



WORKING ANYWHERE, ANYTIME: PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES IN A SMALL BUSINESS

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Abstract

The paper aimed at highlighting the concept of flexibility in the workplace, by investigating the effectiveness of two types of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) on the productivity of employees in a small business. The study found that flexible work arrangements had a positive impact on the productivity of workers since 65.68% of the employees rated this item positively. The main challenge for managers employees was to develop the means by which to reduce employee turnover. The reality of the change in factors that had become important in the workplace had to be faced. In the past aspects such as a safe working space, development and training, clear lines of communication, financial incentives and appraisal were deemed important. The research - A qualitative approach was used with the aim of understanding and evaluating working arrangements and the effect of these arrangements on the productivity of managers and employees. The research sample comprised thirteen top and middle (human resource) managers from seven different accounting firms. The study recommended that small businesses should raise the awareness of the importance of FWAs programmes and their significant effect on the productivity of employees. The researchers recommended that these companies should support friendly organisational culture and adopt writing company policies and laws that laid down the applicability of various FWAs and directed the selection processes among various FWAs.

Keywords: Flexible Work Arrangements (Fwas), Productivity, Policies, Management

INTRODUCTION

Cascio establish in (2000:81) that the reality of virtual places of work is a reality that is striking harder as the idea is becoming more prevalent to many. This idea involves physically working remotely from managers and colleagues. In 2009 Hegewisch stated that legislation that is passed with regard to flexible hours is not a simple “magic bullet”. It will not suddenly enhance the taking up of flexible hours by employers and employees. It is a gradual process. This concept might be considered if both employer and employee would potentially benefit from it. This would depend on the employer’s reasonability when considering accommodating the employee in this manner. Reasonable accommodation is described by Bernard (2014:288) as “any modification or adjustment to a job or the working environment that will enable a person to have access to, or participate in employment”.

In an effort to prove that flexible hours are a viable concept, twenty two of Britain’s biggest companies have committed to giving flexible hours the benefit of the doubt. The result reflects the fact that although their companies are of different sizes, in different sectors and in different locations, they share the “common view” that flexible hours generate enormous financial benefits for their businesses. As a result, they guarantee “sustainable business performance and employee engagement” (Armitstead, 2013:1).

However, many of the anticipated benefits of implementation could possibly be offset by setup and maintenance costs, isolation and lack of trust and so the advantages are possibly completely offset. It is vital to do a cost benefit analysis in order to establish whether the cost in relation to benefit of FWAs is worth it (Smeaton, Ray & Knight, 2014:20).

The challenges faced by small business which threaten the growth and the productivity of these businesses are impediments that exist in the operation and functional areas of the business such as poor managerial skill and lack of planning skills as well as lack in market research skills.. In emerging countries, such as South Africa small businesses may possibly be hindered by lack of electricity in rural areas and limited access to market information and communication technologies (Chimucheka & Mandipaka, 2015:310)

Smeaton et al. (2014:71) believe that there are implementation, procedural and many unanticipated costs relating to FWAs being introduced. There are economic factors that may impact decisions around managers' decisions, adding to the uniqueness of each situation in each business. Martinsson, Lohela-Karlsson, Kwak, Bergström and Hellman (2016:2) speak of a British research which has found that legal requirements, economic incentives, moral and ethical aspects, in this particular order of importance, motivate managers in industry to spend money on employee health and productivity.

Martinsson et al. (2016:2) hold that a Canadian research inspected factors that explained managers' intentions to increase discretionary spending on WHP programmes within the auto-parts industry. In both studies so-called "business cases" were identified as important for motivating managers to invest in employee health. Some of the managers upheld their belief that Work Health Promotion programmes reduced the indirect costs of health problems and their feeling of responsibility towards their employees was enough reason to invest in such interventions. Similar results were found in another research conducted in the Canadian health care sector.

Skilled employees specifically, professionals and managers have a tendency to attract more FWAs than unskilled workers. Highly trained employees in professional service businesses usually have control of their work performance and have the ability to attain FWAs that suit their family and work conditions. SMEs in service trades that contest for skilled employees would for this reason gain an advantage from offering perks such as FWAs to entice and hold the required skills and encourage performance. Strategic emphasis on processes has been united with an emphasis on expenses and an emphasis on human capital has been joined with an emphasis on quality and innovation (Kotey, 2017:365).

