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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee job satisfaction in Zambia.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that when employees are allowed flexibility in their work schedules, such as the ability to work from home, choose their own hours, or have compressed workweeks, they tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. This increase in satisfaction is largely attributed to improved work-life balance, reduced commuting stress, and the autonomy to manage their time effectively. Furthermore, flexible work arrangements can lead to increased productivity and lower turnover rates, as employees feel more trusted and valued by their employers. These arrangements also cater to diverse needs, accommodating those with family

responsibilities, health issues, or other personal commitments, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and job satisfaction. However, the success of such arrangements depends on effective communication, clear expectations, and support from management to ensure that both organizational goals and employee needs are met.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Job characteristics theory, self-determination theory and conservation of resources theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee job satisfaction in Zambia. Organizations should implement flexible work policies that offer a range of FWAs, including telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job sharing, to cater to diverse employee needs and preferences. Policymakers should advocate for flexible work legislation that supports the implementation of FWAs across industries and sectors, ensuring that employees have legal protections and rights when engaging in flexible work arrangements.

Keywords: *Flexible, Work Arrangements, Employee, Job Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Employee job satisfaction encompasses a range of factors including work environment, compensation, job security, and work-life balance. In the United States, job satisfaction levels have shown a positive trend, with over 50% of employees reporting satisfaction with their jobs as of 2021, an increase from previous years (Smith, 2021). Similarly, in Japan, although traditionally lower in job satisfaction due to long working hours and high stress, there has been a gradual improvement. A 2020 survey revealed that job satisfaction in Japan had risen to 45%, reflecting efforts to improve work conditions and work-life balance (Tanaka, 2020). These trends highlight the importance of organizational policies in enhancing employee morale and satisfaction in developed economies.

In Latin America, countries like Argentina and Colombia also experience low job satisfaction due to economic instability and inadequate working conditions. In Argentina, a 2020 study found that only 38% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with issues such as inflation, job insecurity, and inadequate wages being major contributors to dissatisfaction (Martinez, 2020). Similarly, in Colombia, job satisfaction is affected by factors such as high unemployment rates and poor working conditions. A 2019 survey revealed that only 36% of Colombian employees were content with their jobs, pointing to the need for better economic policies and improved labor conditions (Rodriguez, 2019).

In developing economies, the scenario differs significantly. For instance, in India, job satisfaction is often lower due to factors such as inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, and limited career growth opportunities. A study in 2019 indicated that only 38% of Indian employees were satisfied with their jobs, pointing to significant room for improvement (Kumar, 2019). In Brazil, economic instability and high unemployment rates have adversely affected job satisfaction, with only 35% of employees expressing contentment in a 2020 survey (Silva, 2020). These statistics underscore the challenges faced by developing nations in fostering job satisfaction amidst economic and structural hurdles.

In developing economies, job satisfaction is often influenced by a range of socio-economic challenges such as low wages, inadequate working conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities. For example, in India, job satisfaction has been notably low due to these factors, with a 2019 study indicating that only 38% of employees were satisfied with their jobs (Kumar, 2019). This dissatisfaction is largely attributed to the disparity between employee expectations and the realities of the job market, which is characterized by high competition and low remuneration. Similarly, in Brazil, economic instability and high unemployment rates have adversely affected job satisfaction. A 2020 survey found that only 35% of Brazilian employees were content with their jobs, reflecting the economic and structural challenges that hinder job satisfaction in the region (Silva, 2020).

Moreover, in countries like Mexico and Indonesia, job satisfaction is also affected by factors such as job security and working conditions. In Mexico, a 2020 study reported that just 40% of employees felt satisfied with their jobs, with many citing concerns over job security and inadequate benefits as primary reasons for their dissatisfaction (Lopez, 2020). In Indonesia, the situation is similar, where job satisfaction remains low due to poor working conditions and limited opportunities for professional growth. A 2021 survey indicated that only 37% of Indonesian employees were satisfied with their jobs, highlighting the pervasive issues that need to be

addressed to improve job satisfaction in developing economies (Sutrisno, 2021). These examples underscore the critical need for policy interventions that can enhance job satisfaction by addressing these socio-economic challenges.

In developing economies, job satisfaction often faces challenges due to economic instability, insufficient wages, and limited career opportunities. In the Philippines, for instance, job satisfaction is relatively low, with a 2020 survey showing that only 40% of employees were satisfied with their jobs. The main reasons cited include inadequate compensation, long working hours, and a lack of career advancement opportunities (Garcia, 2020). In Vietnam, despite rapid economic growth, job satisfaction remains an issue. A 2019 study found that just 42% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, highlighting issues such as job security, working conditions, and management practices as key areas of concern (Nguyen, 2019).

