

Flexible Work Arrangement and Employee Performance of Selected Commercial Banks in Anambra State Nigeria.

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Abstract: *The study investigates flexible work arrangement and employee performance of selected commercial banks in Anambra State. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Sample size was 186 respondents drawn from the target population of 348 respondents using Taro Yamani formula. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaire. Construct and content validity was used to validate the instrument while Cronbach's alpha (α) statistical method was used to test the reliability of the instrument. . Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed a significant and statistically relationship between job sharing and employee commitment in studied banking sector and a positive and significant relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction in the studied banking sector. The study concluded that Flexible work arrangement reduces work stress, improve mental and physical stability and enhance work efficiency and effectiveness .The study therefore recommends that managers should improve the use of flexitime work arrangement because it enhances employee performance, reduces absenteeism and increases employee satisfaction.*

Keywords: flexible work arrangement, employee performance, job sharing, flexi-time

1.1 Background of the study

Flexible working arrangements are emerging issues in human resource management. Employee in any organization needs to balance between personal life and work responsibilities if the employee performance is to be achieved. Flexible work arrangement (FWA) are useful for achieving the more efficient use of human resources (HR) because they provide an opportunity to allocate employees and their time depending on the nature of work that has to be done (Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill, & Parry, 2017). The interest and importance of flexible work arrangement is increasing especially among the banks' staff who have been found of using more time at office and on the road in cities making them arrive home lately and leaves early in order to beat traffic. A flexible work arrangement includes: flexibility in the scheduling of hours worked, such as alternative work schedules (e.g., flex time and compressed workweeks), and arrangements regarding shift and break schedules; flexibility in the amount of hours worked, such as part time work and job shares; and flexibility in the place of work, such as working at home or at a satellite location. Decentralized and flexible work arrangements have been proclaimed by different researchers as a way for companies to reduce expenses, cope with variations in demand, and be more attractive for employees.

Employees prefer flexibility in working time and location in order to suit their preferred, more individualized life-styles and to be able to better combine paid work with other life activities (Possenriede, 2014). flexible work arrangement minimize 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).

Flexible working has become increasingly common in many countries in recent years, with many employers offering some form of flexible working to their employees and significant numbers of employees taking advantage of these opportunities (CIPD 2012; Matos & Galinsky, Tipping, Chanfreau, Perry & Tait, 2012; Skinner, Hutchinson & Pocock, 2012). Flexible working arrangements have been introduced in Europe due to managers' concern with performance, implying a positive association with performance (Ortega, 2009), a systematic review of the literature (de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011) concluded that a 'business case' for offering flexible working arrangements had not been demonstrated. Others have argued that, despite no evident direct link with performance, flexible working arrangements are inexpensive for employers and popular with employees, so may foster positive employee outcomes that could enhance performance (Bloom and Van Reenen, 2006). This study, in contrast, analyses the association between having a flexible working arrangement and actual employee performance, as measured by individual performance ratings.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, every human being struggles to survive in the wake of competing challenges due to innumerable wants but limited resources. As organizations struggle to meet stakeholders demand of capital appreciation, increasing market share, survival in the industry and successful retention of valuable workers among others, workers too are in a stiff competition to utilize

their time among competing needs such as attending to family affairs, social and political events as well as other personal activities which sometimes conflict with organizational goals. Employees in the banking sector in Nigeria are more involved in their jobs and longer working hours more than 48 hours therefore making it difficult for employees to keep a balance between job, family and other personal issues (Muhammadi et al., 2009). This has resulted in work life conflicts which has been found to be associated with mental health issues like stress and depression (Beck & Davis, 2004) which in the long run affects employee and organization performance. Employees today both male and female lives are becoming more consumed with a host of family and other personal responsibilities and interests in addition to demands of the workplace (Grantol-Vallore & Donaldson, 2001). There is therefore a perceived imbalance between the demands of current lives and people's abilities to adequately cope with them and this may lead to an experience of stress (World of Work Report, 2011). Therefore the study explores the effect of flexible work arrangement on employee performance.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study explores the nature of relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee performance of selected commercial banks in Anambra state, but specifically seeks to:

1. Investigate the nature of relationship between job sharing and employee commitment
2. Ascertain the nature of relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction.

