

Effect Of Flexible Work Schedules On Employee Performance At Safaricom Plc

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Abstract

The issue of flexible work practices has received considerable attention since the early 1980s with policies such as labor market deregulation to remove constraints on the form of employment contracts which employers can offer. This research sought to ascertain how employees performance at Safaricom PLC was impacted by flexible work schedules. The research was built on the psychological contract theory and the spillover idea. The study utilized a descriptive research methodology and had a single organization as its subject. In descriptive research design studies that additionally make an effort to connect variables, it is appropriate to explain and describe how things relate to one another. The target population was 1470 employees from various divisions of Safaricom PLC. The descriptive elements of the research were examined using descriptive statistics composed of means, frequencies, standard deviation, and percentages. The purpose of the research was to ascertain how flexible work schedules influenced employees' performance on the job at Safaricom PLC. The study incorporated four dimensions of flexible work schedules: telecommuting, compressed hours, and part time and flexi work arrangements. Data analysis comprised of descriptive and inferential analysis. Based on descriptive statistics, the study found that majority of employees (54.1%) at Safaricom Plc are fulltime. The research indicated that the features of a flexible work environment explain 43.2% of employee performance, with a moderate correlation between the two components of 0.658, based on the total impact of flexible working schedules on employee performance. The study recommends that a firm should devise the best strategy in which flexible working schedules can be formulated and implemented for greater performance.

Words: *flexible work practices, workers' job performance, Safaricom PLC*

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I. Introduction

In order for an organization to realize its organizational goals, employees need to go beyond their call of duty and perform. Employee performance is an important factor that determines which direction an organization takes in both the short and long term horizon because as an internal resource, employees are the ones with capacity to utilize other available resource optimally with the intention of realizing overall organization goals (Helmle, Botero & Seibold, 2014). Consequently, one of the human resource management objective is to enhance employee performance through adoption of appropriate HR practices. One of the HR practices that have been advocated due to its potential to affect employee performance is a flexible work schedule (Semlali & Hassi, 2016). An employee's job performance depends on or is a consequence of some combination of ability, effort, and opportunity to work in a peaceful work environment, irrespective of the location of performing the work. Further, striking a balance between employee work and life demands, according to Mungania (2017), is one of the strategies that will enhance productivity. Under stable working environment, employees meeting life requirements have better concentration at work due to limited disruptions from life-related forces. In the current fast phase job market, the capacity to adopt a flexible work schedule might prove to be critical to avoid conflicts between an employee family and work life.

In Kenya, most employees in the corporate working environment are engaged for more than 48 hours a week in the work related duties which makes it difficult for them to keep a balance between work, family, and other personal needs (Mungania, 2017). This imbalance results in work life conflicts which is associated with mental health issues like stress and depression which affects employee performance in the long run. At Safaricom, employees face work life balance problems as a result of increased time spent at workplace compared to at home. In certain cases, employees are forced to work till late in the night and report back early in

the morning or even report on Saturdays which is a day for family bonding. All these inconveniences result in conflicting interests from home and work demands. Under such working environment, it is likely that employee performance might be affected. In the last decade, Safaricom has incorporated a flexible work schedule as one of its HR practice. However, what is not known is what the effect of a flexible work schedule has had on employee performance. It is from this standpoint that the current study aims to determine the effect of flexible work schedule on employee performance at Safaricom PLC. Indeed, the need to understand the effect of a flexible work-schedule on employee performance has attracted the interest of many scholars.

A study by Muindi (2015) on “Work Life balance Practices Adopted in Horticultural Farms In Kenya” recommended that the farms should contemplate having more work independence and flexible working hours to ensure employees can organize their work in such a way that they are still able to attend to matters that do not relate to work during peak hours. Mwebi and Kadaga (2015) did a study on the effects of flex-time work arrangement on employee performance in Nairobi CBD Commercial Bank. The findings revealed that Flex-time work arrangement was positively related to employee performance. Jane, Simon and Amos (2015) in their study on the effect of flexibility in work arrangements programmes on job satisfaction of nurses in public hospitals in Nakuru county, Kenya, established that public hospitals in Nakuru town, Nakuru County exempted expectant or breastfeeding nurses from night-shifts; that the existence of half-day work-shifts for nurses enabled them to attend to their personal issues without stress and that night-offs given to the nurses after night-duty enable them to release stress and attend to family responsibilities easily.

