

THE IMPACTS OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION

Lawrence, Michael Nwankwoala

Department of management,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt,
Rivers State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This paper vividly explains the impact of workplace flexibility on employee engagement in the organization. It was revealed that workplace flexibility positively affects employee engagement and its measures such as communication, managers coaching and employee participation. The paper also suggested that managers should make the lines of communication opened in order to gain a strong listening and feedback, job telecommuting should be allowed so as to achieve employee engagement and the employers should endeavour to advise home workers that they need to report any work-related injuries to the company within twenty-four hours of occurrence to improve job satisfaction.

Keywords: Workplace flexibility and employee engagement

Introduction

Flexibility in this context means the quality of having alternatives and easily change working conditions such as working hours, work schedule and general work agreement. Workplace flexibility is the ability of the organization to adapt to change in order to achieve desired goals and objectives. Ugargal and Patrick (2018) noted that workplace flexibility is used as a strong mechanism for employee retention and engagement.

Employee who is given the opportunity to work from home and outside the organisation will be committed to work and engage in organisational activities effectively. Helm (2013) supported that employee engagement is the degree to which workers feel passionate about their works and put more effort to task. Engaged workers perform effectively in a flexible work environment because it gives them work freedom and autonomy. Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) investigated on the influence of flexible work arrangement and they revealed that flexible work positively influences employee engagement. Their study also found that workplace flexibility provides workers the opportunities to work from a desired and comfortable location. Chen and Fulmer (2017) also found that a significant relationship exists between workplace flexibility and employee engagement. They noted that flexible working hour and flexible scheduling as well as flexible location improve employee engagement. A flexible work agreement attracts competent work, reduces absenteeism and improves job satisfaction as well as employee engagement. This paper is out to theoretically review the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement in order to close some literature gaps.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept of Workplace Flexibility

Workplace flexibility is a process in which employees are allowed to work from outside the organisation and are allowed to change hours of work as well as location. According to Hill (2008), Workplace flexibility is a process whereby organisation allows workers to choose on work-related activities. Flexible workplace is a work arrangement which includes part-time work, full-time work from home, shifts and departure time. Amah (2014) noted that workplace flexible is a type of work arrangement like time to take leave, departure time, flexible arrival at work, remote and shift in working hour. Workplace flexibility can also be measured as remote, flexible working hour, flexible work location and schedule.

Factors affecting workplace flexibility

- a) Employee fear of mistake
- b) Responsibility without given authority
- c) Organisational politics
- d) Poor reward system
- e) Poor performance evaluation

2.2 The Concept of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is the process harnessing employees to their work roles in order to improve performance. Employee engagement enables workers to participate physically and emotionally in the organisation. Weihrich, Cannice and Koontz (2011) defined employee engagement as translating workers' potentials into a higher performance. It is the process in which organisations increase workers' commitment and continuous attachment to the work and its environment. Engagement is a positive attitude toward work and levels of job satisfaction experienced by the employee at work. Tumolo (2004) noted employee participation, managers coaching, communication, and employee empowerment as dimensions of employee engagement.

2.3 Theoretical Review

The Job embeddedness is used as theory that underpins the study.

Job Embeddedness Theory

Job embeddedness by the theory states that workers are embedded within the organization when there are interconnections (links), employees are also committed and engaged in work effectively when their working life well suits their family life (fit). The job embeddedness is the combination of forces that fuel employee engagement.

2.4 Relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement

Workplace flexibility has a positive impact on employees' productivity by increasing their level of engagement and commitment (Inuwa, 2016). Flexible working patterns enhance job satisfaction levels and also engagement. According to Cole (2006), flexible work time is responsible for improved employee engagement to the achievement of organisational goals and objective. The presence of flexible working condition enables employees to actively participate in decision making and engage in vital activities in the organisation that lead to high productivity.

Flexible work location enables the employee to engage and involve in decision making and policies implementation from a comfortable location. This also enables workers to balance between work life and family life (Fapohunda, 2014). Workplace flexibility creates room for employee retention because it develops a fair relationship between management and employees. Flexible working hours reduce workplace conflicts and increase harmony as well as employee engagement.

2.5 Benefits of workplace flexibility

- i. It promotes better control over work life and responsibility
- ii. It reduces role-conflict and work overload
- iii. It improves employee engagement and commitment
- iv. It improves employee retention and reduces turnover rate
- v. It creates high sense of belonging and a spiritual workplace.

3.1 Conclusion

From the review of related literature, this paper concluded that workplace flexibility positively influences employee engagement because it gives employees the opportunities to work from comfortable location and use shift schedule as well as shift working hours which promote engagement and commitment.

3.2 SUGESSTIONS

1. Managers should make the lines of communication opened in order to gain a strong listening and feedback.
2. Job telecommuting should be allowed so as to achieve employee engagement.
3. The employers should endeavour to advice home workers that they need to report any work-related injuries to the company within twenty-four hours of occurrence to improve job satisfaction.

References

- Amah, E. (2014). *Human resources management: A practical Approach*. Amethyst & colleagues publishers.
- Chen, y. and Fulmer, I. (2017). Fine-flurning what we know about employee experience with flexible work arrangement and their job attitudes. *Human resource management*, 57(1), 381-395.
- Cole, G. (2006). Flexibility and the workplace: The battle to control working time, *Management Law* 48(6), 536-540
- Fapohunda, T.M. (2014). An exploration of the effects of worklife balance on productivity. *Journal of human resource management and Labour Studies*, 2 (2), 71-89.
- Helm,V. B. (2013). Employee engagement and workplace flexibility. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 5, 33-45
- Hill, J.E (2008). Defining and conceptualizing workplace flexibility. *Journal of Strategic Management*. 2, 66-74
- Inuwa, M. (2016). Job satisfaction and employee performance: An empirical approach. *The Millennium University*, 11 (2), 1-9.
- Tumolo, M. (2004). Effect of flexible work on job stress in the private sector. *Journal of management*.5(3),56-68.
- Ugargol, J.D. and Patrick, H.A. (2018). The relationship of workplace flexibility to employee engagement among information technology employees in India. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 4(3),34-54
- Weihrich, H. Cannice, M. and Koontz, H. (2011). *Management, a global and entrepreneurial perspective*. Tata Mc Grow Hill Education private limited.
- Weidemant, M. and Hofmeyer, K. B. (2020). The influence of flexible work arrangements on employee engagement: an exploratory study. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*. 18 (1),1683-7584