizational support among job seekers (Casper & Buffardi, 2004), particularly those who might require that support due to care giving responsibilities (Frone & Yardley, 1996). The availability of these practices may also increase positive job-related attitudes, work effort and contextual behaviours by enhancing social exchange processes; as symbols of organizational concern for employees, flexible work schedules promote employee interest in and obligation to the organization. Having employees who make use of available flexible work schedules may also incur cost savings for organizations via longer work hours and enhanced productivity. Employees may work longer hours because flexible arrangements increase their availability for work and reduce their commuting time, or because they are exchanging leisure time for flexibility (Golden, 2001; Meyer et al., 2001). They may choose to work during their peak hours in terms of personal productivity or work extra hours during the organization's peak times in exchange for flexibility at other times (McDonald et al., 2005). They may also increase their work effort to avoid losing a job that offers them the flexibility they desire (Shepard et al., 1996).

Despite these conclusions, the possibility that successful organizations are more likely to offer work-life practices cannot be discounted and that the schedules themselves may not be exerting a favourable effect on organizational performance is also to be examined further through research. Equally, it may simply be that organizations offering work-life practices are more likely to engage in high-quality management practices overall, generating positive effects on employee and performance outcomes. The review has also identified the moderators of the link between flexible work schedules and outcomes. For example, organizations are likely to reap the benefits of flexible work schedules given particular demographic

characteristics of the employee that informs the utilization of these practices and through the positive employee outcome that arises from the provision of such schedules such as job satisfaction, commitment and reduced turnover among the employees. Still, there is need to examine whether there is direct positive association between flexible work schedules and organizational performance, it is generally agreed that many flexible work practices, such as flexi time, telework, and informational assistance with dependent care services, have low financial costs that are associated primarily with program administration and do not require an extensive initial outlay of resources.

In addition to this the principle of universality of these practices needs to be addressed; it should be a common phenomenon in the organization that these practices are meant both for men and women. Without necessary changes being made, users of flexible work schedules will continue to be predominantly women, men will continue to anticipate negative repercussions arising from their use, and career-oriented individuals of both sexes will continue to think twice before availing themselves of the practices on offer. This would be a considerable step backwards for all concerned, and lessen the benefits to organizations derived from improved employee perceptions of current or anticipated organizational support. Similarly, flexible work schedule should be designed and implemented in such a way that both the organization and employees can derive the greatest possible benefits from them. More research has been focused on gender and family status, there is need to examine such demographic characteristics such as age and education in relation to the use of flexible work schedules and particularly with respect to particular schedules like compressed work and flexi place. The fact that most studies have not linked flexible work schedules directly to organization performance leaves a gap in this area that needs to be fulfilled in order to be conclusive on whether flexible work schedules can have a direct effect on organization performance.

REFERENCES

Allen, T. D. (2001). Family-supportive work environments: The role of organizational perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 58,* 414-435.

Al-Rajudi, K. O. (2012). Impact of Flexible Work Arrangements on Workers' Productivity in Information and Communication Technology Sector: An Empirical Study of the Gaza Strip ICT Firms. Gaza: Islamic University –Gaza

Armstrong, M. (2006). A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice. London: Kogan page Publishers.

Avery, C. & Zabel, D. (2001). *The flexible workplace: A sourcebook of information and research.* Westport, CT: Quorum.

Bailyn, L. (1997). The impact of corporate culture on work-family integration. In S. Parasuraman & J. H. Greenhaus (Eds.), *Integrating Work and Family: Challenges and choices for a changing world*). Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Bailyn, L., Drago, R., & Kochan, T. A. (2001), Integrating work and family life : an holistic approach, Available from : MIT Sloan Management : Institute for Work and Employment Research

Baltes, B. B., Briggs, T. E., Huff, J. W., Wright, J. A. & Neuman, G. A. (1999). Flexible and compressed workweek schedules: A meta-analysis of their effects on work-related criteria. *Journal of Applied Pychology, 84*, 496-513.

Bambra, C., Whitehead, M., Sowden, A., Akers, J.,Petticrew, M. (2008). A hard day's night? The effects of Compressed Working Week interventions on the health and work-life balance of shiftworkers: A systematic review. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 62,* 764- 777.