1.4 Research hypotheses

1. There is significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment
2. There is significant relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction

2.1 Conceptual Review

Flexible working arrangements generally refers to a practice in organizations where employees are able to choose when they work and where they work from so long as they fulfill their working obligations in doing so (Grzywacz, Carlson, & Shulkin, 2008). 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; flextime, absence autonomy, compressed work weeks, reduced schedule, telework, 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 mandatory 8 hours /day and do not extend their schedules longer). According to Giannikis and Mihail, (2011), flexible working arrangements (FWA) are among the many Work-Life Balance (WLB) initiatives being advanced by many organizations as they seek to enable their employees reconcile their work life and family responsibilities. Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2010) argue that flexible work arrangements enable employees to manage their work and family responsibilities harmoniously. Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2010) view is supported by Dalcos and Daley (2009) who revealed that flexible work arrangement such as flex time allows employees to choose when, where and for how long they engage in work-related tasks, thus enhance engagement. Chow and Howe's, (2006) revealed that work arrangements where employees' participation is incorporated shows higher levels of concentration, and performance. It is therefore evident that flexible work arrangement is very significant in enhancing employees' commitment, quality service delivery in the banks and thus client satisfaction.

Flexi time:

Flextime is a process that allows an employee to negotiate the time to commence their work daily in as much appreciable period of work is achieved pierce & Gardner, (2009) asserted that the introduction of work that is flexible in nature will lead to reduction in absenteeism of staff and can bring about increase in the level of job satisfaction. Flexi time is the most popular flexible work option with both employers and employees. It lets employees set their own starting and quitting times within limits determined by management. Flexi-time, which allows workers who work full-time to choose when to start and finish work (ILO, 2011). Flexible working generally makes workers to be productive hence high performance to the employee. Employees who are placed on flexible program will be happier at work and less prone to burnout and stress than employees on fixed job hence productivity is realized. Productivity is important for the in long run competitiveness and profitability of the organization (Chow and Howe's, 2006). Hildebrandt, (2006) observes that most common flextime practice normally outlines the time when a workday starts and ends to enable all the flextime employees choose the times they will be working within those work limits. Although flextime is part of policies offered by the HR as a benefit package to help employees, the schedule does not alter the total number of hours one is required to be at the workplace (Al-Rajudi, 2012). Flexi time goes a long way in enhancing employee retention as well as reducing the rate of absenteeism and tardiness in an organization.

Job-sharing

Job sharing is an agreement that allows two or more individual to engage in a full time work, whereby they shared the responsibilities between themselves (Hayman 2010). It is a technique that allows two or more employee work together sharing a single full time job. It's basically a form of part-time work that provides you with the equivalent of one full-time employee while giving the job-sharing employees the ability to keep their careers on track while allowing more time for family responsibilities or other activities. job-sharing which is characterized by splitting work between two employees in a way that their joint weekly work hours are equal to the standard week working hours of one employee (Kotey & Sharma, 2016). Job sharing allows more balanced life in terms of giving time to family; it gives leverages in taking days off when any type of emergency occurs. Moreover job sharing helps to enhance team skills as well as leadership skills (Ngambi, 2004).

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Employee commitment

Organisations instigate commitment in its employees due to the positive effects commitment can have in the working community and productivity through long term benefits (Richards, 2004). Richards has portrayed employee commitment as the employees' dedication and aspirations towards fulfilling the purposes of the organisation and their wish to be actively involved instead of remaining as mere contributors (Richards, 2004). Furthermore, employee commitment can have an undeniably positive effect on an organisation as it has a negating effect on the need for hiring new replacement employees or more motivated staff, thereby deleting the costs associated with employing replacements due to employee turnover (Armstrong, 2016). Employees wishing to remain in an organisation, compared to uncommitted employees, have been found to demonstrate happiness and satisfaction, along with being more engaged and self-directed in the workplace (Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova, 2012). Commitment can also demonstrate the employees' contentment and satisfaction towards their current employment situation (Jakobsson, 2018).

Employee satisfaction

Satisfaction refers to the level of fulfillment of one's needs, wants and desire. Satisfaction depends basically upon what an individual wants from the world, and what he gets."Employee satisfaction is a measure of how happy workers are with their job and working environment (Alam, Rafat, Agarwal 2012). It is sure that there may be many factors affecting the organizational effectiveness and one of them is the employee satisfaction. Effective organizations should have a culture that encourages the employee satisfaction, (Bhatti & Qureshi, 2007). Employee satisfaction is the terminology used to describe whether employees are happy, contented and fulfilling their desires and needs at work.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on work/family border theory propounded by Clark (2000). The theory explains 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 crucial aspect of this theory is the idea that work and family make up distinct domains or spheres which however have a bearing on each other. Clarke (2000) further notes 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 transition between these two cultures on a daily basis. This theory tries to explore how people manage to negotiate both the work and family concerns and to link these two spheres in order to achieve equilibrium (Clark, 2000). According to Clark, the theory rises from the thinking that work and family are distinct realms which influence each other. Clark (2000) additionally observe that despite the fact that many facets of family and work spheres are not easy to alter, it is possible for employees to find ways to bridge the gaps between them and strike a favourable balance to ensure that neither of the two domains' are compromised. Balance in this case refers to the satisfactory functioning of both home and works with minimal conflict. Flexible work arrangements present one of the approaches that can be used to strike this balance

