

**FLEXIBLE WORK PLANS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE
MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR IN UGANDA.**

BY

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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DECLARATION

I, GRACE ELYANU, declare that this report is my own original work and has never been submitted for the award of a Degree in any University/College/Institution in and outside Uganda.

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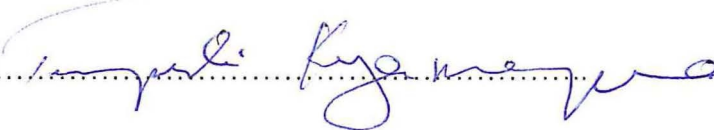
Approval

This is to certify that this research project has been under our supervision and is now ready for submission for examination.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my dear parents; Mr. & Mrs. Daphine Elyanu, my dear husband - Mr. Edward N. O'du'boa and my beloved children; Daphine Tricia, Esther Divine, Daniella Grace and Blessed Edna who fully sacrificed all I needed to succeed.

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This acknowledgement is not just a design but rather, a fair way for me to express my deep and sincere appreciations to whoever lent hand in the successful completion of this research work.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between flexible work schedules and employee performance in the mobile telecommunications sector in Uganda taking MTN and AFRICELL as case studies. The research specifically explored the effect of flexitime, job sharing, part-timing on employee work performance.

The objectives of the study stated:

Examined the influence of flexible work plans on employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL; Assessed the influence of job sharing on employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL; Explored how part-timing influenced employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL;

The findings have revealed that mobile telephone companies implement flexible work plans to a small extent. They do have formal policies on flexible working. Companies adopt some few aspects of flexible working just to motivate their employees to increase work performance. They allow employees to leave work early to take care of urgent personal obligations and place emphasis on employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule. Findings also revealed that organisations did not have mechanisms for supervising it.

On the basis of the findings, it was recommended that Management of MTN and AFRICELL institute flexitime on trial for about six months to evaluate their effect on employee performance. This will enable them to accurately appreciate their importance. The Ministry of Labour should write policies on flexible working.

Also employees should be involved when packaging the flexible work schedules so as to promote ownership of such plans by the concerned workers as well.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Given the fact that mobile telecommunication companies provide twenty four hour services, they have very demanding work schedules that can at times allow flexibility. In this study, flexible work plans is the independent variable while employee performance is the dependent variable. This study therefore seeks to examine the relationship between flexible work plans and employee performance in the mobile telecommunications sector in Uganda. Specially, this chapter presents the historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual backgrounds; the statement of the problem; the purpose of the study; research objectives; research questions; study scope; significance of the study; justification and the conceptual frame work.

1.1.0 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Historical Background

Practice in business and economic activities has been constantly changing so as to meet the needs and demands of consumers. Clients' satisfaction through quality service delivery is constantly forcing service organisations to reform and undertake all aspects of their operations. In order to ensure that they keep up with market demands to compete both in a local and global environment, business undertakings have had to change especially their management practices to improve work performance (Batt, & Valcour, 2003). An area that has been a target for frantic changes is the human resource. Businesses are adopting various human resource management practices in order to get the best out of their employees so as to have a competitive edge.

A popular human resource practice currently being adopted by business organisations is flexible work plans. The current practices in the use of flexible work schedules started with the Internet software development companies of yahoo and google (McIvor, 2005). These companies recruited innovative and skilled workers and allowed them to have variable work schedules such as flextime, telecommuting and job sharing (Altman & Golden, 2007). They promoted the thinking that companies need to hold employees accountable for results not face time. Yahoo and Google developed a brand of management that required managing of the actual work and whether it's getting done. Studies indicate that these two companies have climbed to the top of Internet software development in the world because of flexible work schedules (Kelly & Kalev, 2006; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). In the developed countries of Europe and Asia, flexible work schedules are some of the strategies being used to increase the efficiency and productivity of employees in the work places (Corbett, 2004).

1.1.2 Theoretical Background

Several theories exist that explain, and predict the underlying phenomena of various concepts. This particular study was based on two theories.

The first theory to underpin the study regarding flexible work plans and employee performance is the Psychological Job Control Theory which was advanced by Karasek & Theorell (2004). This theory emphasises the fact that flexible working gives employees the feeling of control on their job and life as well (Gronlund, 2007). Feelings of control significantly contribute to employee work performance. Deci and Ryan (2003) say that increased work performance results from a reduction of work-family conflict as well as stress. Reduced conflict and stress increase job performance.

The second theory is the expectancy theory which was propounded by Vroom (in Armstrong, 2012). The theory explains that individuals exert effort to perform for valued goals they think they can achieve (Vroom, in Armstrong 2012). The theory also shows that, perception of effort to perform among employees is increased by flexible work schedules. Lambert (2000) argues that workers who are able to access and use flexible work schedule supports their value, are more likely to have higher effort–performance linkages; because they are more likely to believe they can perform both work and family roles well.

1.1.3 Conceptual Background

The key concepts of this study were flexible work plans and employee performance. Flexible work plans are variations in the timing and duration of work hours, and the location of work. The increasing proliferation of flexible and more varied work schedules is now a global employment phenomenon. According to Askenazy (2004), flexible work plans also known as flexible work schedules are work time arrangements that vary from the standard work schedules of an organization. Examples of flexible work schedules are flextime, telework and compressed work days or weeks. These plans are designed to meet the needs of both the employer and the employee. They are based on worker needs within set parameters approved by a given organisation supervisor.

Fischer (2006) defines employee performance in service organizations as the extent to which an employee uses company resources in a most productive and efficient manner for the customer. McIvor (2005), argues that employee performance should focus on good service delivery and meeting customers’ needs and their satisfaction in order to keep them willing to pay for such services.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

Mobile telecommunication companies are service organisations which offer many services to customers at any location and whenever they need them (Wolf & Beblo, 2004). In Uganda, Mobile telecommunication companies offer not only communication services but also social networking, banking and money transfer and social-networking. The efficiency of mobile telecommunications services is significantly determined by the performance of their employees.

Given the fact that employees are the greatest asset of any business concern, it is clearly evident now that business organisations with best human resource will succeed. Motivated by the increasingly intensified competition in the emerging global economy, Mobile telecommunications companies are rapidly adopting human resource management practices that have been used in other corporate organisations in order to increase workers' productivity and competitiveness.

In the 1990's Mobile telecommunication companies operated traditional work arrangements where employees were required to work from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. every day of the week (Kelly & Moen, 2007). The sector dismissed flexible work because of the dictate that employees need to be available for the customer. The perception that employees are paid to be physically present was strongly entrenched in these organisations. Currently, flextime policies that allow mobile telecommunication staff to determine when, where and how they will work are being implemented in the mobile telecommunications sector across the world because of their realized contribution to employee performance (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). The advantages that come from this practice such as increased employee morale, engagement, and commitment to the

organization have motivated telecommunication companies to adopt this human resource management practice.

In Uganda, flexibility in work is still in its infancy. It started mainly with mobile telephone companies, but it is steadily being adopted by corporate organisations. Unfortunately studies from other countries especially in the West report mixed results about the efficacy flexible work schedules in improving employee work performance (Click & Duening, 2005). As indicted by Kelly and Kalev, (2006) flexible work schedules require managers to manage the actual work and whether it's getting done instead of managing people and how they do work. This could require telecommunications companies to change their management styles. Given the fact that flexible work schedules is a new practice among organisations in Uganda, there is need for empirical data to establish how it is being done, the challenges faced so far, how they are coping with the challenges, so as to strengthen this modern human resource management practice, especially in the mobile telecommunications sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In order to retain employees, enhance their performance and service delivery in the Uganda mobile telecommunications sector, companies have been embracing flexible working schedules (Sanya, 2014). Despite the increased use of flexible work plans in telecommunications industry in the country, a telecommunication combined 2015 report indicates employee performance related issues such as lack of innovation, slow task accomplishment, and reduced job satisfaction in the mobile telecommunications, due to very tight work schedules that leave no room for workers to cater for their personal problems (Willem de Beer, 2015). However, there is no reviewed study that has come up to explain the relationship between flexible work plans in the telecommunications sector and employee performance in Uganda thus the need for this study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore the relationship between flexible work schedules and employee performance in the mobile telecommunications sector in Uganda taking MTN and AFRICELL.