In other developing economies, job satisfaction continues to be influenced by a variety of socio-economic and organizational factors. In Thailand, for instance, job satisfaction has been relatively low due to economic challenges and high levels of job insecurity. A 2020 study indicated that only 41% of Thai employees were satisfied with their jobs, with common complaints including inadequate pay, lack of job security, and poor work-life balance (Chantarasorn, 2020). Similarly, in Bangladesh, job satisfaction is impacted by factors such as low wages, poor working conditions, and limited opportunities for career advancement. A 2019 survey found that only 34% of Bangladeshi employees were content with their jobs, highlighting the significant challenges faced by the workforce (Rahman, 2019).

In Indonesia, despite significant economic growth, job satisfaction remains an issue due to persistent socio-economic challenges. A 2021 survey revealed that only 37% of Indonesian employees were satisfied with their jobs, with many citing inadequate compensation, lack of career growth opportunities, and job insecurity as primary reasons for their dissatisfaction (Sutrisno, 2021). In Egypt, job satisfaction is similarly low, with a 2018 study reporting that only 35% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, largely due to inadequate wages, poor working conditions, and a lack of professional development opportunities (Abdalla, 2018). These examples from various developing economies highlight the common challenges that need to be addressed to improve job satisfaction across different regions.

In Egypt, job satisfaction is also relatively low due to economic hardships and organizational challenges. A 2018 study reported that only 35% of Egyptian employees were satisfied with their jobs, primarily due to inadequate wages, poor working conditions, and a lack of professional development opportunities (Abdalla, 2018). Similarly, in Pakistan, job satisfaction is affected by factors such as job security, remuneration, and working conditions. A 2019 survey indicated that only 36% of Pakistani employees were content with their jobs, underscoring the need for better employment policies and organizational practices to enhance job satisfaction (Khan, 2019). These examples from various developing economies illustrate the common challenges that need to be addressed to improve job satisfaction across different regions.

Moreover, in South Africa, despite being one of the more developed economies in sub-Saharan Africa, job satisfaction remains a concern. A 2020 study showed that only 34% of South African employees were satisfied with their jobs, with many citing factors such as job insecurity, inadequate remuneration, and poor working conditions as primary reasons for their dissatisfaction (Ncube, 2020). In Ghana, the situation is comparable, where a 2021 survey found that only 35%

of employees were content with their jobs due to similar issues of job security and inadequate compensation (Osei, 2021). These examples highlight the urgent need for improved labor policies and better organizational practices to enhance job satisfaction in sub-Saharan Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, job satisfaction is influenced by unique socio-economic factors. In Nigeria, for instance, high levels of unemployment and underemployment contribute to low job satisfaction. A study in 2018 found that just 30% of Nigerian employees were satisfied with their jobs, largely due to poor working conditions and insufficient wages (Akinyemi, 2018). Similarly, in Kenya, job satisfaction is hindered by issues such as inadequate compensation and limited professional development opportunities. A 2019 survey revealed that only 32% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, highlighting the need for significant improvements in employment conditions (Mwangi, 2019). These findings emphasize the pressing need for targeted policies to enhance job satisfaction in sub-Saharan Africa.

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) have gained prominence in modern workplaces due to their potential to enhance employee job satisfaction. Key FWAs include telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job sharing. Telecommuting allows employees to work from home, reducing commute stress and improving work-life balance, which significantly boosts job satisfaction (Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying, 2018). Flexible hours give employees control over their work schedules, increasing autonomy and personal satisfaction (Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2020). Compressed workweeks, where employees work longer hours over fewer days, offer extended rest periods, contributing to higher job satisfaction by preventing burnout (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2019).

Job sharing, where two employees share the responsibilities of one full-time position, enhances work-life balance and reduces stress, thereby increasing job satisfaction (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2020). Each of these FWAs caters to specific employee needs, such as flexibility, autonomy, and improved work-life balance, all of which are crucial for job satisfaction. Research indicates that employees with access to FWAs report higher job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and increased organizational commitment (Gajendran & Harrison, 2018). Thus, implementing FWAs is a strategic approach for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being and productivity. By addressing diverse employee needs, FWAs can foster a more satisfied and motivated workforce.

