

# Managing Diversity through Workplace Flexibility for Organizational Performance

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## Abstract

*It is not common to find an organization having a homogenous workforce i.e. in terms of age, gender, ethnic affiliation, religious affiliation, physical disability, nationality and even race. This paper therefore sought to find out how organizations can manage this diverse workforce using flexible working patterns e.g. flexitime, job sharing, shift working, work modules, compressed workweeks, part-time working, job rotation and childcare assistance so as to improve organizational performance.. The paper is grounded on Herzberg's two-factor theory. According to the research findings, workforce diversity greatly influences the practice of flexible working patterns. Diversity variables: Gender, age and parenting responsibilities were tested and they indicated a significant relationship at 95% significance level. There was also a statistical significant association between flexible work patterns and organizational performance. The paper therefore gives recommendations to organizations to practice workplace flexibility so as to be able to enable them manage their diverse workforce and therefore optimize organizational performance.*

**Key words:** Affirmative action, Flexitime, Hygiene factors, organic organization, workplace flexibility and Workforce diversity

## Introduction

In today's organizations, it's difficult and not normal to find that the employees are all of the same age, gender, ethnic group, religious affiliation, nationality and even race. This therefore gives the human resource department a task to ensure that this diverse workforce works in harmony to ensure improvement in organizational performance. This study therefore focused on flexible working patterns as a way of managing the diverse workforce.

Trafford (2004) defines flexibility as part-time work, episodic work, job-sharing and general policies that help people manage their private lives. It's a workplace culture that focuses on getting the job done rather than punching time on the clock. From the employee's perspective, an important aspect of job is the hours of work required, the arrangement of the hours, and freedom (or lack of it) in determining work schedules. The work schedules affect the non-work part of a person's lifetime with the family, or leisure, and for self-development. (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003)

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) go on to say that the recent evidence indicates that a sizable portion of job dissatisfaction is related to lack of control over hours of work, forced overtime and lack of freedom to adjust hours to personal needs. The table 1.1 below presents some recent survey data regarding the availability of work schedules adaptations. Flextime is the most common adaptations. This table indicates that most companies especially between 1001-2500 companies practice all the four work schedules extensively.

### **The Concept of Workplace Flexibility**

Armstrong (1995) explains that there are four good reasons why an organization has to operate flexibly today. It includes : the need to achieve competitive edge – this focuses attention on the more efficient use of people; the need to be adaptive – the organization has to be able to respond quickly to change and to the new demands constantly being made upon it in turbulent and highly competitive conditions; the impact of new technology- this may result in major changes to skill requirements and work arrangements which can only function is a considerable degree of flexibility can be achieved in the use of people and new organization structure – a more fluid form process –based organizations in which complex innovation can take place requires more flexible approach to structure, the definition of work roles and how roles interact.

Armstrong also argues that there is a growing trend for firms to seek all three kinds of flexibility by depending on entirely new organization structures. This results in the development of what he termed the 'flexible firm'.

The new structure in the flexible firm involves the breakup of the labor force into increasingly peripheral, and therefore numerically flexible, groups of workers clustered around a numerically stable core groups which will conduct the organization's key firm-specific activities. At the core the emphasis is on functional flexibility. Shifting to the periphery, numerical flexibility becomes more important. As the market grows the periphery expands to take up slack; as growth slows, the periphery contracts. At the core, only tasks and responsibilities change; the workers here are insulated from medium –term fluctuations in the market and can therefore enjoy job security, whereas those in the periphery are exposed to them (Armstrong, 1995).

### **Alternative Work Arrangements**

The nature of work is being redefined and this has created strong pressures for greater flexibility in patterns of work organization in the workplace. Bouchikhi and Kimberly (2000) suggest that the major challenge to organizations by the external world trends is one of openness to individual's needs and democratization. Organizations must change its customized workplaces. The challenge for management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to fully internalize the diverse and changing needs of individuals, and to investigate employee-driven flexibility.