1.4 Specific Objectives

Specifically the study;

1. Examined the influence of flexitime working on employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL.
2. Assessed the influence of job sharing on employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL.
3. Explored how part-timing influences employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL.

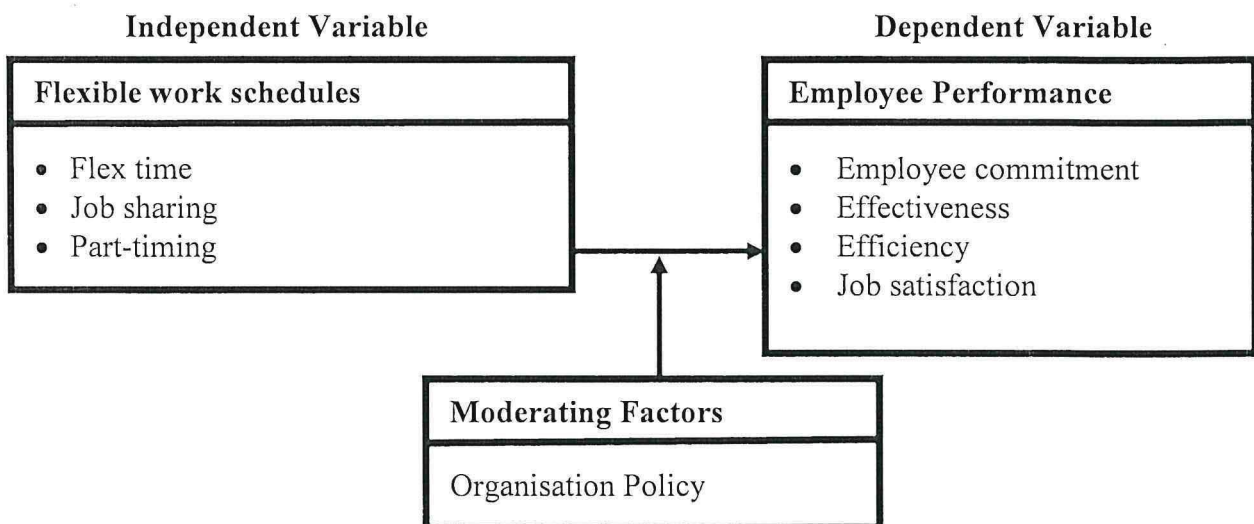
1.5 Research Questions

1. In which way does flexible work plans affect employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL?
2. What is the influence of job sharing on employee performance MTN and AFRICELL?
3. How does part-timing influence employee performance in MTN and AFRICELL?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below is a graphical representation of the variables of study and how they related to each other. The independent variable was flexible work schedules while the dependent variable was employee performance. The moderating variable was organisation policy.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework



Adapted from Altman and Golden (2007) and Batt and Valcour (2003) and modified by the researcher.

As indicated in the conceptual frame work, flexible work schedules can be undertaken by a telecommunications companies when they allow employees to do job sharing, flexitime work or part-time work (Altman and Golden, 2007). According to Batt, and Valcour, (2003) given supportive organisational policy and work environment, flexible work schedules increase employees' job satisfaction and commitment, which lead to effective and efficient task accomplishment. This subsequently leads to good organisational performance.

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study examined the relationship between the human resource management practice of flexible work schedules in the mobile telecommunication sector in Uganda (MTN and AFRICELL) and employee performance.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted at MTN and AFRICELL companies which are located in Bugolobi Kampala District in Uganda.

1.7.3 Time Scope

The study was confined to the period between January 2015 to September 2015. This is the period when flexible working becomes a relevant phenomenon in telecommunications companies. Therefore, there was need to assess the relationship between such plans and employee performance in the telecommunication industry in Uganda.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Ministry of Trade and Industry

The findings may be helpful to both government and private sector policy makers in the designing of policies and strategies that enhance employee performance.

Workers Union

The findings might be used by institutions that protect the rights of employees such as the Workers Union for purposes of monitoring the quality of working conditions and employee rights in mobile telecommunications companies.

Managers at MTN and AFRICELL

Findings of the study may assist those in charge of managing others and work processes to either adopt better flexible work plans or strengthen the existing ones in order to enhance employee performance.

1.9 Justification of the Study

This study was necessary because much as studies from other parts of the world had revealed that flexible work schedules are a popular human resource management strategy in business organisations, there was scanty information about the types of the flexible work arrangements that are ideal for the Ugandan setting. In addition, it was necessary to establish the contribution of such plans to employee performance in telecommunication companies in Uganda. This study therefore was needed to generate empirical data that would be used to enable telecommunications companies in Uganda to adopt and effectively implement flexible work schedules that are appropriate to their industry.

MTN and Africell telecommunication companies were good case studies on flexible work plans and employee performance in Uganda. These two companies clearly indicate in their job adverts that they operate in a flexible work environment. So it was fitting to study variables in an environment where they exist. Also the two companies are among the largest in Uganda and each has an aspects in which it outshines other companies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature on flexible work schedules and employee performance, the relationship between these two variables and the challenges that are likely to be met by organisations in implementing flexible work schedules. The review highlights gaps identified in literature in relation to the study objectives. First, a review of the theories on which the study was based is done.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section makes a critical review of the major theoretical contributions which guided the study. The study was based on employee performance principles from the Psychological Job Control and Expectancy Theory.

2.2.1 Psychological Job Control Theory

This theory highlights the importance of employees having high perceptions of job control and organisational support for individual well-being (Karasek & Theorell, 2004). Karasek and Theorell (2004) argue that perceptions of job control over work hours and perceived job autonomy are key factors in enhancing employee performance. Deci and Ryan (2003) define Job Control as the decision latitude employees have over their job tasks. According to Karasek and Theorell (2004), a job with high demands and low control will lead to stress; however, if an individual in the same high demand job perceives high control, he/she will experience lower strain (Gronlund, 2007). Flexible work enables greater control by providing tangible and psychological resources to enhance well-being. When an employee has control over when and where to work and in addition has control over how work is done, this decreases work-family conflict and

lowers stress which subsequently leads to better job performance (Greenhaus, & Powell, 2006). For example, employee use of flextime and compressed work weeks allow workers to have increased control in order to be able to integrate personal role demands with work role demands. An employee can restructure work hours at each end of the day to deal with none work demands, such as the need to attend a school conference, get a car fixed, or go to the doctor without having to miss an entire day of work. Absenteeism is lowered due to this ability to cluster personal appointments during employee-controlled nonworking time.

2.2.2 Expectancy Theory

This is a Motivation and Work-Family theory that was postulated by Vroom in Armstrong (2012). The expectancy theory holds that individuals are more likely to be motivated to exert effort to perform for valued goals they think they can achieve Vroom, in Armstrong (2006). Under a motivation theoretical perspective, employees on flexible work schedules are more likely to exhibit higher performance because they would have greater resources (e.g., more time, more support), which would enable them to perceive greater expectancy that they can perform both work and family roles well (Kossek & Misra, 2008). The theory highlights a very important fact in employee performance that, perceptions of effort to perform are increased because of use of flexible work schedules. This increases their expectancy to stay in the labour force because of the increased access and use to flexible work schedules (Kelly & Moen, 2007). Workers who are able to access and use flexible work schedule support the value, therefore, are more likely to have higher effort –performance linkages because they will be more likely to believe they can perform both work and family roles well. Research does indeed show that individuals may engage in higher extra-role performance when flexibility is available.

