ICEEE 2015

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP & ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

THEME: Entrepreneurship Development in a Developing Economy: Meeting Today's Challenges

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Institute for Entrepreneurship and Development Studies

6th - 8th October, 2015
www.ifeds.oauife.edu.ng

CONTENTS

1. A Reorientation of Students Awareness of Entrepreneurship Education for Optimum Utilization in Tertiary Institutions

Adediran Adekunle Amos, Adeyanju Hammed Idowu (PhD) & Orukotan, Akinyemi F. (PhD) 1 - 10

2. Efficiency Analysis of Cassava Processing by Women Entrepreneurs in South-West Nigeria
Ehinmowo, O.O. & Ojo, S.O. *11 - 19*

3. Effectiveness of Social Enterprise and Service Learning Strategies in Social Studies Outcomes among Ogun State Junior Secondary School Studies
Adediran, Adekunle Amos & Sobola Isaac *20 - 30*

4. Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: An Empirical Investigation
Folorunso, O.O., Ogunleye, P. Oluwole & Kareem, T.S. *31 - 41*

5. Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment
Kolawole, Taiwo Olabode & Ayeni, Oyebola Olushola *42 - 55*

6. Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Empowerment: An Empirical Study
Oyeniyi, K.O., Oyebamiji, F.F. & Itiola, K.A. *56 - 63*

7. Entrepreneurship Education for Persons with Giftedness and Talents
Salaudeen, G. Olaide (PhD) *64 - 74*

8. Flexible Working and Employee Management: A Potential Driver for Employee's Effectivensss in Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises.
Isiaka, S.B. (PhD), Abdullah, A.S., Abogunrin, A.P., Aremu, N.S. & Aliyu, M.O. *75 - 83*

9. How to Introduce and Sustain Entrepreneurship Education
Olurankinse, C.A. (Mrs.) *84 - 91*

10. Relevance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Agricultural Production
Felicia O. Akerele & Nathaniel B. Akhire *92 - 108*

11. Learning Competencies, Innovation and Attitudinal Change as Determinants of Entrepreneurial Development among Undergraduates
Philips Olugbenga ADEBAYO *109 - 121*

12. A Perspective View of Experimental Learning Theory (ELT) as a Tool for Skills Development in Auditing Firms in Lagos State
Idowu, H.A.O., Ologunde, A.O. & Soewu *122 - 136*

13. Promoting ICT for Agricpreneurship: Women and Youth Development *Felicia O. Akerele & Nathaniel B. Akhire* *137 – 156*

FLEXIBLE WORKING AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A POTENTIAL DRIVER FOR EMPLOYEE'S EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIAN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISEs.

Dr. Isiaka, S.B.[1], Abdullah, A.S.[2], Abogunrin, A.P. [3], Aremu, N.S. [4] and Aliyu, M.O.[5]
Department of Industrial Relations & Personnel Management, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
1-babaita@unilorin.edu.ng +2348035842828
2- **abdullah.as@unilorin.edu.ng +2348053672243**
3- **abogunrin.ap@unilorin.edu.ng +234818522200**
4- **aremu.ns@unilorin.edu.ng +2347033028246**
5- **Aliyu.m.o@unilorin.edu.ng +2348032564817**

ABSTRACT

PUPROSE – This article discussed the nature and benefits of flexible working as a precursor for creating employee engagement which could encourage employee's effectiveness within the small and medium enterprises. Due to the current awareness and focus given to SMEs in developing countries, particularly Nigeria, the paper strived to bring forth the importance and contribution of flexible towards the growth of SMEs and the resulting effects on the nation's economy. DESIGN /METHODOLOGY /APPROACH – The paper presented a conceptual discussion of the interrelated ideas evident within the concept of flexible working and employee engagement. Research examples from the UK are used to underscore the article's arguments. FINDINGS - This paper crystallized how, within this conception, flexible working could be utilized to increase SMEs productivity and encourage their longevity within the dynamic context they operate. ORIGINALTY/VALUE – This article brings forth useful information on developments in flexible working, and the advantages it proffered to SMEs where it has been adopted.