Barnett, R. C., & Hall, D, T. (2007). The silver lining in shift work: Can your organization take advantage of it? *Organizational Dynamics, 36*, 404-417.

Beauregard, T. A., & Henry, L. C. (2009). Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance. *Human resource management review*, 9-32.

Bird. J. (2006) Work-life balance doing it right & avoiding the pitfalls. *Employment Relations Today,* vol. 33, no. 3,

Blau, P. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Wiley.

Bond, James T. and Ellen Galinsky. (2006). "Using Survey Research to Address Work-Life Issues." 411–33 in *The Work and Family Handbook: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives, Methods, and Approaches,* edited by M. Pitt-Catsouphes, E. E. Kossek, and S. Sweet. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work–family interference and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *67*, 169–198.

Casper, W. J., & Buffardi, L. C. (2004). Work-life benefits and job pursuit intentions: The role of anticipated organizational support. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 65,* 391–410.

Casper, W. J., & Harris, C. M. (2008). Work-life benefits and organizational attachment: Self-interest utility and signaling theory models. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *72*, 95-109.

Christensen, K. E., & Staines, G. L. (1990). Flextime: A viable solution to work/family conflict? *Journal of Family Issues, 11*, 455-476.

Clark, S. C. (2000). *Work/Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Family Balance*. Human Relations, 53, 747–770

Cole, G. (2006). Flexibility and the workplace: The battle to control working time. *Managerial Law, 48*(6), 536-540.

Crany, C. J., Smith C. P., and Stone, E. F. (1992). *Job Satisfaction: How People Feel about their Jobs and How it Affects their Performance*. New York: Lexington Press.

Cunningham, C. R., & Murray, S. S. (2005). Two executives, one career. *Harvard Business Review*.

Clutterbuck, D. (2003). *Managing Work-life Balance: A guide for HR in achieving organisational and individual change.* London: UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

Deal, J. (2007). *Retiring the generation gap: How employees young and old can find common ground*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass and Center for Creative Leadership.

Desrochers, W., Hilton, J., & Larwood, L. (2005). Preliminary Validation of the Work-Family Integration-Blurring

Dex, S. (2004 July). *Flexible Working Arrangements in the UK*. Paper presented at the Work Life Balance Across the Life Course Conference, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.

Doherty, L. (2004). Work-life balance initiatives: Implications for women. *Employee Relations*, *26*(4), 433–452. doi:10.1108/01425450410544524 Scale. Journal of Family Issues, 442 466.

Downes, C., & Koekemoer, E. (2011). Work–life balance policies: Challenges and benefits associated with implementing flexitime. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *9*(1)

Drucker, J., White, G., Hegewich, A., & Maynbe, L. (1996). Between hard and soft HRM: Human resource management in the construction industry. *Construction Management and Economics, 14*, 405-416.

Etzion, D. (2003). Annual vacation: Duration of relief from job stressors and burnout. Anxiety, Stress & Coping. *An International Journal. 16*, 213-226.

Frone, M. (2000). Work–family conflict and employee psychiatric disorders: The national comorbidity survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85,* 888– 895.

Frone, M. R., & Yardley, J. K. (1996). Workplace family-supportive programmes: Predictors of employed parents' importance ratings. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *69*, 351-366.

Gajendran, R. S. & Harrison, D. A. (2007). The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92,* 1524-1541.

Galinsky, E., Bond, J. T., & Hill, E. J. (2004). *A status report on workplace flexibility: Who has it? Who wants it? What difference does it make?* New York: Families & Work Institute.

Gardiner, J. & Tomlinson, J. (2009). Organisational approaches to flexible working: Perspectives of equality and diversity managers in the UK. *Equal Opportunities International, 28*(8), 671-686

Glass, J. L., & Finley, A. (2002), Coverage and effectiveness of family-responsive workplace policies. *Human Resource Management Review,* Vol. 12, pp. 313-337.

Grawitch, M. J., Ledford, G. E., Ballard, D. W., & Barber, L. K. (2009). Leading the healthy workforce: The integral role of employee involvement. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Research and Practice, 61,* 122-135.

Golden, Lonnie. (2001). Flexible Work Schedules: What Are Workers Trading Off to Get Them? *Monthly Labor Review* 124:50–67

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work–family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*, 72–92.