From the employee's perspective, an important aspect of job is the hours of work required, the arrangement of the hours and freedom (or lack of it) in determining work schedules. The work schedules affect the non-work part of a person's life: time with the family, leisure and for self-development. (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003)

They go on to state that Recent evidence shows that a sizable portion of job dissatisfaction is related to lack of control over hours of work, forced overtime and lack of freedom to adjust hours to personal needs. The table below shows some recent survey data regarding the availability of work schedules adaptation. Flextime is the most common adaptation.

According to Dessler (2002), flexible work arrangements are programs that generally allow employees to design relatively flexible workdays and or weeks from themselves so as to better accommodate the employees' personal needs and preferences.

They can be classified as:

#### **Flextime**

A flextime is a plan whereby employees' flexible workdays are built around a core of midday hours, such as 11.AM to 2PM. It is called flextime because workers determine their own flexible starting and stopping hours. For example they may opt to work from 7AM to 3PM or from 11AM to 7AM. Well over 15%of the U.S workforce is on flextime not counting professionals, managers and self –employed persons who customarily set their own hours anyway. (Dessler; 2002)

Flexible working hours (flextime) were initially seen as a way of overcoming travel-to-work problems as an inducement to prospective employees to join a company that offers this kind of flexibility. By 1980s there was a lessening of interest in this type of scheme but it remains in the wide use, both to provide flexibility and as a means of achieving better management control of employee working hour. Union resistance has been reduced, but there is still fear that overtime opportunities may be reduced and attention distracted from the need to reduce working hours (Derek and Hall,1995).

According to Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) flextime is an arrangement of working hours which provides for all employees to be present for a specified period (core time) but the rest of the required hours may be completed at their discretion within a specified period.

#### **Compressed workweek**

A compressed workweek is defined by Derek and Hall (1995), as a method of reducing the working week by extending the working day, so that people work the same number of hours but on fewer days. An alternative method is to make the working day more concentrated by

reducing the length of mid-day meal break. The now commonplace four-night week on the night shift in engineering was introduced in Coventry as a result of absenteeism on the fifth night being so high that it was uneconomical to operate. A compressed workweek is the scheduling of the normal 40 hours of weekly work in less than five days. The typical compressed workweek follows a four-day 40-hour schedule (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003).

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003), continue to add that research on the effect of compressed workweeks is uneven –some studies concluded it has positive effects on productivity, absenteeism and other behavior. Others concluded it does not. One pattern in the negative studies suggested that positive results occur shortly after (one year) the introduction, and then they decline. Individual and job differences may explain many of the contradictions in the research findings. In general, taxing physical or mental work probably is not suitable for compressed workweek schedule.

According to Decenzo and Robbins (1989), the 1970s saw an increased interest by employers in developing shorter workweeks for employees. Experiments have generally covered workweeks of three twelve-hour days, four nine-hour days and four ten-hour days, and the latter receiving the greatest attention. A four-day workweek provides employees with more leisure time; decreased commuting time, decreased request for time off for personal matters, makes it easier for organization to recruit employees, and decrease time spent on tasks such as setting up equipment.

There's a decrease in workers' productivity near the end of the longer workday, low job satisfaction and underutilization of equipment. While evidence does generally support that the shorter workweek increases employee enthusiasm and morale and reduces turnover and absenteeism, the evidence is mixed on the issue of productivity (Decenzo and Robbins, 1989).

### **Telecommuting**

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) explain that with the wide spread use of computer terminals and advanced telephone technology, some companies are beginning to contract out routine forms processing on computer terminals in their homes. Other work that can be done this way includes processing catalog sales, transcribing tape dictation, key boarding, and computer programs or even writing software.

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003) go on to add that People who have such arrangements mostly women, appreciate the convenience such arrangements provide. Ideally, this work schedule adaptation can work to the advantage of both the employer and the employee.

