

WORK FLEXIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN PORT HARCOURT

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WORK FLEXIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design that solicited responses from employees of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. Primary data was collated using structured questionnaire. The population of the study comprised 202 employees of 18 Deposit Money Banks operational in Rivers State. A sample size of 134 was determined using the Taro Yamen sample size formula. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between work flexibility and employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study concluded that work flexibility bears a significant influence on employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study recommends that Deposit Money Banks should incorporate flexible job schedules into human resource management strategies, policies and plans to enhance innovativeness.

Keywords: Work Flexibility, Employee Performance, Quality of Work, Timeliness of Work

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INTRODUCTION

The need for employees to behave in a manner that would yield a positive impact on the organization has been a great concern for management of various business units and groups. Bateman and Organ (1983) cited in Akinyemi (2012) were the first to introduce the concept organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) where they referred to it as an individual behaviour that is discretionary not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system and in aggregate, promotes the effective functioning of the organization. The implication of the term organizational citizenship behaviour is an issue that has been well documented in the literature. Its implications manifest in forms of organizational effectiveness, efficiency and group performance (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 2010). Other effects of organizational citizenship behaviour could be manifested in higher salary and promotion, higher organizational commitment, lower turnover and intention to leave organizations. Organ (1988) and Zhang (2011) introduced five categories of organizational citizenship behaviour which include: altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship and civic virtue. In recent times, employers have sought different means of enhancing citizenship behaviours among employees using different strategies of which work flexibility seem to be gaining prominence.

In a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work flexibility has become a predominant issue in the workplace. Flexible working arrangements are actually emerging issues in the human resource management field. The world is becoming a global village; hence employees in organizations seek the balance between personal life and work responsibilities if the employee performance is to be achieved. Three major factors contribute to the interest in flexible work arrangement: global competition, renewed interest in personal lives, family values and an aging workforce.

Concerns have always been raised regarding policy and debates on Work flexibility from perspectives of the quality of working life when weighed against the broader family matters. However the challenge has been how employees would adopt good flexible work arrangement practices and the organizations to adopt policies to tackle conflicts that ensue from the interface of family or social pressures and work stress (Mclean & Collins, 2011).

Work flexibility relates to an organization's working arrangement in terms of working time, working location and pattern of working (Chartered Institute of Personnel And Development, 2013). Work flexibility like flexible part time, shift work, compressed work hours and job sharing are often used to help employees in balancing their family and work life (Okemwa, 2016) during 'core hours' which is usually fixed or a period between the latest permissible starting time and earliest permissible finishing time.

In the current global work environment, there is intense competition for talented employees and for market share based on higher product quality and lower prices in order to realize strategic advantage. Competition requires organizations to take into account diversity of employee's needs, work life values, cultural influences in the areas where the companies operate as well as the diversity of working relationships in order to attract, retain and fully engage the employee. As many organizations come to terms with the challenges of attracting and retaining the best talent and retaining the best talent coupled with the emerging issues of work life conflicts, it is important that managers employ a variety of human resource practices to attain organizational goals (Mclean & Collins, 2011).

In response to these concerns, and increasing demand for work-life balance from employees, companies have been introducing initiatives such as Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) (McNall &

Collins, 2010), where employees can choose their place of work, and within boundaries their of scheduled hours of work. These FWA's can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and intention to stay with the company (Warner & Hausdorf, 2009). Flexible work time arrangements are essentially those arrangements of work that allows workers to modify where, when and for how long job-related work is performed (Lewis, 2003).

This study was guided by the following research question:

- What is the relationship between work flexibility and quality of work in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between work flexibility and timeliness of work in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?



Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the relationship between work flexibility and employee performance Source: Author's Desk Research, 2020

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work/Family Border Theory

Family border theory was proposed by Clark (2000). The theory aims at explaining how individuals manage and negotiate the work and family spheres and the borders between them in order to attain balance. The concept of "work" and family constituting different domain or spheres which influence each other is central to the model. The theory states that each person's role takes place within a specific domain of life, and these domains are separated by borders that may be physical, temporal, or psychological. The theory addresses the issue of "crossing borders" between domains of life, especially the domains of home and work. Hence, this theory shows that there should be a proper balance between work and non-work activities like social life, family life, health and so on. According to the theory, the flexibility and permeability of the boundaries between people's work and family lives will affect the level of integration, the ease of transitions, and the level of conflict between these domains. Boundaries that are flexible and permeable facilitate integration between work and home domains. When domains are relatively integrated, transition is easier, but work family conflict is more likely. Conversely, when these domains are segmented, transition is more effortful, but work family conflict is less likely (Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

