

Flexible Work Arrangements, Job Satisfaction and Performance

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Abstract: Flexible work arrangements (FWA) refer to flexibility regarding an employee's work location, working times and how much an employee works. FWA practices are designed to keep employees motivated and satisfied with work and non-work related roles. Existing empirical studies on the impact of flexible work arrangements on performance, and job satisfaction have mostly been conducted in developed countries. This paper sought to address this gap by undertaking a study in an organization specific context in a developing country, in particular Durban Westville Eskom, South Africa. The main aim of this paper was to establish the relationship between flexible work arrangements, performance and job satisfaction at Durban Westville Eskom shared services department. This paper is anchored on the two-factor theory, Vrooms expectancy theory, Role theory, and Spillover theory. The target population consisted of 120 employees reporting to revenue management shared services. Simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size whereby a sample of 92 employees was obtained. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from the sample. Data was analysed through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings show that a majority are satisfied with their current work arrangements, and that flexible work arrangement could make them stay with their current employer. In addition, it was found that performance and flexible work arrangement have a strong positive correlation. The study concluded that flexible work arrangements enhanced employee retention, and job satisfaction which led to higher productivity.

Keywords: *Flexible work arrangements, Job Satisfaction, Performance*

1. Introduction

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) can be said to be deliberately chosen alternatives to the standard eight-hour working day (Rau & Hyland, 2002). FWA refers to flexibility in relation to where an employee working from, the time he/she is working and even how much work an employee does (Chen, 2015). The concept of flexible work arrangement has been growing in interest among academics, practitioners, and executives, both in private and public sectors, especially due to its importance (Sturges, 2012). Due to the important role it plays, governments in first world countries such as the United States of America and countries that belong to the European Union have policies that have been put in place regarding flexible work arrangements (Jones & Jones, 2011). Flexible work life practices are deliberately designed such that they keep employees motivated and satisfied with work and non-work related roles. These practices balance work and family responsibilities, and help obtain a higher level of work commitment among employees (Chen, 2015; Palkisetia, 2015). However, it is notable that most existing empirical studies on the impact of flexible work arrangements on performance, and job satisfaction have mostly been conducted in developed countries. In this regard, this paper attempted to address this gap by conducting a study in an organization specific context in a developing country. In this case, the study will be conducted in Durban Westville Eskom, South Africa. The main aim of this paper was to establish the relationship between flexible worker engagements, performance and job satisfaction at Durban Westville Eskom shared services department. Eskom is a state-owned company that deals with the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity within South Africa and parts of Africa.

Descriptive Analysis: The company operates as a monopoly and is regulated by the National energy regulator of South Africa (NERSA). Given the experience of employees in the company, Eskom is faced with high absenteeism, late coming and high staff turnover rates. Thus, without any empirical investigation, this problem calls for attention. This paper therefore sought to address three main objectives; Firstly, it sought to determine the relationship between flexible work arrangements, job satisfaction and performance at Eskom shared services department; Secondly, it sought to establish the relationship between demographic profile and FWA, and thirdly, to establish the expectations employees of different age groups have on flexible work arrangements. In that regard, the paper sought to answer the following questions: (1) Does a relationship

exist between Flexible work arrangement, job satisfaction and performance? (2) What is the relationship between FWA and demographic characteristics such as age, education level, experience, intent to leave and job satisfaction? (3) How does the need for flexible work arrangements differ amongst employees of different age groups? The remainder of this paper covers the theoretical framework and related literature, research design and methods, results, Discussion and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework: The study was anchored on several theories that explain the link between FWA, job satisfaction and performance.

Hertzberg's: Fredrick Hertzberg's 2-factor theory served as the main framework for this paper. This theory was developed in 1959 and has been used to study job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. This is realized through a consideration of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The theory holds that the independent variable flexible work arrangement explains the dependent variables job satisfaction and performance. Hertzberg's two-factor theory has two dimensions of motivators and hygiene factors. These lead to intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction respectively. Motivators are intrinsic factors that result in job satisfaction and comprise of recognition, possibility of growth and advancement, responsibility, and achievement. Hygiene factors are extrinsic in nature. They encompass salary, job security, relationships at work and home, policies and procedures and personal life. However, according to Hertzberg, job satisfaction could be achieved through intrinsic factors and that job dissatisfaction is the result of the absence of hygiene or extrinsic factors (Sypatak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999).