According to Dessler (2002), telecommuting is where employees work at home, usually with video displays, and use telephone lines to transmit letters, data, and complete work to the home office. It's estimated that 7 million workers in the U.S are telecommuting today in various jobs from lawyers to clerks to computer experts. Robbins and Decenzo (1989) say that home working allows employers to tap an expanded workforce, namely people who have small children at home and those who are handicapped.

### **Part time Working**

Initially most attempts to stagger working hours were in order to ease public transport problems: now they are to find ways of staffing the business. At one time part time was relatively unusual and scarcely economic for the employer, as the national insurance costs of the part time employee was not appropriate to those of the full timer. The part time contract was regarded as an indulgence to the employee and only second best alternative to the employment of someone full time. This view was endorsed by lower rates of pay, little or no security of employment and exclusion from such benefits as sick pay, holiday pay and pension entitlement (Derek and Hall, 1995).

Milkovich and Boudreau (2003), go on to say that although part –time has been hailed as beneficial for working parents, it has also been severely criticized by some women organizations such as 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women. Part-time work is “marginal” employment, 9 to 5 says, because it pays low wages and forces workers to give up benefits. A better choice the group suggests, would be for more employers to establish family-oriented workplace policies such as parental leaves, childcare and flexible schedules so that “parents are not forced to choose marginal jobs in order to provide care for their families”.

Most part-time work is concentrated in the service industries, especially education, health care, personal services (for example, beauty shops), business services such as advertising and entertainment and creation. The second most frequent location of part-time labor is in retail and wholesale trade, then agriculture and finally manufacturing (ibid, 2003).

### **Job Sharing**

Job sharing occurs when a single job is divided between two people. Because it requires schedule compatibility between the two people sharing the job, as well as roughly equivalent or complementary skills, employees initiate most job sharing (Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003).

Derek and Hall (1995) define job sharing as a specialized form of part time working where two people split a full-time job between them so that the employer has a full time service and the employee has only a half-time commitment.

Decenzo and Robbins (1989) explain that with the increase of two career families that have small children, work sharing allows one or both parents to be at home with the child during the affirmative years. Years ago, parents had to make a decision –would one of them quit work (primarily the wife/mother) to raise the child or would the child be sent to day care center? Perplexed by these questions and desiring to maintain both a family and a career, may sought a job that would allow both. Job sharing was an alternative. In work sharing, two people share one fulltime job. One person may work in the morning, the other in the afternoon. Each person is compensated according to his or her share of work.

### **Workforce Diversity**

One of the challenges of the HRM is to be able to deal with a workforce that has a mixed, rather than homogenous, set of values. And as already indicated, the challenge will come mainly from the younger workers. This is supported by a study in 1970s of the job satisfaction experienced by group of young blue-collar workers. (Schuster, 1985)

Schuster (1985) adds on to say that compared to the older workers, the younger ones were significantly less satisfied with the work itself and expressed low total satisfaction. In addition their perceptions of the need for satisfaction were quite different from those of their older counterparts. The attitude questionnaires (which were administered to several age categories of workers) indicated that a positive lineal relationship exists between age and job, whereas older workers tend to try to meet higher level needs on the job, younger workers consider social factors on the job to be more important.

Harrison and Kessels (2004) explain that the changing nature of work in emerging economy carries with it growth in job and income insecurity and threatens perpetuate existing gender inequalities in the distribution of work and jobs. Even in the “dot com ” that are often heralded as offering more autonomy for employees and more challenge and interest in the workplace. Harrison and Kessels (2004) go on to say that the operation of knowledge economy threatens to intensify old labor market divisions in those countries where most new jobs are in the low-skill, low paid sectors and knowledge workers, form at present only a small minority of the labour force. The composition of the workforce will continue to become more diverse as women; minority-group members and older workers flood the workforce.

