

The Effects of Workplace Flexibility on Job Satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This research sought to evaluate the effects of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction for employees at Chitungwiza Municipality. Workplace flexibility are work options that permit flexibility in terms of where work is completed and how it is completed. The research was carried out in the form of a case study of Chitungwiza Municipality employees in the health, works, finance, urban planning, town clerk and human resource departments. A sample of 40 participants was drawn from a population of 440 employees. Purposive sampling method was employed in selecting participants from non-managerial employees. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to generate data from the participants in the identified departments. In analyzing the generated data, the thematic approach was used in which themes were derived from the research questions. The themes included establishing the flexible work arrangements available at Chitungwiza Municipality, the effects of flexible work arrangements, challenges of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality and the possible solutions to the identified challenges. The research findings revealed that flexible work arrangements had a positive effect on employee job satisfaction and further improve organisational performance. In light of the findings, the study recommends that organisations should incorporate flexible work arrangements so as to minimize negative attitudes and create conducive work environments that suit every employee to ensure employee job satisfaction. Workplace flexibility acts as a security measure in curbing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Workplace Flexibility, Job satisfaction, Organisational Performance, Zimbabwe

1. Introduction

Allen, Johnson, Kiburz & Shockley (2013) refer to flexibility as “work options that permit flexibility in terms of where work is completed often referred to as telecommuting or flexplace and when work is completed”. National studies by Galinsky, Aumann & Bond (2012) have shown that nearly all employee demographic groups report increasing difficulty in managing work and life responsibilities therefore creating a critical need for organisations to implement workplace flexibility to give employees more control over where, when and how long they work (Kossek, Valcour and Lirio, 2014). The term flexibility in the workplace is often thrown in along with independence, work-life balance, friendly culture and casual environment and flexibility is often on the debate table for employers. Work flexibility suggests not only a distinction in time and place of the job, but also job

sharing, part-time and term-time working and career breaks (maternity/paternity leaves). Other studies on flexible work arrangement (FWA) discuss three broad categories which are flexi-time (flexibility in scheduling), tele- homeworking (flexibility in location) and part-time (flexibility in length of the work) (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard 2014).

Organisations tend to question their ability to implement a flexible work style and simultaneously maintain high productivity and performance levels. Flexibility and high productivity seem to be contradictory terms at face value, which is why many employers are hesitant to change the work style or environment in any way as they might think that employees will perceive them as being less strict or rigid with procedures and protocol (Galinsky *et al.*, 2012). Although workplace flexibility is growing in some firms and many scholars tout the benefits of flexibility policies, there is often an implementation gap where workers and employers are dissatisfied with workplace flexibility

experiences and outcomes (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Flexibility at the workplace can include negotiated arrangements such as flexibility in working time, scheduled work, when, where and how work is done, part time work, job sharing, phased work and compressed work.

According to research from the Families and Work Institute (2015), workers with greater control over their work schedules have higher probability to express increased engagement, job satisfaction, retention and overall well-being (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). Employees stated that with flexible working conditions they were able to adjust their work schedule to suit their family time as well thus they would not think of resigning. Shaban et al., (2017) indicates that generally high morale results in increased productivity. They further state that high employee turnover is a costly indicator of low morale. Workers leave their jobs because they are not satisfied and have no motivation to stay. Seema (2019) also states that employee satisfaction is a behaviour which is reflective of the extent to which workers are happy or satisfied with their work in an organisation as well as the environment which enables them to accomplish the work according to standard. Abid & Barech (2017) highlight that there is a connection between flexible working hours, personal (family) responsibilities and gender differences to job satisfaction and commitment towards organisation. Eluka & Okafor (2014) also posit that improved working conditions affects positively on employees' performance.

Seema (2017) showed in their study that institutions which offer the concept of flexible timing are at an advantage over other organisations in regard to retaining valuable employees, better performance & productivity, increasing employees morale and motivation, building loyalty among employees and lower absenteeism. This aspect does also agree with the work done by Mupeta and Muleya (2019) who looked at this aspect in the light of what they termed as a governance strategy involving application of a set of civic innovations, collaborative leadership and political leadership in public institution management to improve performance in service delivery. This could be attained through flexible innovations aimed at enhancing the productivity of the workforce.