Clark (2000) defines balance as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict stating that although many aspects of work and home are difficult, to alter, individuals can shape to some degree the nature of the work and home domains and the borders and bridges between them in order to create a desired balance. Clark (2000) notes that it is this proactive shaping of domains (work and family) by individuals which differentiates work/ family border theory from much of the literature on work and family conflict that assumes individuals to be purely reactive to their

situation. Work and family are seen as separate domains or worlds which are associated with different rules, thoughts, patterns and behavior. Borders are a delineating between domains indicating the points at which domain- specific behavior can begin and end. However there are three main forms of border; physical border (borders defining where domain - relevant behavior can take place such as location of paid employment), temporal border (which divides when tasks can be done such as set working hours) and psychological border (borders defining thinking patterns behaviors or emotions such as thinking about family issues when at work). It is the recognition of tangible, physical and temporal as well as psychological borders which makes work-family border theory distinct from that of boundary theory (Desrochers & Sargent, 2003).

However, whilst work/family border theory is a useful way of conceptualizing work life balance, it has been critiqued. The theory is largely gender blind as noted in study of gender and work life balance amongst women and men in midlife (Emsline & Hunt, 2009). He noted that the border between work and family may be of more importance to men than women because women may be more frequently border crossers than men when it comes to issues of caring for children and elderly relatives. With respect to outcomes of people's daily lives based on the concept of the border theory, some scholars have expressed concern about women's double burden due to the blurring of the boundary between work and family (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004).

Work and family border theory focuses on the domains of work and family to the exclusion of any other areas of life such as wellness, leave benefits for personal reasons and or friends or leisure. Clark justifies this by stating that work and family are the two most important aspects of people's lives. Whilst this theory allows for individuals to attach different values to the domain of work and family, it appears to

be largely focused on the needs of parents, care givers; failing to take account of importance attached to other domains such as leisure, sport for wellness and socializing of which this study sought to find their influence on performance of banking industry. This study has added more insight above family responsibilities and work life activities. The study has shown the importance of promotion of preventive care to employees which means that if employees take preventive measures their health will be sound which may spill over not to family, work alone but also to other spheres of life such as leisure and other personal matters which will be improved (Clark, 2000).

Work Flexibility

Work flexibility can be defined in terms of flexibility about when one works, where one works, or how much one works. Using FWA, employees are able to have some controls over the choices of time or location in which they work. It is different from some work arrangements that refer to employers' ability to change work schedules and lay off employees (Edward, Clifton & Kruse, 1996) For example, in the situation where employees are asked to work during the non-standard hours in order to meet the needs of clients, it is not considered as FWA for the purpose of this paper. FWA are designed to help employees balance their work and non-work responsibilities. Another construct that serves a similar purpose is family friendly policies, which has received significant attention from scholars over the past few decades (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Compared to family friendly policies, FWA can be relevant and helpful to a broad spectrum of employees, including not only those who have family responsibilities such as taking care of children or elders, but also those who have other non-work concerns such as continuing education or volunteer activities.

There are three major forms of FWA: flexibility in the scheduling of hours, the place of work, and the numbers of work hours. Flexibility in the scheduling of hours usually includes flexi-time, compressed workweek, and scheduling of breaks and overtime. Flexi-time means that employees work a certain number of core hours, but they can vary their start and stop times as long as they work the equivalent of a full work week. Compressed workweek means working longer hours each day to reduce the number of days in a workweek. Flexibility in the place of work allows employees to perform tasks at places other than their primary workplace during their work schedule. Working from home is the most common example. In a meta-analysis of telecommuting conducted by Gajendran and Harrison (2007), home was the primary location in nearly all the studies included. A third way to provide work flexibility is changing the number of work hours, which usually includes reduced work hours and job sharing. Unlike employees who use flexi-time, compressed workweek, or working from home, employees who reduced work hours and job sharing often change their employment status from full time to part time.

