



## Flexible Work Arrangements and Productivity of Sales Representatives of Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of flexible work arrangements on productivity of sales representatives of book publishing companies in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were; to examine the relationship between flexi-time, job sharing, part time and telecommuting and employee effectiveness and employee efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey involving collecting data across top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria was employed. Twenty (20) sales representatives from each company were surveyed using convenience sampling technique. Out of the 200 questionnaires administered, 162 copies of questionnaire were filled correctly and returned. constructs of flexible work arrangements as well as measures of employee productivity were measured on four point Likert scale ranging from 4= Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2= Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree. Cronbach Alpha was employed to ascertain the internal consistency of the instruments and they fall within 0.70 -.080 threshold. Validity of instrument was determined using face and content validity. Views of respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) with the aid of statistical package for social sciences version 22.0. Statistical instrument employed to analyze the hypotheses was Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (rs). Findings revealed that flexi-time, job sharing, part time and telecommuting all have significant positive relationship with both employee effectiveness and employee efficiency. Based on the findings, the study concludes that making time and location flexible for employees, the book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria could significantly enhance productivity of their sales representatives. The study therefore recommended among others that since flexi-time is found to have the potential to affect employee productivity, management of companies in the book publishing sector in Nigeria should avail all categories of staff the opportunity to choose start and close time where necessary. It is also suggested that more options of FWAs like compressed week work and self-roistering could be added to the survey instrument in addition to the ones identified in this study which could lead to new findings.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to the Study

Book publishing companies like every other organization are not just the physical structures and sophisticated technologies, reason being that such buildings and technologies though as important as they may be in providing a face and shelter to the organization, are not the most important aspects of the facilities. On establishment of organizations, employees are hired to help stir the affairs of the organizations so as to achieve the visions, objectives and missions (Uzochukwu, Egechukwu & Olohi, 2019), and employees are regarded as the most important assets to organizations (Abid & Barech, 2017). Moreover, the success of such organisations depends largely on the productivity of these employees (Opeyemi, Maloma, Ebe, Odunayo, Maxwell & Hezekiah, 2019) which is also measured in terms of the effectiveness, efficiency and of flexibility of the employee (Mungania, Waiganjo & Kihoro, 2016).

Thus, in the era of workplace dynamism, Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) emerged as one of new trends in human resources management. Flexible working arrangements have received increasingly important interest among researchers and practitioners in the field of human resources management, particularly in the Western countries (Aziz -Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2020). Hence organizations tend to enhance agility of human resources, and flexibility of operations, in response to various environmental variables (Opeyemi et al. 2019).

Studies in USA, showed that with more than 80% of US families being dual-career or single parent, more workers are combining work and family demands, resulting in the need for more flexible work schedules (Kossek & Michel 2011; Spreitzer, Cameron & Garrett, 2017; Caillier, 2018; Baeza, Gonzalez & Wang, 2018). In UK and Australia researchers look at the many types of flexible working arrangements in operation today and the benefits they can bring to an organization including better retention rates, reduced costs and improved productivity (Fagan, Lyonette, Smith and Saldana-Tejeda, 2011; Riordan 2013). Furthermore they investigated organisations that have embraced flexible working arrangements and how this change is positively affecting their business (Morgan, 2015).

In the Middle East, studies in the field of flexible working arrangements found it to be a veritable tool for performance enhancement (Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2020). In Pakistan for instance, it has been established that flexibility is a tool that can be used to increase productivity, job satisfaction, efficiency, enhance performance and improved the quality of life (Abid & Barech, 2017). In South Africa, research indicates that employers in organizations offering flexible timing benefits in terms of retaining their valuable employees, it has been seen that it increases the employee's morale, loyalty and enhances the productivity, reduces the absenteeism, employer's time and hiring cost (Jackson & Fransman, 2018). FWAs do not only contribute to improving the general atmosphere and human relations but it also enhances the pleasure of work (Grobler & De Bruin, 2011).

In Nigeria, globalization has affected every facet of life including the labour force (Falola, Salau, Omoniyi-Oyafunke & Olokundun, 2016; Radó, Nagy & Király, 2015). The structure of work pattern in Nigeria is generally categorized into two categories: formal and informal categories. The formal category is often practiced in government-owned institutions like government funded universities, public hospitals and police force. On the other hand, the informal category is practiced by indigenous entrepreneurs who engage in self-employed micro, small, medium and large businesses (Akanji, 2013).