Although this study was carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic, the study can be seen as ways to brainstorm problematic working conditions which are typical of flexible working time arrangement and therefore improve productivity under employees. According to several sources of information, flexible working arrangement has been the normal form of work in Europe during the COVID crises (Eurofound 2020a).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION

The problem of the study stems from the existence of constraints in the productive, work hours and the conflict between time work and family responsibilities. These constraints affect the overall level of performance of the employees, which has a direct influence on the level of productivity in the small business sector.

With this in mind, this study attempts to answer the following research question: What is the impact of flexible work arrangements (FWA) on the productivity of employees in the small business sector?

In attempting to answer this research question, the purpose of this study is: To assess the influence of FWAs on the level of workers' productivity in the small business sector.

LITERATURE

The following entails an overview of pertinent views with respect to flexible working arrangements and productivity. There are different types of flexible working arrangements, such as, telecommuting, flexi-time, compressed hours and job-sharing, etcetera in found in companies/organisations today. For this study, reference is made to two kinds of flexible working arrangements:

Telecommuting and flexi-time

Tele-working refers to flexible working that is possible from any site using technology, namely: laptops, wireless internet connections and mobile phones (Dizaho, Salleh, & Abdullah, 2017:457). According to Gajendran, Harrison and Delaney-Klinger (2015:256), telecommuting is a work method that empowers employees to work from remote locations using information and communication technologies to interact with others without being at the workplace. It is important to remember that in this type of FWA, physical contact with people is eliminated to a great extent.

It has been established that the most feared aspect regarding telecommuting is not having that face-to-face interaction as in a traditional working environment. The fear of this isolation is also linked to fear of a promotion being hindered or hard work being overlooked (Harrington & Santiago 2006:1). Kumar (2015:255) confirms that telecommuting involves not being within the boundaries of the physical workplace and using communication technology to perform daily tasks. Absalyamova and Absalyamov (2015:228) state that factors such as distance and not being within the bounds of the normal working environment do not necessarily have negative connotations.

Flexi-time means to elect the time of work i.e. selecting the beginning and end times of work on a settled number of prearranged, monthly or weekly, hours (Dizaho et al., 2017:457). According to Kumar (2015:255) the most important aspect concerning flexi-time involves selecting a time to start and end the working day. Although this is so, the employee must keep in mind that there are stipulated hours in every day when they are obliged to be at the office and available. Marsh and Roberts (n.d.:4) make prominent mention of a decrease in energy costs, meaning that there will be a decrease in overheads as well as an increase in employee morale and employee productivity.

Cost effectiveness and feasibility

Davey pointed out in (1997:237) that flexible working can prove to be a good change and have a positive impact on profitability. It was also said that the main impediment is normally management’s attitude itself. Cassio confirmed this (2000:81) that current managers also need to be well and better equipped with respect to supervisory skills appropriate to the implemented system. Productivity, profits and customer services may be boosted to a greater extent should this be followed through appropriately.

A satisfied customer is equivalent to repeated business which in turn enhances the prospect of higher profits. When it comes to managing a virtual workplace and seeking the most benefits possible or reaping excessive benefits in relation to costs, it is essential and vitally important to realise that managers need to adapt and adjust to the kind of managerial style required to make a success of the new implementation. For instance, instituting measurable goals for each employee but failing to measure performance is asking for failure. Clear lines of communication between managers and employees are vitally important to successful implementation. This is a priceless exercise that has the potential to contribute majorly to offsetting cost to benefit when FWAs are implemented. This is where the essence of the success with respect to reaping extensive success in relation to cost lies. It is clear that it is not the cost that becomes the problem, but the manner in which the environment created by the cost is managed. This then initiates and sustains the offsetting between expenses and benefits (Cascio, 2000:88).

Smeaton et al. (2014:20) confirm that this aspect is relatively abstract as it touches on matters such as having happy staff members resulting in better productivity levels, less absenteeism, more profits and possible lower costs. As depicted in Figure 1, Smeaton et al. (2014:20) use a diagram which refers to the concept of decreased costs versus enhanced profits only because it has an impact on the decisions regarding FWAs.