KEYWORD: – Flexible working, Employee Engagement, Human resource management, SMEs.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) (2012) and Rees and French, (2013), people management in organizations today has been carried out amidst the various challenges posed by turbulent and rapidly dynamic context. Evidently, majority of the developed economies have been noted to have moved away from mass production of standardize commodities or even day-to-day white-collar administrative work, because lots of such services are now been migrated to places such as India and China (Rees and French, 2013) where labor and production are discovered to be cheaper and in abundant. At the same time, it has been noted that employees in the workplaces are increasingly clamoring for more flexible, autonomous and creative functions. This argued by French et al (2011) culminated to a search in favor of work-life balance by many employers for their employees in order to prevent burnout and encourage the achievement of high organizational performance. Consequently, there have been increasing interest from employers in flexible working and majority of the employers have already introduced a variety of flexible working choices for their staff (Rees and French, 2013) so as to encourage the creation of employee engagement within their organizations.

Employee engagement has been identified by both the academics and practitioners in human resource management in recent years as a concept of growing interest (CIPD, 2013). This is because majority of employers have come to recognize the importance of the way their staff perceive their work places, as well as how much they relate with the culture in shape of goals of the organization, objectives and their stated values (although the perception of the concept of employee engagement may be different dependent on the individual organization and context understanding of the concept. However, each firm still attends to its establishment one way or the other, consciously or unconsciously). In one of the recently published report of the CIPD (2012) employee engagement is described as a ''passion to work'' and engaged workers as feeling positive about their jobs and being ready to go the extra mile in order to make sure they do their jobs and assigned tasks to the best of their ability. Moreover, the pertinence of employee engagement on organization's bottom line cannot be over emphasized as it is recognized to have an effect on firm's performance (Truss et al, 2006; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) as well as been found to relate to other factors such as job involvement (develops a connection or bond with their job and shows fervent concentration), job satisfaction (feeling fulfilled with their job and are happy to go back to the same work always as well as encourage prospective employees to work for their organization) and organizational citizenship behavior (Feeling a sense of ownership or stakeholder-ship in their workplaces and would protect the interest of the organization at all times) (Rees and French, 2013; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Both the private, public and third sector organizations operates in a rapidly changing context due to the accelerating rate of globalization and technological advancement which bring with it intense competition resulting to a need for greater flexibility by organizations, their managements, and other stakeholders (Rees and French, 2013; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Therefore, employment flexibility (flexible working) options presents employees a certain percentage of choice over where, when, and how much they work which would in turn reduce absenteeism caused by burn out and encourage higher employee engagement. On the other hand, employer's adoption of short and fixed term contracts reduces the pressure put on them as a result of long-term investment in labour costs. Similarly, Rees and French, 2013 also postulate that among the benefits of flexible working for the employers includes; reduction in fixed costs i.e. teleworking, assists recruitment and retention of workers, increases employees productivity and efficiency, improvement of employee's morale, reduces stress, burnout and frequent request for sick leave, reduces absenteeism and provides potential workers in a wider pool. A handful of research have studied the 'business case' for the introduction of flexible working and advantages such as reduced over head costs due to reduced office space requirements (Thomson, 2008), increased quality performance (Rees and French, 2013) and increased operational and numerical flexibility (Thompson and McHugh, 2009) have all been discovered. The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sector has been identified as an economic generator if appropriately operated in an economy. Thus the Nigerian economy being the largest in West Africa with several clusters and niches of small scale businesses and an increasing clamor by the federal government for the establishment of small medium enterprises, requires a shift from the traditional work practices towards modern trends such as embracing the flexible working concept in order to achieve adequate employee engagement level within their businesses. However, the concept of flexible working and employee engagement is yet to receive much attention by both the academics as well as the practitioners in the Nigerian work system (i.e. public, private and third sector) (Adeleye, 2010; Akingbola, 2011). It is against this backdrop that this paper examines flexible working with a considered interest on location flexibility and employee engagement as a fundamental human resource practices through which the employees effectiveness in the Nigerian small and medium enterprises may be driven to the benefit of the sector in particular and the nation's economy in general. The overall structure begins with the introduction, it then moved to the conceptual frame work where types of employment flexibility were listed and briefly discussed and finally expatiated and concludes on the potential of flexible working on employee's effectiveness in the Nigerian small and medium enterprise sector.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The CIPD (2013) describes flexible working as a mode of working arrangement which enables certain degree of flexibility on how long, when and at which location an employee wish to work. This working

arrangement may come in terms of the arrangements of work which can include working location, working time, and the pattern of doing jobs (De Vroom, 2004; Green, 2004; CIPD, 2013). Similarly, Rees and French (2013) also viewed flexible working as a form of diagnoses for the recent work practices and a panacea to the challenges of managing the workforce in the current competitive and dynamic business context.