Lambert (2000) found that employees with access to work-family benefits were more likely to exhibit higher job commitment behaviours.

The study seeks to assess whether the two theories hold for the telecommunication sector in Uganda.

2.3 Types of Flexible Work Schedules

Current descriptions of flexible work schedules all build on the concept of employee scheduling discretion, thus enabling employees to have some choice to determine how long, when, or where they are engaged in work for various time periods (e.g., days, weeks, or seasons). A flexible work schedule allows employee flexibility in one or more of the design criteria: *when*, *where*, *how much*, or the *continuity* of work. This discretion affects how an individual experiences his/her working time in relation to nonworking time, such as time spent on leisure and domestic activities from care giving to household labour to relaxation (Fagan, 2001). Common work schedules include flextime, job-sharing, part-timing, and telecommuting.

2.3.1 Flexi-time working is a work arrangement that allows an employee to decide core hours when he must be present on job. This work schedule permits employees to choose their starting and quitting times within limits set by management (Batt & Valcour, 2003).

2.3.2 Kelly and Kalev, (2006) say that Job Sharing is a form of regular work arrangement in which two people share the responsibilities of one regular, full-time position. They share a position, each working part of the week. These positions are regular part-time and therefore involve at least a 50% commitment. For example two individuals typically work 20 hours a week sharing the compensation, benefits, and position requirements and responsibilities. Often employees work an equal number of hours. This can mean splitting the week to 2.5 days each or splitting the day. Some

employees work alternate weeks. Some split the hours (e.g. one person works 2 days and the other 3 days). The job can also be divided into working models. A twin model is where two employees share one position and all tasks but work on different days. In an island model, employees share one position but take on different aspects of the job. This work schedule is beneficial to employees because they have the advantages of part-time work in a position that requires full-time work. This study sought to establish whether job sharing is related to employee performance at MTN and AFRICELL in Uganda.

2.3.3 Part-time working is when an employee works for only specified number of hours or days in a pre-set period (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). Part timing work can be regular, occasional or voluntary. Regular part-timing involves an employee working for a specified number of hours or days on regular basis. Occasional part-timing is when an employee works only when a job opportunity arises. Voluntary part-time sometimes called Voluntary reduced time (V-time), allow employees voluntarily to reduce their hours of work with a corresponding reduction in salary for a predetermined period of time. It was imperative to establish whether part time arrangements enhance employee performance in telecommunication companies in Uganda.

2.3.4 ROWE which is Result Oriented Work Environment is the newest flexible working schedule. According to Kelly and Moen (2007), in this arrangement, managers do not count their employees work hours or even require that they maintain a traditional work schedule (Possenriede, 2011). Emphasis is placed on employees meeting performance and work productivity standards. Factors such as the labour market, cost, environmental and technological forces are driving flexible work schedule growth, making them vital for employer adoption. However, Richman *et al*, 2008) say that the most important of all is employee performance enhancement.

2.4 Employee Performance

Employee performance is something a single person does for the institution (Shockley & Allen, 2007). This definition differentiates it from more encompassing constructs such as organizational performance. This understanding also differentiates performance from outcomes. Outcomes are the result of an individual's performance, but they are also the result of other influences. In other words, there are more factors that determine outcomes than just an employee's behaviours and actions. Armstrong (2000) indicates that employee performance goes hand in hand with performance management. Performance management is the systematic process of planning work, setting expectations, monitoring performance and developing the capacity of employees to perform. Performance management develops staff and helps them to achieve their objectives and is therefore a strong driving force for the enhancement of their performance, (Parker & Allen, 2001). Performance management is done through performance planning, monitoring and measurement.

Employee performance is established by evaluating the employee against the elements and standards in an employee's performance plan and assigning a summary rating of record. This activity is mostly done by the manager or immediate supervisor. However, a new trend of allowing employees evaluate their own performance has emerged. Employees indicate the extent to which they have exhibited specific work related behaviours on key performance indicators (Baskal, 2010). Organisations now combine results from the managers rating and those from personal ratings to come up with an overall score on a person's performance rating is based on work performed during an entire appraisal period (Performance Management and Incentives Awards Division, 2001).

2.5 Flexible Work Schedules and Employee Performance

2.5.1 Flexitime Working on Employee Performance

Batt, and Valcour (2003) define flexitime as a work scheduling arrangement that permits a variation from the employee's core hours in starting and departure times, but does not alter the total number of hours worked in a week. This can be implemented when an organisation allows employees to leave work early for family obligations and arrive later so that less time is spent commuting during peak hours. This work plan allows employees to retain full pay and benefits while they also meet their needs. Flexitime working has been discovered to significantly increase the positive work-life balance an aspect that enhances the performance of an employee. Aiming for a greater balance between demands from within and outside the workplace is often the driver for individuals to seek such arrangements (Altman and Golden, 2007). The interplay between employee wellbeing, work-life balance and performance brings into play factors such as organizational commitment, enthusiasm, energy and satisfaction. This implies that an employee who is better able to integrate work and non-work will experience enhanced wellbeing. Indirectly, this positive association impacts on individual and subsequently organizational performance (Batt, and Valcour, 2003).

It has also been realized that employees benefiting from flexible work normally want to 'repay' their organisation by exhibiting improved levels of motivation and drive (Possenriede, 2011). Flexible working also enables Individuals to adapt their working arrangement over time to meet both changing job demands and evolving demands from the home. This increases personal control to meet needs from both domains. Therefore, flexible working is a positive measure for reducing workplace stress through reducing hours, cutting down on commuting time and minimizing work overload.

Another study by Bond, and Galinsky (2006) revealed that Flextime work schedules had positive effects on employee productivity, job satisfaction and employee absenteeism in health care services. Flextime work schedules were positively related to employee engagement even when there was high patient case load. In a study by Burke (2009), it was found that flextime working was highly associated with job satisfaction. Employees who perceived having more flexibility on the job reported better sleep, more exercise, and a healthier lifestyle in general than those employees who did not perceive the availability of flexibility. This increased their overall performance level. This is because employees felt empowered to structure their work and personal lives according to their needs. In fact, when asked whether they would rather have a flexible work environment or a salary increase, employees in this study overwhelmingly chooses flexible work. The challenge with this work plan is difficulty in providing supervision and keeping track of hours.

2.5.2 Job Sharing and Employee Performance

Kelly and Kalev, (2006) say that job sharing is a form of regular work arrangement in which two people share the responsibilities of one regular, fulltime position. They share a position, each working part of the week. These positions are regular part-time and therefore involve at least a 50% commitment. For example two individuals typically work 20 hours a week sharing the compensation, benefits, and position requirements and responsibilities. Often employees work an equal number of hours. This can mean splitting the week to 2.5 days each or splitting the day. Some employees work alternate weeks. Some split the hours (e.g. one person works 2 days and the other 3 days). The job can also be divided into working models. A twin model is where two employees share one position and all tasks but work on different days. In an island model, employees share one position but take on different aspects of the job. This work schedule is

beneficial to employees because they have the advantages of part-time work in a position that requires full-time work.

Studies indicate that job sharing increases employee morale, engagement, and commitment to the organization. A study by Pruchno, Litchfield and Fried (2000) found significant positive relationships when comparing those who were in a job sharing schedule with other employees. Employees in job sharing were found to have higher levels of organizational commitment, and in some cases they also had higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, the availability of flexible working was a key competitive strategy within the labour market.