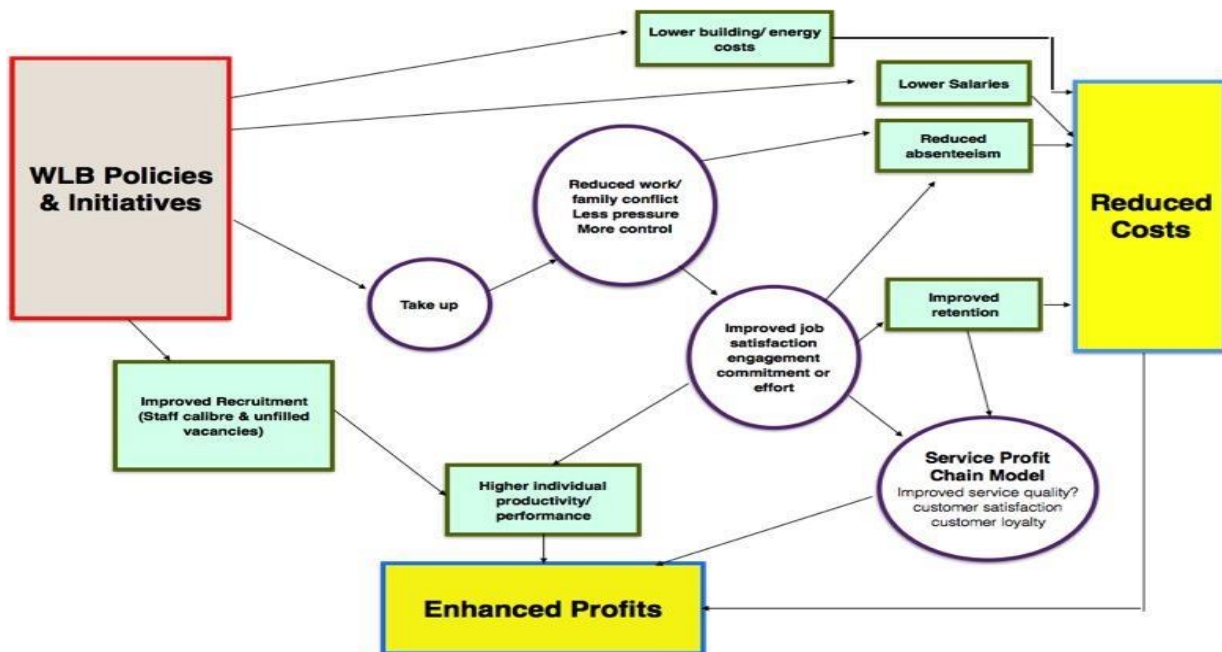


Figure: 1 Policies and profits

The following discussion refers to Figure 1.

Decreased costs versus enhanced profits

According to Smeaton et al. (2014:21) the simple theory of economics makes work-life balance a priority within the bounds and structures of businesses. There are a few ways in which we can attain these cost savings, such as providing smaller wage packages, reduction in absenteeism, a smaller staff turnover as well as reduced overhead costs.

Satisfied employees could lead to increased profits

In order to attain a point of increased profits, reduced costs most certainly play a role, but at what price? In addition to this, there are factors such as the productivity of the workforce, the quality of work produced by employees and whether "...members of staff are either 'happy' or 'driven' at work or, within a more sociological 'exchange theory' framework, feel duty-bound to work hard. It is understood as a reciprocal act in exchange for the WLB [work-life balance] their manager is facilitating".

Smeaton et al. (2014:22) point out the importance of fostering the relationship between the employee and the business. Reference is made to the service profit chain model by Smeaton et al. (2014:20). This model speaks of basic “bottom line benefits”.

Employee engagement enriches organisational commitment, enthusiasm towards work and high performance. The particular management style is thus a core aspect to take into account as the focus of businesses is shifted to accommodate all parties even better than before. Many businesses have come to the realisation that providing for better work-life balance can actually become the key to a potential competitive advantage. .

The flexible employee and by labour law

Labour law in South Africa makes provision for “labour market flexibility” and it is defined as “...the extent to which an enterprise can alter various aspects of its work and workplace to meet the demands of the business, for example the size of the workforce, the content of jobs, working time etc.” (Venter, Levy, Holtzhausen, Conradie, Bendeman & Dworzanowski-Venter, 2013:140). Labour law, within a South African context, realises that there is a rapid development in technology, increased thought around virtual offices, a rise in tendency for people to have a second job requiring them to work at night (moonlighters) and “hot-desking”, referring to work stations that are provided for workers needed at work at a particular point in time. In the light of the aforementioned it can be seen that the South African labour market is making room for businesses to adjust working hours.

