
FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND PERCEIVED EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AT A MEDIA ORGANIZATION: AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY FROM NEPAL.

Rohit Kumar Shrestha (PhD)*; Basu Prasad Mainali; Bhakta Prasad Dhakal***;
Rajesh Kumar Poudel******

*Associate Professor of Management,
Padmakanya Multiple Campus,
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NEPAL
Email id: rohitshrestha92@gmail.com

**Lecturer of Management,
Padmakanya Multiple Campus,
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NEPAL

***Lecturer of Management,
Padmakanya Multiple Campus,
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NEPAL

****Lecturer of Management,
Nepal Commerce Campus,
Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NEPAL
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ABSTRACT

Flexible employment arrangements (FEAs) are an emerging issue in many countries. The main objective of this research is to analyze flexible employment arrangements on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd in Nepal. This study applied a descriptive research design. This study was performed through a quantitative and case study approach to examine the influence of FEAs on employee productivity. There was a total of 31 staff at the Media Network while collecting data. A Census study was conducted on the Media Network. Survey-based questionnaires were distributed to collect primary data. Likert Five-Point Scale was used to analyze perceptual data which was gathered from respondents. A great majority of employees are in favor of the positive influence of the policy of FEAs on employee productivity. Based on the perception of respondents of the Media Network, it was found that types of flexible employment arrangements namely job-sharing, telecommuting, compressed workweek, flextime, and part-time work influence a great deal on employee productivity. It can be concluded that FEAs have a strong influence on employee productivity. The practical implication of this study is that organizations should improve the application of FEAs to enhance employee productivity because it increases employee motivation and reduces absenteeism.

KEYWORDS: *Compressed Workweek, Flextime, Influence, Job-Sharing, Part-Time, Telecommuting, Nepal.*

INTRODUCTION

Employees want favorable and suitable situations for high productivity. The adoption of flexible employment arrangements (FEAs) is emerging issue in innovative human resource management (HRM). FEAs are necessary for a balance between employees' personal lives and workplace obligations. Achieving employee productivity is inevitable for every organization (Kipkoech, 2013). FEAs can use human resources more efficiently and effectively because it gives employees autonomy and the opportunity to allocate time according to their needs (Berkery et. al., 2017). Flexible employment arrangements are referred to as flexible working arrangements (FWAs). The FEAs/FWAs include Flexi time, compressed work week, telecommuting, and part-time work, which are the determinants to affect employee productivity. (Irawan & Sari, 2021). FEAs reduce the adverse impacts of employment-life imbalance and therefore support increasing employee job satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, and morale, customer service, and minimizing employee absenteeism (Hughes, 2007&Todd, 2004).Armstrong (2009) states that FEAs are a crucial component of employee motivation and competencies to enhance employee performance which leads to organizational performance. This is useful for workers, managers, and employers. As FEAs provide the employee the autonomy to change work responsibility, flexibility creates a balance between personal life and work life (McDaniel & Veledar, 2022). It supports a work-life balance, which improves life and job satisfaction which leads to contributing overall enhancement of employee productivity.

Radio is the most comfortable kind of mass media in Nepal. Radio broadcast in Nepal was begun by the state-owned Radio Nepal in Kathmandu in 1951. The restoration of democracy in 1990 paved the way for the entry of new private media sectors including Frequency Modulation (FM). Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd. has been running for 2006 in Nepal. Managers in Europe introduced FEAs to assess the relationship with performance (Ortega, 2009). Although FEAs are inexpensive and increase performance (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2006). However, this phenomenon is equally crucial and relevant. There is a dearth of research work in the Nepalese context. Given this context, this study aims to analyze the influence of FEAs and employee productivity in the media sector of Nepal.

Statement of the Problem

Human beings have to struggle to survive and develop due to innumerable wants but limited resources. Similarly, an organization also struggles to successfully retain valuable employees among others. Employees have to keep an imbalance between work, family, and other personal issues (Muhammadi et al., 2009) due to longer working hours (ILO, 2010) in the banking industry in Kenya, hence resulting in mental problems, work-life conflict, negative effect on performance which in the long run affects the performance of the organization. The degree of relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance and productivity remains unclear in public hospitals (Wang & Walumbwa, 2007). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is almost a lack of research studies on this phenomenon in the Media industry of Nepal. Nepalese organizations also are facing a dearth of articles on this topic. Therefore, there is a need to research on FEAs and employee productivity in the Media sector in Nepal. The main issue of this study is:

“What is the influence of flexible employment arrangement on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd in Nepal”.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the influence of flexible employment arrangements on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd in Nepal.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the influence of the policy on the matter relating to FEAs at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd.
2. Assess the influence of job sharing on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd.
3. Measure the influences of telecommuting on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd.
4. Analyze the influence of compressed hour week on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd.
5. Evaluate the influence of flextime on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd (BFM 91.2).
6. Determine the influence of part-time on employee productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd.