2.3 Empirical Review

Mungania, Waiganjo & Kihoro (2016) investigated flexible work arrangement on performance of the banking industry in Kenya. The target population was 36,212 employees from all 43 commercial banks in Kenya focusing on branches in Nairobi. This study adopted survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. It was found that flexible work arrangement was strongly related to performance of the banking industry in Kenya. The study concluded that consideration of flexible work arrangements aspects to employees can greatly influence performance in banks in Kenya. The study recommends that managers should provide flexible work

arrangements considerations such as giving employees flexibility on when to begin and end work as long as they meet the target since this influences performance.

Mwebi & Kadaga (2015) examined the effects of flextime work arrangement on employee performance in Nairobi commercial banks. This research adapted a descriptive design. The target population was all the 1074 Nairobi CBD commercial banks employees where proportionate stratified sampling method was used to get a sample of 291 respondents from different strata (management, supervisory, clerical and secretarial as well as the support staff). These were issued with questionnaire which served as the research tool. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data via SPSS and further analysis was done by inferential statistics where correlation analysis was employed in finding the relationship between the variables. The findings revealed that Flextime work arrangement is positively related to employee performance.

Kipkoech (2013) researched on flexible working patterns and employee performance in Kericho county referral hospital in Kericho County. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population consists of 111 employees of Kericho County Referral Hospital. A sample of 104 staff of Kericho referral hospital was selected. The data was collected using closed and open ended questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by Cronbach Alpha formula. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS). The finding indicated that flexi working strategies was significant to performance of employees in an organization. The study recommended that temporary contract, work shift and part time had positive effect performance hence should be adopted.

Essien & Edwinah (2017) investigated flexible work time schedules and organizational commitment in the Nigeria Banking Industry. A total of 1,990 workers drawn from across all the banks operating in both states were sampled for this study. Consequently, a sample size of 320 workers was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sampling size table. The finding clearly shows that the implementation of flexible work schedules in the banks positively impacts on employee affective, continuance and normative commitment to work. The paper suggests that the management of banks in Nigeria should vigorously pursue the implementation of flexible work time schedules within its workforce so as to boost and sustain employee commitment to work.

Eleftherios (2018) examined the relationship between flexible employment arrangements and the workplace performance. Ordinary least squares (OLS) method is followed to analyze the data. The findings show a significant and positive relationship between the flexible employment arrangements and the workplace performance. Education, age, wage, quality of relations between managers-employees, years of experience, the area of the market the workplace is operated and the competition are significant factors and are positively associated with the propensity of the implementation of flexible employment arrangements.

Okemwa (2016) studied flexible work arrangement and commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The study adopted cross sectional survey design and the target population consisted of 1217 nurses in 27 level 4 and 5 public hospitals. Primary data were collected through the use of questionnaire. Linear regression analysis was used to regress relationship between flexible work arrangement and commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. It was found that there is a significant positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and commitment in public hospitals in Kenya. The study concludes that flexible work arrangement (flexitime, compressed work schedule, shift schedule and job sharing) has a positive significant linear relationship with commitment. It recommends that matrons and administrators in public hospitals to develop flexible work arrangements practices that suit individual needs of the nurses and implement them in order to greatly enhance their commitment.

3.1 Method

The study employed descriptive design. The target population of the Study is employees of the nine selected commercial banks in Anambra state. Sample size for this study was 186 respondents drawn from the target population of 348 respondents using Taro Yamani formula. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaire self-administered to the respondents. Construct and content validity was used to validate the instrument while Cronbach's alpha (α) statistical method was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The calculated Cronbach Alpha coefficient (α) was 0.85 which was above 0.70. Therefore, the instrument (questionnaire) was accepted to be reliable and consistent for this study. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses.

3.2 Result

The study sought to establish relationship between job sharing and employee commitment. The findings of the study are discussed below as explored by the questionnaire that was issued

Table 1 what is the extent of relationship between job sharing and employee commitment.