Jackson & Fransman (2018) highlights that work life balance is mindful of client needs and expectations, work pressures and workload, nature and scope of work, personal choice or working style, personal commitments, inherent job requirements and responsibilities, supportive infrastructure, such as childcare that is flexible to alter changing work schedules. Those who disagreed however indicated that FWAs did not promote work-life balance as work-conflict could not be totally eradicated.

Although FWAs are generally beneficial and have been adopted by other organisations especially in Europe and the United States, various institutions in Africa have not implemented these measures (Jackson and Fransman,

2018). Tiwari (2014) defines morale as an employee's attitude toward his or her job, employer, and colleagues. Therefore, high morale will result in an employee being satisfied with the job, putting more effort, commitment, taking initiative and being creative in the organization. Employees focus on realising organisational goals rather than their personal goals. Low morale may result in unsolved complaints and strikes, high turnover, high skiving thereby impeding firm's performance. Shaban et al. (2017) indicates that generally high morale results in increased productivity. They further state that high employee turnover is a costly indicator of low morale. Workers leave their jobs because they are not satisfied and have no motivation to stay.

Absenteeism is another costly variable of low morale. Unwarranted absenteeism escalates costs and decreases productivity Shaban *et al.* (2017). Bakotic & Babic (2013) indicate that conditions under which a job is executed can be different from those completely comfortable and those that are difficult and are a danger to employees' life and health. Difficult working conditions can be attributed to factors related to the organization such as inter alia work schedule, working time, duration of the work shift, excessive strain and work pace. Adverse conditions within the work environment may consequently lead to job dissatisfaction, low productivity, absenteeism, turnover and financial costs to the organisations.

Employers appear to target certain jobs or their incumbents more than some in the provision of schedule flexibility. Possibly, the jobs given flexible scheduling are simple where such scheduling is easiest to administer and implement. Theoretically, flexible schedules must be focused on employees who most value flexibility and are consequently ready to lose wages as well as other working conditions to acquire them (Golden, 2005). Managers who are able to manage the coordination of work schedules effectually are highly likely to attain positive work group performance and as such to facilitate this, it is crucial that organisations allocate resources to train managers and employees on how to work in new scheduling forms (Giovanis, 2017).

The disparity in the allocation of flexible schedules indicates that legislative and policy reform should concentrate on bringing more flexibility to the employees relatively disadvantaged of such opportunities. These include those on the standard 40-hour per week, women and a group of jobs lacking equal opportunities for flexible work scheduling (Golden, 2005). Giovanis (2017) posits that decision makers in human resource management should review and adopt FWA policies as these may improve the organisation's performance. The OECD (2016) states that in addition to individual and collective bargaining processes, some governments have gazetted laws designed to warrant worker provision for some FWAs and these are sometimes targeted specifically at mothers and fathers. Omondi & K'Obonyo (2018) state that when employees contribute in the decision-making

processes in their institutions, initiatives are highly likely to meet their intended objectives. Employee participation early in the process can aid to build ownership over new initiatives consequently resulting in a desire to employ new programs and fewer resistance during implementation.

Welch & Gordon (1980) indicate that the conception of flexible work schedules has gained prevalent reception in Europe and the United States. They further state that thousands of European organisations which employ several million employees adopted flexitime as an organisational concept with United States firms and government agencies actively experimenting with comparable flexitime programs. Abid & Barech (2017) suggest that workplace flexibility has its beginnings in Germany with an aerospace company called Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blolm. They state that the notion was initially introduced in 1967 for 3 000 white collar employees in administration, research and development in a bid to lessen queues for clocking on and off and the subsequent traffic jamming of employees being obliged to start and finish at the same time. As a way to avoid queues, people were leaving early and there was low morale as well as reduced productivity. The then Personnel Manager introduced a system of variable hours, alternating between variable and rigid hours. By the year 1972, 6000 of the 20000 employees were using flexi time and the company consequently reported savings of around \$40 000 a month, increased productivity, lowered absenteeism, fewer travel problems and fewer recruiting difficulties (Abid & Barech 2017).

The adoption FWAs in Africa has however been restricted. Jackson and Fransman (2018) states that notwithstanding the benefits of FWAs, very limited companies in South Africa have not more than 20% of their staff employing flexi work practices. The restrictions can be attributed to leaders or managers support or lack thereof, client needs and expectations, work pressures and workload, nature and scope of work, personal choice or working style, personal commitments, inherent job requirements and responsibilities, supportive infrastructure, such as childcare that is flexible to alter changing work schedules (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011 in Jackson & Fransman, 2018). According to a global report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on FWA of 2010, Kenya was rated among countries with the highest incidence of long working hours being more than 48 hours per week (Waiganjo & Kihoro, 2016).

