

The role of flexibility in the work place management essay



Flexibility is a way to help people define how and when work is done, flexibility helps employers and employees work effectively to enable the organisation achieve its objectives. (Simonetta Manfredi, Director, Centre for Diversity Policy Research, Oxford Brookes University.) Flexibility is all about creating a situation where both the employer and employee benefit from the schedule of work, creating a balance between individual needs and delivering of service. ' (Helen Gibbs, Senior Personnel Adviser, London Borough of Sutton) Flexible working relates to working time, pattern of work and location of work (ACAS PAGE 6). Many employers in united kingdom have introduced a range of flexible working options for their employees. In (2004) the workplace employment relations survey (WERS) discovered that a good number of employees (over 70 percent) gave some kind of flexible working option to employees and these has increased from the results of the survey carried out by workplace employment relations survey in 1998 (Kersley et al, 2005). These increase in flexible working option by employers was propelled as a result of growing need for work life balance (Bailyn et al, 2001). In the United Kingdom, legislative support for parents who have young children that are disabled these would enable them to adapt a more flexible working practise because they offer employees the opportunity to choose where and where they want to work Vlasios Sarantinos (2007). For flexible working practise to work effectively there must be a transparent and accessible process that will be used to manage flexible request made by employees, this enables employees feel that the organisation is treating them fairly and their request for a different type of working arrangement is being looked into. In these essay i am going to be critically reviewing the role that flexibility can play in the work place.

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Building the culture There's a clear set of shared values, including ' the service user comes first', and ' people mean business'. Service users come to the office regularly so that backroom employees can meet them and have a sense of what the service is about. These values underpin the company's approach to flexible working. Employees feel they ' belong to something' and are pushed to achieve their full potential. Management is hands on: managers will not hand work out to their staff unless they are able to do the work themselves. All managers have to do a care shift once a month so they don't lose touch with the needs of service users and employees. Internal communication is reinforced by open days, where the chief executive meets staff informally. Thirty per cent of managers' diary time is non-prescribed, so as to leave time for informal contact with their staff. People's opinions are listened to. The number of managers has been halved from 24 to 12 and the company aims to recruit its managers from within. Finance Manager Steve Tuck believes that employees are motivated by seeing the improvement in the quality of life of service users. It's not unknown for people to take clients home for a meal.

Put in ur own words.

There are various forms of flexibility which organisations used to engage employees in an organisation

Functional flexibility: These type of flexibility allows employees to make use of their competencies and skills to enable them move freely across the different channels of production. This type of flexibility is likely to be desired when the employee no longer has stable relationship with the organisation and it relies on training across the channels of production.

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Numerical flexibility: These flexibility depends on the ability of the organisation to increase or decrease its labour number as it chooses by hiring some temporary workers and employing people who will be given fixed contracts.

Temporal flexibility: This type of flexibility involves adjustment of working hours to meet demands of production, part time working could be engaged in to handle intense peaks when needed.

Financial flexibility: In financial flexibility labour cost is reduced with efforts put in by the organisation to secure profit making.

Vlasios Sarantinos (2007)

Below are examples of flexible working practise which employees make use of in an organisation:

Part-time working: Its a form of work where employees are under a contract to work for less than the full time hours

Term-time working: . in this working arrangement a staff remains on his or her permanent contract but can take paid/unpaid leave during school holidays.

Job-sharing: This is a type of working arrangement where a job task is shared between two or more employees.

Flexitime: in this working arrangements staffs are allowed to choose within a given time frame when they want to begin and end their work.

Compressed hours: Compressed hours involve re allocating or reducing the set working hours into fewer and longer blocks during the week.

Annual hours: The set time within which full-time staffs must work is defined over a whole year.

Working from home on a regular basis: in this working arrangement the employees have a choice to work from home and report outcomes to their supervisor.

Mobile working/teleworking: This allows staffs to work all or part of their working week at a location remote from the employer's workplace.

Career breaks: This are period in which the employee is allowed to go on break, it may be a career break or sabbatical.