Flexible work arrangements are basically options that allow an employee to work outside the traditional confines of a standard organization of work with respect to such different modalities as amount, distribution of working time and place of work (Spreitzer, Cameron & Garrett, 2017). This is in direct contrast with traditional work arrangements that require employees to work at a standard time and place daily. Flexible working arrangements include flexi-time, self-roistering, part-time and telecommuting

(Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie, 2020). Flexi-time is a type of FWAs which allows full-time workers to choose the start and finish time of the working day within core hours (Chung & Lippe, 2018). Self-roistering refers to a FWA where a group of employees make work schedules by themselves, which is based on a company time frame determined by the employer in which the quantitative and qualitative demands have to be met (Uzochukwu, Egechukwu & Olohi, 2019). Part-time work is the option where employees agree to work fewer hours weekly than the standard workweek (Oludayo, Falola, Ahaka & Fatogun, 2018). Telecommuting is a form of FWAs where employees work from remote locations using technology devices (Caillier, 2018). Job sharing is where two or more employees share a job that is full time, these same employees share the compensation determined by the number of hours each of the employee does (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Employee productivity has to do with the final and specific outputs expected from the employee considering the resources invested on the employee (Buuri, 2015). The employee productivity involves considering the time invested in the production of the desired outputs from an individual (Nwinyokpugi, 2018). This implies that employee productivity encompasses also the measurement of the employee related costs incurred by the organization in the production of desired output. Thus, in this study, employee productivity is treated in terms of employee effectiveness and employee efficiency. Employee efficiency is an employee characteristic, which relates to the speed and accuracy of an employee at the job task (Buuri, 2015). Employee effectiveness refers to how well an employee accomplishes the job assigned to him/her at the expected time schedule for its completion (Caillier, 2018).

Every organization wants to break even with their products in the market place, wanting it to be consumed by all, producing quality products and making sure that these products are always available for their client on demand (Kipkoech, 2018). The book publishing sector organisations are not in exception. This sector like other organizations is never static, it evolves in response to global and local issues, and these alterations may lead to a change in the nature of work performed, the time and how employees performance are obtained in the organization (Yohanes, Sautma & Togar, 2020).

Flexible forms of work can help the organizations to improve their services through satisfied employees (Hashim, Khattak & Kee, 2017). The performance of employees in flexible working environment could result in increased productivity, customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, employee commitment and retention (Uzochukwu, Egechukwu & Olohi, 2019). Productivity is critical for the long term effectiveness of an organization (Zhang, Zhao, Zou, Lin, Mu, Deng, Du, Zhou, Wu & Gan, 2021). For round-the-clock book supply services to be guaranteed among organisations, flexible work arrangements are made available for the employees at the time of employment so that employees work round the clock to provide effective services all the time (Jafarpanah & Rezaei, 2020). It is as a result of these observed issues in the book publishing sector that gave credence to the need to carry out this study on the effect of flexible work arrangements on productivity of sales representatives in listed book publishing companies in Nigeria.

The 21st century accompanied with various global developments like COVID-19 has increased the necessities for organisations to facilitate work flexibility. In spite of the importance of FWAs at this point in time, limited attention has been paid to its application in many book publishing companies in Nigeria. A survey of the implementation of FWAs for sale rep at some book publishing companies in Nigeria revealed that telecommuting, compressed work weeks and self-roistering are practiced but not applicable to categories of staff (Ghahremani-Nahr & Nozari, 2021). Other options like flexi-time, job sharing have been ignored. This development has led to occupational stress and work-life imbalance among sales representatives of book publishing companies in Nigeria. This calls for an examination into the effect of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity in the book publishing sector. Moreover, studies on FWAs in Nigeria are mostly carried out on employees in the manufacturing sector

(Opeyemi, Maloma, Ebe, Odunayo, Maxwell & Hezekiah, 2019; Uzochukwu, Egechukwu & Olohi, 2019) and in the banking sector (Ojo, Salau & Falola, 2014; Oludayo, Gberevbie & Popoola, 2015). With rare studies on publishing sector hence, this study examines in detail the effect of flexible work arrangements on productivity sales representatives in book publishing companies in Nigeria with particular focus on top 10 listed book publishing companies in Nigeria.