Greenhaus, J., Collins, K., & Shaw, J. (2003). The relation between work-life balance and quality of life. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 510-531.

Greenberg, J., Roberge, M., Ho, V. T., & Rousseau, D. M. (2004). Fairness in idosyncratic work arrangements: Justice as an ideal. *International Journal.*

Grover, S. L., & Crooker, K. J. (1995). Who appreciates family-responsive human resource policies: The impact of family-friendly policies on the organizational attachment of parents and non-parents. *Personnel Psychology*, *48*, 271-288.

Grzywacz, J. G., Carlson, D. S., & Shulkin, S. (2008). Investigating workplace flexibility using a multi-organization database: a collaboration of academics and practitioners. *Journal of Community, Work & Family,* 199-214.

Grzywacz, J. G., Casey, P. R., & Jones, F. A. (2007). The effects of workplace flexibility on health behaviors: A cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 49,* 1302-1309.

Gunlu, E., Aksarayli, M. & Percin, N. S. (2009). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment of hotel managers in Turkey. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(5), 693-717.

Haar, J. M., & Bardoel, A. (2000). *Work-Family Negative and Positive Spillover and Outcomes: Direct and Moderate Effects.* Hamilton: University of Waikato.

Hanson, G., Hammer, L., & Colton, C. (2006). Development and validation of a multidimensional scale of perceived work-family positive spillover. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology,* 249-265.

Hill, E. J., Miller, B., & Weiner, S. (1998). Influences of the virtual office on aspects of work and work/life balance. *Personnel Pyscology*, 667-683.

Hamermesh, D. (1999). The timing of work over Ttime. *Economic Journal*, 37–66.

Hackman J.R. Oldham G.R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 60, 159-170

Ivanovic, A., & Collin, P. (Eds.). (2006). *Dictionary of Human Resources and Personnel Management.* A & C Black.

Karnowski, S., & White, B. (2002). The role of facility managers in the diffusion of organizational telecommuting. *Environment and Behavior, 34*, 322-334.

Kelly, E., Kossek, E., Hammer, L. Durham, M. , Bray, J., Chermack, K., Murphy, L. , Kaskubar, D. (2008). Getting there from here: Research on the effects of work-wamily initiatives on work-family conflict and business outcomes. *The Academy of Management Annals* Volume 2,

Kirby, E. L., & Krone, K. J. (2002) "The policy exists but you can't really use it": Communication and the structuration of work-family policies. Journal of Applied Communication Research, 30(1), 50-77.

Kossek, E. & Lautsch, B. (2008). *CEO of Me: Creating a life that works in the flexible job age.* NY: Wharton School Publishing.

Kurland, N. B., & Bailey, D. E. (1999). Telework: The advantages and challenges of working here, there, anywhere, and anytime. *Organizational Dynamics, 28*, 53-68.

Lambert, S. (2000). Added benefits: The link between work-life benefits and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 801-815.

Landry, B., Mahesh, S. & Hartman, S. (2005). The changing nature of work in the age of e-business. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18 (2). 132- 144.

Lewis, S. (1997). Family friendly employment policies: A route to changing organizational culture or playing about at the margins? *Gender, Work and Organization*, *4*(1), 13-24.

Maxwell, G., Rankine, L., Bell, S., & MacVicar, A. (2007). The incidence and impact of flexible working arrangements in smaller businesses. *Employee Relations, 29*, 138-161.

McCampbell, Atefeh S. (1996). Benefits Achieved through Alternative Work Schedules. *Human Resource Planning* 19:30–37.

MacEachen, E. , Polzer, J. & Clarke, J. (2008). You are free to set your own hours: Governing productivity and health through flexibility and resilience. *Social Science and Medicine*, 66, 1019- 1033.

Melbourne, S. (2008). May, Flexible Thinking. *HR Monthly*, 44-45.

Mowday, Richard T., Lyman W. Porter, and Richard M. Steers. (1982). *Employee-Organization Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism, and Turnover*. New York: Academic Press.

Michie, S., & Williams, S. (2003). Reducing work related psychological ill health and sickness absence: A systematic literature review. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 60*(1), Miller, Katherine (2005). Communication Theories. New York: McGraw Hill.

Morgan, L. (2009). *The impact of work life balance and family friendly human resource policies on employees job satisfaction.* London: Oxford University Press.