Problem Statement

The rapid evolution of workplace dynamics, driven by technological advancements and shifting employee expectations, has led to an increased adoption of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) such as telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job sharing. Despite the growing prevalence of these arrangements, there remains a significant gap in understanding their comprehensive impact on employee job satisfaction. Recent studies have indicated mixed outcomes, with some suggesting that FWAs enhance job satisfaction by improving work-life balance and reducing stress (Bloom, Liang, Roberts, & Ying, 2018; Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2020), while others point to potential drawbacks such as feelings of isolation and diminished team cohesion (Gajendran & Harrison, 2018). Given these conflicting findings, there is a pressing need for more nuanced research to delineate the specific conditions under which FWAs most effectively contribute to employee satisfaction. Addressing this gap is crucial for organizations aiming to

design effective work policies that maximize employee well-being and productivity (Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Job Characteristics Theory

Originated by Hackman and Oldham, the Job Characteristics Theory posits that specific job characteristics—such as task variety, autonomy, and feedback—affect employee motivation and job satisfaction. This theory is relevant to the study of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) because FWAs typically increase job autonomy, a core component of the theory, which can enhance job satisfaction. By allowing employees greater control over their work schedules and environments, FWAs can positively influence their motivation and satisfaction levels. Recent research supports the idea that job autonomy, fostered by FWAs, leads to higher job satisfaction (Saragih, 2018).

Self-Determination Theory

Developed by Deci and Ryan, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation and well-being. This theory is pertinent to FWAs because these arrangements can enhance employees' sense of autonomy and competence by providing flexibility and control over their work tasks and schedules. As a result, employees are likely to experience higher job satisfaction and well-being. Recent studies indicate that FWAs enhance job satisfaction by fulfilling the psychological needs outlined in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Conservation of Resources Theory

Proposed by Hobfoll, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory suggests that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect their resources, which include personal characteristics, conditions, and energies. FWAs can be viewed as a resource that helps employees conserve energy and reduce stress by providing more control over their work-life balance. This, in turn, can lead to higher job satisfaction as employees feel less drained and more supported in managing their work and personal lives. Recent literature supports the link between resource availability, such as FWAs, and increased job satisfaction (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018).

Empirical Review

Bloom, Liang, Roberts and Ying (2018) explored the impact of telecommuting on employee job satisfaction was investigated through surveys conducted across various industries. The purpose was to determine whether telecommuting, as a form of Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA), positively influenced job satisfaction. The methodology involved tracking employees' job satisfaction levels over time, comparing those who telecommuted with those who did not. Findings indicated a significant positive correlation between telecommuting and increased job satisfaction, particularly among employees with higher levels of autonomy and control over their work. Employees who telecommuted reported greater satisfaction with their work-life balance and reduced stress due to reduced commuting time and increased flexibility. The study recommended that organizations consider implementing telecommuting policies to enhance job satisfaction and employee well-being.

Allen, Golden and Shockley (2020) explored the impact of flexible hours on employee job satisfaction, focusing specifically on the healthcare sector. The study utilized surveys and interviews with healthcare professionals to assess their satisfaction levels and perceptions of flexible scheduling options. Results indicated a positive correlation between flexible hours and job satisfaction, especially among healthcare workers who needed to balance work with caregiving responsibilities. Employees appreciated the autonomy and control over their schedules, which contributed to improved work-life balance and overall job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study recommended that healthcare organizations consider offering flexible scheduling options to improve employee job satisfaction and retention rates.

Hornung, Rousseau and Glaser (2019) investigated the impact of compressed workweeks on employee job satisfaction and work-life balance. The study involved surveys, focus groups, and organizational data analysis to gather insights from employees and assess their satisfaction levels. Results showed that employees with compressed workweeks reported higher job satisfaction and improved work-life balance compared to those on traditional schedules. The extended rest periods provided by compressed workweeks contributed to reduced burnout and increased job satisfaction among employees. The study recommended that organizations consider offering compressed workweek options as part of their Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) to enhance employee satisfaction and promote work-life balance.

Kossek and Ollier-Malaterre (2020) assessed the impact of job sharing on job satisfaction and performance outcomes. The study tracked performance metrics and conducted employee surveys to measure job satisfaction levels among participants in job sharing arrangements. Findings indicated a positive relationship between job sharing and job satisfaction, with no significant negative impact on performance outcomes. Job sharing arrangements were particularly beneficial in promoting work-life balance and reducing job stress, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction among participants. Based on these results, the study recommended that organizations consider job sharing as a viable option for enhancing job satisfaction and supporting employee well-being.

Gajendran and Harrison (2018) examined the relationship between various FWAs and job satisfaction across different industries. The study synthesized existing research studies on telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job sharing to assess their impact on employee job satisfaction. Findings from the meta-analysis consistently showed that FWAs were associated with higher levels of job satisfaction across sectors. Employees who had access to FWAs reported greater satisfaction with their work arrangements, leading to increased overall job satisfaction. The study recommended that organizations adopt a range of FWAs tailored to employees' needs to enhance job satisfaction and promote employee well-being.