Burke (2009) points out a significant challenge of this work schedule that of employees or organisations finding compatible partners and dividing the work equally to achieve balance. Stavrou (2005), points out the challenges of making effective Job sharing plans that address division of responsibilities between partners and hours of work. He also highlights the problem of synchronising pay and benefits. In the case of flextime plans, a challenge of office coverage is brought out by Askenazy (2004). He also says that it is difficult to track the hours worked.

2.5.3 Part-time Working and Employee Performance

Corbett (2004) defines part-time work as an option that allows an employee to work for a specified number of hours or days per week, and for a pre-set, limited duration. A study by Beauregard and Henry (2009) showed that part-time working reduced absenteeism, tardiness and increased ability to recruit outstanding employees. It reduced turnover of valued staff. Part-time working allows employees to work when they accomplish most, feel freshest, and enjoy working; they are more effective which

increases the quality of the work (Wolf, & Beblo, 2004). Part-timing also enables the organisation to have extended hours of operation for departments such as customer service (Possenriede, 2011). This develops an image of an organisation that puts customer service above everything else.

Part-timing Policies enable an organisation to hire talented workers from across the world (Stavrou, 2005). This increases the chances of finding talent that fits best with the organisation, regardless of location. Finding talent that otherwise is closed off to traditional 9-5 office jobs such as stay-at-home parents, retired professionals, and professionals with disabilities are all brought into the workforce through this flexible work options. This enables better Service delivery and faster growth of the organisation. Being able to hire salespeople in different geographic locations is one reason (Wolf & Beblo, 2004).

This work schedule has management related challenges. A study by Pruchno, Litchfield and Fried (2000), discovered that organizations faced a challenge of blending employees' schedule requests with organizational work demands. In some cases managers were given extra tasks of managing part-time work schedules which reduced their efficiency (Shepard & Clifton, 2000). This was because creating numerous schedules for part-time working was time-consuming and it diverted the managers' attention from other responsibilities. Also ensuring fair and equitable practices such as; maintaining customer loyalty as customers interact with different employees every time they come was a challenge. Stavrou, (2010), also noted that flexible work success requires an extra layer of collaboration, coordination and communication between employees and the organisation which is in most cases lacking when employees do part-time work. Part-time working has been noted to affect salary and benefits. The career advancement of an employee within the organisation may also be affected.

2.6 Organisational Policy, Flexible Working and Employee Performance

Possenriede (2011) observed that the effective management of work schedules depends on organizational policy. This implies that organisational policies moderate the effect of flexible working on employee performance. Working conditions enshrined in the policies of organization determine how performance enhancement strategies such as flexible working will be implemented (Henry, 2009). Commitment or having a committed and engaged workforce however requires being honest about the time and resources one invests in managing a complex mix of factors, including: - flexibility, autonomy and employee voice. The commitment employees attach to their work is a result of a series of personnel management policies and actions in addition to flexible work plans. This includes the personal relations established between senior management and individual staff members, compensation, working conditions, rewards, and recognition for good work (Kelly & Kalev, 2006). The effectiveness of even highly skilled employees will be limited if they are not motivated to perform, however, HRM practices can affect employee motivation by encouraging them to work both harder and smarter. It is further argued that employee-friendly working time arrangements help to improve employees' work-life balance, thus contributing to the retention of employees (Baskal, 2010). Conversely, ignoring this issue may lead to a situation in which employees act contrary to the organization's interests, through increased absenteeism, lateness, reduced focus on the job tasks, attention being diverted to personal matters, and ultimately searching for alternative jobs and resigning.

2.7 Literature Summary and Gaps

Flexible work arrangements can be a good strategy for improving employee performance and productivity in service organizations. Aiming for a greater balance between demands from within and outside the workplace can be a driver for employees

to have more job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and increased creativity. This increases the overall performance level of an employee. However, flexible work schedules could also be a source of stress, if a reduction in hours means that employees struggle to achieve objectives which had not been appropriately reduced to match such a change. This implies that flexible working needs should be well designed to succeed, particularly where the required tasks of the role should reflect the hours available.

However it was clear how telecommunications companies in Uganda, manage the challenges of division of responsibilities between partners, sharing hours of work for each partner as well as pay and benefits. Information was also needed on how office coverage is maintained and work hours are tracked by organisations. This scenario necessitated an empirical study on these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the techniques that were used to collect and analyse data. It describes the study design, sample and techniques used, instruments used for collecting data, data analysis techniques and ethical issues.

3.2 Study Design

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey study design. The design was used to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate as possible (Amin 2005). This is the most commonly used approach in social research and it allows collection of data once in the field from a sample of population at a particular point in time (Amin 2005). This type of design also aims at complete inventory and so provides a complete enumeration of the services provided. In this study the sample population was taken from MTN Uganda and AFRICELL Uganda and both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to enable triangulation of findings.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted at MTN and AFRICELL Uganda. MTN and AFRICELL Uganda were selected because they are the largest and fastest growing mobile telecommunication companies in Uganda. MTN Uganda is a subsidiary of MTN Group, a South Africa-based multinational mobile telecommunications company, operating in many African, European and Middle Eastern countries. Its head office is in Johannesburg. The company is the world's 15th-largest mobile telecommunication company measured by subscribers as of 31 March 2014 (Willem de Beer, 2015). In Uganda the company has an edge over her closest competitors AIRTEL and AFRICELL

in the mobile money business. In her job adverts, MTN portrays itself as a good employer with flexible working conditions (www.MTN Uganda, 2015)

AFRICELL is one of the fastest growing mobile telecommunications operators in Africa. AFRICELL is at the forefront of the mobile expansion in Africa and is aiming to become one of the leading telecom players in the continent. With plans to obtain a 20% market share in Uganda in the next four to five years, the Lebanon-based telecommunication company is lining up a \$150 million investment over the next three years to improve the network operations of its newly acquired unit. By upgrading its network, the company plans to boost its data business where it already has an edge over MTN and AIRTEL visit (<http://www.AFRICELL.com>, June, 2015). AFRICELL took over orange Uganda in November 2014 (<http://www.itnewsafrika.com>, June, 2015). As Orange Uganda, the company was awarded the Top Employers Africa 2015 and Top Employers Uganda 2015 certification. This was due to the fact that the company provides exceptional employee conditions and implements human resource practices that optimise its employment practices develop its employees (Ziad Dallouid, 2015). There, these two telecommunication companies were therefore good case studies on flexible work plans and employee performance in Uganda.

3.4 Study Population

The study population included managers and employees of MTN and AFRICELL working in the service centres located in Kampala. MTN and Africell employee records (2014) indicated that Africell has 34 employees and MTN 56 working in the Kampala area service centres. This brought the study population 90 respondents. Service centre managers were included because they organise and supervise Flexible work schedules. Other employees were selected because they were the target of the schedules.

3.5 Sample Size and Selection

Krejcie & Morgan (1970), sample size determination table was used to determine the study sample. For a population of 90 subjects, a sample of 73 respondents is recommended. The target sample was therefore 73 respondents. Following Trochim, (2006), recommendation, 15% of the sample were targeted as key informants($s=12$) and 75% and main respondents($s=61$). The actual total sample had 64 respondents. Eight (8) were key informants and 56 were employees. Simple stratified random sampling was used to select employees. This method was used in order to give more respondents in the population a chance of being part of the sample. This technique also increases representativeness that enables collection of a cross section of data. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants. This sampling method was preferred for this sub sample because the researcher wanted to collect in-depth responses from respondent who are well informed about the research problem. Key informants consisted of managers, assistant managers and heads of sections of services centres. The rest of the staff were in the category of employees. A summary of the study sample is given in the table below.