Significance of the Study

This study on “Flexible Employment Arrangements and Perceived Employee Productivity at Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd in Nepal” is of great significance in itself because this study fills the existing gap, to a great extent, by providing empirical evidence which extends existing conceptualization in this field. The findings of this study increase the understanding of flexible employment arrangements and how they lead to employee productivity in Nepalese private organizations. This research will suggest to the policymakers in these bodies how best to manage FEAs. In addition, the study will also assist academicians, researchers, and learners as a basis for further research on this phenomenon to build upon the study and make better contributions to the area in Nepal. Moreover, the results of the study will be of great importance to the organization concerned, managers, and employees on how FEAs can assist them in removing work-life imbalance.

Limitations of the Study

The study limited itself to only one Biratnagar-based media as a case study due to limited time constraints. Hence, this study cannot be generalized to other organizations.

Review of Literature

Productivity is the relationship or ratio between outputs and inputs over time. Employee productivity is defined as the relationship between homogenous physical output per unit and employee input. (Sharpe & Fard, 2022). Employee productivity is concerned with finishing a certain number of assigned works by the employees concerned at the stipulated time (Safitri & Yudistira, 2020). It is a state of being productive. Flexible working/employment arrangements are

the employees' freedom, discretion, and chances to choose work in various ways, being attractive, adaptable, and favorable for most employees. The most general flexible employment arrangements are flexible working locations and hours (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Thus, nowadays FEAs have been increasingly adopted by many organizations in many countries.

Traditional work system that specifies working hours per day cannot be favorable for urgent needs and occasions. Therefore, a work arrangement was applied that suits both the organization and employees, which has been called a flexible work arrangement. According to (Njiru et. al., 2015& Ifeoma, 2019), flexible employment arrangements include job-sharing-two employees sharing a full-time job, either 1-6 days each in a week or alternating a week; telecommuting also sometimes referred to as telework or flex place-autonomy to work from home or another place outside the office; compressed work week- a full-time worker could work four 10-hour days instead of five 8-hour days the opportunity such as to work five long days and take a sixth day of the week off; flexi-time- the autonomy to prefer starting and stopping time daily, possibility to vary employees' working hour ((McDaniel & Veleadar, 2022); part-time- the chance to perform the job a few days a week or fewer hours per day instead of working agreement (p. 102). In shift work, an employee performs the same jobs based on a rotation such as during morning, night, evening, or day shift (Lippe, 2020). In a job-sharing system, two or more employees work together and split the workload in a part-time and equitable way, so that each employee do an equal amount of task without being overburdened of the task, however, the employees fulfill their duties as a full-time employee (Shrestha, 2019). In certain situations, each of them may work separately.

Theoretical Review

This study can be linked to the work/family border theory found by Clark (2000). This theory explains how employees negotiate both the work responsibilities at the workplace, their family, and social concerns.

Another spillover theory developed by Piotrkowski in 1979 is concerned with work factors, family factors, and work-life balance.

Likewise, Vroom's Expectancy Theory supported by Nyberg (2010) explains that reduced employee turnover enhances employee performance hence determining employee performance.

Similarly, the Self-determination Theory propounded by Ryan & Deci in 2000 indicates employee motivation hence gaining better job satisfaction and employee productivity.

Empirical Reviews

A study by Muchiti & Gachunga (2015) concluded that flexible employment arrangements i. e., part-time, flex time, and timework have a high impact on employee productivity at the judiciary in Kenya.

A study by Wadhawan (2019) concluded that flexible employment arrangements have a significant impact on employee satisfaction which leads to employee productivity in the information technology sector. FEAs also affect the employee work-life balance that supports building loyalty to the institution, to fulfill their responsibilities and physical health.

A study by Mohammed & Bekele (2021) concluded that flextime schedules and compressed

workweeks have a positive significant effect on employee job satisfaction that leads to employee productivity of the ECA in Addis Ababa. However, telecommuting has an insignificant effect on job satisfaction. This means that telecommuting cannot lead to enhanced job satisfaction among employees.

A study by Deshwal (2016) showed that flexible employment/working arrangements have a significant positive influence on employee productivity and organizations in many ways such as in terms of meeting their family challenges, creating employer trustworthiness, retaining employees' longer tenure, and reducing tensions of employees.

A study by Irawan & Sari (2021) examined that flexible work arrangement does not have a significant impact on employee productivity.

A study by Giovanis (2018) analyzed a positive significant association between flexible employment arrangements and workplace performance.