Rau and Hyland (2002) define flexible work arrangement as an alternative to the standard working day. It usually comprehends to organizational initiatives which enhance employees' flexibility on the time and place where work has to be accomplished, and also various policies exerting influence on the number of hours worked. Economic, technological, social and family changes have encouraged the introduction of flexible working arrangements. The flexibility arrangements includes; flex-time, absence autonomy, compressed work weeks, reduced schedule, tele-work, extra vacation days, limited schedule of meetings (meetings cannot be scheduled too late at the end of the day), flexible holidays and keeping with the schedule (employees work the

mandatory8 hours /day and do not extend their schedules longer).

Flexible work practices as stated by Hill, Märtinson, Ferris and Baker (2001) allow employees the freedom to work outside the standard work schedules. According Rau (2003) flexible work practices are different forms of working schedule that enables employees to work outside the normal work day. Some of various forms of flexible work practices include – telecommuting, compressed hours, shift, flexi-time and annualized hours (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). However, this study was interested in only four types of flexible work practices namely: telecommuting, compressed work week, job sharing and flexi-time.

Employee Performance

According to Gilbert and Ivancevich (2000), performance refers to the act of performing or carrying into execution or recognizable action, achievement or accomplishment in the undertaking of a duty. Cascio (2006) defines performance as working of individuals in an organization to be more effective. Zaman et al. (2011) indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between performance and reward. The other approach in defining organizational performance that has in the gained popularity in numerous recent past organizations is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) methodology by Kaplan & Norton (1992). In this method, performance of an organization is measured using four key perspectives financial, customer, internal processes, and Learning Growth/innovation. In the Kenyan scenario it has been generally adopted by sixty nine per cent of the companies in a survey by Kiragu (2005).

According to Armstrong (2000) performance is a means of getting better results from the whole organization or teams or individuals within it by understanding and managing performance within an agreed frame work of planned goals, standards and competence requirements. Performance is the

accumulated end results of all the organization's work processes and activities (Santos & Brito, 2012). It is about how effectively an organization transforms inputs into outputs (Robbins, 2009) and comprises the actual output or results as measured against its intended outputs. Liptons (2003) proposes that performance is the ability of the firm to prevail. There is hardly a consensus about its definition, and this limits advances in research and understanding of the concept of performance (Santos & Brito, 2012). As the debate on what organization performance rages on, the approach on how to measure it has attracted even more scholarly attention (Liptons, 2003).

Measures of Employee Performance

Quality of Work

Phillip Crosby defined quality as conformance to requirements while using a quality system to prevent defects as well as measuring quality of nonconformance and adopting zero defects as the quality standard (Jung & Wang, 2006) Quality improvement is an approach that firms adopt for the purpose of improving performance in terms of quality and innovation (Jung & Wang, 2006) The key aspect of quality is essentially the extent to which the company is able to meet stakeholder expectations on certain dimensions that increase performance (Saner & Eijkman, 2005) Historically, Quality emerged as an important issue in operations, advocating the use of strategies to improve performance the important gurus of quality ideas include Edwards Deming who advocated the use of statistical techniques to drive quality improvement by reducing process variation and Joseph Juran who also advocated the use of statistical techniques. In essence, the object is to identify the extent to which implementation of quality standards have a significant influence on financial performance (Zu, 2009).

With greater visibility into quality processes, managers will be able to transform the original goals of quality in a continuous improvement process that will have a positive impact on financial performance (Kaynak, 2003). Terziovski, Feng and Samson (2007) define operational performance as the performance related to an organization's internal operations, such as productivity, product quality and customer satisfaction. With better operational performance, the products or services the organization offers should become more attractive to customers and the firm should have better business performance.

Quality in service organizations is difficult to define due to the fact that services are intangible and are consumed at the point of production and often involve contact with customers (Nair, 2006) the singular nature of many service encounters makes their standardization more difficult. Due to the person to person interaction in customer service, setting quality standards and measuring performance requires consideration of both the service provider and the customer perception of quality (Agus, 2003) Any measurement of performance and control of quality must be carried out in a way that does not interfere with the provision of a service (Aguilano & Chase, 2001). Many quality experts advocate the use of a quality management system as it offers a structured and methodical approach to managing quality by systematically organizing how activities should be carried out (Agus, 2003). Some of these involve Total Quality Management (TQM) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification.