According to Dessler (2002), diversity has been defined as any attribute that humans are likely to use to tell themselves, ‘ that person is different from me’ and includes such factors as race, sex, age, values and cultural norms. Kondola and Fullerton (1994) also concur by saying that the basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of employees. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences, which will include sex, age, background, race, disability personality and work style. This paper is founded on the promise that that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilized, and in which organizational goals are met.

Mullins (2002) suggests that managers need to be aware of future demographic trends; for instance Equity Direct predict that by the year 2010, 40% of the labour force will over 45 years of age. Devolution and regionalization have increased and paradoxically so too has the trend towards great integration into multinational grouping (in terms of both company mergers and political agendas). The growth of the portfolio workers and contract workers results in an employment relationship, which is short-term, instrumental and driven by outcomes and performance.

It is therefore Dessler’s advice that smart employees have to actively recruit a more diverse workforce. This means taking special steps to recruit older, minorities and women. It is 25 years since the Sex Discrimination Act in the U.K Mullins (2002) states, and although there have been some important victories there is considerable work to be done. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act will have a significant impact on public sector organizations. A code of practice, to be released in the summer of 2001, will provide the mandatory set of guidelines for the public sector. The reluctant employer is having its hands forced by statutory obligations. The disability Rights Commission is also seeking ‘Actions’ and commitment from organizations other kind words and wishes.



In summary, Mullins (2002) says that all this kind changes amount to a picture in which the white males will no longer dominate. Instead, we can anticipate a complex pattern where, ideally, individual differences will be valued and celebrated and at the very least, equal opportunities practice will be observed. Personal qualities and characteristics that may have been downgraded ignored or regarded, as nuisance factors will be perceived in this new situation as adding value. Organizations which embrace difference and diversity as opposed to those which are merely compliant will, it is claimed, succeed in a fiercely competitive climate.

### **Sample and Measures**

This study used case study design and on a state corporation whose results will be inferred to other state corporations in the region. The main data collection instrument was the questionnaire which was self administered. A total of 102 usable questionnaires were collected resulting to 86% response rate from the 118 questionnaires administered.

### **Results on workforce Diversity**

Results indicated there were 69 males out of 102 respondents, which constitute 67.6% of the sample as compared to 33 females who form only 32.4%. This shows that the general workforce as per the sample selected is male dominant. The age of the workforce was classified into three i.e. between 18-30years, 30-45 years and 45 years and over. In relation to age, the majority of the workforce was between 18-30years. They were 59 in number constituting 57.8% of the sample population followed by those employees with ages between 30-45 years who are 37 and form 36.3% of the sample population and only 6 employees (5.9%) were in the third category of 45years and over. This could be as a result of the company's operations, which include production, processing and selling of seeds. These processes are more of labor intensive, as it requires energetic employees to work in the fields and in their peak seasons they are required to work longer hours, for example during planting and harvesting seasons.

From the sample size selected only one employee forming 1.0% out of the entire sample was physically challenged. The other 101 employees were physically well forming 99%. This could mean that the company is biased in employing people on the basis of their physical disability. All the employees in the sample population responded to the question on religious affiliation as being Christian. This means that from the sample population, all the employees were of one religious affiliation. This variable gives no diversity but instead state the workforce's homogeneity in terms of religious affiliation. In relations to parenting, results indicated that from the sample only 44 (43.1%) employees have children below 3 years while 58 (56.9%) employees responded as not having children below 3 years. This could be as a result of the workforce having most employees between 18-30years as

*Hypothesis one: there is a relationship between workforce diversity and workplace flexibility*

Chi square was used to determine the relationship; this was due to the nature of the data collected (categorical). The data was analyzed at 95% significance level. Spearman correlation was also used to analyze the degree and direction of relationship between the variables. A cross tabulation between gender and part-timer shift and also gender and alternating day & night shifts resulted in a positive significance statistical association. In the cross tabulation between

gender and part-timer shift, a calculated chi-square value of 13.415 at  $p < 0.05$  with 1 degree of freedom shows that the association is significant. The level of significance was 0.000. This means that the gender of the respondents influences the practice of part-timer shift. The Spearman Rho correlation coefficient's calculated value is positive ( $r = 0.363^{**}$ ). All the respondents who said they practiced part-timer shift were male.

