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Flexible Working Arrangement and Performance in Public Hospitals

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Abstract:

Despite availability flexible working arrangements in the public hospitals to enhance the productivity of the health care personnel, performance in most public hospitals remains wanting. Furthermore, the extent to which flexible work arrangements relates to employee productivity, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and turnover of health personnel, and thus performance remain unclear in public hospitals. The purpose of the paper was to investigate the influence of flexible working patterns on employee performance in public hospitals. It focused on the part time, work shift, flexi time and temporary contracts arrangement on employee performance. It was guided by spill over, self-determination and Vroom's Expectancy Theories. Descriptive research design was adopted. A sample of 104 employees of Kericho referral hospital were selected using simple random sampling technique from a population of 111 employees. The data was collected using questionnaire. The data was analyzed inferential statistics. The finding indicated that flexi working strategies was significant to performance of employees in an organization. It was noted that the performance contributed by flexi working methods were 22.9% while other factors which was not measured was 77.1%. Temporary contract, work shift and part time working were positive significant predictors while flexi time positive but not significant on performance. The study recommended that temporary contract, work shift and part time should be encouraged while flexi time should be further investigating since it does not provide fix controllable schedules.

Keywords: Strategic management, flexible working arrangement, descriptive design, Kericho, Kenya

1. Introduction

Flexible working arrangements are actually emerging issues in human resource management field, the world is becoming a global village hence as an employee in any organization the balance between personal life and work responsibilities should not ignored if the employee performance is to be achieved. Employee performance is defined as work related task that is expected on employees and how well the task was done. The performance can be measured monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually to be able to provide are of improvement in the identified segment in the business (Dessler, 2008). Armstrong (2009) added that it is an element of both motivation and abilities of employee. He addressed that it can be improved through careful placing and training programs with right incentive both monetary and non-monetary to improve the overall performance of the organization.

Flexible working relates, to an organization working arrangement in terms of working time, working location and pattern of working (chartered institute of personnel and development). Flexible working arrangements like flexible part time, shift work, compressed work hours and job sharing are often used to help employees in balancing their family and work life (Lim and Teno 2000) during 'core hours' which is usually fixed or a period between the latest permissible starting time and earliest permissible finishing time.

The performance of employee in flexible working environment can be broken into; Productivity, customer satisfaction, job satisfaction and employee turnover. Productivity is critical for the long-term competitiveness and profitability of the organization (Chow and Howe, 2006). Customer satisfaction is where the facility (hospital) services surpass the client expectation. The concept of job satisfaction is defined by Spector (1997) as an attitudinal variable, that represents the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. Turnover is where an employee willingly or forced by circumstances to exit a job in an organization. These concepts were elements were used for development of employee performance.

2. Literature Review

Less research has been made on flexible working arrangement. The theoretical framework and research concepts was provided the following literature.

2.1. Theoretical Review

The paper utilized three relevant theories: Spill over theory, Self-determination theory and Vrooms Expectancy theory. There is few review in the both empirical and theoretical on the working arrange, because it has been take for granted where organization fits itself according to the situation at hand.

Spill over theory was postulated in 1979 by Piotrkowski. He advocated that there should be an equilibrium between family and work life. Greenhaus and Beutell (2010) supported the theory and in fact added some other factors which determine employee performance he talked about attitude, stress and emotions and said that work life balance is vital but the later issues should be controlled. The theory support some of the models used in this paper to balance work and home life.

Self-determination theory was developed by Ryan and Deci in 2000. Self-determination theory brings about the issue of autonomous motivation. Voluntary motive makes employees prefer temporary contracts as a form of flexible working since it brings about better productivity, new ideas (innovations) which at long run yields job satisfaction to the employees. De Cuyper and De Witte (2010) claimed that self-motivation theory can categorized into: autonomous which relates to relationships such as family, controlled motives such as power and instrumental which relates to achieving specific goals. He further said that for productivity, controlled employee turnover, job satisfaction and customers' satisfaction employees should be motivated through issues like flexible working arrangements. This theory is important on temporary contract is one form of employment which actually helps in determining employee performance in any given organization.

Vroom's expectancy theory was developed by Victor H. Vroom in 1964. According to this scholar, flexible working arrangements is vital since it helps in determining the employee performance. This theory actually brings on board three concepts; valence concept asserts that employee performance may be strengthened through rewards, innovations and low employee turnover, the second concept is expectancy where employee will be motivated by having the ability, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction which increases employee productivity and thus better employee performance. The last principle is the instrumentality concept where employee is rewarded by being innovative, productive and better employee turnover which yield job satisfaction to the employees hence better performance. Nyberg (2010) supported this theory and highlighted that when employee is subjected to flexible working conditions the employee turnover will controlled, productivity of the individual will be enhanced thus employee will become innovative at long run all this yield job satisfaction to the employees hence determining employee performance. This theory is important to the study because for employee performance to realized motivating factor should be brought on and this is actually by use of flexible working patterns.