Jane, Simon & Amos (2015) did a study on the effect of flexibility in work arrangements on job satisfaction of nurses in public hospitals in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study established that public hospitals exempted expectant or breastfeeding nurses from night-shifts and that the existence of half-day work shifts for nurses enabled them to attend to their personal issues without stress. Night-offs given to the nurses after night-duty enabled them to release stress and attend to family responsibilities easily.

Furthermore, the study established that flexibility in work arrangements used by the public hospitals had a strong effect on behaviour, moderate effect on cognition and weak effect on the affective aspect of job satisfaction of nurses. In general, the results revealed that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between flexibility in work arrangements and job satisfaction of nurses. This confirms a study done by Heejung (2007) which viewed flexible work arrangements as a business imperative to achieve strategic priorities such as higher employee productivity, lower absenteeism job satisfaction. This research reported a positive relationship between work time flexibility and job satisfaction of employees. Thus, implementation of flexible work arrangements programmes at the work place enhanced job satisfaction of employees.

The unsettling business environment in Zimbabwe has become a driving force towards the implementation of flexible workplaces in order to achieve employee job satisfaction. This study is driven by an interest to understand the connection between work place flexibility and job satisfaction in local government institutions, focusing on Chitungwiza Municipality. The municipality is meant to provide basic services such as, housing and accommodation, primary health care, water, refuse and sewer services. Although FWAs are generally beneficial and have been adopted by other organisations especially in Europe and the United States, various institutions in Africa have not implemented these measures (Jackson & Fransman, 2018). Chitungwiza Municipality employees face a variety of challenges due to bureaucracy and rigidity of the organisation's inflexible working conditions. These challenges include among others high skilled labour turnover, unprecedented absenteeism, low staff morale, collective job action, increased recruitment costs, poor employee performance and ultimately resulting in poor job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the driver for vast strategies implemented in organisations to assist employees to stay content with their employment. Alleged performance irregularities and poor service delivery has prevailed at Chitungwiza Municipality over the years. The Chitungwiza Municipality District Administrator's (DA) Monthly Report of February 2015 indicated that there was a decrease in service delivery, organisational commitment, job involvement, work effort and job satisfaction among employees. All other departments in the municipality work during the day. Only the security section and the health department were allowed to work shifts and as such had varied time to start and finish work depending on the shift that they had to work.

Theoretical Framework

Theories have been employed in various fields to expound how the world functions. The spill over theory states that stress, attitudes, emotions as well as general behaviour can be passed over from one life domain to another (Omondi & K'Obonyo, 2018). This theory will greatly influence this research as it will help explain and understand the positive and negative effect of the adoption of FWAs or

the lack thereof and their effects of employee consequential behaviour. What is gotten in the work domain might become a negative or positive spill over to the home domain and vice versa. The spill over theory is valuable in expounding how negative or positive experiences can be conveyed from one area of life role to another (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Sok, Blomme & Tromp, 2014). Negative spill over can be illustrated with the type of conflicts it results in. According to Haar & Bardoel (2000) work-life conflict can be characterised into three categories, strain based, behaviour based and time-based conflict. These conflicts generally add up the challenges that employees experience as they attempt to balance work and family. Strain conflict for example is presented by the divisions caused as one shows different behaviour within each domain or role. Alternatively, failure to sufficiently find time to avail oneself to roles in both one's family and at work results in time conflict (Sok, et al., 2014). The independent variable in the study was flexible working arrangements measured by flexitime, job sharing, teleworking and part time work whereas the dependent variable was job satisfaction.

Research Objectives

The study objectives were:

- i. To examine the flexible working arrangements on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality.
- ii. To identify the effects of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality.
- iii. To establish the challenges of lack of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality.
- iv. To propose possible solutions to flexible work arrangements to enhance job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality.