De Menezes and Kelliher (2017) did a study on flexible working, individual performance, and employee attitudes in formal and informal arrangements. The study concluded that there exists an imbalance between current lives demands and the ability of people to adequately cope with them, this lead to people experiencing stress. A study done in Turkey by Erkut, Altindag and FundaSiller (2014) concluded that for the enhancement and sustainability of employee performance, flexible working hours are deemed very precious. Lives are becoming more involving for employees with a host of personal and family responsibilities in addition to workplace demands (Grantol Vallore & Donaldson, 2001).

From the studies evaluated above, it is evident that a good number of studies have sought to determine the effect of flexible work schedule on employee performance. However, there exists a contextual gap in that no study has looked at Safaricom. In addition, there is a gap existing in adoption of telecommuting, compressed hours, part time and flexi time to represent flexi work schedules. Consequently, this research sought to answer the following question; what is the effect of flexible work schedules on employee performance at Safaricom PLC?

Research Objectives

The objective of this research was to establish the effect of Flexible Work Schedules on employees’ job performance at Safaricom PLC.

II. Theoretical Foundation

The study was based on two theories, namely, the psychological contract theory proposed by Argyris (1960) and spill over theory by Jane Jacobs and John Jackson (1969).

The psychological contract theory and spill over theory served as the foundation for this investigation. The psychological contract, developed by Chris Agyris in 1960, provides a structure for tracking the attitude of employee and their priorities on the performance related aspects that are the subject of this research. This theory explains the employee employer connection by examining how individuals' ideas impact their judgment and conduct in exchange interactions and how what employers do influences employees' behavior. This theory will guide this study since it focuses on reciprocity, or the idea that someone would do something out of obligation in exchange for a favor. The spillover hypothesis of Piotrkowski (1979; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990) focuses on how job responsibilities affect the micro-system of work and family, which may be either good or negative. This has an impact on the research because job flexibility allows people to combine and overlap work and family duties, creating a beneficial ripple effect that is essential for maintaining a good work-life balance.

III. Research Methodology

The study used descriptive research design in the context of one organization. It will enable the researcher to get more inclusive information on employee insights on the effect that Flexible Work Schedules has on their performance. The target population was 1470 employees of Safaricom PLC across various Divisions as detailed in Table 3.1. These employees are based at the head office in Nairobi

In order to identify respondents for the research, stratified sampling and basic random sample procedures was used. First, Safaricom current five divisions were considered as strata from which the responders would be chosen. Because the population is diverse, stratification was employed to account for the perception of each strata in regard to the organizational climate.

The researcher used Slovin's (1960) method to determine the number of respondents in each cadre.

n= sample size

N= Total population, i.e., the three cadres' targeted population

e= stands for error tolerance. The research will use a 95% confidence level, which will result in a 0.05 margin of error.

The following formula is used to determine the sample size;

$$n = \frac{1470}{(1 + 1470 * 0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 1470 / 4.675$$

$$n = 315$$

Hence the 315 employees formed the sample size. To arrive at the sample size for each cadre, the researcher proportionately determined the number of targeted employees in each cadre with a view to arriving at a total number of 315 respondents.

Table 3. 1: Sample Size Distribution

Population	Number	Sample size	Percent
Resources Division	89	19	6
Technology Division	749	161	51.1
Finance Division	299	64	20.3
Corporate Security Division	275	59	18.7
Corporate Affairs Division	58	12	3.9
Total	1470	315	100

Primary data was collected from employees using a semi structured questionnaire consisting of two parts, A and The electronic questionnaire, which was administered through google forms comprised of five-point Likert type scales ranging from one (the lowest point) to five (the highest point).