According to Dancaster and Baird (2016:457) legislative provision regulating FWAs in South Africa is weak and managers are therefore less inclined to make provision for FWAs. Frail company support in South Africa for FWAs does not contribute to individual businesses voluntarily adopting the use of the policy either. The government in actual fact considers the need for FWAs as a private matter. Legislation pertaining to FWAs in South Africa has been found inadequate.

The influence of a company’s policies and laws that support FWAs

Cooper and Robertson (2003:6) suggest that policies and regulations for FWAs enhance the expectation from the side of the employee with respect to feeling free to request FWAs. It portrays serious intent and confirms the manager’s willingness to accommodate a balance between work and life. If employees feel that their managers actually want to ease the tension and create a healthy work-life balance, they will be in a healthier state of mind and willing to give more to the company in terms of effort. It is easier for an employee to know this if it is stipulated in a policy or written regulation (El-Rjoudi, 2013:490).

Using cloud-based software technology that may make businesses more attractive to younger workers and offering improved capabilities are increasing at firms irrespective of size. All but the smallest firms have also seen increases in the use of Skype or similar services for video-conferencing. Double-digit rises in the use of cloud-based software have been experienced by businesses with incomes (in American Dollars) of:

- \$750 000 to \$1.5 million (53%, up from 41% two years ago)
- \$1.5 million to \$5million (59%, up from 46%)
- \$5million to \$10 million (69, up from 59%) Tysiac, 2017a).

Robertson (2017:16) notes that policy pertaining to FWAs may assist managers in dealing with stress. The strategy could aid by ensuring that this does not increase stress for managers themselves. It also may increase efficacy with regard to managing stress. Work-life balance is fortified because of its beneficial impact on the organisation such as a rise in productivity, loyalty, satisfaction, growth in morale, attitude and behaviours of employees (Dizaho et al., 2017:462).

Defining small to medium enterprises: qualitative criteria

The two main criteria to distinguish small and medium enterprises from large ones are the “personal principle” and the “unity of leadership and capital”. The personal principle denotes amongst others, that the company manager performs a central role in the business regarding the decision-making processes, recognises the company as a lifelong duty and maintains direct and close contact with employees, customers and suppliers. (Berisha & Pula,2015:22)

Flexible work arrangements in small business

It must be borne in mind that the majority of literature on FWA’s concentrates on large organisations, and therefore the small business environment represents an underexplored niche in FWA research (Brand & Bax, 2002; Maxwell, Rankine, Bell & MacVicar, 2007; Townsend, McDonald & Cathcart, 2014). Some authors opine that service sector

small businesses are particularly susceptible to FWA's, as they have different approaches to flexibility than large organisations do (Maxwell, et al, 2007; Townsend, et al, 2014), they tend to be less formal than large organisations (Townsend, et al, 2014), and tend to be more innovative in terms of their HR practices than their larger counterparts (Dex & Scheibl, 2001). However, financial and resource constraints do not always permit small business from making FWA's available to employees, which is often – erroneously – viewed as an unwillingness on the part of small businesses to incorporate FWA's.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY

This study adopts an Interpretive stance, employing qualitative methods, as the purpose of the study in to understand the impact of FWA's on employee productivity, thereby deconstructing the reality of FWA's to understand its core assumptions within a naturalistic setting sensitive to cultural and historic realities (Weber, 2004). Furthermore, a qualitative is best suited to studies where the research is interested in those attitudes and behaviors best understood within their ordinary surroundings. (Babbie & Mouton, 2012:270).

Non-probability sampling, more specifically, judgemental sampling was employed in the study. The judgement of whom to include in the sample was made on the basis of the potential contribution potential respondents could make to the study. The research population for this study comprised all managers at small accounting practices in the Cape Town region of the Western Cape province in South Africa. A total of 13 managers were selected from seven different small businesses. These managers all occupy middle or senior management positions within these practices, with a significant proportion being HR managers or directors

Data were collected by employing semi-structured interviews, in order to gain insight into managers' thoughts and experience regarding FWAs. The data to be analysed are thus textual data stemming from audio recordings (taken with due consent) of the interviews, complemented with field notes made by the researcher during the interview. Interviews are seen as fundamental to data collection in qualitative research, as participants' accounts can be uncovered. Reflection, clarification, requests for examples and description and the conveyance of interest through listening techniques are of the utmost importance during interviews (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000:1487).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Section A: Biographical background of interviewees

Each respondent received a code name so as to adhere to the promise pertaining to confidentiality. The process of organising data and stating findings preceded a comparison between the literature review and what had been established in the findings.