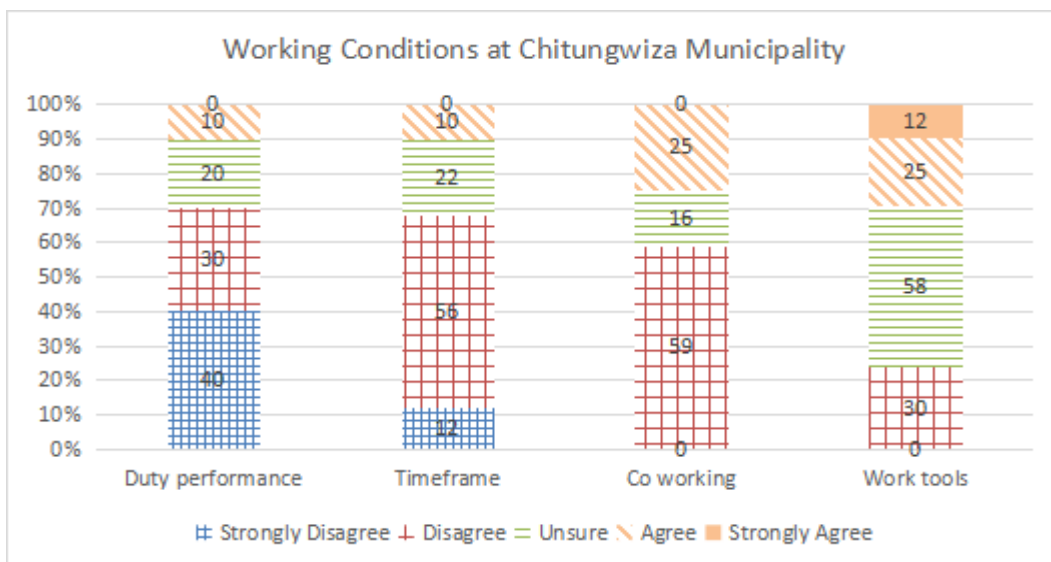
2. Methodology

The research employed the qualitative method because it provides the variation between the variables being studied thereby reducing scholar biases. Saunders et al., (2003) propounds that qualitative research is a process of finding out and using dynamic formats to explain data. The research used the qualitative methodology and the case study research design to establish the effects of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality. The use of a case study enables intensity, depth and facilitates the exploration of the interaction between case and context, obtain a holistic and real-world perspective while studying a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The population of the study was 440 Chitungwiza Municipality employees from the health, works, finance and urban planning departments. A sample of 40 Participants was drawn using the purposive sampling method. Data was gathered using a questionnaire which was structured to address the research objectives and administered to Participants from the chosen departments. The Participants completed the questionnaire after agreeing to the research ethics.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study sought to establish the effects of workplace flexibility on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality. The respondents were required to state the working conditions at Chitungwiza Municipality in relation to how they perform their duties as presented in the bar graph below.

Establishing working conditions at Chitungwiza



Municipality

Figure 1: Establishing Working Conditions at Chitungwiza Municipality
Source: Primary Data (2021)

Participants were asked to explain if their performance of their duties was flexible and 40% strongly agreed that it was flexible. 30% disagreed, 20% were unsure whilst 10% agreed they could perform their duties in a flexible manner. Looking at the flexibility of timeframes given to employees, 56% disagreed to having flexible working timeframes, 22% were unsure and 12% strongly disagreed. 10% of the respondents agreed that the working timeframes were flexible enough to enable them to do their work. The research further sought the respondents' opinion on co-working and flexibility. 59% disagreed that co-working brought flexibility to their daily work, 16% were unsure whilst 25% agreed that co-working brought flexibility. The last aspect was whether the work tools enabled working flexibility. 50% of the respondents were unsure, 30% disagreed whilst 25% agreed that working tools brought about flexibility.

As explained by the spill-over theory, work-life conflict can be characterised into three categories, strain based, behaviour based and time-based conflict (Haar & Bardoel, 2000). These conflicts generally add up the challenges that employees experience as they attempt to balance work and family. Alternatively, failure to sufficiently find time to avail oneself to roles in both one's family and at work results in time conflict (Sok, et al., 2014). Employee timeframes are determined by their contract and hence they cannot set times which they can execute their work. Jane, Simon & Amos (2015) did a study on the effect of flexibility in work arrangements on job satisfaction of nurses in public hospitals in Nakuru County, Kenya. The public hospitals exempted expectant and breastfeeding nurses from night-shifts and that the existence of half-day work shifts for nurses enabled them to attend to their personal issues without stress. The nurses were given night-offs which enabled them to release stress and attend to family responsibilities. This eliminates individual tensions which may spill over to work colleagues and also to the family.