The primary data was coded and input into SPSS. In analyzing the descriptive elements of the study, descriptive statistics consisting of means, frequencies, standard deviation and percentages was used. Correlations and regression analysis was used to draw inferences to the entire population. Linear regression analysis was used to test the effect of Flexible Work Schedules on employee performance. Employee performance was the dependent variable while the independent variables were different types of flexible work schedules. The linear regression model to be used was:

In further detail, the regression took the form;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where Y = Employee performance

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Telecommuting

X_2 = Compressed Hours

X_3 = Part Time

X_4 = Flexi-work arrangements; ϵ = Error Term

Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse and present the data.

Descriptive Statistics

The study aimed to establish the the effect of Flexible Work Schedules on employees' job performance at Safaricom PLC. Descriptive statistics was computed to establish the summary of responses in regard to the study variables. The mean shows the concentration of the responses along the scale measurement while the standard deviation shows the scope of spread in relation to responses.

Flexible Working Schedule

The respondents were asked to indicate some forms of flexible working schedules, as well as the extent to which they engage in different practices. The study used a scale of 1:0-20% to 5:81-100% in determining the degree at which respondents engaged in different working schedules.

Table 4. 1 Flexible Working Schedule

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I spend at least 50% of their time working at/from home (Telecommuting)	246	4.167	1.1955
I am engaged in part time working	246	4.142	1.3000
I am enjoying flexitime	246	2.427	1.599

I am enjoying working in compressed hours (reducing working week by extending working day)	246	1.951	1.500
Valid N (listwise)	246		

As shown from the findings, it was established that majority of the respondents spend at least 50% of their time working at/from home i.e telecommuting (mean=4.167, SD=1.1955) while others opined that they are engaged in part time working (mean=4.142, SD=1.3). Additionally, the study found that some respondents enjoyed flextime (mean=2.427, SD=1.599) and also working in compressed hours (reducing working week by extending working day) (mean=1.951, SD=1.5) The standard deviations are greater than one implying that the variation in responses is significant.

Telecommuting

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent at which you agree or disagree with the statements regarding telecommuting using a five point Linkert scale with one being the least and five being the highest.

Table 4. 2 Telecommuting

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees achieve a huge saving in time and commuter costs while telecommuting hence becoming more productive	246	3.622	1.3338
Telecommuting helps in reducing absenteeism in as per number of days an employee attends work	246	3.183	1.4095
Telecommuting affects performance in terms of productivity	246	2.968	1.5169
Telecommuting causes employees to dedicate more time to work as they can easily work early or late, off the set official hours	246	2.740	1.3513
Telecommuting contributes to employee work life balance	246	2.638	1.3565
Valid N (listwise)	246		

It was found that employees achieve a huge saving in time and commuter costs while telecommuting hence becoming more productive (mean=3.622, SD=1.3338) and that telecommuting helps in reducing absenteeism in as per number of days an employee attends work (mean=3.183, SD=1.4095). Furthermore, majority of the respondents were undecided on the fact that telecommuting affects performance in terms of productivity (mean=2.968, SD=1.5169), as well as on the argument that Telecommuting causes employees to dedicate more time to work as they can easily work early or late, off the set official hours (mean=2.740, SD=1.3513). The study also established that it is not bsure whether telecommuting contributes to employee work life balance (mean=2.638, SD=1.3565). The findings thus imply that as much as telecommuting is an effective component of flexible work strategy, majority of employees are yet to establish its effect on employee performance.