Table 3.1: Summary of Category of Respondents

Category	Target sample	Actual Sample	Sampling technique	Data
1. Managers	12	8	Purposive	Qualitative
2. Employees	61	56	Stratified random	Quantitative
Total	73	64		

As indicated in the table 3.1, the actual sample was 64 respondents. This sample included 8 key informants who were purposively selected from Managers, Assistant Managers and Heads of sections and 56 employees.

3.6 Study Variables

Flexible work schedules were the independent variable while employee performance was the dependent variable. Flexible work schedules were operationalised as the company allowing employees to share their jobs, do part-timework, telecommute or do flexitime work. Employee performance was looked at as the extent to which an employee displays effectiveness, efficiency, job commitment and job satisfaction.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used a structured and self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide to collect data.

3.7.1 Structured Questionnaire for Employees

A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from employees. The questionnaire had structured items. Structured questions were used because they allow collection of specific data. Using questionnaires also allows the respondents some time to reflect on answers to avoid hasty responses (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2005).

Section A of the questionnaire measured the demographic variables of respondents. The demographic variables that were measured included; employee category, gender, age, level of education and period of service. Section B measured the independent variable, flexible work schedules, while Section C measured performance of employees. Section D measured the moderating variable organisational policy. New scales were constructed for these items following Saunders *et al*; (2003) steps. This was done, because no scale

is available on Flexible work schedules and employee performance in mobile telecommunications companies in Uganda. For all items in sections B up to E respondents responded on a five-point scale for which 1 represented “completely disagree” to 5 “completely agree”.

3.7.2 Interview Guide for Managers and superiors of Service centres

An Interview Guide was used to collect in-depth information (qualitative data) from key informants, who were managers and supervisors in the service centres that were sampled. Interviews were used because the study targeted respondents’ real opinions on the research problem. The interview questions focused on the major themes of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

3.8 Research Procedure

The researcher first constructed the instruments and gave them to the supervisors for approval. The supervisors ascertained the face validity and clarity of the instrument. Changes were made as recommended by the supervisor. After the approval, the researcher went to the field. Using the authority letter from the university, the researcher introduced herself to managers of service centres. She explained the purpose of the research and its benefits. The researcher assured respondents of confidentiality in relation to the information they provided. She then collected data.

3.9 Data Management and Quality Control

The researcher constructed the instruments and gave them to the supervisors to ascertain the face validity and clarity of the instruments. A pilot study was done to test the validity and reliability of the instruments.

3.9.1 Validity

According to Arya et al. (2002), validity refers to the degree to which results obtained from analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study. Only face and content validity were ascertained. With regard to content validity of the instruments, the supervisors evaluated the two instruments for their content validity. As recommended by Amin (2005), items that were found to be ambiguous and those judged to be inappropriate were either eliminated or adjusted. In the content validity test, the validity of each item was evaluated on a scale for which 1 = relevant, 2 = quite relevant 3 = somehow relevant and 4 = not relevant. The validity of the instrument was tested using the Content Validity Index (CVI). The CVI was measured using the formula: Content Validity Index (CVI) = Number of items declared/Total number of items. The CVI for the questionnaire was 0.81 and that of the interview guide was 0.83 (see appendix 3). Therefore the CVIs for both instruments were high enough to allow the instruments to be used as research instruments.

3.9.2 Reliability

When an instrument is reliable, it yields consistent responses because it is interpreted well. If the desired variable is not measured reliably, the information obtained would not be correct and therefore not be valid. To enhance the reliability of the instruments data was collected from 15 respondents before the instruments were used in the field. It was entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and a Cronbach alpha coefficient test of reliability was calculated using the formula below;

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K - 1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

Where σ_X^2 was the variance of the observed total item scores, and $\sigma_{Y_i}^2$ was the variance of component i for the pilot sample. The variables with an alpha correlation coefficient of at least 0.7 were taken to be reliable (Ahuja, 2005). The pilot study results in appendix 3 show that alpha values for flexible work plans was 0.72 , work performance was .89 and organisational policy was 0.71. In addition, the researcher ensured that all items in the questionnaire had face validity. The researcher also ensured that the instruments had simple wording and clarity.

3.10 Data Analysis

3.10.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data was edited, coded and entered into SPSS. Descriptive data addressing respondents personal characteristics i.e. gender, age bracket were analysed using percentages. Descriptive statistics and frequency tables were used to summarise and present the findings. The percentage of the frequency of occurrence of responses was calculated and presented in tables. Pearson product moment correlation and Regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between and contribution of flexible work schedules to performance of employees of telecommunications companies. Following the approach recommended by Zikmund (2000) the responses given by each respondents in section B and C were summed up to convert ordinal measurement into a continuous scale to enable multivariate analysis possible.

3.10.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Pragmatic Content Analysis (PCA) was used to analyse qualitative data using methods adopted from Mugenda (2005). Mugenda (2005) advises that data should be first coded into sub-themes and categorised into themes and used to give credence to qualitative findings. Concepts were classified according to their probable causes and effects. The

intensity with which certain words are used was ascertained. This enabled the researcher to establish why something was said, which subsequently lead to understanding respondents' perceptions and beliefs (Kombo & Tromp, (2006). Further, responses from the interview with participants were classified and recorded according to frequency of their ideas or concept. The frequency of concepts showed the measure of direction or bias in data interpretation (Trochim, 2006).

3.11 Ethical Consideration

The research procedure was clearly explained to participants. Then written informed consent was sought. Participants signed consent forms that described the study procedure, risks and benefits of participation. The research procedure was also reviewed and approved by the university's Research Committee that considered the issues of ethics. Respondents were assured that the information given would be treated confidentially and it would only be used for study purposes.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the techniques that were used to collect and analyse data. A double case study was used. Respondents included managers, and other employees of the mobile telecommunications companies in the service centres. Survey instruments, the questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect data. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential methods.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study which examined the influence of flexible work plans on the performance of employees in mobile telephone companies. Specifically the study explored the influence of flextime, job sharing and part-timing on employee work performance. Frequency counts and percentages were run to determine demographic characteristics (gender, age, length of service) of respondents. Correlation coefficients determined the relationship between variables under study. Linear regression analysis verified the contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented first then followed by the findings on the study objectives.

4.1.1 Demographic data of respondents

The study first wanted to establish background characteristics and below are the findings. The researcher collected relevant demographic information of respondents. The findings are presented in the tables below.

4.1.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The findings are indicated below.

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	37	66.7
Female	19	33.3
Total	56	100.0

Source: Primary data

According to the findings in table 4.1, majority of the respondents (66.7%) were male while the rest (33.3%) were female. Though the male were slightly more than the female both, gender were well represented. Therefore, responses were a true representation of both genders.

4.1.3 Age Category of respondents

The researcher established the age category of respondents. The findings are shown below.

Table 4.2: Age Category of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
18-30	9	14.8
31-45	24	44.4
46-55	17	31.4
=>55	6	9.2
Total	56	100.0

Source: Primary data

The findings in table 4.2 reveal that majority of respondents (44.4 %) were aged 31-45 years followed by 31.4 % who were age 46-55 years, then followed by 14.8% who were aged 18-30 years and finally by 9.2 % who aged 55 years and above. This finding indicates that the majority of respondents were mature enough to understand the issue of flexible working. Therefore, they were expected to provide valid responses.

4.1.4: Length of service

Respondents also indicated the time they had worked in their organisations in the table below.

Table 4.3: Working Tenure of respondents

Tenure in years	Frequency	Percent
0-5	32	57.1
6-10	15	26.7
11-15	9	16.2
Total	56	100.0

Source: Primary data

As indicated in the table above the majority of respondents (57.1 %) had worked in the organisation from 0-5 years, 26.7% had worked from 6-10 years and 16.2% had worked for 11-15 years. Generally, most of the respondents had worked in their respective organisations to enable them understand work plans they follow and therefore, were able to provide reliable responses.