Chattered institute of personnel and development (2005)

Flexibility is seen to be important in workplace to both employers and employees because it gives them an opportunity to organise the way they work in a way that will be comfortable with their personal lives. For employers flexible working can help retain staff who have the required and skill required by the employer, it also widens the talent pool in the job market enabling them to recruits potential workers with more skill and still retain the staffs that are loyal and committed which can lead to an increase in productivity and profitability(Confederation of British Industry 2009).

Employers have realised that in order to provide quality services when needed by customers a flexible working system that involves the two parties

is needed which makes the workforce flexible enough to adapt to changing
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business conditions. Recession has had an effect on organisation layout and operations causing a lot of people to loose their job and holding unto whatever they can lay their hands on. The effect recession has on flexible working can be viewed as both negative and positive. Negative, because it has led to an increase in the number of people working part time that would love to take up a full time job and positive from the employers perspective because employers respond to more flexibility which indicates that that there is a tendency for organisations to embrace flexible working to have as a new way of working in the organisation. We need increased flexibility in the work place if the economy is to return back to stable and sustained growth, and in order to do this we need to develop all resources available especially man power to help increase productivity and give the economy a competitive advantage. Employers may find it expensive introducing flexible working because of the cost it might incur, the business premises may have to be open for a longer period of time thereby increasing cost of heating and lightning(Confederation of British Industry 2009) . Flexible working also plays an important role to employees because it enables them to balance their job at work alongside their responsibilities at home because in the society today both men and women want flexible jobs which involves minimal travel to enable them share the responsibilities of raising a family. Flexible working improves the moral of employees and gives some a feeling of worth, it also reduces absence and lateness to work(The Women and Work Commission 2006)

Flexible working has been seen to affect business by playing an important role to make sure that shifts are fully covered and services are maintained

flexible working is needed in organisations (British chambers of commerce, 2007). A flexible human capital practise makes organisations more stable, skilled and enthusiastic free from distractions, flexible working practises helps organisations to attract talents, with the difference in generation of workers with varying lifestyle and working conditions, companies have to reorganise their recruitment efforts, benefits plan, productivity incentives, work processes and work schedules in order to recruit qualified hands. Technological advancement also require that we think of how we can connect with people more effectively, organise teams and measure employees work performance when they work from home. Focused and talented employees who are on flexible schedules are likely to give out their best and be more committed to the goals and objectives of the organisation and deliver great value to customers who when satisfied continue to patronize the organisation thereby improving sales and boosting the company's image.

flexibility also helps reduce cost associated with health care, overhead, labor, turn over and legal fees. Cost involved with labor can be reduced and profitability can be increased by using a flexible human capital practise in which you boost the output of one employee and efficiency among groups across the organisation and reduce waste as a result of poor concentration, loss of work time and mistakes. it reduces labor cost for the same output thereby increasing profitability.

Flexibility also reduces health care cost because staffs have sufficient resources to meet the demands when they have control of planning their

time, these flexible working practise reduces stress and depression faced by most employees which directly reduces health cost of the company.

BOOK IMPACT OF FLEXIBILITY ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE.

To raise morale and job satisfaction: flexible working increases the morale of employers to perform at their utmost best because they feel they are treated as adults who have control of their life and their time and they tend to perform at their utmost best when they are at work.

To improve productivity/Quality : the need for producing a good quality product must be of paramount importance because there are cost associated with poor quality which dents the image of the organisation and makes customers unsatisfied, flexible working arrangement ensures fresh and capable hands at the production line at all times. When an employer is worn out down and his her shift is over another employee takes and continues the process of production. It also inspires and increases commitment an loyalty from staffs(Alison and Lou, 2001)

Opposing flexibility Traditionally, flexibility has been seen as a characteristic of poor quality jobs (see for

example De Witte, 1999; Nolan et al, 2000; Purcell et al, 1999), where employers

have sought to achieve organisational flexibility by means of using ' non-standard'

working practices, such as part-time work and temporary employment.

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Reduced absence and employee turnover: Flexible working enables employees to take care of their personal obligations leading to a decrease in frequent absenteeism because they have more options to which their time can be managed and it helps skilled workers remain in the organisation because staffs are more likely to stay in the organisation. (British chambers of commerce, 2007).

Reduced training costs : by introducing flexible working organisations retain trained employees there by saving up expenses that would have been used in training new staffs if the trained staffs were to exit.