Statement	Mean	Std deviation
Job sharing allow employee to Share responsibilities and working hour.	4.50	.888
Sharing a single project with my work partner gives me sense of commitment and zeal to perform my work	4.81	.525
Job sharing enhances team skills, leadership skills and job commitment	4.31	.766

The respondents' views on the extent of relationship between job sharing and employee commitment had varied agreeing on table 1 above: Job sharing allow employee to Share responsibilities and working hour a mean of 4.50 and std deviation of .888, Sharing a single project with my work partner gives me sense of commitment and zeal to perform my work a mean of 4.81 and a std deviation of .525, Job sharing enhances team skills, leadership skills and job commitment a mean of 4.31 and a std deviation of .766. From the findings it can be noted that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that job sharing has positive relationship on employee commitment. In the present context the subject of job sharing has assumed a particular importance.

Table 2 what is the extent of relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction

Statement	Mean	Std deviation
Flexible work reduces absenteeism and increases employee satisfaction.	4.46	.778
Organization allows the employee to negotiate the time to commence and end work daily.	4.28	.756
Employees are satisfied because organization has scheme for employee leave.	4.12	.774

The respondents' views on the extent of relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction had varied agreeing on table 2 above: Flexible work reduces absenteeism and increases employee satisfaction a mean of 4.46 and std deviation of .778, Organization allows the employee to negotiate the time to commence and end work daily a mean of 4.28 and a std deviation of .756, Employees are satisfied because organization has scheme for employee leave

A mean of 4.12 and std deviation of .774. From the findings it can be noted that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that flexi time has positive relationship on employee satisfaction in that the present context the subject of flexi time has assumed a particular importance.

3.4 Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There is a significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment in selected banks in Anambra state.

Table 3: Pearson correlation between job sharing and employee commitment

	Job sharing	Employee commitment
Job Sharing	1	.664**
Pearson Correlation		

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	186	186
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.664**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	186	186

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

The table above shows that the degree of relationship between job sharing and employee commitment in the banking sector is uphill (positive) relationship. The correlation coefficient ($r=.664$) is significant at .05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant positive relationship between job sharing and employee commitment in selected banks in Anambra state.

Hypothesis two: There is a significant relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction in selected banks in Anambra state.

Table 4: Pearson correlation between flexi time and employee satisfaction

		Flexi time	Employee satisfaction
Flexi time	Pearson correlation	1	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	186	186
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson correlation	.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	186	186

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

The table above shows that the degree of relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction in the banking sector is uphill (positive) relationship. The correlation coefficient ($r=.796$) is significant at .05 level, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant positive relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction in selected banks in Anambra state.

3.5 Discussion of findings

The study explores the nature of relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee performance of selected commercial banks in Anambra State. Studies have shown consistent findings on the subject. Many researchers report that flexible work arrangement has a significant relationship between employee and organizational performance. Mungania, Waiganjo & Kihoro (2016) reported that flexible work arrangement was strongly related to performance of the banking industry in Kenya. The finding is in tandem with the work done by Mwebi & Kadaga (2015) found that Flextime work arrangement is positively related to employee performance. This is consistent with the study by kipkoech (2013) reported that flexi working strategies was significant to performance of employees in an organization. The study is in agreement with the work done by Eleftherios (2018) shows a significant and positive relationship between the flexible employment arrangements and the workplace performance. While Essien & Edwinah (2017) found that the implementation of flexible work schedules in the banks positively impacts on employee affective, continuance and normative commitment to work which is in consistent with the study. Okemwa (2016) found that there is a significant positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and commitment in public hospitals in Kenya

4.1 Summary of Findings

The following findings emanated from the study:

1. The result revealed a significant and statistically relationship between job sharing and employee commitment in studied banking sector ($r = .664(p < .01)$);
2. There is a positive and significant relationship between flexi time and employee satisfaction in the studied banking sector ($r = .796(p < .01)$);

4.2 Conclusion

Flexible work arrangement reduces work stress, improve mental and physical stability and enhance work efficiency and effectiveness. The flexible arrangements help employees in managing their work load, their personal life and help them to assess their responsibilities. It also reduces conflict, by helping employees to better manage the boundaries between work

and home life. Employees who are allowed to work flexibly often show an increase in commitment, engagement and improved performance. Commitment to the team was seen as a prerequisite to flexible working being effective, as well as reinforcing organisational commitment

4.3 Policy Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, the following policy recommendations are made:

1. Managers should improve the use of flextime work arrangement because it enhances employee performance, reduces absenteeism and increases employee satisfaction.
2. Managers should be open to requests for flexible working, and consider each request on its merits, using consistent principles. The use of consistent and explicit principles is important as this helps to overcome employees' perceptions of injustice.
3. Flexible working arrangements like flexible time, shift work, compressed work hours and job sharing should be encourage to help employees in balancing their family and work life.

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