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Research Article

The Effect of Flexible Work Arrangements on Employees' Well-being, Job Satisfaction, and Work Performance in Morocco: A Case Study

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Abstract

Nowadays employees are consumed with a number of family responsibilities and other personal problems besides the demands of their workplace. In fact, most people lack the ability to efficiently manage all these things, and this leads to an unhealthy amount of stress, an imbalance between work and personal life, and a potential job dissatisfaction. This is why it is important for managers to come up with different practices to help employees find a balance, and hence increase their overall productivity and work performance. One-way managers achieve this is by including one or more types of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs). This study aims to look at the effects of FWAs on employees' wellbeing, job satisfaction work performance among the employees of Pastel Agency Services, Morocco. The paper will be organized in Three different chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the concept of FWAs and a statement of the problem, purpose, questions, hypotheses and methodology adopted in the study. The second chapter is a review of the literature. The third and final chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements, wellbeing, job satisfaction, work performance

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays employees are consumed with a number of family responsibilities and other personal problems besides the demands of their workplace. In fact, a lot of people lack the ability to efficiently manage all these things, and this leads to an imbalance between their work and personal lives thus leading to a decrease in work productivity. This is why businesses give more and more importance to the well-being of their employees and their job satisfaction. In this context, the concept of flexibility or flexible work arrangements (FWAs) is gaining importance because it seems to have numerous benefits including increased personal and team effectiveness, greater employee commitment, reduced stress, and greater overall organizational performance (Clarke and Holdsworth 2017). However, the results of previous research on the effects of FWAs on work-related criteria were ambiguous, they varied from zero or little effect to substantial positive effect (Dunham et al., 1987; Pierce et al., 1989) (cited in Hosboyar et al., 2018). Similarly, De Menezes & Kelliher (2011) (cited in Klindzic and Maric ,2019) reviewed a 148 publications and previous studies about the effects of FWAs on organizational performance and found that the findings of those studies were inconclusive and that the relationship between FWAs and performance should be further examined. Also, while reviewing the literature it seemed that most of the studies on the topic of flexible work arrangements have been done in a western context. Indeed, FWAs have been gaining popularity mostly in the European Union and Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. (Klindzic and Maric ,2019). Therefore, this paper will try to answer the

following question: How do Flexible Work Arrangements affect the well-being, job satisfaction, and work performance of employees at Pastel Agency Services, an event planning company in Morocco?

The study will also test the three following hypotheses:

H1: The wellbeing of employees with Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) is significantly higher than that of employees without FWAs.

H2: The job satisfaction of employees with Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) is significantly higher than that of employees without FWAs.

H3: The work performance of employees with Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) is significantly higher than that of employees without FWAs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs)

Bal and De Lange (2014) (as cited in Clarke & Holdsworth, 2017) define Flexibility in the workplace as “the opportunity of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks”. Another definition of workplace flexibility is given by Grzywacz et al. (2008). They define it as a concept that includes a range of working practices which enable workers to adapt the timing or scheduling of work, as well as the location of work in order to meet their needs. The scheduling arrangements include flex-time, compressed hours and part-time work. The location arrangements include teleworking, home working and hot desking. Also, Flexible work arrangements are defined as negotiated terms of employment in terms of working time and workplace (catalyst, 1997) (as cited in Allen & Shockley, 2009). Likewise, Rau (2003) defines FWAs as those involving

telecommuting, i.e., where work takes place, and flextime, i.e., when the work takes place. (Cited in Allen & Shockley, 2009).

Workplace 2010 (2006) defines FWAs as: “*any one of a spectrum of work structures that alters the time and/or place that work gets done on a regular basis. A flexible work arrangement includes: 1. Flexibility in the scheduling of hours worked, such as alternative work schedules (e.g., flex time and compressed workweeks), and arrangements regarding shift and break schedules; 2. Flexibility in the number of hours worked, such as part time work and job shares; and 3. Flexibility in the place of work, such as working at home or at a satellite location.*”

Employee wellbeing

Warr (1987) (as cited in Krishantha, 2018) views employee wellbeing as “*the overall quality of an employee’s experience and functioning at work*”. It is not limited to physical health only. Rather, it refers to the physical, psychological and financial state of the workforce at the organization. Similarly, Currie (2001) (as cited in Krishantha, 2018) defines employee wellbeing at work as the physical and mental health of the employees, which are achieved through a stress-free and physically safe environment.

Job Satisfaction

According to Saeed et al. (2014), job satisfaction refers to the extent to which an employee enjoys performing his or her job, and the feeling of achievement they get from it. The authors also state that job satisfaction reduces turnover, and that it is a good indicator of how well the employee intends to perform their jobs. Greater levels of job satisfaction led to increased motivation and performance, while

reducing absenteeism and turnover among employees.