## **1.2. The Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of flexible work arrangements on productivity of sales representatives in the book publishing sector in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to;

- examine the relationship between flexi-time and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- determine the relationship between job sharing on effectiveness and sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- ascertain the relationship between part time work and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- examine the relationship between telecommuting and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- examine the relationship between flexi-time and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- determine the relationship between job sharing and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria;
- ascertain the relationship between part time work and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria and
- examine the relationship between telecommuting and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Work/Family Border Theory**

The Work/Family Border Theory as propounded by Clark in 2001 is based on the assumption of border permeability and flexibility. Border permeability happens when elements from one domain cross the border that divides the work and family domains. This permeability covers psychological, physical or spatial and temporal borders in explaining the moral and ethical spheres between work and family. The psychological border is when there is excess from one domain to another while the physical borders comprise the doors and walls that defines work and home and finally, the temporal borders include time policies such as hours of work and personal time. The transformation between home and work is always demanding and is explained as often involving and ‘shifting gears’ or ‘wearing different hats’. These daily and spontaneous interactions facilitate the balance between family and work responsibilities.

Flexibility, on the other hand, shows the degree to which one domain may enlarge to accept the demands of the other domain. Flexibility explains the softness or malleability of the boundary between two domains (e.g., the extent to which the role of a professor can accommodate the demand of the other domain as a parent and vice versa). With work/family border flexibility, employees have the freedom to select their place and hours of the work (Clark, 2001). By implications, when employees are faced with conflict between the two domains, such employees that are border crossers can make use of the different strategies to deal with this conflict.

The effectiveness of these strategies is dependent on the degree of border permeable and flexible between family and work, and the extent of similarity between the two domains. Borders that allow a low degree of permeability tries to divide the two domains making them as separate systems (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). This theory, however, explains that there is a high level of influence and interconnectedness between the two domains even though the degree of flexibility and permeability differs (Clark, 2001). When there is flexibility and permeability of borders, they are well integrated, invariably it leads to the interconnectivity between family and work life.

## **2.2. Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements are the kinds of preparations that allow the employee of an organization to have a higher level of control as regards to when, where and how they work. Flexible work arrangements mean a higher level of flexibility in the workplace, hours scheduling and the amount of hours worked. Flexible work arrangements allow employees and their organizations to make informed choices about when (e.g. flexi-time, compressed workweeks), where (e.g. telecommuting), and for how long (e.g. reduced hours, part-time) job related activities can be achieved and accomplished (Nadeem & Henry 2013). Flexible work arrangements grew in popularity because of changes in the workforce demographics and also the demands of employee for greater work-life balance (Fransman 2015). Flexible work arrangements allow employees the opportunity to engage in flexible working hours, part-time work, saving overtime, compressed working weeks and working from home, not necessarily from the office (Munsch, Ridgeway & Williams, 2014). These arrangements have ultimately helped in maintaining and achieving work-life balance for employees across various levels of management.

Flexible work arrangement is the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks (Purvanova, 2014). It is a multi-faceted concept that includes discretion over where work is performed (e.g. telecommuting), the duration of individual and collective sessions of work-related tasks (e.g. part-time employment), as well as options for multiple points of entry and departure from paid work, for example, career flexibility (Fransman, 2015). Flexibility is referred to by Costa, Sartori and Akerstedt (2016) as the level of individual discretion and autonomy. Literature classifies flexible work practices as office-based practices and flexi-place practices (Grobler & De Bruyn, 2011). Kelly, Moen and Tranby (2011) refer to flexibility as schedule control, because flexible work options can include contingent work, contract work and just-in-time staffing. The extent to what employees experience as flexible working hours requires supportive organisational culture (Galea, Houkes & De Rijk, 2014), and it is important that management within organisations acknowledges the fact that employees go through different phases during careers and specific requirements can change (Fransman, 2015). Flexible working arrangements include flexi-time, self-roistering, part-time and telecommuting (Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie, 2020).

- **Flexi-Time**

Flexi-time is a scheduling programmed for full-time employees which allows them to choose their starting and finishing times daily, provided they complete a stipulated number of hours start and/or end the work day earlier (or later) than usual. In other words, it is a situation where workers can set their own starting and stopping times (Kelly, & Kalev, 2016). Employees are required to be present during certain “core hours”, which is usually fixed at a period between the latest permissible starting time and earliest permissible finishing time (Ekari & Amah, 2017). A company has core hours between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The employees then have the choice to start anytime between 6:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and the choice to leave anytime between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., provided they work eight hours. Another variation has employees arrive 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., have a minimum one half hour lunch break between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., and finish between 3:30 and 6:30 p.m., again provided eight hours are worked (Lutz, 2012).