4.2 Pearson correlation confidents of the study variables

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated among the study variables before frequency and regression analysis was done. The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 4.4 : Correlation Matrix of study variables

	Flexitime	job-sharing	Part-timing	Performance
Flexitime	1	.217*	.343*	.562*
		.000	.000	.000
Job-sharing		1	.513*	.410*
			.000	.000
Part-timing			1	.232
			.000	.000
Performance				1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

The findings in the table above show that there were positive relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The correlation between flexitime and performance was $r=.562$, that between job sharing and performance was $r=.410$ and that between part-timing and performance was $r=.232$. Hence, this finding implies that implementation of flexitime; job-sharing and part-timing policies would increase employee work performance. Therefore, the independent variables were strong predictors of the dependent variable.

4.3: The Influence of Flexitime on Employee Work Performance

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of flexi-time on employee work performance. Frequency analysis was first used to determine the extent to which flexitime working plans were being used in the organisations. Flexitime was perceived as Employees being allowed to leave work early for family obligations, employees being permitted to work at home for a specified number of hours per week and organisation placing emphasis on employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule. The findings are shown in the table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Ratings on Flexitime working

Flexitime working		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	rating
My Organisation allows employees to leave work early for family obligations and arrive later	f	1	21	19	10	5	3.1	agree
	%	1.9	39.9	35.2	16.7	7.4		
In my Organisation employees are permitted to work at home for a specified number of hours per week	f	4	3	9	10	29	1.6	disagree
	%	7.4	5.6	16.7	16.7	53.7		
My Organisation allows an employee to work a traditional 35-40 hour workweek in less than five workdays and to rest for other days	f	1	2	2	34	161	1.6	disagree
	%	1.9	3.7	3.7	63.0	27.8		
In my Organisation, emphasis is placed on meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule	f	21	19	1	9	5	3.2	agree
	%	39.9	35.2	1.9	16.7	7.4		

Source: Primary data

The findings in the table above show that only about two aspects of flexitime exist in mobile telephone companies. With regard to employees being allowed to leave work early for family obligations and arrive later, the majority (39. %) agreed and 35.2% were not sure. A small percentage (16.7%) disagreed and 7.4% strongly disagreed. As far as organisation placing emphasis on meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule the majority (39.9%) strongly agreed, 35.2

disagreed, 16.7% disagreed and 7.4% strongly disagreed. Generally respondents strongly disagreed (53.7%) on Organisation are permitting employees to work at home for a specified number of hours per week, 16.7% disagreed on the issue, only 5.6% agreed and 7.4% strongly agreed. As far as organisation allowing employees to work a traditional 35-40 hour workweek in less than five workdays and to rest for other days, the majority (63.0%) disagreed and 27.8% strongly disagreed. This finding implies that organisations only implement two aspects of flextime, placing emphasis employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule and allowing employees to leave work early for family obligations.

The views of key informants were also explored on this issue. Key informants indicated that organisations only implement some aspects of flextime work. The human resources officer from the MTN service centre at Lugogo said that “*employees are sometimes allowed to leave work early to take care of urgent personal obligations*”. The head of customers care department at Wandegeya AFRICELL centre intimated that emphasis is “*placed on meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule*”. This implies that employees are not strictly supervised to be fully engaged all the time. This finding reveals that organisations do not fully implement flextime work plans. The Human Resource Officer in the AFRICELL centre at Lugogo agreed that “*only flextime aspects that are known to increase job satisfaction of their employees and work performance are implemented*”. This implies that organisations are still reluctant to fully adopt flextime work plans. The Human Resource Officer of MTN Clock Tower intimated the reason. He said, “*Organisations do not have the capacity and tools to manage full flextime schedules*”. This is the reason why they only adopt aspects of it that they infuse into their traditional work schedules. However, all key informants agreed that they have had significant improvements in the work

performance of their employees due to implementing just these few aspects of flexitime working.

Liner regression was done to establish the influence of flexi-time on employee work performance. Scores on flexitime were regressed on scores on work performance. The findings are shown in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.6: Showing regression results of flexitime vs. work performance

R	R²	Ad R²	B	beta	Sig.
0.56	.313	.314	1.020	.56	.04*

(Source: Primary Data)

***Values significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Predictor: Flexitime, Dependent variable: Work performance

Regression results in Table 4.6, show that the correlation between flexitime and work performance is $r = 0.56$. This implies that, generally, flexitime working is moderately and positively related to employee work performance. The relationship was significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. This means that when employees are given more opportunity to leave work early to attend to personal issues, permitted to work at home for a specified number of hours per week and emphasis is placed on employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule their work performance increases. The results of the regression indicated an R-square of 31.3 percent. This implies that on average, flexitime work plans can cause a 31.3 percent variation in the work performances of employees.

4.4: The Influence of job sharing on employee work performance

The second objective of the study was to determine the Influence of job sharing on employee work performance. Frequency analysis was first used to explore the extent to which job sharing is implemented by mobile telephone companies. The researcher explored whether the companies allow two people to share responsibilities of one regular, full-time position allowing each to work less hours, employees can split their week each working for 3 or 2.5 days or whether it is common practice for a workmate to help another accomplish tasks. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4.7: Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Ratings on Job Sharing.

Job Sharing		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Rating
Two people can share the responsibilities of one regular, full-time position allowing each to worker less hours	f	1	4	20	10	21	2.1	disagree
	%	1.9	7.4	35.2	16.7	39.9		
Regular part-time involving only a 50% commitment is allowed	f	4	3	10	10	29	1.6	disagree
	%	7.4	5.6	16.7	16.7	53.7		
Two employees can be allowed to split their week each working for 3 or 2.5 days.	f	1	2	2	35	16	1.6	disagree
	%	1.9	3.7	3.7	63.0	27.8		
Common practice in my organisation for a workmate to help you accomplish your tasks	f	19	22	1	9	5	3.2	agree
	%	35.2	39.9	1.9	16.7	7.4		

Source: Primary data

The findings in the table above, show that respondents generally strongly disagreed that two people can share the responsibilities of one regular, full-time position allowing each to work less hours (39.9%), 16.7 disagreed and 35.2% were not sure. As far as employees doing regular part-time involving only a 50% commitment the majority (53.7%) strongly agreed, 16.7% agreed and another 16.7% were not sure. In relation to two employees being allowed to split their week each working for 3 or 2.5 days, 27.8% strongly disagreed, 63.0% disagreed and 3.7% were not sure. With regard to organisations allowing a workmate to help another accomplish these tasks, 39% agreed, 35.2% strongly agreed and 16.7% disagreed. These findings show that only one aspect of job sharing is implemented by mobile telephone companies. This also shows that job sharing may not be an official policy of work plans in the organisations.

The views of key informants were also explored on this issue. The findings from the key informants indicate that companies do not have job sharing as a formal work plan. It is done only to expedite service delivery. The Human Resource Officer of Wandegeya AFRICELL said “*employees are allowed to share their responsibilities only when one is too busy to complete them alone*”. The head of customer care at clock tower MTN added that “*Job sharing is a normal practice here, but we only do it when the employee in charge is overwhelmed or absent*”. This implies that job sharing is policy used to speed up service delivery but not to motivate employees.

Liner regression was done to establish the influence of job sharing on employee work performance. Scores on job sharing were regressed with scores on work performance.