Use of Flexible Working Arrangements within Chitungwiza Municipality

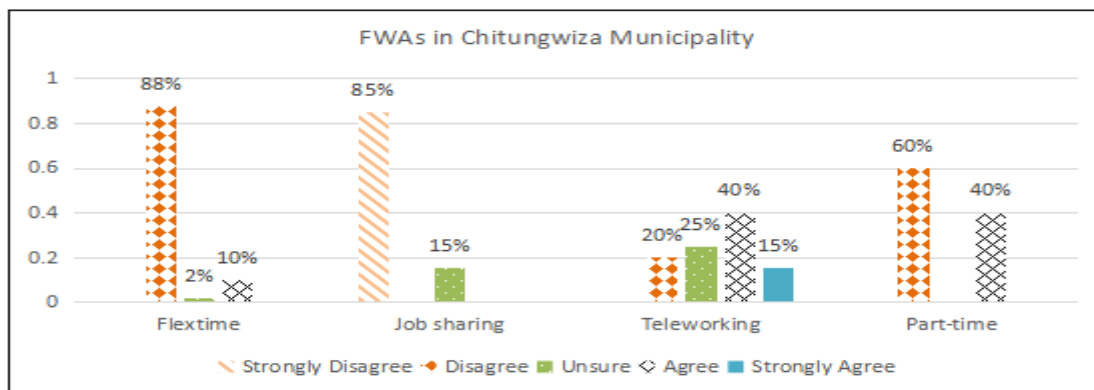
Below are the responses on the use of FWAs within Chitungwiza Municipality by the employees.

Figure 2: Use of FWAs within Chitungwiza Municipality
Source: Author (2021)

The study established that 88% of the respondents indicated that amongst the flexible working arrangements, flexi-time was not available at Chitungwiza Municipality. 2% was unsure of the existence of flexitime whilst 10% agreed that there was flexitime at the municipality. Kelly & Kalev (2006) state that flexi-time is where employees set their own starting and stopping times. Omondi & K'Obonyo (2018) explain that flexi time is one of the greatest initiatives to increase workers' well-being as it helps workers to deal with their social responsibilities apart from work. Applying the concept of flexi time in an organisation increases productivity, lowers absenteeism, reduces travel problems and recruiting challenges (Abid & Barech 2017). Employees highlighted that the work time table required them to report for duty at 8am and finish work at 4.30p.m. The literature established that only the security section and the health department were allowed to work shifts and as such had varied time to start and finish work depending on the shift that they had to work.

85% strongly agreed that job sharing was a flexible working condition which was in practice while 15% were not sure if such a condition existed at Chitungwiza Municipality. Employees explained that with job sharing they worked as a team to complete tasks faster, for instance employees within the Finance department explained that their tasks required that they prepare financial statements and as such they had to share work so as to complete the tasks at hand. Likewise, those within the roads section advised that to compete tasks they also had to co-work so as to finish tasks as their jobs were physically challenging.

The study established that 40% of respondents agreed that teleworking was currently being practiced in the organisation, whilst 15% strongly agreed. 20% disagreed and 25% were unsure of the existence of teleworking. It was noted that those who highlighted that they could telework were actually availed with the necessary tools such as cell phones and as such could telework. The nature of the establishment of the Chitungwiza Municipality does not allow some employees to engage in teleworking such



as those in the road works department. Employees have to be at specific areas of work to perform the work unlike those who work from offices they can carry their work home.

In addition, 40% agreed that working part-time was a flexible condition available to them within Chitungwiza Municipality. Management highlighted they could work part-time because they enjoyed also tele-working and they also enjoyed flexi-time. However, 60% disagreed that part-time was a condition available to them at Chitungwiza Municipality. Employees highlighted that their contracts highlighted that they were to work each day from 8.am to 4.30pm and that this was non-negotiable. It was noted that there was a difference in views between the employees and the management as it seems management benefit most from the FWAs at Chitungwiza Municipality. From the above it can thus be noted that, management can do teleworking as they have the tools to aid this. In addition, management have flexible times of arriving and leaving the office (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020).