However, flexible working cannot be discussed conceptually without the mention of Atkinson (1984) who developed the concept in one of his works titled the ''flexible firm'' which was as a result of the changes that took place in the nature and setting of the workforce at that particular period. Furthermore, the initiation of flexible working into the employment and human resource practice has been perceived as designing a shift within employment relations which allows individual employees to decide on the choice of work arrangements as befitting to their personal schedule (De Vroom, 2004; Smithson and Stokoe, 2005; Grant 2009). However, as good as this arrangement might appear to give employees a greater control over how, where and when they wish to do their jobs; it still possesses some lopsidedness (De Vroom, 2004). For example, most employers restrict the practice to a particular group among their employees such as parents and carers while they neglect others who are not in this category, this may in turn lead to feeling of unfairness which could disrupt the employment relations climate and affect organizational performance (CIPD, 2008; CIPD, 2013). Accordingly, major external and internal drivers of flexible working have been identified to influence the adoption and need for implementing a flexible working practice in the organization, one of this is the increasing urge to deploy the human capital efficiently and effectively while also taking into consideration a balance in the work-life of the individual employee most especially those in the categories of carers and parents with little children (Truss et al, 2006; Clark, 2012). Consequently, governments and nongovernmental organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, have continuously stress the need for workforce flexibility in the quest for efficiency and effectiveness and as the increase in ageing population as well as female workers continued to be seen in work contexts, organizations need to adopt a way to keep a balance to how work is done so as to ensure competitiveness and consideration of work-life balance of the employees (CIPD, 2012). While employees perceived flexible working arrangements as an opportunity to juggle the demands of work and personal (home) lives and autonomy to choose and make arrangement of work themselves (Taylor, 2002;

Pollitt, 2003; CIPD, 2012,) employers see it as a leverage to achieving positive organizational outcome which includes high task performance, successful change, increased quality problem solving, reduced turnover, enhanced efficiency, reduced recruitment and retention cost, reduced absenteeism as well as grievances among their workforce (Illes et al, 1996; Thomson, 2008). Further to this, Truss et al (2006) also

argue that employees who were allowed flexibility tended to exude emotional engagement towards their work place and as well show job satisfaction, talked positively about their organization and are less likely to want to quit their jobs. None the less, flexible working has been seen as an important consideration by governments and organizations alike due to the accelerating expansion in the business context and increasing growth in technology which warrants the need for a greater flexibility from businesses, their leaders and their employees so as to ensure their continuous existence in the context (Thompson and McHugh, 2009; Thomas, 2009). Also, the CIPD (2012) found that in the UK, 96% of organizations today engage in some form of flexible working, while ¾ employees also make use of one form of flexible working or the other, 20% of employees work from home and 14% work remotely showing the increasing interest in flexible working. However, organization's decision on which form or how many type of flexible working practice they wish to adopt is dependent on the context in which they operate, the market condition, business/organizational function, structure, size as well as culture among other factors (Rees and French, 2013).

TYPES OF FLEXIBILE WORKING

According to Blyton and Morris (1992) four major types of flexibility includes: Task or Functional flexibility; Numerical flexibility; Temporal flexibility and Wage flexibility. In addition to this lists, are two more types which includes: Location flexibility and Behavioral flexibility (Rees and French, 2013).

Numerical flexibility refers to the flexibility in numbers of employees; it entails the changes in the size of a business's workforce in relation to the market demand (Atkinson, 1994; Reilly, 1998). It encompasses the use of the following: Employment contract (Atkinson, 1994), subcontracted labor, Agency temps, Short term contracts, rolling contracts, Outsourcing, Training scheme.