Factor Theory: To quantify the level of job satisfaction, using Hertzberg's 1959 motivation-hygiene theory, Ghazi Shahzada & Khan (2013) conducted a study whose findings showed that adequate levels of motivation and satisfaction needed to increase employee performance can be realized through prioritizing hygiene factors. Similarly, Palanski et al. (2014) in a similar study concluded that employees voluntarily leave their jobs due to personal reasons such as family conflicts, employee's perception of organizational culture, and future growth (Protas, 2013). Herzberg's hygiene factors of job satisfaction give a rationale as to why employees may be more productive and committed to their employer when they work in an environment that promotes job satisfaction. Therefore, this theory is relevant since it supports the relationship between work-life benefits and commitment to the organization.

Vrooms Expectancy Theory: Vrooms theory of job satisfaction sought to establish the relationship between workplace and personal factors. According to Vroom, valance, expectancy and instrumentality are instrumental in job satisfaction, motivation and performance at work. When the three factors are low, there is a likelihood of a decline in work performance due to reduced motivation. However, if those factors are high, higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation will occur (Vroom, 1964). Vroom (1964) declared that by satisfying employee's needs within an organization, a positive effect on employee performance can be achieved.

Role Theory: Role theory has been widely used to understand the relationship between work and family (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The theory posits that roles are based on demands or expectations about appropriate behaviour that depend on factors such as an individual's own assumptions, role identity and culture (Katz & Kahn, 1978). When these role demands or expectations do not conform to expectations, the role conflict may arise. According to Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964) role conflict is the "simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other" (p. 19). It is notable that Inter-role conflict results when demands of multiple roles are incompatible purely because involvement in one role is increasingly challenging by virtue of involvement in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Within the role theory, two hypothesis exist, namely, the scarcity hypothesis (Goode, 1960) and enhancement hypothesis (Sieber, 1974). These have been instrumental in explaining multiple role accumulation, and especially work-life balance.

Scarcity Hypothesis: The scarcity hypothesis (Goode, 1960) has largely been the underlying theory to explain work-family balance (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). Proponents of the scarcity hypothesis theory posit that individuals' physical and psychological resources are unavailable, therefore the more roles an individual occupies, the more extinguishes the resources become (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). Accordingly, individuals

participating in multiple roles will inevitably experience role conflict and strain due to the scarcity of the resources required to fulfil multiple roles (Carlson & Frone, 2003). High levels of work-family conflict were therefore thought to result in the imbalance between work-family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Enhancement Hypothesis: The enhancement hypothesis (Sieber, 1974) has a positive perspective of work-family balance. Sieber (1974) and Marks (1977) suggested that the advantages of pursuing work and family roles are likely to outweigh the disadvantages. According to Sieber (1974), resources are abundant and through role accumulation, individuals acquire resources that may be beneficial when facing diverse life challenges. Similarly, Marks (1977) argued that resources of time and energy are flexible and through multiple role involvement, individuals can expand their resources and energy supply. Active engagement and commitment to multiple roles provide individuals with resources and opportunities that may enhance functioning in different roles (Barnett & Gareis, 2006; Kyule, Katunzi & Arasa, 2016). Furthermore, the benefits of multiple role involvement are likely to outweigh any stress and therefore yield sufficient satisfaction (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Sieber, 1974). Based on the enhancement hypothesis, participation in multiple roles can lead two main ways to positive results. Firstly, individuals can depend on satisfaction and success in one role to compensate for dissatisfaction in another role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Secondly, positive experiences or outcomes of one role can be transferred to another (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kyule et al., 2016). The enhancement hypothesis is important in facilitating an understanding work balance as it describes the positive outcomes of pursuing multiple roles

Spill Over Theory: The Spillover theory posits that an employee's experience in one facet in life affects their experience in another facet (Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001) Glowinkowski & Cooper (1986) asserts that the occurrence of spillover can be attributed to the actions of one facet affecting the other facet. The spillover theory states that 'employees bear the attitude, skills, emotions and behaviors from their family life into their work role and from their work roles to their family lives' (Lambert 1990). The spillover effect can be positive or negative. Positive spillover can be defined as attributes from one area affecting performance positively in another area and negative spillover is when attributes from one area prevents the fulfilment of demands in another area. Existing researchers (Allen et al., 2013) have acknowledged both positive and negative spillover. Spillover theory was found relevant to this study since it has a significant influence on meeting work and family obligations either positively or negatively (Chen Powel and Greenhaus, 2009).