Effects of FWAs on job satisfaction

The figure below discusses the employee responses on the effects of FWAs on job satisfaction.

respondents agreed that flexible working arrangements strikes a balance between work and life whereas 25% strongly agreed. 90% agreed to increased family time due to flexibility whilst 10% strongly agreed to the same. Inflexibility in working conditions has adverse effects on overall employee job satisfaction. Employees put their effort to executing their jobs and they expect employers to reciprocate by recognising their efforts and to honour the employment social contract.

The participants highlighted that FWAs have a positive advantage to any organisation. This is reiterated by Seema (2017) that institutions which offer the concept of flexible timing are at an advantage with regards to retaining valuable employees, better performance and productivity, increasing employee morale and motivation, building loyalty among employees and lowering absenteeism. Seema (2017) showed in their study that institutions which offer the concept of flexible timing are at an advantage over other organisations in regard to retaining valuable employees, better performance & productivity, increasing employees morale and motivation, building loyalty among employees and lower absenteeism.

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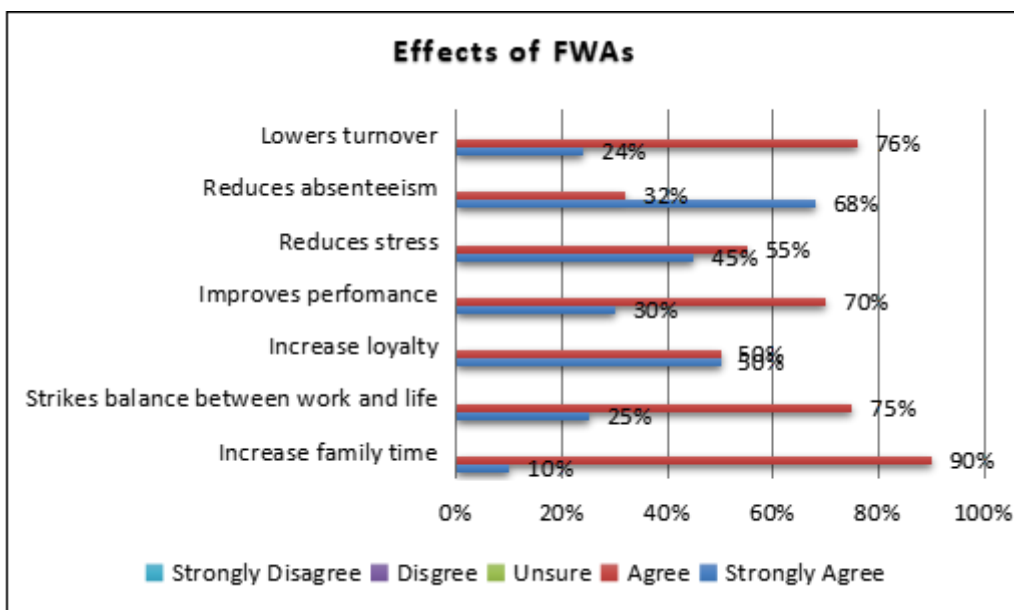


Figure 3: Effects of FWAs on job satisfaction
 Source: Author (2021)

The data presented above shows 76% of the participants agreed flexible work arrangements lowers employee turnover and 24% strongly agreed. 68% strongly agreed and 32% agreed that flexibility reduces absenteeism. 55% of participants agreed to flexibility reducing stress whilst 45% strongly agreed. In terms of improving performance, 70% agreed and 30% strongly agreed. Increase in loyalty, 50% agreed and 50% strongly agreed that flexibility increased employee loyalty to the organisation. 75% of the

work schedules have higher probability to express increased engagement, job satisfaction, retention and overall well-being (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). Employees stated that with flexible working conditions they were able to adjust their work schedule to suit their family time as well thus they would not think of resigning. Shaban et al., (2017) indicates that generally high morale results in increased productivity. They further state that high employee turnover is a costly indicator of low morale. Workers leave their jobs because they are not satisfied and have no motivation to stay. Seema (2019) also states that employee satisfaction is a behaviour which is reflective of the extent to which workers are happy or

satisfied with their work in an organisation as well as the environment which enables them to accomplish the work according to standard. Abid & Barech (2017) highlight that there is a connection between flexible working hours, personal (family) responsibilities and gender differences to job satisfaction and commitment towards organisation. Eluka & Okafor (2014) also posit that improved working conditions affects positively on employees' performance.

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Challenges of FWAs at Chitungwiza Municipality

Below is a pie chart of the responses on the challenges of lack of flexible working arrangements at Chitungwiza Municipality.