Compressed Hours

Table 4. 3 Compressed Hours

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Compressed Hours working determines employee performance in given period	246	4.468	.8648
Compressed hours working determines the amount of effort in man hours used by employee to achieve organization success	246	4.301	.9029
Compressed hours working determines the employee commitment in terms of time in hours worked	246	4.285	1.0103
Compressed hours working reduces stress related complaints by employees	246	3.809	1.1429
Compressed Hours working affects performance in terms of productivity	246	2.768	1.4023
Valid N (listwise)	246		

Based on the findings, majority of the respondents agreed on the statement that compressed hours working determines employee performance in given period (mean=4.468, SD=0.8648) and that compressed hours working determines the amount of effort in man hours used by employee to achieve organization success (mean=4.301). Additionally, the findings shows that compressed hours working determines the employee commitment in terms of time in hours worked (mean=4.285, SD=1.0103) whereby it reduces stress related complaints by employees (mean=3.809, SD=1.1429). However, majority of the respondents were undecided on the statement statement that compressed hours working affects performance in terms of productivity (mean=2.768, SD=1.4023). The findings imply that compressed working hours has a significant impact on employee performance based on descriptive statistics.

Part-Time Working

Table 4. 4 Part-Time Working

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Part time work lowers stress related complaints by an employee	246	4.232	.8894
Part time work determines the performance of an employee at any given time	246	4.102	.8955
Part time employment in health telecommunication employees provides less autonomy to the employee which affects the number of workload employee performs	246	3.622	1.0687
Part time work determines the number of tasks an employee performs in a given period	246	3.402	1.2040
Part time working affects performance set to be completed in a given period	246	3.256	1.1082
Valid N (listwise)	246		

According to the findings in regard to part time working, the study found that part time work lowers stress related complaints by an employee (mean=4.232, SD=0.8894) and that it determines the performance of an employee at any given time (mean=4.102, SD=0.8955). In addition, it was found that part time employment in health telecommunication employees provides less autonomy to the employee which affects the number of workload employee performs (mean=3.622, SD=1.0687) and also that it determines the number of tasks an employee performs in a given period (mean=3.402, SD=1.204). Majority of the respondents however gave a neutral point of view in regard to the fact that part time working affects performance set to be completed in a given period (mean=3.256, SD=1.1082). As a result, the findings imply that there is evidence that part time working gives employees time to meet family needs and during work time, there is concentration and engagement hence increasing employee performance.

Flex-Time

Table 4. 5 Flex-Time

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Flexitime gives employee more control over scheduling personal responsibility on either end of workday hence improving efficiency	246	3.305	1.2090
Flexitime affects the number of cases reported by employees related to family conflicts	246	3.211	1.1659
Flexitime is one way of providing professional service delivery in the organization which influences the number of positive client feedback	246	3.138	1.1975
Flexitime plays an important role in employee performance	246	3.134	1.3164
Flexitime determines the number of employees in the organization in a given period	246	3.061	1.2357
Valid N (listwise)	246		

Drawing from the findings, it was established that majority of respondents gave a neutral point of view on the argument that flexitime gives employee more control over scheduling personal responsibility on either end of workday hence improving efficiency (mean=3.305, SD=1.2090) and that flexitime affects the number of cases reported by employees related to family conflicts (3.211, SD=0.1659) Similarly, the the respondents took a neutral choice on the fact that Flexitime is one way of providing professional service delivery in the organization which influences the number of positive client feedback (mean=3.138, SD=1.1975) as well as on the argument that flexitime plays an important role in employee performance (mean=3.134, SD=1.3164) as well as if flexitime determines the number of employees in the organization in a given period (mean=3.061, mean=1.2357). The findings implies that employees at Safaricom Plc are yet to establish the effect of flexitime on employee performance sinc majority chose a neutral point of view.

Employee Job Performance

The study used three dimensions to establish the degree of employee performance in relation to flexible working condition. These dimensions comprised of deviant behaviours, work output and task factors.