The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 4.8: Showing Regression Results of Job sharing Vs work performance

R	R²	Ad R²	B	Beta	Sig.
0.41	.168	.169	0.96	.41	.02*

(Source: Primary Data)

*Values significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Predictor: Job Sharing, Dependent variable: employee work performance

The regression results in the table above show that the correlation between job sharing and employee work performance is $r = 0.41$. The relationship was significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. This implies that, job sharing is positively related to employee work performance. Increased job sharing opportunities lead to increased work performance. The results of the regression model indicated an R-square of 17 percent. This implies that on average, improved job sharing will lead to about 17% change in employee work performance. Therefore, job sharing is a significant factor in employee work performance and could be considered by employers in their work performance enhancement plans.

4.5: The Influence of part-timing on Employee work Performance

The third objective of the study was to determine the effect of part-timing on employee work performance. Frequency analysis was first used to explore the extent to mobile telephone companies allow their full time employees to do part-time work. The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 4.9: Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Ratings on part-timing

Part- timing		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Rating
Employees are allowed to work and be paid for preferred time of the day - either day or night	f	1	9	4	21	19	2.1	disagree
	%	1.9	16.7	7.4	39.9	35.2		
Employees can work for a half day	f	4	3	9	9	29	1.6	disagree
	%	7.4	5.6	16.7	16.7	53.7		
Employees can work for two days a week	f	1	2	2	34	15	1.6	disagree
	%	1.9	3.7	3.7	63.0	27.8		
Employees can work only on hired basis	f	1	4	20	10	21	1.3	disagree
	%	1.9	7.4	35.2	16.7	39.9		

Source: Primary data

The findings in the table above show that majority of respondents disagreed (39.9%) and 35.2% strongly disagreed that employees are allowed to work and be paid for preferred time of the day - either day or night. As far as employees working for a half day is concerned, the findings showed that the majority (53.7%) strongly disagreed 16.7% disagreed and only 16.7% were not sure. With regard to employees working for two days a week, 63% disagreed and 27.8% strongly disagreed. In relation to employees working only on hired basis, 39.9% strongly disagreed, 16.7% disagreed and 35.2% were not sure. This implies that mobile telephone companies do not implement part-time working as their work plan.

The views of key informants were also explored on this issue. Key informants indicated no part-timing opportunities are allowed by the organisations. This was likely due to the negative perception organisations had on this flexible work plan. For example, the head of customers care MTN Lugogo explained, “*Allowing employees to do part-time work makes them lazy and it may reduce their job commitment*”. The Human Resource Officer at AFRICELL Lugogo also intimated that a “*full time employee working as a part-timer would complicate supervisions and salary administration*”. This implies that part-time working is not implemented by mobile telephone companies because they feel it is difficult to supervise and calculating the benefits would be hard. However, the head of technical services at MTN head office in Bugolobi said that part-timing could be allowed for a retired employee whose skills are difficult to replace or for services that have been outsourced. This implies that part-time working only exist among employees who are not formally registered with the companies.

Linier regression was done to establish the influence of part-timing on employee work performance. Scores on part-timing were regressed with scores on employee work performance. The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 4.10: Showing Regression Results of Part timing vs. Employee Work Performance

R	R²	Ad R²	B	Beta	Sig.
0.23	.052	.054	1.020	.23	.04*

(Source: Primary Data)

***Values significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Predictor: Part- timing, Dependent variable: Employee work performance

Regression summary results in Table 4.9, show that the correlation between part timing and employee work performance was $r= 0.23$. The relationship was significant at p -value < 0.05 . This is a low, but positive relationship probably due to its being not formally implemented. The results of the regression model indicated an R-square of 5.2 percent. This implies that on average, part-timing would predict a 5.2 percent increase in employee work performance.

4.5 Influence of organisational policy on flexible work plans

Finally, the research explored the moderating effect of organisational policy on flexible working in the two organisations. Scores on organisational policy were regressed on scores on flexible work plans. The table below shows this effect.

Table 4.11: Regression results of organisational policy Vs flexible work plans

R	R ²	Ad R ²	Std. Error	Sig.
.67 ^a	.448	.449	2.90648	.02 ^a

a. Predictors: (Constant) organisational policy

b. Dependent variable: flexible work plans

The regression summary in Table 4.10 shows that the correlation (linear relationship) between organisational policy (dependent variable) and flexible work plans is $r=0.67$. This implies that, generally, organisational policy is positively related to flexible work plans. The relationship was significant at p -value < 0.05 . This means that supportive organisation policy towards flexible working increases implementation of flexible work plans. The results of the regression model indicated an R-square of 44.8%. This means that organisational policy has a significant effect on companies policies and mechanism for enabling flexible work plans.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the study that examined flexible work plans and employee performance in the mobile telecommunications sector in Uganda: the case of MTN and AFRICELL. A discussion of the findings is presented first, followed by a conclusion and finally by recommendations for action and further research.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 The influence of flextime working on Employee work performance

The first objective of the study was to determine the flextime work plans on Employee work performance. The findings revealed that flextime working positively contributes ($r^2=0.313$) to employee work performances. The positive contribution resulted from organisations allowing employees to leave work early to take care of urgent personal obligations and placing emphasis on employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule. It is likely that high perceptions of job control and organisational support for individual well-being as indicated by Karasek and Theorell (2004) motivate employees to expend effort on behalf of the organisation. The role of flextime in enhancing employee performance was indicated by key informants who said that, the only two aspects being implemented, had led to a more than 60% improvement in work performance. This increased performance may be resulting from what Deci and Ryan (2003) call Job Control, attitude employees have

over their job tasks. Key informants reported that employees had increased focus on the job and performed more efficiently. The finding revealed that though organisations have not fully implemented flextime work plans the little they have tried to implement had a positive effect on the performance of employees. This positive contribution of flextime to employee work performance may be resulting from employees feeling that they are in control of their working time. This conclusion agrees with Karasek and Theorell (2004) who say that that perceptions of job control over work hours and perceived job autonomy caused by flextime are key factors in enhancing employee performance. Kavulu (Thursday 2nd October 2015) concurred with the two scholars when he said that he loves it better when given autonomy to exercise his abilities when given an assignment to handle at his work place.

5.2.2 The influence of job sharing on employee work performance of employees

The second objective of the study was to find out the influence job sharing on employee work performance. The findings revealed low ($r^2= 0.168$) but positive influence of job sharing on employee work performance. Key informants reported improvements in quality of services to customers because employees were more capable of quickly solving work problems. This resulted from their feeling off less stress and having higher job satisfaction. This finding agrees with Greenhaus and Powell (2006) who said that job sharing allows workers to integrate personal role demands with work role demands. As a result they are able to deal with none work demands, which increases their job commitment. Organisations only use one aspect of job sharing allowing a workmate to help another accomplish his tasks. This means that job sharing may not be an official policy of work plans in the organisations. Job sharing is done to expedite service delivery. It is also done to address the issue of absenteeism that in the event of one individual being off duty due to an avoidable circumstances, another steps in.

Employees are allowed to share their responsibilities for example when one is too busy to complete them alone. This implies that job sharing is used to speed up service delivery and curb absenteeism but not to motivate employees. Though job sharing is not implemented as an official policy, the positive contribution it has on work performance is probably due to its humanitarian concern. Pruchno, Litchfield and Fried (2000) says that it happens due to higher levels of organizational commitment, and people concern. As noted by Annet (not real name) who observed that because of working in a pool at the MTN call centre, whenever she has social issues to take care of, there are colleagues of hers who step in and handle her chaos. She further reported that even when she misses duty, she gets her full salary which keeps her motivated to perform. This concerns with Vroom's Expectance Theory which states that individuals are more likely to be motivated to exert effort to perform for valued goals they think they can achieve Vroom, in Armstrong (2006).