Promoting customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction can be improved where,

customer service hours can be extended or shifted to periods when it is most required, and

Workers with different skills can be attracted and retained because of the flexible work

system in the organisation to help respond to diverse customer requirements. (Success with flexible working practices, 1997).

Book success with flexible work practise.

Flexibility has been seen traditionally to characterise poor quality jobs De witte, 1999, Nolan et al, 2000; Purcell et al, 1999) because employers try to achieve flexible working environment in the organisation by using working practices that are not up to standard, It might have been predicted generally

that access to flexible working arrangement would impact job satisfaction positively, it has also been discovered that a higher sense of responsibility and work completion affects job satisfaction positively (Hyman and Summers, 2004; Igbaria and Guiraraes, 1999), However findings on the effect of remote working on job satisfaction varied, In some studies lack of social interaction has lead to a negative impact on job satisfaction due to feelings of isolation (igbaria and Guimaraes, 1999), while some people tend to have a higher job satisfaction (Baruch, 2000). Igbaria meant that employees working in remote locations may perform low because they are not satisfied with their job and this may be due the fact that they have no one to interact with however Baruch said that some employees may actually enjoy working in remote locations and it tends to enhance their job performance. Flexible working offers employees choices to help them achieve a work life balance that is satisfactory. Stress which is one of the problems employees face has been linked to flexible working but flexible working does not seem to have an effect on reducing stress levels. Stress and anxiety may also be created by flexible working because an employee that works for a smaller amount of time or hours reduces but still has the same level of workload as someone working full time this tends to put pressure on the employee which might stress him or her out trying to cope with the work load (Dr Claire and Deirdre, 2008)

It has been suggested by some researchers that people who spend more time working remotely tend to have lower job stress (Raghuram and Wiesenfeld, 2004) however (Mann and Holdsworth, 2003) said that people working remotely show more signs of mental ill health than those working in

organisational premises. Some evidence was found by Tietze and musson (2005) of some worker who work remotely experiencing stress, they tend to experience stress which was linked with the self organisation required of their work, because it created new demands on them. An analysis linked to stress pointed the fact that flexible working time or flex time affected absenteeism positively, while compressed working practise had no effect Baltes et al, (1999). Baltes was saying that when workers were allowed to work with flexitime that means choosing when to resume and close work within a set time frame that it enabled them to always show up for work because they could adjust their schedule to meet up with the time they choose and that compressed working did not affect absenteeism positively or negatively. Remote workers were worried about the lack of opportunities to develop themselves which the employer denied them having including mentoring from senior colleagues and informal learning Cooper and Kurland (2002). Cooper discovered that concerns began to grow among workers working remotely that their absence was not felt by the organisation and they were neglected with no further course or training to further develop their skills, and because of these flexible workers tend to have lower long term career potential Frank and Lowe (2003). Although Mc Closkey and igbaria (2003) brought a contrasting a view saying dat flexible working had no direct or indirect effect on career prospects of employees. Cohen and Single (2001) found that professional staffs who worked reduced working hours were less able to spend time developing their skill which is one of the business factors important for a succesfull career(Dr Claire and Deirdre, 2008). Meaning that the less time professional workers spend in their workplace the less opportunity they get to learn new things.

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Business impact of flexible working

The company's policies towards flexible working are reflected in its business outcomes. Since 1997, employment at the company has gone up from 60 to 280 staff and turnover has increased from £1 million to £9.5 million.

Sickness absence has been reduced to 0.6 days a year, well below that for the care sector as a whole, which produces significant financial savings. The company also sees direct benefits in terms of staff recruitment and retention. Sandwell CCT came second in the Sunday Times '100 best companies to work for' list in 2007, and first nationally in the work-life balance category. It also came first in the categories of 'managers who listen', 'managers motivating staff to give their best' and 'training making a difference'. It believes that this success has boosted the company's image as an employer. Employee turnover at Sandwell CCT is now 4%, compared with 20% or more across the care sector generally. Because staff enjoy their jobs, there is a high level of employee engagement and this is reflected in the quality of service and value for money.

PUT IN UR OWN WORDS.