2. Literature Review

Flexible Work Arrangement: Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) is a construct often defined in terms of flexibility about when, where, or how much one works in their day to day working life. In this paper, FWA are taken to be arrangements that allow employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011) in such a way that they are enabled to balance the expectations of their work and non-work lives more effectively. In addition, FWA may also be defined as employer-provided programmes that give employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday (Hill et al., 2001). It's worth noting that FWA assist employees in realize a balance between work and life demands. These programs are specifically meant to help employees who are not able to manage their time between life and work due to their responsibilities at home such as taking care of children. Furthermore, flexible working programs also lead to lower turnover and absenteeism. This in turn results in higher productivity and profitability within the organization (Palkisetia, 2015). Three types of FWA exist, namely, 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 among others. Flexi-time requires employees to be engaged in work a certain number of core hours, which they may vary the time to begin and stop as long as they work the equivalent of a full workweek or any other nominated time. Compressed workweek involves having employees 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. Thus, work flexibility that is location orientated allows employees to work from home through telecommuting/Telework or to work from a remote office through flex place (Palkisetia, 2015; Tufail et al., 2016). It's notable that FWA is linked to reduction in absenteeism and improved employee productivity (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011). Other impacts of FWAs are enhanced job satisfaction (Richman, Johnson & Noble,

2011), increased organizational commitment (Beauregard & Henry, 2009), positive attitude (Richman, Johnson & Noble 2011); higher financial performance (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011); and reduced labor turnover (Society for Human resource management).

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is the enjoyment employees experience while performing their job (Saeed Waseem Sikander & Rizwan (2014). This enjoyment is usually expressed as positivity towards work. Research has shown that employees who reportedly feel positive about their job achieve high levels of job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge 2013). High levels of job satisfaction have been found to lead to high employee motivation and thereby enhanced performance, consequently reducing turnover and absenteeism (Kyule et al., 2016). It is therefore easily deductible that job satisfaction has a relationship to low retention, absenteeism and late coming (Sukriket, 2015). In addition, other researchers have found employee's productivity, behavior and motivation to be linked to job satisfaction (Dobre, 2013; Yadav & Aspal, 2014; Tehseen & Ul Hadi, 2015; Tufail et al., 2017). In order to increase job satisfaction Uduji (2013) recommended that leaders in organizations should incorporate the needs of their employees into the organizational strategy so that employee dissatisfaction is reduced and employee motivation and satisfaction is enhanced. This can be realized through flexible work programs and organization a culture. Generally, most aspects of work have been found affect job satisfaction even those aspects that have no direct relationship with the job task itself (Awang et al., 2013), for example flexibility.

Performance: Performance has been defined in many ways by different authors. In this study, it will be defined simply as results orientated behavior (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). These are the actions that individuals or groups perform as they have a contribution in achieving organizational goals in the anticipated manner (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). In most cases, performance is often described in terms of output, that is, the achievement of set and quantified objectives. It is largely a matter not only of what people achieve but how they achieve it. High-performance results from functional behaviour, more so discretionary behavior and the effective use of the required knowledge, skills and competencies. This may thus be enhanced by Flexible work programs (Alromaihi, Alshomaly, & George, 2017). On the other hand, (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Kappagoda, 2012) assert that employee performance is a record of the results produced in a specific job function or activity during a specific time period associated with organizational objectives. It is the result produced by a specific functional unit or individual activity over a given period and not the personal characteristics of employees who performing the work. Performance is important to both employees and organizations. People are an organization 's greatest assets: individuals and organizations have learned about the importance of the role of people in an organization, and how the success of an organization depends on its people (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1995).

3. Methodology

This quantitative research on the relationship between Flexible work arrangements, job satisfaction and performance was carried out at Eskom, Durban Westville's department of shared services. The target population consisted of 120 employees reporting to revenue management shared services. Simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. At a confidence level of 95% or 5% level of significance, a sample size of 92 respondents was obtained from a population of 120 employees. This was determined by using the sample size determination table in Sekaran & Bougie (2013). An online questionnaire was used to collect data from the sample. The questionnaire was developed using Question Pro, an online survey tool. Online questionnaires were used since they are a quick and efficient method for data collection (Creswell, 2014). Data was analysed through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Cronbach alpha value for the study was 0.76. Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient of reliability or consistency. It measures how well a set of items (or variables) measures a single unidimensional latent construct (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A Cronbach value above 0.75 shows that the items on each of the variables in the questionnaire are reliable for measurement (Brown, 2002).