Task or functional Flexibility refers to where employees may be multi-tasked or multiskilled (Dekker, 2010). For instance, employees are made to be generalists through gaining the capacity to undertake different job roles and task such as job rotation and task rotation as well as job enlargement (Dekker, 2010; Torrington et al, 2010).

Temporal flexibility involves responding to business and employee demands using varying patterns of working hours such as zero hours, annual hours, flexi-time, part-time working, job share ,time off in lieu, term-time working, among others (Blyton and Morris, 1992; Torrington et al, 2008; Torrington et al, 2010).

Wage flexibility entails the use of performance related indexes for paying wages as well as individualizing wages accordingly (CIPD, 2012).

Location flexibility involves a situation where employees are allowed to work remotely or choose to either work on or off the organization's site or elsewhere, which may range from home, project sites, customer's/client's office, on the move and even outside the firm's domiciliary (Thomson, 2008).

Behavioral flexibility according to Rees and French (2013) involves the employee and employer capacity to acclimatize positively with change and instability.

FLEXIBLE WORKING AS A POTENTIAL FOR EMPLOYEE'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THE NIGERIAN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE SECTOR

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been regarded as the driver for employment generation, economic growth and technological advancement through their major impact on the macroeconomic growth in many countries where their existence and sustainability are encouraged. Consequently, the contributing effect of SMEs has been seen as largely economic sustenance due to their economy output enhancing capacity (Akingbola, 2011).

Therefore, it is imperative for countries in the developing world to bring work practices that would serve as drivers that would usher in necessary and requisite antecedents to foster the continuous growth and existence of the SMEs. Although there has not been a generally agreed definition of SMEs, the National Council of Industries defined SMEs as business enterprises that are characterized with having a total costs (which excludes land) that is not above two hundred million naira (N 200,000,000.00) only. The merit of the SME sector embracing flexible working plan (employment flexibility) for their employees would create the antecedents for effectiveness and efficiency of staff productivity which in turn would reflect positively on organization's bottom line as well as have a direct profitable effect on the Nation's GDP (Adeleye, 2010). According to Thomson, (2008), due to the volatility and increasing competitiveness of the context where businesses exist today, the effectiveness of the traditional forms of labour management are becoming obsolete and non suitable for managing employment costs. Therefore, organization who chose to be adamant to using the 'old' work process may continue to exist in a state of inertia and eventually fall out due to their non adaptability to the rapidly dynamic context in which they exist and which might also be characterized by fluctuating product demands and thinner margins. Moreover, firms who seek to gain increased productivity, reduced costs, and increase competitive agility tend to adopt modern employment flexibility (Thomson, 2008).

Arguably, the model of the flexible firm propounded by Atkinson (1984) prescribes the segmentation of the organization labour force into peripheral and core groups according to the critical nature of the tasks

or jobs these employees engages in at a particular moment in relation to the organizational goals. While the core workers are extended job security, the peripheral employees are usually not subject to the volatility or unpredictability of the firm's product market (Atkinson, 1984). Also, it is evident that organizations such as the SMEs would benefit more through cost savings when peripheral employees are used most of the time. This is because this band of staff earns less compensation and benefits compared to their core staff counterparts. Subsequently, organizations such as SMEs would have the time to concentrate more on developing their core competencies when they externalize their peripheral jobs to only relevant peripheral employees (Adeleye, 2010) thereby saving more time and ensuring absorptiveness of their core staff in more required tasks. Hence, peripheral activities which include those that are assigned to non-core employees should be externalized in order to encourage full concentration on core activities of the organization.

From all the above, key strategic drivers that organizations could gain from adopting the flexible working practices may include (but not limited to this) business process re-engineering, cost savings, focus on core competencies, increased staff absorptive capacity and union busting (Adeleye, 2010; Thomson, 2008). Organization's technological competencies as well as advancement has been recognized as one of the major facilitator of a firm's flexibility due to the fact that employment flexibility such as location flexibility would only be effective where necessary information technology facilities is readily available. This would ensure easy and uninterrupted flow of communication from employees working or stationed off the organization's main sites. Albeit the practice of location flexibility evident among the telecommunication organizations in Nigeria. Its popularity is still little among major SMEs in the country.