Work Performance

Campbell and Wiernik (2015) looked at the definitions provided by many scholars and concluded that individual job performance refers to what people do and the actions they take that help reach organizational goals. It also refers to how well an individual performs a certain job or task. This involves noticeable objectives and intangible ones as well. In addition, they note that work performance is not limited to observable actions of a certain individual but also includes other activities like mental productions and decisions.

Findings of previous studies

While reviewing the literature, it turns out that flexible work arrangements affect employees’ well-being, job satisfaction and work performance in many different ways. Firstly, concerning job satisfaction, the results have been inconsistent. For example, Hosboyar et al.’ (2018) study did not indicate that FWAs had a positive effect on job satisfaction. Other studies have revealed the opposite. Working families organization (2008) showed that flexible work arrangements led to stronger commitment to the organization and higher job satisfaction. Similarly, Apgar (1998) (cited in Rawashdeh et al., 2016) found that there is a positive effect of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction. Possenriede and Plantenga (2011) also concluded that FWAs namely flexi-time, telecommuting and part-time work are associated with higher job satisfaction. On a similar line of thought, FWAs availability has been positively linked to job satisfaction. The reason for this is that when organizations values and cares for employees, those latter tend to have a positive reaction in return (McNall et al., 2010) (cited in

Masuda et al., 2012). Likewise, Altındağ and Siller (2014) showed that flexible working hours allow employees to rest, motivates them and have a moderate positive effect on employees' loyalty and job satisfaction. As for the effect of FWAs on job performance, Altındağ and Siller (2014) showed that since FWAs are positively associated to higher job satisfaction, they are by extension positively related to better job performance. Identically, Working families organization (2008) found that there is a positive relationship between FWAs and work performance. Indeed, it was reported that there was either a positive impact or no impact on individual performance. Additionally, the research showed that FWAs positively affect both the quantity and quality of work produced. Mugania et al. (2016) also concluded that flexible work arrangements improved organizational performance in the banking industry in Kenya. On a similar note, Clarke and Holdsworth (2017)' study showed that flexible workers tend to increase their team's productivity and effectiveness. Last but not least, FWAs also seem to positively affect employees' well-being. Clarke and Holdsworth (2017) stated that FWAs might reduce employees' work stress by reducing work-life conflict and commuting stress, thus improving employee's well-being. Similarly, Possenriede and Plantenga (2011)'s research showed that higher job satisfaction leads to lower rate of absenteeism and increased general well-being, and as mentioned before the authors have also shown that FWAs increase job satisfaction. As a result, FWAs seem to have a positive effect on employees' well-being. Finally, Uglanova and Dettmers (2018) examined the impact of two flexible working time Arrangements (FWTA) on the well-being of employees measured in

terms of leisure time and job satisfaction. It turned out that Employer-oriented FWTA has negative effects on job satisfaction and leisure time and by extension on employees' well-being. On the other hand, employee-oriented flexibility increased job quality, lead to higher work motivation, reduced stress and increased employees' job satisfaction therefore increasing their well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Participants

A qualitative research design is adopted in this study, and more specifically a case study. In this regard, Taherdoost (2016) explains that the sample sizes in case studies are typically small and intended to study a real-life issue or phenomenon. Moreover, he clarifies that the sample is not necessarily representative of the population. Similarly, Schoch (2019) explains that case studies tend to focus on small samples, and that in some cases participants are selected based on their uniqueness or because of special arrangements or easy access. Accordingly, the present study uses a non-probability sampling technique. Also, the sample size is small and consists of 36 participants in total. The respondents will be selected among the employees of Pastel Agency Services.

Research Instrument

A survey is used as a research instrument. It is divided in two main parts. The first part is reserved for employees and consists of three sections. The first is a simple question that determines whether the employee has access to FWAs or not. The second measures the employee's wellbeing and the third measures his/her level of job satisfaction. The second part is reserved for managers only and attempts to measure employees' work performance

and therefore compare the performance of flexible workers to that of non-flexible workers. Therefore, in total, 3 measures are used. The first is the Workplace wellbeing snapshot survey which is a survey developed by the “What Works Center for Wellbeing”. It is designed for organizations to determine how their employees are doing with respect to different aspects of wellbeing. The second is the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) authored by Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist (1967). The MSQ measures an employee’s job satisfaction. There are 3 MSQ forms available: two long forms and a short form. The MSQ short form consists of 20 items taken from the long form. For the present study a slightly adapted version of the MSQ short form is used. The third is also a slightly adapted version of the “Employee Performance Evaluation Survey” developed by SoGoSurvey, a cloud-based platform founded in 2013 and headquartered in Herndon, Virginia, United States. It enables the creation, distribution and analysis of surveys,

forms, polls, quizzes and assessments. Also, an open-ended question was added to each section to give the participants the opportunity to express themselves freely. Combining quantitative and qualitative data will allow for an in-depth investigation.

FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

The sample was relatively small. It consisted of 33 employees and 3 additional managers whose purpose was to measure the work performance of said employees. The employees belonged to two groups as explained before. The group that did not have access to flexible work arrangements consisted of 12 employees or 36.4% of the total number of participants. Whereas the group that did have access to flexible work arrangements consisted of 21 employees or 63.6% of the total number of participants (figure1). Although the percentages of the two groups are not equal, the results will still be used to make a comparison between them.

Table 1. Wellbeing frequencies

	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
The mean wellbeing among all employees	.805	.08425

Wellbeing

Table 1 shows that employees with access to FWAs on average scored higher than those without access to FWAs in terms of well-being although the difference between the means is not very significant. Indeed, table 2 shows a significance value of $p = .805 > 0.05$, which indicates that there is no

significant difference between the wellbeing of employees with access to flexible work arrangements and those without access to flexible work arrangements. Therefore, FWAs do not affect the well-being of employees, and the difference in the means is due most probably due to chance.

Table 2. Well-being: Independent T-test

	The mean wellbeing of employees With FWAs	The mean wellbeing of employees Without FWAs
Mean	3.4176	3.3333

Job Satisfaction

Table 3 indicates that on average, the employees with access to FWAs scored higher than those without access to FWAs. However, table 4 shows that the significance value is $p = .392 > 0.05$, which indicates that there is no significant difference between the job

satisfaction of employees with access to flexible work arrangements and those without access to flexible work arrangements. In conclusion, FWAs do not affect the Job satisfaction of employees and the difference in the means is due most probably due to chance.

Table 3. Job satisfaction Frequencies

	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
The mean Job satisfaction among all employees	.392	.28446

Table 4. Job satisfaction: Independent T-test

	The mean job satisfaction of employees With FWAs	The mean job satisfaction of employees Without FWAs
Mean	3.4395	3.1316

Work Performance

Table 5 shows that the mean work performance of employees without access to FWAs is 4.3958 whereas the mean work performance of employees with access to flexible work arrangements is 4.5729. While there is a difference between the two means, this difference of exactly 0.1771 remains insignificant. We can conclude that there

is no significant difference between the two groups. Thus, flexible work arrangements do not significantly affect the work performance of the employees of Pastel agency services. Therefore, we can also reject the Hypothesis that the work performance of employees with Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) is significantly higher than that of employees without FWAs.

Table 5. Work Performance: means comparison

	The work Performance of employees without access to flexible work arrangements	The work Performance of employees with access to flexible work arrangements
Mean	4.3958	4.5729

Quantitative Findings

From the results of qualitative data, it seems that employees with access to flexible work arrangements have an overall higher wellbeing, job satisfaction and work performance compared to their colleagues who don't have access to flexible work arrangements. This is contradictory to what was found in the quantitative data analysis, which showed that there are no significant differences between the wellbeing, job satisfaction and performance of the two groups of employees.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, we attempted to explore many of the aspects of Flexible work arrangements, but we especially focused on the effects of FWAs on the well-being, job satisfaction and work performance of employees at Pastel agency services, Morocco. The results of the study turned out to be somewhat inconsistent. Indeed, the results of the quantitative data have shown that there was no significant difference between the level of wellbeing, job satisfaction and work performance of employees with access to FWAs and those without access to FWAs. However, the results of the qualitative data have shown the opposite and that there is in fact a difference between the two groups of employees. In other terms, qualitative data showed that FWAs positively affect those 3 aforementioned variables, whereas quantitative data showed no effect at all, neither positive nor negative. Because of

this inconsistency, no clearcut conclusion can be made as to the effect of FWAs on the wellbeing, job satisfaction and work performance of employees at Pastel agency services.

Limitations of the study

This research used a case study as a research design. Case studies tend to use few research participants, and the present study used only 36 research participants including 33 employees and 3 managers. Therefore, the main limitation of the study is the small number of data collected which might have contributed to the lack of consistency of the results.

Further suggestions

Since the research yielded inconsistent results, further and deeper research should be made in order to answer the question of whether flexible work arrangements have a positive effect on the wellbeing, job satisfaction and work performance of employees. Also, a purely quantitative research design might be a better alternative to this particular topic since it will have more research participants and hence more data.

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