Deviant Behaviours

Table 4. 6 Deviant Behaviours

Opinion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Theft	246	3.837	1.1093
Absence from duty	246	3.728	1.1478
Intentional lateness	246	3.667	1.0665
Working slowly	246	2.947	1.3036
Valid N (listwise)	246		

It can be seen from the findings that majority of the respondents opined that to a great extent, flexible work environment affect theft (mean=3.87), absence from duty (mean=3.728), intentional lateness (mean=3.667) as well as working slowly (mean=2.947). The findings thus implies that flexible working moderately affects deviant behaviour among employees.

Work Output

Table 4. 7 Work Output

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work motivation	246	3.683	1.0978
Quantity of work	246	3.451	1.0784
Mental strain	246	3.427	1.21585
Job safety	246	3.098	1.2116
Better work output as compared to competitors	246	2.927	1.0742
Valid N (listwise)	246		

According to the study findings, it was established that to a great extent, flexible working among employees at Safaricom Plc affects work motivation (mean=3.683). Additionally, the study found that to a moderate extent, flexible working culture affects quantity of work (mean=3.451), mental strain (mean=3.427) as well as job safety (mean=3.098). However, the study found that to low extent, flexible working condition affects better work output as compared to competitors (mean=2.927). The findings implies that flexible working condition influences work output moderately.

Task Factors

Table 4. 8 Task Factors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Good relationship with co-workers	246	3.968	.8613
Commensurate pay	246	3.089	.8991
Working condition	246	2.626	1.2081
Autonomy in work	246	2.012	.9835
Valid N (listwise)	246		

Based on the study findings, it was found that to a great extent, flexible work schedules influences good relationship with co-workers (mean=3.968) and moderately influences commensurate pay (mean=3.089). Additionally, it was found that working condition (mean=2.626) and autonomy in work (mean=2.012) is influenced by flexible work schedules to a low extent.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was done to establish the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The study aimed to establish the effect of Flexible Work Schedules on employees’ job performance at Safaricom PLC. As a result, the independent variables comprised of the dimensions of flexible work schedules; telecommuting, part time working, compressed hours and flexi-work arrangements. On the other hand, employee performance was considered as the dependent variable.

Summary Model

The summary model of a regression analysis presents the R- coefficient of correlation which shows the extent of correlation between the dependent and independent variable and the R-square- the coefficient of determination that shows the extent of variation in dependent variable explained by independent variables considered in the study.

Table 4. 9 Summary Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658 ^a	.432	.423	.3565
a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexiworkarrangements, Parttime, Compressedhours, Telecommuting				

The findings shows that telecommuting, part time working, compressed hours and flexi-work arrangements and employee performance have a moderately strong correlation (r=0.658). In addition, the coefficient of determination (r square=0.432) implies that flexible working schedules explains 43.2% of employee performance.

Analysis of Variance

Analysis of variance determines the model’s good of fit for the data. The good of fit of the model is determined based on the significance value. On a 95% confidence level, the significance value is 5%. The model can be said not good for the data if the significance value is greater than 5% and vice versa.

Table 4. 10 Analysis of Variance

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.347	4	5.837	45.914	.000 ^b
	Residual	30.637	241	.127		
	Total	53.984	245			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Flexiworkarrangements, Parttime, Compressedhours, Telecommuting						

The ANOVA results presented in Table 4.16 shows that the F statistic is 45.914 and the level of significance being 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The study findings imply that the regression model was significantly fit to model the regression data.

Coefficients of regression analysis

Regression coefficients provide information concerning a unit effect realized on the dependent variable as a result of change in individual independent variables.

Table 4. 11 Coefficients of regression analysis

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.435	.154		-2.821	.005
	Telecommuting	.248	.068	.213	3.638	.000
	Compressed hours	.293	.054	.289	5.449	.000
	Part time	.213	.056	.211	3.805	.000
	Flexi work arrangements	.606	.051	.602	11.992	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Performance						