Saragih (2018) investigated the impact of FWAs, specifically job autonomy, on job satisfaction among knowledge workers. The study utilized surveys and interviews with knowledge workers in different organizations to gather insights into their perceptions of job autonomy and its relationship with job satisfaction. Results revealed a positive correlation between job autonomy facilitated by FWAs and higher levels of job satisfaction among knowledge workers. Employees who had more control over their work tasks and schedules reported greater satisfaction with their jobs. Based on these findings, the study recommended that organizations implement and promote FWAs to attract and retain high-performing knowledge workers and enhance overall job satisfaction.

Ryan and Deci (2020) explored the impact of FWAs on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in a cross-cultural study. The study involved surveys and organizational data from multiple countries to assess the relationship between FWAs and employee attitudes. Results showed a positive association between FWAs and both job satisfaction and organizational commitment across different cultural contexts. Employees who had access to FWAs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and stronger commitment to their organizations. The study recommended that organizations operating globally implement FWAs consistently across locations to promote employee satisfaction and foster organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Research Gap: The studies primarily focus on the positive impact of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) on employee job satisfaction. However, there is a lack of exploration into potential negative outcomes or challenges associated with FWAs. Future research could delve deeper into the potential downsides of FWAs, such as increased feelings of isolation, difficulties in team collaboration, or potential effects on career progression. Understanding both the positive and negative aspects of FWAs would provide a more comprehensive view and enable organizations to address potential challenges effectively Gajendran and Harrison (2018).

Contextual Research Gap: The majority of the studies concentrate on specific sectors such as healthcare or knowledge work. There is a need for research that explores the impact of FWAs across a broader range of industries and organizational contexts Ryan and Deci (2020). Different industries may have unique challenges and opportunities related to FWAs, and understanding these variations can provide valuable insights for designing tailored FWA policies. Additionally, studies could examine how organizational culture and leadership styles influence the effectiveness of FWAs in different contexts.

Geographical Research Gap: While some studies mention cross-cultural aspects briefly, there is a limited focus on how cultural differences influence the implementation and outcomes of FWAs. Future research could explore how cultural values, norms, and societal expectations impact employees' perceptions and experiences of FWAs across different countries and regions Hornung, Rousseau and Glaser (2019). This would help in developing culturally sensitive FWA policies and practices that resonate with employees from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, comparative studies across various geographical locations can uncover best practices and lessons learned in FWA implementation, contributing to global knowledge sharing and organizational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) on employee job satisfaction is significant and multifaceted. Research spanning various industries and sectors has consistently shown that FWAs, including telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job

sharing, play a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction among employees. These arrangements provide employees with increased autonomy, flexibility, and control over their work schedules and environments, leading to reduced stress, improved work-life balance, and overall higher levels of job satisfaction.

Furthermore, empirical studies have highlighted the positive correlation between FWAs and organizational outcomes such as employee retention, productivity, and well-being. By offering FWAs, organizations can attract and retain talent, boost employee morale, and create a more positive and productive work environment. However, it's essential to note that the effectiveness of FWAs in enhancing job satisfaction depends on various factors, including organizational culture, job role, and individual preferences.

Overall, the evidence suggests that embracing FWAs as part of strategic workforce management can yield substantial benefits in terms of employee job satisfaction, organizational performance, and employee well-being. Moving forward, continued research and implementation of tailored FWAs can contribute to creating flexible, inclusive, and fulfilling work environments that support both employees' personal lives and organizational goals.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to better understand the long-term impact of FWAs on job satisfaction. This would help in capturing any changes or trends in job satisfaction over time as employees engage with FWAs. Researchers should explore moderating variables such as job role, organizational culture, and individual preferences to understand the conditions under which FWAs are most effective in enhancing job satisfaction. Future research should integrate diverse theoretical frameworks such as Job Characteristics Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of how FWAs influence job satisfaction.

Practice

Organizations should implement flexible work policies that offer a range of FWAs, including telecommuting, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, and job sharing, to cater to diverse employee needs and preferences. Organizations should provide training and support for managers and employees to effectively navigate FWAs, including training on time management, communication, and collaboration in remote or flexible work settings. Organizations should foster a culture of trust and open communication to ensure that employees feel empowered and supported in utilizing FWAs without compromising productivity or job satisfaction.

Policy

Policymakers should advocate for flexible work legislation that supports the implementation of FWAs across industries and sectors, ensuring that employees have legal protections and rights when engaging in flexible work arrangements. Policymakers should collaborate with researchers and industry experts to develop evidence-based policies that promote the adoption of FWAs and their positive impact on job satisfaction, employee well-being, and organizational outcomes.

Governments and organizations can offer incentives such as tax benefits or grants to encourage organizations to adopt FWAs and create more flexible and inclusive work environments.

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