From the cross tabulation, we can also find that there is a significant relationship between gender and alternating day & night shifts. A calculated chi square value of 7.025 at one degree of freedom with the level of significance at 0.008 at  $p < 0.05$  means that gender influenced the practice of alternating day and night shifts. Since the relationship is positive ( $r = 0.262^{**}$ ), the practice of alternating day and night shift increases within a particular gender (male).

However there was no significant statistical association at  $p < 0.05$  between gender and permanent night shift, double day shift and three shifts working. The level of significance between gender and permanent night shift was 0.158 at one degree of freedom with a chi-square value of 1.991 which was greater than 0.05, therefore there was no significant relationship.

The level of significance between gender and double day shift was 0.266 at one degree of freedom with a chi-square calculated value of 1.235. This shows no association between the two variables at  $p < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient between the two variables showed an inverse relationship ( $r = -0.110$ ). Between gender and three shifts working, the calculated chi-square value was 0.976; the level of significance was 0.323 at one degree of freedom. This also indicates that there was no significant relationship.

The second variable tested against the flexible working patterns was age as indicated in table 4.20. There was an inverse significant relationship ( $r = -0.286^*$ ) at  $p < 0.05$  between age and the practice of flextime. This means that the practice of flextime decreased with an increase in age. The level of significance was 0.012 at  $p < 0.05$ , denoting a strong relationship. The chi-square value was 8.773 at 2 degrees of freedom.

A cross tabulation between age and double day shift showed an inverse association too  $r = -0.021^*$  at  $p < 0.05$ , which indicates that the practice of double day shift increases with decrease of age. The level of significance was 0.034 at  $p < 0.05$ . The chi square value was 6.779 at 2 degrees of freedom. This indicates a significant relationship between age and double day shift.

A significant association also occurred between age and alternating day & night shift. The inverse relationship indicated by the coefficient of correlation ( $r = -0.355^{**}$ ) at  $p < 0.01$ , which tells that the practice of alternating day & night shift increased with a decrease in age. The level of significance 0.000 at  $p < 0.05$ . the chi-square value is 32.640 at 2 degrees of freedom.

However all the other flexible working patterns (compressed work week, teleworking, part-time, job sharing and work modules) had no significant association to age because their level of significance was greater than 0.05.

From the finding, the null hypothesis that stated that *there is no significant relationship between the workforce diversity and flexible work patterns* is rejected. This is because the chi-square analysis indicates statistically significant associations between gender and part-timer shift, alternating day & night shift; between age and flextime, double day shift, three-shift working and also between parenting responsibilities and flextime, alternating day & night shift



and job rotation variables. The implication of these is that the workforce diversity variables; gender, age and parenting responsibilities influence the practice of flexible work patterns like flextime, alternating day and night shifts, double day shifts, part time working and job rotation.

*Hypothesis two: There is a relationship between workplace flexibility and organization performance*

The independent variables were the flexible working patterns, while the dependent variable were the organizational performance variables, which include: reduction in absenteeism, increase in productivity, offers equal employment opportunities, offers parenting opportunities, requires multi-skilling, reduction in: fatigue, commuting time, resistance by union; provides leisure time, increases enthusiasm and general job satisfaction. Flexible working patterns whose practice was very minimal, that is, their frequencies were below 10% a, were not tested. Therefore those that were tested included: job sharing, work modules, part-timer shift, alternating day and night shifts, double day shifts and job rotation.

From the cross tabulation, only three out of the twelve organizational performance variables showed significant relationships with job sharing. They include variables like: job sharing offers parenting opportunities, reduces resistance by employee unions, and increase leisure time for employees.