Respondent	Gender	Age	Qualification	Management-level
RA2	Female	40	BCompt	Middle
RA3	Female	50	Post graduate	HR manager
RB1	Female	34	BCom	Top / owner
RB2	Male	30	Articles / law	Middle
RB3	Female	33	Diplomas	HR manager
RC1	Female	43	BCom	Top / owner
RC2	Male	33	Cost accounting	Middle
RD1	Male	50	BA	Middle
RE3	Female	39	BA	Middle
RF1 / RG1	Male	50	Master's degree	Top / owner
RF2	Female	35	BA Accounting	Middle
RF3	Female	29	Diploma	Middle
RG2	Male	38	BA Accounting	Middle

Table 1: Representation of sample selected

Section B: The research questions and responses are in two dimensions:

Dimension one

(i) The possibility that employees could choose the start and end of working hours so that it may have a positive implication for productivity.

When this question was posed, many factors arose across the answers from the respective respondents. Training employees, effective planning, the extent to which it was implemented, traffic, one's position in the firm were all

aspects that became a part of the decision-making process regarding FWAs. Respondents made it clear that those factors might hinder the application of FWAs and so it might not even be possible to implement FWAs as a result.

Most of the respondents made it clear that if there was a manner of approach that could possibly minimise the aforementioned negative impact of the factors mentioned, FWAs might be implemented successfully. In actual fact, much emphasis was placed on planning. Appropriate planning might be the answer. The majority of respondents were of the opinion that employees could choose the start and end of working hours so that it might have a positive implication for productivity.

Goudswaard, Verbiest, Preenen, and Dhondt (2013:21) recognise the relationship between employee-oriented flexibility and productivity and say that the freedom of workers to select their working-time arrangements is a chief aspect in refining job performance and productivity. The author confirm the eleven responses by stating that the relationship between employee-orientated flexibility and productivity assists in refining job performance.

(ii) Employees who opt to make use of the FWAs, knowing that their remuneration will be affected negatively, will have a negative implication for productivity.

Once again, the following question evoked many mixed emotions and opinions. A few respondents could not understand why remuneration should be tampered with in the first place and other respondents felt that should an employee opt to make use of FWAs there was an opportunity cost to pay. This analogy might be regarded as the spectrum within which this question was answered. Respondents answered confidently and also mentioned a few times that it was of the utmost importance to clear suchlike matters beforehand, so as to avoid the fact that a change or decrease in remuneration as a result of choosing to make use of FWAs, did not affect productivity negatively. There were three particular managers who was in actual fact very uneasy about the fact that employees' remuneration would be affected negatively simply because they chose to work flexibly. All the managers felt very strongly about their opinions.

Kossek, Lautsch and Eaton (2006:350) state that instances where, although there are policies pertaining to remuneration and promotion, employees could encounter an unenthusiastic reaction when asking managers to make use of FWAs as the attitude of the firm does not offer the relief by safeguarding compensation or possible promotion. This is closely reflected in responses from the respondents who provided opinions on promotions and remuneration. This was confirmed by eight respondents.

(iii) Certain forms of FWAs result in increasing services for lengthened periods, which has a positive implication for productivity.

This question received extremely positive responses. Respondents were exceptionally optimistic and positive regarding the fact that loyalty was affected very positively as a result of the liberty granted. Respondents were excited and frankly convinced that FWAs increased the period for which someone was willing to continue working for the firm.

Tysiac (2017a: N/A) testifies that growth and income escalated from 2014 to 2016 as a result of firms making use of flexitime, reduced hours of work and telecommuting. The authors confirmed all the respondents' responses by mentioning that the flexibility stigma may help advance perseverance, job satisfaction, growth and income.

(iv) Do you think that there is a reduction in control over employees who make use of FWAs and that it has a detrimental consequence for the small business?

Regarding this question relating to the control over employees who made use of FWAs, there was one respondent who confidently said "no" and the rest all placed great emphasis on the fact that in-house structures and planning were crucial in making FWAs work. Aspects such as control that had to be in place and communicating efficiently with employees came across as vitally important in facilitating the workability of FWAs. Alongside important control measures, essentially the personality of the person being entrusted would to a great extent determine the degree of success of implementing FWA

Dimension two:

The influence of a company's policies and laws that support FWAs on employees in the small business sector.