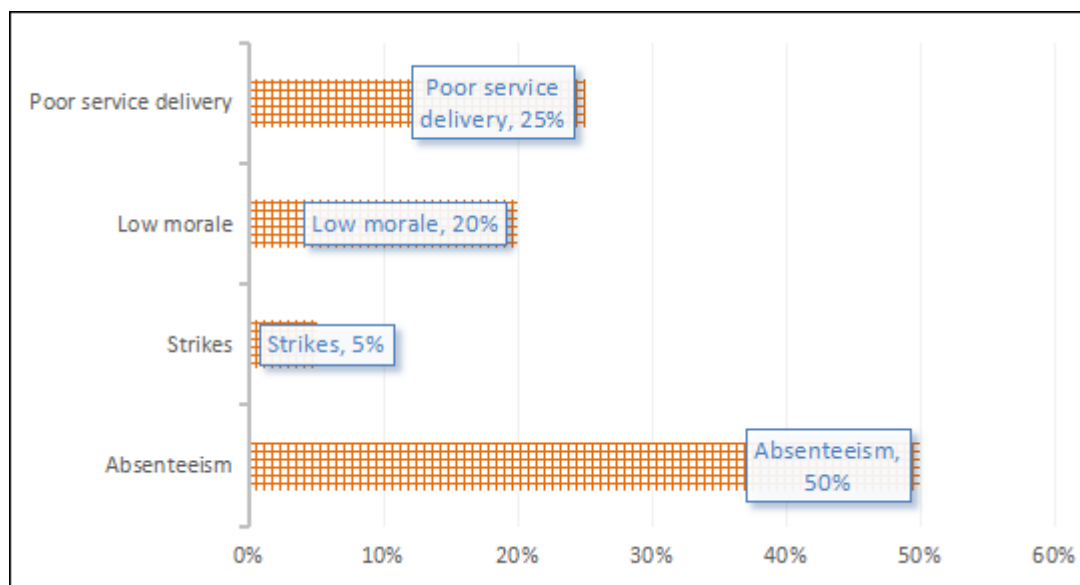


Figure 4: Challenges of FWAs on job satisfaction at Chitungwiza Municipality

Source: Primary Data (2021)

The challenges of flexible working arrangements were examined and 50% of the respondents pointed to absenteeism, 25% cited poor service delivery, 20% cited low morale and 5% cited strikes as major challenges emanating from non-flexible working arrangements. Absenteeism had the highest frequency which may translate to say employees chose to be absent when their grievances for flexible working arrangements were not adequately resolved. Usually, when there are unresolved challenges in an organisation, employee morale decreases and subsequently service delivery becomes poor. The end result may be job actions in form of strikes or sit-ins.

Strikes disrupt business activities and in the end job losses. It is important for the employer to always engage employees whenever they have grievances to avoid production and time loss.

Unwarranted absenteeism escalates costs and decreases productivity (Shaban et al., 2017). Difficult working conditions can be attributed to factors related to the organisation such as work schedule, working time, duration of the work shift, excessive strain and work pace. Adverse conditions within the work environment may consequently lead to low productivity, absenteeism, turnover, financial costs to the organisations and consequently affects employee job satisfaction. In the same light Bakotic & Barbic (2013) states that high morale results in an employee being satisfied with the job, putting more effort, commitment, taking initiative and being creative in the organization.

Low employee morale often results from unresolved complaints and strikes, high turnover, high skiving thereby impeding job satisfaction. Shaban et al. (2017) indicates that high employee turnover is a costly indicator of low morale. Workers leave their jobs because they are

not satisfied and have no motivation to stay. Absenteeism is another costly variable of low morale. Unwarranted absenteeism escalates costs and decreases productivity (Shaban et al., 2017). Bakotic & Babic (2013) indicate that employee working conditions can be difficult and are a danger to employees' life and health. Difficult working conditions can be attributed to factors related to the organization. The difficult working conditions may consequently lead to low productivity, absenteeism, turnover and job dissatisfaction.

4. Conclusions

The study found out that Chitungwiza Municipality employees face a variety of challenges due to the bureaucracy and rigidity of the organisation as well as inflexible working conditions. The challenges being faced by Chitungwiza Municipality as result of the lack of flexible work arrangements resulted in high skilled labour turnover, unprecedented absenteeism, low staff morale, collective job action and poor performance ultimately resulting in poor service delivery.