A study by Ifeoma (2019) found that workers who are allowed to perform responsibilities flexibly often accomplish engagement, commitment, and mental and physical stability which lead to work efficiency and effectiveness. FEAs also help to manage personal life, home/family life, and workload.

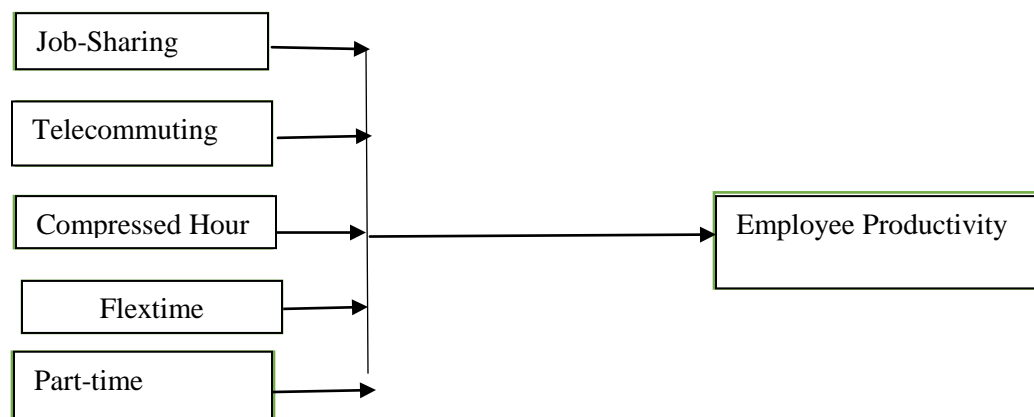
A study by Kipkoech (2013) revealed that work shift, part-time, and temporary contract positively and significantly influence performance while flexi-time positively and insignificantly influences performance in Kericho County referral hospital.

A study by Njiru et. al., (2015) found that telecommuting and flexi-time do not influence employee performance; compressed work influences performance to a very small extent, and job-sharing influences performance to a large extent.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the above-mentioned literature reviews the following conceptual framework has been depicted:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Research Gap

Little research study has been performed on this issue as a manner of enhancing productivity among organizations in Nepal. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, research work is scarce on this phenomenon in the media landscape in Nepal. In addition, research work has not been found by the researchers in private FM radio sectors. Therefore, this study fulfills this gap.

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a descriptive research design. This study was performed through a quantitative and case study approach to examine the influence of FEAs on employee productivity at the Birat Shree Media Network Pvt Ltd. There was a total of 31 employees at the Birat Shree Media Network Pvt Ltd. during the period of gathering data. A sample size of between 30 to 500 cases for quantitative research is appropriate (Roscoe, 1975). A census study was performed on the Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd. Survey-based questionnaires were distributed to collect primary data. Likert Five-Point Scale was used to analyze perceptual data gathered from respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes an analysis of data, reporting of findings, interpretation, discussion, and conclusion of the study.

RESULTS

Results include policies and types of FEAs' influence on the BFM.

TABLE 1: ANALYZING THE POLICIES OF THE FEAs' INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES)

S. N.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	The existence and application of rules and regulations of BFM of FEAs have positive effects on workers' productivity.	0	5.3	10.5	68.4	15.8
2	The media's policies for FEAs influence the loyalty and satisfaction of employees which significantly impacts employee productivity.	0	21.1	10.5	52.6	15.8
3	Policies on FEAs influence employee retention which reflects their productivity.	0	15.8	10.5	57.9	15.8

Note: The respondents were asked questions based on the Likert Five-Point Scale where 1= Strongly Disagreed; 2= Disagreed; 3= Neutral; 4= Agreed; and 5= Strongly Agreed.

Table 1 shows that 0% and 5.3% of employees strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the statement of No. 1 "The existence and application of rules and regulations of BFM of FEAs have positive effects on workers' productivity". 68.4% and 15.8% of employees are in favor of agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively even though 10.5 % of employees show the scenario of neither disagreeing nor agreeing with the same statement. All other remaining statements i. e., No. 1 and 2 also show the proportion of agreement more than that of disagreement.

TABLE 2: ANALYZING THE TYPES OF FEAs' INFLUENCE ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY**(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES)**

S. N.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Applying job-sharing as a flexible employment arrangement influences employee productivity significantly and positively.	0	5.2	21.1	68.4	5.3
2	Working from home or other places with the help of information and communication technology influences employee productivity significantly and positively.	0	10.4	21.1	63.2	5.3
3	Performance of overtime work during the week and saving an extra day as a holiday improve employee productivity significantly and positively.	0	10.5	21.1	57.9	10.5
4	An employee's autonomy to select the start and finish of working hours influences their productivity significantly and positively.	0	5.3	10.5	68.4	15.8
5	I would feel more satisfied doing part-time work which supports enhanced productivity	0	15.8	26.3	57.9	0

Note: The respondents were asked questions based on the Likert Five-Point Scale where 1= Strongly Disagreed; 2= Disagreed; 3= Neutral; 4= Agreed; and 5= Strongly Agreed.