2.2. Flexible Working Arrangements

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). Customer satisfaction is where the facility (hospital) services surpass the client expectation. Flexible employment provides new awareness and innovative concepts into an organization.

2.2.1. Shift Work

According to Cole (2002), shift work is utilizing more hours during a 24-hour cycle by incorporation more than one; working day' for instance 3 blocks of 8 hours, 2 blocks of 8 hours, 2 blocks of 12 hours or some other variant advantage of shift-work is that it can provide 24 hours cover it is required. It enables more man hours to be worked than the typically day work system. It takes place outside the official working hours (8.30 a.m-5p.m) day. It can be in a form of night shift, evening, early morning and rotating shifts.

This type of flexible work option is actually designed so that the services in the hospital are provided 24/7 so as to make sure emergency issues is taken care of. It is indeed frequently applied in healthcare where doctors practice but mostly applied by nurse's due to the fact that they represent a large portion in the healthcare. According to International Labor Organization (ILO) working in shifts help the employees to succeed one another at the workplace so that the establishment can operate longer than hours of work of an individual worker at different daily and night hours. Shift arrangement is vital practice since it helps in reducing accidents, fatigue which in long run productivity in the organization will be realized.

2.2.2. Part Time Working

According to Cole (2002), part-time work is employing people for a few hours each week (up to 21 hours) usually on regular/permanent basis. Part-time working is advantageous to employers in that it is particularly useful for meeting need for "bursts" of work activity for instance in hospitals where there is shortage of medical personnel .it also applies in shelf-filling in a supermarket. Part time work has become an important form of employment in that people now combines education and also raising family. This part-time also been used to operational flexibility which in turn brings better employee performance. Household Income and Labor Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey indicated that part time workers have higher level of satisfaction with their work hours and flexibility than full time workers and equally satisfied with their pay. This type of flexible working option makes employee have manageable workload, brings about less work-family conflicts and also attracts well qualified employees thus the productivity level of employees will go up hence better performance.

2.2.3. Temporary Contracts

Temporary contracts are hard to determine since its evaluation is based on the job to be done. There not been clear view on the benefits or cost attached to the temporary employment. This has created divided view based on lack of commitment, insecurity, expensive, low esteem, high absenteeism and low performance (Armstrong, 2009). Though it can be considered as a way to evaluate the employee for further consideration making manager not make the wrong choose as well as used in job fluctuating industries to regulate balance or satisfy a job undertaking. Dessler (2008) added that it may be productive and cheaper in recruiting and training, though the overall cost is more by 20% to 50% as compared to some who is permanent employee.

2.2.4. Flexi-Time

According to Cole (2002) Flexi time enable employee to vary their working hours within agreed parameters and provided they attend during a “core” time it has some potential benefit for instance, it gives employee more control over scheduling personal responsibilities on either end of the work day.

Innovation is path dependent, for instance the new methods or products are dependent on the organizational culture, social environment and accumulated previous knowledge. Grant (1991) assumes therefore that organizational capabilities are inexhaustible on short-run temporary or part-time contracts for example stimulus projects which was devised by the government.

When the flexibility to hourly workers, workplace productivity will be improved, when employees work in shifts they will be less distracted, exhibit a better attitude and performance better on the job. When employees are happy, excited and energetic about their work they will be able to produce more and this enhanced performance. Employees who were undertaking workplace flexibility practices were able to work longer hours before experiencing negative impact on their work-family balance. Control over time, flexibility and pace of work is important in predicting positive levels of commitment and productivity for all employees.

Arguments for a positive relationship between flexible employment contracts and innovation can also be found. Following the approaches of Matusik and Hill (1998), not necessarily only internal resources are used for innovation. Instead, innovation depends much more on the effective utilization of technology and knowledge, even beyond internal capacities can be seen as complementary innovation input factors. Especially in the cases of open source projects, the use of external resources is crucial.

Studies across the world have shown that both public and private organizations are implementing work-life balance initiatives, among them flexible work arrangement, to minimize on 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 and Todd, 2004).

3. Research Objective

The purpose of the paper was to investigate the influence of;

- Work shift on employee performance in public hospitals.
- Part time working on employee performance in public hospitals.
- Temporary contracts on employee performance in public hospitals.
- Flexi time on employee performance in public hospitals.

4. Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted. A sample size 104 was obtained from target population comprised on top management, doctors, clinical officers, nurse and subordinate staff amount to 111 using Yamane formulae. Primary data were collected using structure questionnaires. Reliability of the instrument was tested using pilot study. A Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.7 was considered reliable for the study (Paton, 2001). The study had Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.77 which was obtained using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Experts’ researchers helped in revising and improvement of the instrument’s validity. Multiple regression model was used to measure the objective.