The first section of the findings addressed the prevailing working conditions at Chitungwiza Municipality. Respondents indicated that they could perform their duties in a flexible manner but the timeframe allocated to complete the tasks, coworking and availability of work tools did not bring flexibility as they executed their duties. As explained by the spill-over theory, work-life conflict can be characterised into three categories, strain based, behaviour based and time-based conflict (Haar & Bardeel, 2000). These conflicts generally add up the challenges that employees experience as they attempt to balance work and family. Employees need to find time with their families after successfully completing their work (Sok, et al., 2014). Some work timeframes are determined by employee contracts hence they cannot set times to execute the work.

The second section of the study established the flexible working arrangements available at Chitungwiza Municipality. The study established that flexi-time, job sharing and part time work arrangements were not available at Chitungwiza Municipality. Only the security section and the health department that were allowed to work shifts and as such had varied time to start and finish work depending on the shift that they had to work. On the contrary, tele-working (40%) was a flexible working condition which was in practice at Chitungwiza Municipality. Employees explained that with job sharing they had to work as a team to complete tasks faster. Likewise, those within the roads section advised that to complete tasks they also had to co-work so as to finish tasks as their jobs were physically demanding. This revealed that their work was not flexible for teleworking or flexitime.

Third, on establishing the effects of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction, the study noted that flexible work arrangements lower employee turnover, reduce absenteeism (68%), reduce stress (55%), improve performance (70%), increase loyalty (50%), strikes a balance between work and life (75%) and increase family time (90%). Institutions which offer the concept of flexible working arrangements are at an advantage with regards to retaining valuable employees, better performance and productivity, increasing employee morale and motivation, building loyalty among employees and lowering absenteeism. The challenges of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction were evaluated and

some conclusions drawn from the findings. The major challenges which emanated from non-flexible working arrangements included absenteeism, poor service delivery, low morale and strikes. Organisations can face low productivity and unresolved complaints due to the identified challenges.

5. Recommendations

After synthesising the findings and drawing conclusions, the study came up with the following recommendations:

- i. The challenges being faced by Chitungwiza Municipality as result of the lack of flexible work arrangements resulted in high skilled labour turnover, unprecedented absenteeism, low staff morale, collective job action and poor performance ultimately resulting in poor service delivery. It is therefore recommended that the employer engages the employees in a bid to address the poor working conditions they are facing. Creation of a viable working environment ensures that there is job satisfaction and hence the adoption of FWAs would go a long way in maintaining this.
- ii. There were mixed feelings in terms of FWAs within Chitungwiza Municipality. With some employees saying FWAs did exist within Chitungwiza Municipality while on the other hand others disagreed with this. There is therefore need by management to increase employee knowledge about FWAs within the organisation so that employees are fully aware of their existence and those which are applicable to them.
- iii. The study revealed that most of the employees felt dissatisfied with their jobs as they stated that their employer was not availing them with the resources to carry out their duties. Employees also felt that there were rigid working conditions which inhibited them from having enough time for social life. In addition, other employees felt that their work was dictated to them without being consulted resulting in low morale, absenteeism and employee turnover. It is therefore recommended that the employer avails resources to employees so that they can perform their duties timeously without difficulty. It is also recommended that the employer should ensure that there are flexible working conditions and also take into cognisance the employees' social needs.
- iv. The study revealed that Chitungwiza Municipality was beset with challenges of labour turnover, absenteeism, low staff morale, collective job action and poor performance. These challenges were as a result of rigid working arrangements. It is recommended that Chitungwiza Municipality should institute FWAs within the organisation to ensure that these challenges are addressed and subsequently improve employee job satisfaction. Further to these recommendations, the Chitungwiza Municipality should consider putting in place policies and

standard operating procedures that are legally binding in order to govern the smooth flow of the work arrangements. The employer must also ensure that employees are allowed to manage their work schedules and work within suitable time frames.

- v. This study is not enough to decisively institute these findings hence further research is needed in this area. Job satisfaction is a broad aspect which is not only affected by FWAs but a myriad of other factors which should be interrogated. Studies should also be carried out using other methodologies other than the qualitative method used in this research to understand the dependent and independent relationships between other variables and job satisfaction. Other research methodologies can be used applied to explore variables such as social interaction, motivation, organisational perceptions, organisational environment and employee characteristics.

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