Table 2 shows that 0% and 5.2% of employees strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the statement “applying job-sharing as a flexible employment arrangement influences employee productivity significantly and positively”. 68.4% and 5.3% of employees are in favor of agreeing and strongly agree respectively even though 21.1 % of employees show the scenario of neither disagree nor agree with the same. All other remaining statements also show the proportion of agreement more than that of disagreement.

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that the great majority of employees are in favor of statement No. 1 with “the existence and application of rules and regulations of BFM of FEAs have positive effects on workers' productivity”. Thus, the policy of the BFM is positive towards FEAs to enhance employee productivity. The statement No. 2 and 3 are also the same as No. 1, which enhance employee productivity.

Table 2 shows that 68.4 percent of employees agreed with the statement “Applying job-sharing as a flexible work arrangement affects workers' productivity significantly and positively” and 5.3 percent of employees strongly agreed with the same. On another hand, 5.2 percent of employees disagreed with the statement and none of the employees strongly disagreed. Moreover, the proportion of agreement with this statement is more than that of disagreement with the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that job-sharing influences employee productivity with the statement on the average even though 21.1 percent are showing neutral productivity towards the statement. Similarly, table 2 also shows that 63.4 percent of employees agreed with the statement

“Working from home or other places with the help of information and communication technology influences employee productivity significantly and positively and 5.3 percent of employees strongly agreed with the same. On another hand, 10.4 percent of employees disagreed with the statement and none of the employees strongly disagreed. Moreover, the proportion of agreement with this statement is more than that of disagreement with the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that telecommuting influences employee productivity with the statement on the average even though 21.1 percent are showing neutral productivity towards the statement.

Likewise, table 2 also shows that 57.9 percent of employees agreed with the statement “Performance of overtime work during the week and saving an extra day as a holiday improve employee productivity significantly and positively” and 10.5 percent of employees strongly agreed with the same. On another hand, 10.5 percent of employees disagreed with the statement and none of the employees strongly disagreed. Moreover, the proportion of agreement with this statement is more than that of disagreement with the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that a compressed workweek influences employee productivity with the statement on the average even though 21.1 percent are showing neutral productivity towards the statement. Accordingly, table 2 shows that 68.4 percent of employees agreed with the statement “An employee’s autonomy to select the start and finish of working hours influences their productivity significantly and positively” and 15.8 percent of employees strongly agreed with the same. On another hand, 5.3 percent of employees disagreed with the statement and none of the employees strongly disagreed. Moreover, the proportion of agreement with this statement is more than that of disagreement with the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that flextime influences employee productivity with the statement on average even though 10.5 percent are showing neutral productivity towards the statement.

In the same way, table 2 shows that 57.9 percent of employees agreed with the statement “I would feel more satisfied doing part-time work which supports to enhance productivity” and none of the employees strongly agreed with the same. On another hand, 15.8 percent of employees disagreed with the statement and none of the employees strongly disagreed. Moreover, the proportion of agreement with this statement is more than that of disagreement with the same. Therefore, it can be concluded that part-time work influences employee productivity with the statement on average although 26.3 percent are showing neutral productivity towards the statement. No respondents were in favor of the option to strongly disagree with all of the statements of the Likert Five-Point Scale in both the table 1 and 2. On the other hand, a great majority of respondents were in favor of the agreed option in the scale. This study supports the studies of Muchiti & Gachunga (2015), Wadhawan (2019), Deshwal (2016), Giovanis (2018), and Ifeoma (2019). Similarly, this study partially is in line with the studies of Kipkoech (2013), Mohammed & Bekele (2021), and Njiru et. al., (2015). This study contradicts the study of Irawan & Sari (2021).

CONCLUSION

Flexible employment arrangements are a challenging and emerging issue in Nepal. The main objective of the research work is to analyze policy-related matters and the influence of dimensions of flexible employment arrangements on employee productivity at Biratnagar-based Birat Shree Media Network Pvt. Ltd. The great majority of employees are in favor of the positive influence of the policy of FEAs on employee productivity. Based on the perception of respondents of the Media Network. It can be concluded that types of flexible employment arrangements namely job-

sharing, telecommuting, compressed workweek, flextime, and part-time work influence employee productivity because the proportion of agreement with all of the statements in the Likert Five-Point Scale is more than that of disagreement of the same.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Organizations should improve the application of FEAs to enhance employee productivity because it increases employee motivation and reduces absenteeism. This grants employees to perform their duties in their preferred and favorable location and hour hence improving the productivity of employees.

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