Arguably, location flexibility has lot of benefits for the organization among which may include cost saving, increased efficiency and employee effectiveness, reduced office utility costs, reduction of undue 'micro management' of staff and increased employee independency. Additionally, setting out conditions that fosters or encourages enabling working terms for the workers will be more productive to the SMEs organization. This is because; the human resource of every organization is the key resources to their bottom line productivity, therefore adoption of best practices in human resource management such as flexible working will go a long way to facilitating employee engagement within the SMEs and improve staff well being (due to consideration given to work-life balance).

REFERENCES

Adeleye, I. (2010) The Diffusion of Employment Flexibility in Nigeria's Banking Industry: Its Nature, Extent and Causes

Akingbola, R.O. (2011) Small and Medium Scale Enterprises and Economic Growth in Nigeria: An Assessment of Financing Options. Pakistan Journal of Business and Economic Review, 2(1). Pp. 79-85

Aitkinson, J. (1984) Manpower Strategies for Flexible Organizations. Personnel Management, 12(2), pp. 12-34

Blyton, P. and Morris, J. (1992) HRM and the Limits of Flexibility. In Blyton, P. and Morris, J. (Eds) Reassessing Human Resource Management. Sage: London

CIPD (2012) Flexible Working Provision and uptake. Available on line at: http://www.cipd.co.uk [Accessed: 9th April, 2015]

CIPD (2013) Learning and Talent Development. CIPD: London

Clark, E. (2012) Time for Employers to Become Flexible Friends. Employer's Law, 12(3), pp. 23-37

Dekker, F. (2010) Labor Flexibility, Risks and the Welfare State. Economic and Industrial Democracy, 31(4), pp. 399-481

De Vroom (2004) The Shift From Early to Late Exit: Changing Institutional Conditions and Individual Preference: The Case of The Netherlands, in Maltby, T., De Vroom, B.,

Mirabile, M.L. and Overbye, E. (Eds), Ageing and the Transition to Retirement: A Comparative Analysis of European Welfare States, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 120-156

Grant, L. (2009) Job Design and Working Hours: Key Sources of Gender inequality, Yeandle, S. (Eds.). Policy for A Change: Local Labor Market Analysis and Gender Equality, The Policy Press: Bristol

Green, F. (2004) Why has Work Effort Become More Intense? Industrial Relations, 43(6), pp. 209-750

Illes, P., Foster, A., and Tinline, G. (1996) The Changing Relationships Between Work Commitment, Personal Flexibility and Employability: An Evaluation of a Field Experiment in Executive Develoment. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 11(8), pp. 1834

Politt, D. (2003)Shift-pattern Switch Improves Staff Turnover and Recruitment at Seaboard. Human Resource Management International Digest, 11(1),pp. 12-14

Rees, G. and French, R. (2013) Leading Managing and Developing People (4th Edition). CIPD: London

Schaufeli, W.B. and Bakker, A.B. (2004) Job Demands, Job Resources, and Their Relationship with Burnout and Engagement: A Multi-sample Study. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25(3), pp. 293-325

Smithson, J. and Stokoe, E. (2005) Discourses of Work-Life Balance: Negotiating 'Genderblind' terms in Organizations. Gender, Work and Organization, 12(2), pp. 147-169

Taylor, R. (2002) The Future of Work-life Balance. Human Resource Management International Digest, 10(4), pp. 13-15

Thompson, P. and McHugh, D. (2009) Work Organizations: A Critical Approach. (4th Edition). Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

Torrington, D., Hall, L. and Taylor, S. (2008) Human Resource Management, (7th Edition). FT/Prentice-Hall: London

Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S. and Atkinson, C. (2010) Human Resource Management (8th Edition) FT/Prentice-Hall: Hallow

Truss, K., Sloane, E., Edwards, C., Wisdom, K., Croll, A. and Burnett, J. (2006) Working Life: Employee Attitude and Engagement 2006, Research Report. CIPD: London

Thomson, P. (2008) The Business Benefits of Flexible Working. Strategic Human Resource Review, 7(2), pp. 17-22