The level of significance for the variable- reduced resistance- was 0.016, -increased leisure -was 0.011 at  $p < 0.05$  and their spearman Rho correlation was ( $r = -0.054$  and  $-0.135$ ) respectively. Therefore, this means that although there was a significant association, it was inversely proportional. That is, an increase in the practice of job sharing led to decrease in resistance by employee unions. The chi-square value was 12.242 at 4 degrees of freedom for the variable reduced resistance and 13.049 for provided leisure time for employees at 4 degrees of freedom.

Parenting opportunities also indicated a significant association with job sharing. Its level of significant was 0.009 and at  $p < 0.05$ . The spearman correlation value at  $p < 0.01$  was 0.379\*\* which indicates a strong positive association. All the other organizational performance variables showed no significant relationship in the chi-square value with job sharing.

The other variable tested was part-timer shift, which is another type of flexible working patterns. A cross tabulation between this independent variable and the organizational performance variables showed significant relationships except the variable that part-timer shift improves productivity in terms of quality and quantity of output.

There was a strong positive association between part-timer shift and reduced commuting time. The level of significance at  $p < 0.05$  was 0.001 and the spearman correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) at  $p < 0.01$  was 0.238\*\*. Its calculated chi-square value was 18.811 at 4 degrees of freedom. This implies that the practice of part-timer shift lead to a reduction in commuting time. Another very strong positive significant relationship is seen between part-timer shifts and provides

leisure time for employees. The level of significance at  $p < 0.05$  was 0.000 and the spearman's Rho at  $p < 0.01$  was 0.116\*\*. It calculated chi-square value is 45.289 at four degrees of freedom.

The cross tabulation of table 4.10 below also indicates that there were very strong inverse relationships between part-timer shifts and the following organizational performance variables at  $p < 0.01$  as indicate by spearman correlation: parenting responsibilities ( $r = -0.210^{**}$ ), flexible working patterns require employees to be multiskilled ( $r = -0.438^{**}$ ), reduces resistance by employee unions ( $r = -0.008^{**}$ ), increases enthusiasm ( $r = -0.610^{**}$ ), increases general job satisfaction ( $r = -0.443^{**}$ ) and expanded workforce required flexible working patterns ( $r = -0.112^{**}$ ).

Their level of significance at  $p < 0.05$  was 0.001 for parenting responsibilities and flexible working patterns require employees to be multi-skilled; 0.003 for reduced resistance by employee union; 0.000 for increases enthusiasm, increases general job satisfaction and expanded workforce required flexible working patterns. This indicates that there was a significant statistical association between part-timer shifts and the above organizational performance variables.

Another significant relationship is also seen between part timer shift and the following variables: reduced absenteeism, offer equal employment opportunities and reduces fatigue. Their levels of significance at  $p < 0.05$  were: 0.046, 0.016 and 0.035 respectively. Spearman correlation coefficient showed the relationship between part-timer shifts and these variables to be inverse at  $p < 0.05$ , that is,  $r = -0.319^*$ ,  $-0.330^*$ ,  $-0.331^*$  respectively as indicated in table 4.10 below.

Alternating day and night shift which was also tested against organizational performance variables. From a cross tabulation, the study established that there was a significant relationship between alternating day and night shifts and the following variables at  $p < 0.05$ : reduced absenteeism, offers equal employment opportunities, parenting responsibilities, provides leisure time, increases enthusiasm and increases job satisfaction. Their level of significance was 0.049, 0.024, 0.006, 0.000, 0.014 and 0.001 respectively.

Spearman's Rho indicates a strong inverse association between alternating day and night shift except for parenting responsibilities whose spearman Rho at  $p < 0.01$  was ( $r = 0.365^{**}$ ) and increase in job satisfaction ( $r = 0.087^{**}$ ). Spearman correlation at  $p < 0.01$  indicates a strong negative relationship between alternating day and night shift and provides leisure ( $r = -0.367^{**}$ ).