Six questions were posed in relation to the second dimension and the responses to these were concluded as follows:

(i) Policies pertaining to FWAs have an influence on the loyalty of employees and, consequently, a positive implication for productivity.

When respondents were asked whether they felt that policies pertaining to FWAs had an influence on the loyalty of employees and a positive implication for productivity, twelve respondents replied affirmatively. Respondent RD1 replied in the negative. Emphasis was placed on taking the personality of the employee into consideration. Respondents provided clear-cut, decisive answers.

Cooper and Robertson (2003:6) declare that policies and regulation for FWAs boosts the expectancy from the employees with respect to a sense of liberty when wanting to request FWAs. El-Rjoudi (2013:490) maintains that it puts an employee at ease to know that it is specified in a policy or a written rule. Cooper and Robertson state that the implementation of FWAs boosts the expectancy of employees and El-Rjoudi feels that it sets an employee at ease and consequently has a positive implication for productivity.

(ii) Employees that are granted the privilege of selecting the desired FWAs depending on the circumstances has a positive implication for productivity.

Collectively speaking, responses to this question were indecisive. Respondent RA2 said that it depended on the circumstances, as there were some people who could be trusted to be disciplined with time and responsibility, and others who could not. There were two respondents who said it definitely had a positive implication for productivity. Respondent RF3 was not in a position to comment with certainty. The same respondent RD1 who had hitherto been continuously negative toward FWAs, remained so within the context of this dimension. Five respondents provided a straightforward “yes”. RF2 stressed the fact that a discussion between employer and employee regarding this aspect was crucial. RE1 placed emphasis on planning around the FWAs that had been chosen. Two respondents accentuated the fact that the type of person and the control measures in place were critical success factors in the implementation of FWAs. RB2 stressed that strong boundaries and a strict sense of control were required of top management within the developed structures.

Hans, Mubeen, Mishra and Al-Badi (2015:56) have found that quality of work life is a course of action a firm takes to react to employee requirements by creating mechanisms to permit them to make the decisions that design their lives at work. Quality of work life has an impact on employees, job satisfaction, job involvement, job effort, job performance, intention to leave, organisational turnover and personal isolation. Hans et al. thus confirm the answers of the five respondents who answered affirmatively to the question as well as the answers of the two respondents who said it definitely had a positive implication on productivity.

Robertson, (2017:16) confirms the answers of the majority of the respondents by stating that stress-management can aid business-level results and therefore aid productivity.

(iii) Employees who opt to make use of the FWAs who know that possibilities of promotion could be hindered will result in a negative implication for productivity?

In the light of the answers provided to this question, a few respondents concluded that employees who opted to make use of the FWAs who knew that possibilities of promotion could be hindered would result in a negative implication for productivity. One said that “it depends” and two respondents said “no”. Once again, there was a mix of answers and not much uniformity and agreement among respondents.

The crucial aspect, according to Goudswaard et al. (2013:29), is the existence of mature employment relations between employer and employee. The readiness to negotiate fruitfully is vital. The manager should have the ability to have a mature discussion with the employees as well as the ability to design the working hours as capably as possible. Two respondents said that the matter pertaining to remuneration must be discussed beforehand and one respondent believed that the matter pertaining to promotion had to be discussed beforehand. Goudswaard confirms these responses by stating that readiness to negotiate successfully is vital.

(iv) By implementing FWAs employees do not share capabilities as often as they would otherwise and therefore this would have a negative effect on their productivity?

In this respect managers realised that the challenges relating to communication were a reality, yet there were possible solutions at hand to overcome those challenges. Respondent RF2 was of the opinion that it would not have a materially negative effect on productivity. Seven of the respondents agreed that as a result of the implementation of FWAs employees would not share capabilities as often as they would otherwise and FWAs would thus have a negative effect on productivity. Five of the respondents felt that despite a fear that implementing FWAs would result in employees not sharing capabilities as often as they would otherwise, the negative effect on productivity could be overcome by technology.

It could be rational to suppose that FWAs may complicate a few of the fundamentals of the tasks that managers have to see to and that it may take time to establish that energies exerted to implement FWAs are acceptable and in harmony with earnings received. Training may have an influence on pacifying fears, and so can confirming that efforts to implement FWAs will be rewarded (Sweet, Pitt-Catsoupes & James, 2017:66). Five of the

respondents felt that despite a fear that implementing FWAs would result in employees not sharing capabilities as often as they would otherwise, the negative effect on productivity could be overcome by technology.