4. Results

Demographic Profile: Personal characteristics of the employees have a relationship with the need for flexible work arrangement (FWA) (Al-Rajudi, 2012). To establish this, information on age, gender, marital

status, level of education, experience, and children was sought from the research participants. Online questionnaires were emailed to 90-respondents constituting the sample for the study. 60 of the respondents responded, a 65% response rate. 31 (51.7%) of the respondents were male while 29 (48.3%) were female, and 46.7% were in the age range 25 to 35 years. As concerns race, the majority of the employees in the department were African (47%) and Asian (38%). 49% had a bachelor's degree and 6. 5% had either a masters or doctorate degree. The high level of education could be attributed to the need for a skilled workforce with a specialized area of expertise within the department. Unmarried respondents constituted 43% of the employees, married 53% and divorced 3%. Majority of the respondents, 26(43%), had between 5-10 years of work experience and 20 (33%) had over 15 years of work experience, with 6(10%) having been in the department for less than 5 years.

Flexible Work Arrangement Needs: Flexible work arrangements presents options for dealing with work-life balance such as breaks from work, compressed working hours, self-roster flexi-time, paid leave and job-sharing (Lewis, Gambels and Rapoport, 2007). The research finding on current work arrangement at Eskom department -shared services indicated that 34 (56.7%) of the respondents were on flexi work arrangement, 5(8%)were on a compressed workweek while 20(33%) were not on either of them. This reflects the existing policies and practices in the company regarding work-life balance. The descriptive data analysis (table 1b) shows that younger employees have a greater need for flexible work arrangements 41(68%). The analysis further indicates that 30(50%) of the participants are desirous to extend their studies and that a flexible work arrangement would help them in that regard. Hence, it could be argued that when organisations incorporate the needs of employees into their strategy, dissatisfaction is reduced and employee motivation is increased. Furthermore, previous research has indicated that employees working more flexible hours are more productive than those working traditional hours and that these gains are manifested both in terms of quality of work and actual outputs (Bevan et al., 1999).

Table 1: Flexible work arrangement needs

Flexible work arrangement needs	Age25-45		Age45-60+		Variance
	No	Percentage	No	Percentage	
Further Studies	30	50%	8	13,33%	13,33%
Spending time with Kids	25	41,66%	12	20%	24,5%
Work Life Balance	41	68,33%	14	23,33%	2,22%
Time Management	15	25%	4	6,66%	6,67%
Work life commitments	21	35%	5	8,33%	13,33%
Adult Dependants	15	25%	9	15%	26,67%
Kid dependants	24	40%	6	10%	13,33

Descriptive Analysis -Flexible Work Arrangement, Job Satisfaction and Retention: The respondents were given a set of measures with corresponding statements on flexible work arrangement, job satisfaction and retention and had been asked to rate them on a five-point scale where: Strongly Disagree was rated as 1, Disagree=2 Neutral=3 Agree=4and Strongly Agree 5). Regarding the current level of job satisfaction, 43(72 %) indicated that they were satisfied. 47 (78%) of the respondents desired autonomy, while 77% indicated that flexible work arrangement would make them stay with their current employer.

Table 2: Flexible work arrangement, Job satisfaction and retention

Measure	Question		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Current level of Job satisfaction	I am satisfied with my current work arrangements	Count	2	4	11	31	12	60
		%	3,33	6,67	18,33	51,67	20	100
Desire for Autonomy	I would prefer to be involved in structuring my working times	Count	2	4	7	31	16	60
		%	3,33	6,67	11,67	51,67	26,67	100
		%	1,67	13,33	8,33	43,33	33,33	100