Timeliness of Work

Timeliness is recognized as an important component of work performance (Downs, 2008) Timeliness is a way of developing and using processes and tools for maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity (Downs, 2008) It involves mastery of a set of skills like setting goals, planning and making decisions better. At the end we have better performance (Brogan, 2010). According to Thompson, Arthur, Strickcan (2010), accurate and timely information about daily

operations is essential if managers are to gauge how well the strategy execution process is proceeding Time is an essential resource since it is irrecoverable, limited and dynamic (Downs, 2008) Irrecoverable because every minute spent is gone forever, limited because only 24hours exist in a day and dynamic because it is never static (Claessens, Roe and Rutte 2009).

Timeliness is a method managers used by managers to increase work performance (Claessens, Roe, Rutte 2009) Performance can be seen as the consistent ability to produce results over prolonged period of time and in a variety of assignments (Galbraith,2007). High performance in organizations is when an organization is so excellent in so many areas that it consistently outperforms most of its competitors for extended periods of time (North, 2004) Performance can be seen as the consistent ability to produce results over prolonged period of time and in a variety of assignments (Phillips, Jory & Mogford, 2007) performance also determines the success and survival of every organization (Eruteyan, 2008).

Relationship between Work Flexibility and Employee Performance

Studies across the world have shown that both public and private organizations are implementing work-life balance initiatives, among them flexible work arrangement, to minimize on the negative effects of work-life imbalance and hence tap on the associated benefits which include but not limited to increased productivity, increased employee morale, increased customer service, increased employee commitment, and reduced absenteeism (Hughes, 2007; Todd, 2004). Having access to or use of work flexibility increases their relative feeling of being valued, which leads to a higher level of job satisfaction. As the relative feelings of being valued increases, employees are also more likely to respond a higher level of organizational commitment (Eaton, 2003). Following the preceding rationale, when the organization provides manv work flexibility arrangement, perceive work flexibility employees may standardized benefits, and treat them more as a right than a privilege. In this situation, employees may not pay attention to work flexibility nor see them as rare resources. The distinctiveness attached to having access to work flexibility, or using work flexibility is discounted. As the number of work flexibility offered by the organization increases, individual level perceived availability and actual use of work flexibility is likely to lose its distinctiveness and thus, may have a relatively weaker contribution to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similar arguments about distinctiveness effects have also been found in other research, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Bommer, Dierdorff, & Rubin, 2007) and selection interviews (Morgeson & Campion, 1997).

Availability of flexible work arrangement practices have also been related to increased civic virtueand decreases turnover intentions among all employees not just users of the practices (Grover & Crooker 1995). McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley and Shake Speare-Finch (2005) suggest that employees working flexible hours may enable organizations to keep up with a workload that is inherently variable throughout the year; flexible working arrangements may invoke the principle of reciprocity, wherein employees work extra hours during peak times in exchange for the ability to tailor their hours to suit their own needs at other times. A study of the '100 Best Companies for Working Mothers' by Meyer, Mukerjee, and Sestero, (2001) revealed that organizations offering work-life balance practices enjoyed increased profit rates. It is therefore evident that flexible work arrangement is very critical in ensuring that employees' commitment, satisfaction and performance is increased in the banking industry.

Chow and Keng-Howe's (2006) study of workers in Singapore revealed that the more flexible their schedules, the greater their self-reported

productivity. With regard to contextual performance, the perceived usefulness of available practices has been found to predict increased organizational citizenship behavior (Lambert, 2000). The findings of this study from the qualitative data indicated that employees desired to have more considerations on flexible work arrangements and avoiding reporting to work early would ensure they do not leave the organization hence they desired the organization to adopt such practices for increased performance. Informants also noted that their organizations should offer scholarship and support further education as part of flexible work arrangements hence this would ensure increased performance for their part. Reduction of working hours was also sated as a way in which the banks would enable employees had quality time with family, personal, leisure and work which would enable them to increase their performance.

Provision of work flexibility at work does have an impact on employee's views positively about the organization as it triggers a sense that organization does care about the employees. Zhong et. al. (2016) identified that the notion of employee wellbeing is recently being deliberated as benefits which are less tangible in nature and has commonly been observed an employee's perceived work setting, social situation in which typically the work is carried out and organizational provisions and care witnessed by employees. As Baral & Bhargava (2010), pointed out that work flexibility has the ability to enhance and impact employee behavior and attitudes for the organization.