The cross tabulation also indicates negative relationships between alternating day and night shift and absenteeism. Spearman's correlation coefficient at  $p < 0.05$  was  $-0.260^*$ ,  $-0.238^*$  for offers equal employment opportunities and  $-0.087$  for provides job satisfaction.

The other dependent variables: increased productivity, requires employees to be multiskilled, reduces fatigue, reduces commuting time, reduces resistance by employee unions and

expanded workforce requires workplace flexibility had no significant statistical association with alternating day and night shift from the chi-square analysis.

The other independent variable tested was job rotation. From cross tabulations, there was a strong association between job rotation and parenting responsibilities. This relationship was established at  $p < 0.05$ . The level of significance between the two variables was 0.000 at 4 degrees of freedom and a chi-square value of 26.608. The correlation coefficient showed a strong positive association between these variables ( $r = 0.495^{**}$  at  $p < 0.01$ ).

There was also a significant relationship between job satisfaction and alternating day and night shift. The level of significance at  $p < 0.05$  was 0.017, at 4 degrees of freedom and a chi-square value of 12.027. The relationship between these two variables was inverse ( $r = -0.023$ ) at  $p < 0.05$ .

All the other dependent variables showed no significant association between them and job rotation. They include: reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, offers equal employment opportunities, provides leisure time, increased enthusiasm, reduced commuting time, requires employees to be multiskilled, reduces fatigue, reduces resistance by employee unions and expanded workforce requires workplace flexibility.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated on flexible working patterns as a way of managing workforce diversity. It was intended to establish whether there was a relationship between workforce diversity and flexible working patterns and also to establish a relationship between flexible working patterns and organizational performance. The study specifically sought to establish the diversity of the workforce at a government corporation; examine the different types of flexible working patterns practiced; establish the effects of workplace flexibility on organizational performance and to find out the problems encountered during the implementation of the flexible working patterns. In view of these findings the study concludes that:

Government corporations employ diverse workforce in relation to age, sex and parenting responsibilities. This diverse workforce requires that the organization cater for them differently according to their needs. For example an employee of 24 years does not have similar needs to an elderly employee of 54 years. An elderly employee, it is assumed get exhausted faster than a young employee and so provision of flexible working patterns e.g. part-time working will suit an old or retired employee.

The study also concludes that organizations offer different working patterns. These different working patterns are offered so as to ensure that each individual employee's needs are catered for during working hours and also during their non-work hours. The provision of work patterns e.g. shift-working, job rotation and work modules have enabled organizations to think of the employee as an individual and not as the entire workforce.

It can also be concluded that workplace flexibility affects organizational performance positively. Organizational performance indicators i.e. Reduction in absenteeism, increase in quality and quantity of output, requires employees to be multiskilled, reduction in fatigue, increase in

employee morale and enthusiasm and increase in employee general job satisfaction were used to prove this in the study. This can further be explained that if an employee is offered with a variety of work patterns he is liable to perform better as he knows that the organization acknowledges him as an entity and therefore does not generalize the entire workforce. The policy of all employees working 8.00am to 5.00pm does not cater of individualistic needs but rather assumes that the entire workforce is homogenous and that they have similar needs, which is not true.

Although flexible working patterns have proved to have a positive effect on organizational performance, there are also problems that have been raised by the supervisory staff of each department that they face during the implementation of the work patterns. These problems include: difficulty to provide services e.g. catering and medical services to those who work on odd hours i.e. those on night shifts and those who work on weekends; difficult to administer especially where employees work interdependently, it also requires frequent training programs so that that the employees can easily be moved from one department to another easily-this is both time and money consuming; employees are overworked during peak periods and in sensitive departments e.g. finance and audit conflicts arise over allocation of modules.

Further research should be carried out on other ways of ensuring that organizations can effectively manage the workforce diversity other than the provision of flexible working patterns. Though flexible working patterns have been proved to be a way of managing the diverse workforce, there could be other ways that organizations can implement so as to effectively manage its diverse workforce.

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