5.3.3 The Influence of part-time working on employee work performance

The third objective was to assess the influence of part-time working on employee performance. The findings showed a low ($r^2=.052$) but positive influence of part-timing on employee work performance. Again, despite only being occasionally implemented, part-timing still had a positive contribution on work performance. However, the true concept of part-time working described by Corbett (2004) did not exist. Corbett (2004) says that part-time work as a flexible work plan is when full time employees are allowed to work for a specified number of hours or days per week, and for a pre-set, limited duration. The small positive contribution of part-time working in these organisations resulted from tardiness and increased ability for organisations to recruit outstanding employees (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). The occasions where organisations allowed part-timers, they were talented workers (Stavrou, 2005) and worked extended hours. as

indicated by Wolf and Beblo (2004) this developed the image of the organisation as one that puts customer service above everything else.

Part-time working was not popular because of blending employees' schedule requests with organizational work demands (Pruchno, Litchfield & Fried (2000). Also managers did not want to have extra tasks of managing part-time work schedules. They feared that this would reduce their work efficiency (Shepard & Clifton, 2000). Managers were not willing to allow supervision of schedules for part-time working to divert their attention from other responsibilities. It was also evident that organizations did not have collaboration and internal communication structures yet Stavrou, (2010), notes that the success of part-time working requires extra collaboration, coordination and communication between employees and the organisation.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings have revealed the small extent to which mobile telephone companies implement flexible work, which has resulted into significant improvements in the work performance of employees. This positive contribution has been due to employees having job control and attitude over their job tasks. This implies that the job control and expectancy theories of flexible working apply to employees in mobile telephone companies. However, it was evident that though, in their job adverts, talk of flexible working as one of the benefits, they don't have policies and frameworks to fully implement flexible work plans. Companies adopt some few aspects of flexible working just to motivate their employees to increase work performance. They allowed employees to leave work early to take care of urgent personal obligations and place emphasis on employees meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule. This has paid off as companies reported above average increases in the work performance of their employees.

The two aspects of flextime work plans that were commonly adopted led to increase the work performance of their employees. This implies that performance could increase further if organisations fully adopted flextime work plans. However, Organisations were reluctant to fully adopt flextime because they were not sure of its effect on job commitment. Organisations also did not have mechanisms for supervising it. Supervisors feared that it would increase their responsibilities. Though organisations used only one aspect of job sharing; allowing a workmate to help another accomplish his tasks this contributed to increased work performance. This implies that if job sharing became an official work plan it would significantly boost employee performance and subsequently service delivery but not to motivate employees.

5.5 Recommendations for Action

In view of the findings, the following recommends are made:

Currently there is no clear government policy on flexible work plans. The Ministry of Labour should initiate policy documents on flexible working to guide employers and employees on this issue. The findings have shown that organisations are reluctant to fully adopt flextime because of not being sure about its actual results. It is therefore recommended that the management of these organisations put flextime on trial basis of about six months in one department per period. This will enable them to accurately understand their importance.

Organisations that implement flexible work plans even to a smaller extent should be given rewards such as tax reductions or holidays in order to motivate them to fully implement flexible working plans.

Organizations should train their human resource officers in flexible work plans management. This will reduce the fear and load of managing them in the organisation.

Given the fact that the government is the major employer, it should take the lead in using flexible work plans. Government could start by adopting flextime and job sharing to show the private sector that they can be effective ways of increasing employee job satisfaction.

The labour laws were also not very clear on flexible work plans. Labour unions should have working documents to guide employees on how to agitate for flexible working schedules.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher recommends that studies be done on effective strategies to supervise and manage flexible work plans.

There is also need to explore flexible work plans that may be more relevant to the Ugandan work environment and labour laws.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Employees

Dear respondent, I am called **GRACE ELYANU**. I am conducting a study on “**The Influence of Flexible Work Plans on Employee Performance in the Mobile Telecommunications Sector in Uganda**”. I request you to candidly complete this questionnaire. The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and it will be used for the purpose for which it was collected.

Thank you.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This part of the questionnaire is designed to obtain some background information from you. It asks questions about pertinent variables such your gender, age and years of experience.

Please tick what is most appropriate to you:

1. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

2. Age bracket

1	2	3	4
18-30 years	31-45 years	46-55 years	55 and above

3. Length of service

1	2	3	4	5	6
0 - 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 - 20 years	21 - 25 years	26 and above

Section B: Flexible work plans practices in your Organisation

4. Instructions

Please circle the number on the scale that best indicates the extent to which your Organisation implements flexible work plans. Using the scale for which;

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Not Sure (NS)

4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Flexible work schedules in your Organisation						
		1	2	3	4	5
	Flexitime					
1	My Organisation allows employees to leave work early for family obligations and arrive later so less time is spent commuting during peak hours					
2	In my Organisation employees are permitted to work at home for a specified number of hours per week					
3	My Organisation allows an employee to work a traditional 35-40 hour workweek in less than five workdays and to rest for other days					
4	In my Organisation, emphasis is placed on meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule					

	Job sharing					
5	In my Organisation, two people can share the responsibilities of one regular, full-time position allowing each to worker less hours					
6	In my Organisation, regular part-time involving only a 50% commitment is allowed					
7	In my Organisation two employees can be allowed to split their week each working for 3 or 2.5 days.					
8	In my Organisation, emphasis is placed on meeting work productivity standards instead of maintaining a traditional work schedule					
9	It is a common practice in my organisation for a workmate to help you accomplish your tasks					
	Part-timing					
10	In my organisation employees are allowed to work and be paid for preferred time of the day - either day or night					
11	In my organisation employees can work for a half day					
12	In my organisation employees can work for two days a week					
13	In my organisation employees can work only on hired basis					

Section C: Perceived Work Performance

5. *In this section Please circle the number on the scale that best indicates the level of your work performance using the aspects below.*

	Work performance	1	2	3	4	5
1	Flexible work schedules in my organisation have enabled me to provide good services to stake holders and the country at large					
2	Flexible work schedules in my organisation have enable me to significantly contribute to the achievement of my organisation's goals and mission					
3	I have a higher focus on my job due to flexible work schedules					
4	I am able to perform more efficiently due to flexible work plans					
5	I now accomplish more tasks due to flexible work conditions in my organisation					
6	I am more efficient in doing my work due flexible working schedules					
7	My usefulness to my organization has increased considerably due to flexible work conditions					
8	I have more job satisfaction now due to flexible work conditions in my organisation					
9	I can now quickly solve work related problems because I am always fresh					

SECTION D: The Effect of Organisational Policy on Flexible Working

1	The organisation policy of my institution is employee-friendly and helps to improve employees' work-life balance.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Human resources policies of my organisation enhance individual employee performance.					
3	The human resource policies in my organisation promote employee job satisfaction.					
4	Flexible working schedules are supported by human resource policies.					
5	The employment policies of my organisation advocate for flexible working conditions.					

Please indicate the extent to which the organisational policy of your institution supports or interferes with flexible working plans.

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Thank you for your kind co-operation.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Managers and Supervisors of service centres

1. What Flexible work plans does your organization use?

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.....
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2. Generally, what would you say is the percentage improvement in the performance of employees in your organizations as a result of Flexible work schedules?

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.....
.....

3. What do you think is the most practical Flexible Work Plan for mobile telecommunications companies?

.....
.....
.....

4. What challenges are being faced by your Organization in implementing Flexible work schedules?

.....
.....
.....

5. How can the challenges you have mentioned above be overcome?.....

.....
.....

Appendix 3: Content Validity Index (CVI) and Reliability Coefficients of the questionnaires

Content Validity Index (CVI)

Instrument	Content Validity Index
Questionnaire for employees	0.81
In -depth Interview guide	0.83

Source: Pilot data

Reliability Coefficients of the Questionnaire

Instrument	No of items	Alpha Coefficient
Flexible work plans	13	0.72
Work performance	9	0.89
Organisational policy	5	0.71

Source: Pilot data