Mayberry, P. (2006). Work-life balance policies and practices in the UK: Views of an HR practitioner. *Journal of Management, 23*(2), 167–188.

Meyer, C. S., Mukerjee, S., & Sestero, A. (2001). Work-life benefits: Which ones maximize profits? *Journal of Managerial Issues*, *13*(1), 28-44.

Murray, L. P., Gregoire, M. B., & Downey, R. G. (1991). Organizational commitment of management employees in restaurant operations. *Hospitality Research Journal,*14, 339-348.

McNall, L.A., Nicklin, J.M. and Masuda, A.D. (2010) Flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction/turnover intentions: The mediating role of work-to-family enrichment. *Journal of Psychology*, *144*, 61–81.

Nadeem, S., & Henry, C. (2003). Power dynamics in the long-term development of employee-friendly flexible working. *Women in Management Review, 18*(1/2), 32-49.

Nord, W.R., Fox, S., Phoenix, A. & Viano, K. (2002) "Real-world reactions to work– life balance programs: lessons for effective implementation", Organisational Dynamics, Vol. 30 Issue. 3, pp. 223–38.

Olmsted, B., & Smith, S. (1989). *Creating a flexible workplace: How to select and manage alternative work options.* AMACOM: New York.

Othman, N. (2009). A Conflict between professional vs. domestic life? Understanding the use of ICT in teleworking for balance in work and family Units. *Computer and Information Science*, 3-16.

Pérez, M. P., Sánchez, A. M., & de Luis Carnicer, M. P. (2002). The organizational implications of human resources managers' perceptions of teleworking. *Personnel Review, 32*, 733-755.

Pleck, J. H. (1997). Paternal involvement: Levels, origins, and consequences. In M. E Lamb (Ed.), *The Role of the Father in Child Development.* 3rd ed. 66-103. New York.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1994. *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Poelmans, S.and Sahibzada, K. (2004). A multi-level model for studying the context and impact of work–family policies and culture in organizations. *Human Resource Management Review*, 14, 409–431.

Podnar, K., & Golob, U. (2010). Friendly flexible working practices within the internal marketing framework: a service perspective. *The Service Industries Journal*, 1773-1786.

Reggio, E., A., (2003). *Introduction to Industrial/Organizational Psychology*. 4th Ed.). Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*, 698–714.

Rousseau, D. M. (2001). The idiosyncratic deal: Flexibility versus fairness? *Organizational Dynamics, 29,* 260- 273.

Rayman, P., Bailyn, L., Dickert, J., Carre, F., Harvey, M., & Read, R. (1999), Designing organizational solution to integrate work and life, Women in Management Review, Vol. 14 Issue. 5, pp. 164-176.

Ryan, A. M, & Kossek, E. E. (2008). Work–life policy implementation: Breaking down or creating barriers to inclusiveness? *Human Resource Management, 47,* 295–310.

Saks, A.M. (2006) Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *21*, 600–619.

Shockley, K. M., & Allen, T. D. (2007). When flexibility helps: Another look at the availability of flexible work arrangements and work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 71*, 479-493.

Society for Human Resource Management (2005). *Benefits Survey*.

Southerland, J. (1997). Workforce reduction strategies: An empirical examination of the options. *Employee Relations, 20*, 148-163.

Sweet, S., Pitt-Catsouphes, M., & Besen, E. (2014). Explaining organizational variation in flexible work arrangements: why the pattern and scale of availability matter. *Journal of Community, Work & Family,* 115-141.

Towers-Perrin. (2001). *Flexible Work Arrangements*. Singapore: Ministry of Manpower.

Tausig, M., & Fenwick, R. (2001). Unbinding time: Alternate work schedules and work-life balance. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, *22*(2), 101-119.

Thoits, P. A., & Hewitt, L. N. (2001). Volunteer work and well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 42,* 115-131.

Venkatesh, V., & Johnson, P. (2002). Telecommuting technology implementations: A within- and between-subjects longitudinal field study. *Personnel Psychology, 55*, 661-687.

Wayne, J. H., Randel, A. E., & Stevens, J. (2006). The role of identity and work—family support in work–family enrichment and its work-related consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *69*, 445–461.

Wilensky, H. (1960). Work, careers and social integration. *International Social Science Journal*, 543-560.