High quality performance in service delivery process is hard to achieve from employees who experience work-family conflict. Excessive job demands and work overload lead to emotional exhaustion suffered by the hotel employees. Emotional exhaustion is a valid

effect of the conflicts of work roles and family roles. The conflict between Work and family result in employees feeling emotionally exhausted as they try to deal with both conflicts. More still, if employees do not cope with difficulties surfacing from emotional exhaustion, they may not be tightly connected to the organization as they lack links with managers and coworkers at the workplace.

This study thus hypothesized that:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between work flexibility and quality of work in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between work flexibility and timeliness of work in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design that solicited responses from employees of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. Primary data was collated using structured questionnaire. The population of the study comprised 202 employees of 18 Deposit Money Banks operational in Rivers State. A sample size of 134 was determined using the Taro Yamen sample size formula. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in (p> 0.05) or rejecting the null hypothesis in (p <0.05). We shall commence by first presenting a proof of existing relationships.

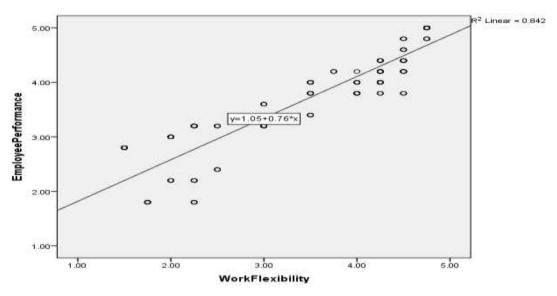


Figure 1: Scatter plot for relationship between work flexibility and employee performance

Figure 1 showed a strong relationship between work flexibility (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable). The scatter plot graph shows at R² linear value of (0.842) depicting a

positive relationship between the two constructs. The implication was that an increase in work flexibility simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of employee performance.

Table 1: Correlation for Work Flexibility and Employee Performance

			Work Flexibility	Quality of Work	Timeliness of Work
Spearman's rho	Work Flexibility	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.745**	.503**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
		N	46	46	46
	Quality of Work	Correlation Coefficient	.745**	1.000	.841**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
		N	46	46	46
	Timeliness of Work	Correlation Coefficient	.503**	.841**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000] .
		N	46	46	46

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2020, (SPSS output version 23.0)

Ho_{1:} There is no significant relationship between work flexibility and quality of work in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between work flexibility and quality of work. The correlation coefficient 0.745 confirms the magnitude

and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between work flexibility and quality of work in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho_{2:} There is no significant relationship between work flexibility and timeliness of work Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive relationship between work flexibility and timeliness of work. The correlation coefficient 0.503 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between work flexibility and timeliness of work in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypotheses showed that there is a significant positive relationship between work flexibility and employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This study finding concurred with thoughts of Eaton (2003) that having access to or use of work flexibility increases their relative feeling of being valued, which leads to a higher level of job satisfaction and eventually higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviour. As the relative feelings of being valued

increases, employees are also more likely to respond a higher level of organizational commitment. Availability of flexible work arrangement practices have also been related to increased civic virtue and decreases turnover intentions among all employees not just users of the practices (Grover & Crooker 1995). McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley and Shake Speare-Finch (2005) suggest that employees working flexible hours may enable organizations to keep up with a workload that is inherently variable throughout the year; flexible working arrangements may invoke the principle of reciprocity, wherein employees work extra hours during peak times in exchange for the ability to tailor their hours to suit their own needs at other times. A study of the '100 Best Companies for Working Mothers' by Meyer, Mukerjee and Sestero, (2001) revealed that organizations offering work-life balance practices enjoyed increased profit rates. It is therefore evident that flexible work arrangement is very critical in ensuring that employee performance is increased in the banking industry.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Flexible work arrangements are connected to a number of positive outcomes for employees who access them including better mental health and reductions in stress, burnout, turnover and absenteeism and increases in retention, loyalty, job satisfaction, innovation, creativity and productivity (Galinsky, Bond, Sakai, Kim & Giuntoli, 2008). This study concludes that work flexibility significantly influences employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

The study recommended that Deposit Money Banks should incorporate flexible job schedules into human resource management strategies, policies and plans to enhance innovativeness.

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