Table 3: Flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction

Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I am satisfied with my current work arrangements	Count	2	4	11	31	12	60
	%	3,33	6,67	18,33	51,67	20	100
I would prefer to be involved in structuring my working times	Count	2	4	7	31	16	60
	%	3,33	6,67	11,67	51,67	26,67	100
A flexible work arrangement will make me want to stay in my company's employ	Count	1	8	5	26	20	60
	%	1,67	13,33	8,33	43,33	33,33	100
I come late to work and leave earlier from work because of personal commitments	Count	24	17	11	7	1	60
	%	40	28,33	18,33	11,67	1,67	100
I often need time off during a working day to take care of personal commitments	Count	5	18	14	18	5	60
	%	8,33	30	23,33	30	8,33	100
I find it difficult to balance my work-life commitments	Count	13	21	16	10	0	60
	%	21,67	35	26,67	16,67	0	100
I would like to spend time with my kids after they finish school but my working hours do not enable me to do so	Count	6	17	17	125	5	60
	%	10	28,33	28,33	25	8,33	100
A flexible work arrangement	Count	0	5	12	28	15	60

will help balance my work-life commitment	%	0	8,33	20	46,67	25	100
I would like to further my studies but my working arrangement, where I am based and office hours, makes it difficult	Count	7	14	11	18	10	60
	%	11,67	23,33	18,33	30	16,67	100

Descriptive Analysis- Flexible Work Arrangement and Job Satisfaction: Table 7 presents responses to nine statements relating to work-life balance that the respondents had been asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 depending on how they viewed them. The statements mainly focused on flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction (where: Strongly Disagree was to be rated as 1; Disagree=2 Neutral=3 Agree=4 and Strongly Agree=5). A majority of the respondents 43(72%) agreed to strongly agree with the statement “I am satisfied with my current work arrangements”. Majority of the respondents 47 (78%) indicated that they would prefer to be involved in structuring their working times. Further, 77% of the respondents felt that flexible work arrangement could make them stay with their current employer. This result concurred with Sukriket (2015)’s finding that satisfied employees are less likely to leave their jobs compared to employees who were not satisfied. In addition, 43 (73%) respondents indicated that flexible work arrangement would help balance their work-life commitments. This, notwithstanding, 34 (57%) of the respondents found it difficult to balance their work-life commitments. Besides, 41 (68%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, “that they come late to work and leave earlier because of personal commitments”. In summary, majority of the employees in the Department, 54 (88.5%) indicated that flexible work arrangement could make them satisfied. This result concurred with Richman, Johnson & Noble (2011) study finding that FWAs enhanced job satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis - Flexible Work Arrangement, Job Satisfaction and Performance: Using Pearson’s moment correlation analysis, the researchers sought to answer the question, “Does a relationship exist between Flexible work arrangement (FWA), job satisfaction and performance”? Table 4 presents the results of the analysis. The analysis show that performance and flexible work arrangement have a strong positive correlation which is statistically significant ($r = .585$, $p = 0.11$). Likewise, there is a strong positive correlation between flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction which is statistically significant ($r = .577$, $p = 0.11$). This result concurs with Ali (2016) findings that high job satisfaction levels and performance correlate to workplace flexibility. Other related studies including those by Indermun & Bayat (2013), Duggah & Denis (2014) and Shmailan (2016) have also found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance. The correlation results suggest that 34.2 per cent of the variance in performance is accounted for by FWA ($R^2 = 0.342$; $P < 0.05$) while 65.8 percent of the variation is accounted for by other factors that the study did not address. The analysis further indicate that 33% of the variance in job satisfaction was accounted for by FWA ($R^2 = 0.33$; $P < 0.05$) while 67 % of the variation could be explained by other factors. This simply implies that flexible work arrangement is an important factor in determining employee job satisfaction, behaviour and productivity (Chen, 2015; Dobre, 2013). This assertion is supported by Herzberg’s 2-factor theory and Vroom’s theory of job satisfaction. According to Herzberg & Mausner (1959), employees may be more productive and committed to their employer when they work in an environment that promotes job satisfaction. Similarly, Vroom (1964) declared that by satisfying the needs of employees within an organization, a positive effect on employee performance could be achieved,

Table 4: Correlation analysis
Correlations

		Performance	Job Satisfaction	Flexible Work Arrangements
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.327*	.585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011	.000
	N	60	60	60
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.327*	1	.577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011		.000

	N	60	60	60
Flexible Work Arrangements	Pearson Correlation	.585**	.577**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	60	60	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that employees at Durban Westville Eskom were on flexible work arrangements, and that younger employees have a greater need for flexible work arrangements. This could be attributed to the nature of their social ties. In addition, employees preferred to be involved in structuring their working times. It is worth noting that flexible work arrangements enhanced employee retention. Likewise, flexible work arrangements enhanced job satisfaction which led to higher productivity.

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