Based on the study findings, holding telecommuting, part time working, compressed hours and flexi-work arrangements constant, employee performance will reduce by 0.435 units. In addition, incorporating telecommuting enhances employee performance by 0.248 units. Similarly, compressed hours, part time working and flexi work arrangements enhances employee performance by 0.293, 0.213 and 0.606 units respectively. Based on the significance of the variables in the study, it was established that all the dimensions of flexible work schedules have a significant influence on employee performance since the values are less than 0.05. as a result, the resulting regression model is presented as;

$$Employee\ performance = -0.435 + 0.248(\text{telecommuting}) + 0.293(\text{compressed hours}) + 0.213(\text{part time working}) + 0.606(\text{flexi work arrangements})$$

IV. Discussion Of The Findings

The study aimed to establish the effect of flexible working time schedules on performance of employees. Inferential statistics showed that telecommuting has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This attributed to reduced time wasted while moving from residential area to work place. The findings are in tandem with Okemwa (2016) who found that telecommuting increases the time an employee works and therefore lateness at work is eliminated. Robbins and Judge (2013) also argued that policies focused on employee work life balance are effective in lowering absenteeism and improve retention of highly skilled employees.

In addition, the study established that compressed hours at work has a positive and significant relationship with employee work performance. As employees work within a short period of time, concentration is kept high and they will be able to attend their activities outside the work environment. The findings support the results of earlier study by Manne (2014) that with flexible practices including compressed hours, employees will effectively manage multiple roles responsibilities hence satisfaction.

Further, it was found that part time working has a positive and significant effect on performance of employees. Part time working gives employees more time to engage with the family members thus striking a good work-family balance. The findings are in tandem with Mwebi and Kedaga (2015) study which found out that part time work arrangement is positively related to employee performance.

The study also found that flexi work arrangements has a positive and significant effect with employee performance. The findings are in agreement with Okemwa (2016) that there is a significant positive relationship

between flexible work arrangements and nurses' commitment in public hospitals in Kenya. Flexible work arrangement (flexitime, compressed work schedule, shift schedule and job sharing) has a positive significant linear relationship with nurses' commitment

In regard to the study findings, it is worth noting that flexible work schedule is an appropriate human resource management practices that enhances employee performance significantly. The study concludes that having dimensions of flexible work schedule such as compressed working hours determines employee performance in given period. In addition, part time employment provides less autonomy to the employee which affects the number of workload employee performs.

The study also notes that flexitime gives employee more control over scheduling personal responsibility on either end of workday hence improving efficiency. Besides, flexitime is one way of providing professional service delivery in the organization which influences the number of positive client feedback. Telecommuting on the other hand, causes employees to dedicate more time to work as they can easily work early or late, off the set official hours. As a result, employees achieve a huge saving in time and commuter costs while telecommuting hence becoming more productive.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

As a result of the positive and significant effect that flexible working schedule has on employee performance, the study recommends that a firm should devise the best strategy in which flexible working schedules can be formulated and implemented for greater performance. In addition, the human resource department should liaise with employees while formulating policies for part time working and compressed hours. This will ensure the inclusion of employees views are included in decision making as far as flexible work schedules are concerned.

Furthermore, the study recommends that Safaricom Plc should be conducting surveys on employee job satisfaction as well as their suggestion for better working condition. Additionally, there should be a continuous assessment on the best strategies in relation to flexible work schedules to ensure employees do not under perform due to more free time.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited by a number of factors; first, the study was confined within Safaricom Plc. Secondly, the study was limited to a descriptive research design and inferential statistics which is quantitative and not qualitative other design methodology. Thirdly, the study was limited to primary data as the main source of data for analysis and interpretation. However, the limitations registered were not sufficient to hinder the achievement of the study objective. Perhaps, the study findings are credible for generalization.

Suggestions for future studies

The current study aimed to establish the effect of flexible work schedule on employee performance at Safaricom Plc. For generalization of the findings, the study recommends that future study should be done on other sectors of the economy. Since the study was limited to four constructs of flexible working schedules, future studies should be done with more dimensions to establish the degree of influence it have on employee performance. Future studies should also consider using other design of study other than descriptive research design using different sources of data.

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