Which was later adopted from findings as;

$$Y=1.566 + 0.183X_1+ 0.173X_2+ 0.232X_3 - 0.011X_4+e$$

Where;

Y = employee performance

X₁ = shift work

X₂= part time working

X₃= Temporary contracts

X₄= Flexi time

5. Results and Discussion

The results were provided through coefficient of determination, ANOVA analysis for the variables and multiple regression model.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.479 ^a	.229	.197	1.00086

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexi time, Temporary contract, Part time, Work shift

Table 1: Coefficient of determinant (SPSS 21.0)

Source: Research data (2017)

The coefficient of determinant (R Square = 0.229) implied 22.9% of the data variation was a result of flexi working strategy on employee performance but 77.1% was due to other factors. These factors include motivation, working environment, management among others.

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance * Work shift	Between Groups	(Combined)	25.411	4	6.353	6.171	.000
	Within Groups		96.770	94	1.029		
	Total		122.182	98			

Table 2: Work Shift and Performance ANOVA (SPSS 21.0)
Source: Research data (2017)

The study found that there was significant effect of work shift on the performance of the employee (F= 6.171, P (0.000) < 0.05).

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance * Part time	Between Groups	(Combined)	23.861	4	5.965	5.703	.000
	Within Groups		98.321	94	1.046		
	Total		122.182	98			

Table 3: Part Time and Performance ANOVA (SPSS 21.0)
Source: Research data (2017)

Table 19 indicated significant influence of part time on employee performance of employee (F = 5.703, P (0.000) < 0.05).

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance * Temporary contract	Between Groups	(Combined)	22.049	4	5.512	5.175	.001
	Within Groups		100.133	94	1.065		
	Total		122.182	98			

Table 4: Work Shift and Performance ANOVA (SPSS 21.0)
Source: Research data (2017)

The effect of temporary contract on employee performance was significant (F = 5.175, P(0.001) < 0.05).

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Performance * Flexi time	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.983	4	.746	.588	.672
	Within Groups		119.199	94	1.268		
	Total		122.182	98			

Table 5: Flexi Time and Performance ANOVA (SPSS 21.0)
Source: Research data (2017)

The results from table 21 indicated that flexi time had no significant influence on the employee performance (F= 0.588, P (0.672) > 0.05).

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	28.020	4	7.005	6.993	.000 ^b
	Residual	94.161	94	1.002		
	Total	122.182	98			

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity, customer and job satisfaction, and employee turnover
Predictors: (Constant), Flexi time, Temporary contract, Part time, Work shift

Table 6: Flexi Arrangement and Performance ANOVA (SPSS 21.0)
Source: Research data (2017)

The ANOVA table that result from regression analysis indicated that there was significant effect of flexi work strategies on the employee performance (F = 6.993, P (0.000) < 0.05). Hence the research finding indicate that the organization should adopt flexi arrangement to increase employee performance.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.566	.450		3.481	.001
	Work shift	.183	.074	.243	2.473	.015
	Part time	.173	.085	.194	2.049	.043
	Temporary contract	.232	.078	.273	2.957	.004
	Flexi time	.011	.087	.012	.120	.905

a. Dependent Variable: Productivity, customer and job satisfaction, and employee turnover

*Table 7: Regression model
Source: Research data (2017)*

H₀1: There is no significant effect of work shift working on employee performance in Kericho County Referral Hospital. The null hypothesis was rejected, (P<0.05).

H₀2: There is no significant influence of part-time working on employee performance in Kericho County Referral Hospital was reject, (P <0.05).

H₀3: There is no significant effect of temporary contracts on employee performance in Kericho County Referral Hospital was reject, (P<0.05).

H₀4: There is no significant influence of flexi-time on employee performance in Kericho County Referral Hospital was accepted, (P>0.05).

The coefficient indicated that temporary contract, part time and work shift affected performance in that order positively while flexi time affected employee performance in the positively but not significant. According to Muchiri (2015), he noted that there was significant positive influence of employee productivity at judiciary, which concur with the study.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that work shift, part time and temporary contract affected significantly contributed positively to the employee performance in an organization. It was noted that flexi time was not significant to employee performance and positive contributed to performance. The structure and management were the main reason why flexi time may be considered not to be effective in the general performance. Hence there is room for more studies. It was identified that the highest of the four strategies was temporary contract followed by work shift and lastly part time.

The performance of the organization as measure on the basis of increase in productivity on number of employee was significant. The study also found that customer satisfaction was affected slightly positively by customer care staff. Job flexibility was very important to job satisfaction. Employee turnover was to great extent important in performance based on movement of in and out of job. The study identified that there were other many factors since 22.9% of employees' performance were predicted by flexi working strategy. Other factors were not assessed some include motivation, incentive, training, development among others.

The study recommended on the use of temporary contract more on organization as one strategy of flexi work. Also work shift and part time are advocated to be a positive contribution in employment strategies. Flexi time need proper scheduling, period of work or task assessment method to evaluate the amount of work done. Job flexibility was considered to be significant in increase of performance as well as employ turnover.

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