(v) Do you agree that the nature of the work influences the kind of FWAs to be chosen and will influence the employees' productivity?

The answers gained from respondents to this question indicated that the nature of the work to be done played a crucial role when considering whether to make use of FWAs. Whatever the task at hand, the type/nature of work had to be understood and considered before decisions around whether or not FWAs should be implemented were made. Ten respondents answered in the affirmative. Respondent RB3, said it depended, RC2 said that the nature of the work would not be influential and RF3 said that information might be on the server which may not be accessible off-site.

Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill and Parry (2017:170) state that it is evident that FWAs can improve efficiency. When staff members are provided with the freedom to decide how and when they may spend their time, they will usually work during their most productive hours, allowing employees to pay attention to non-work demands during the work day.

(vi) A task that requires an individual's constant time and attention intensifies the need for FWAs?

Respondents provided mixed answers to this question as there were too many different factors involved in making this decision - factors such as the personalities and the trustworthiness of individuals and the matter of problematic clients. Many managers gave ample consideration to whether or not they were able to trust employees and whether the communication facilities at hand would actually facilitate or distract employees. There were, however, managers who believed that when a task required an individual's constant time and attention it intensified the need for FWAs. Although there were factors to consider, managers seemed willing to work around the problems. There was much agreement pertaining to the fact that if proper, rigid controls, systems and process were in place, FWAs might be successful.

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MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was confirmed that it proves the importance of adopting FWAs programs in order to increase workers' productivity. Respondents agreed that, there is a positive effect of FWAs on workers' productivity. Employers agreed with the presence of impact of the types of FWAs applied on their productivity; this reveals that using different types of FWAs can be an effective tool to improve employees' productivity; and companies should take into account the type of FWAs that matches with each worker needs and also job requirements.

Most respondents in favour of telecommuting of the employees viewed that work remotely (telecommuting) affect their productivity positively. Those who have a positive attitude towards telecommuting may be encouraged by the pluses of telecommuting like saving their commute cost and time. Employers agreed with the positive impact of supported regulations and policies of the organization to FWAs programs on their productivity. This represents the highest ratio among the dimensions that affect the level of flexibility. Which can be considered as an indication of workers' need to the existence of policies and laws supported these arrangements.

The respondents agreed with that type of work affect the applied type of FWAs and then on worker's productivity. For example, the different types of work such as software, hardware, work that need contact with customers or the work that needs a team to accomplish it and others lead to choose a specific type of FWAs. For example, an employee with hardware work cannot chose or use telecommuting.

If managers are not in support of FWAs irrespective of the company implementing the policy, friction could result. When employees felt safe and secure in terms of policies and regulations within their workplace (home) that supported their views, it could have a positive influences on their productivity.

The recommendations are basically directed to the small business sector managers and employees. In order to enhance the concepts of FWAs in small business the following recommendations are formulated:

To evaluate its long-term business goals. If it is determined that FWAs programs can serve as a tool in meeting those goals, and there are attitudinal/ behavioral links between those programs and a number of performance outcomes then FWAs programs should be implemented.

To enhance an organisational environment with friendly culture through reducing congestion and transportation for the commute; in case of telecommuting and flexi-work-week arrangements. This also reduces a business overhead costs. To allow workers choose among the different types of FWAs, which is appropriate to their

job requirements and family circumstances; in order to achieve the highest level of job satisfactions which reflects directly on their productivity. Occupation type can also determine the availability of FWA.

Finally to care more about designing and writing policies and laws that laydown the applicability of various FWAs that governs the selection processes among this various FWAs which have positive effect on workers' productivity especially when a business follows the principles of sound science in developing these policies.

To increase the awareness of management and staff in small business about FWAs programs and its importance and its great effects on employees' productivity. And to consider FWAs as one strategy that can assist in attracting and retaining staff.

To increase the small business competitive advantages by adopting FWAs programs; which attract and retain high-quality employees who seek for more flexibility in their work schedules. The availability of FWAs is considered as signal or indicator that the company cares about the wellbeing of its employees. To consider FWAs as a work-life need and not something that a business could offer it to some and deny it to other employees. For more, FWA employees need to receive the professional and technical support they need to succeed from their employers.

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