Flexi-time provides employee the opportunity to meet up with household or personal obligations or even emergencies, during the day and also to reduce time spent on commuting by starting and ending work before or after the rush hour (Cooker, 2012). Flexi-time allows employees, to decide the beginning and closing times of their work day, in as much as certain amount of hours has been used. Flexible work options are more likely to be successful when an organization encourages managers and employees to view flexibility as a mutually beneficial business process for determining the best approach to how, where and when work is done. According to Hofacker and Konig (2013) opine that flexi-time enable employee to vary their working hours within agreed parameters and provided they attend during a 'core' time which has potential benefits that gives employee more control over scheduling personal responsibilities on either end of the work day, flexibility in time of work allows employees some degree of choice regarding how total weekly hours are distributed to manage non work demands which includes flexitime, compressed workweeks, flexible shifts, part-year, seasonal schedules, and flexible breaks during the workday. Dalcos and Daley (2019) posit that flexible work arrangement such as flexi-time allows employees to choose when, where and for how long they engage in work-related tasks, thus enhance engagement. An employee with a flexi-time schedule has alternative start and end times, but total weekly or daily hours worked are the same as those for other regular full-time employees.

- **Job sharing**

Job sharing is basically splitting work between two employees in such a way that their joint weekly work hours equals the standard week working hours of one employee (Kotey & Sharma, 2016). This is where two or more employee share a job that is full time, these same employees share the compensation determined by the number of hours each of the employee does. Jobs are shared by splitting of days, splitting of weeks or alternate weeks. The accomplishment of job sharing is dependent on a very good partnership between the workers and also requires team work spirit by the employees involved (Kotey, 2017).

- **Part Time Arrangements**

Part-time workers are the workers that works less than 35 hours a week and this set of employee are reported to have the lowest levels of psychological and physical health problems (Clarke, 2011). Workers who wish to balance their work and family participates in part time work while workers that prefer working for longer hours are not satisfied with part time work. This type of flexible work arrangements is very popular in some of the European countries. For example, over 70% of women in the Netherlands work part-time (Rahman, 2019). However, there are some negative assumptions about part-time work and part-time employees. One of them is that full-time employees are more engaged in work compared with part-time employees. However, Johnson, Shannon and Richman (2018) provided evidence contrarily to this assumption: i.e., that the level of engagement both for part-time and full-time employees is the same. Moreover, there are advantages of part-time work for example, employees working just part of the time are less likely to experience burnout compared with their full-time colleagues (Johnson, Shannon & Richman, 2018).

According to Jansen, Mohren, Amelsvoort and Kant (2010), part time working arrangements have recently gained attention from scholars as family-friendly policy. Ioanlazar, Osoian and Patriciaratiu (2010) similarly argue that organizations that incorporate a culture part time working hours in the workplace, do gain employees trust, and as a result, employees pick part time segments that enable them to deliver quality optimal performance to the organization. In addition, some researchers argue that part time working arrangements do facilitate work-life balance, hence beneficial to employees (Parkes & Langford, 2018). In their research, Ioanlazar, Osoian and Patriciaratiu (2010) examines the relationship between flexible working hours and work- life balance for any significant correlation with employees' performance and the result proved positive.

The inability for organizations to create a balance between work and personal life usually affects employees' effectiveness and performance in the workplace (Thompson & Lyness, 2019). Part time arrangements by some companies is a proactive measures in providing programs and initiatives that could help employees resolve work-life conflicts by choosing part time working arrangements that enhances their performance and satisfaction. Managerial support has also been found to influence employee decisions both to utilize work-life balance practices like part time working arrangements (Singh & Cooper, 2011).

- **Telecommuting**

Allen, Golden and Shockley (2015) defined telecommuting as a form of work organization in which work is done partially or completely outside the organisation with the aid of information and telecommunication services. Telecommuting, also known as remote work or telework, with the help of information and technological devices employees perform their work in different places instead of the central workplace (Mamaghani, 2012). Telecommuting can be part time or full time, with the part time predominant in recent years. Telecommuting has advantages at the individual, organizational and societal level (Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015).

Telecommuting also known as flexi-place is broadly defined as giving employees varying degrees of control over where their work is done (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2011); i.e., that some or all working hours are spent working at a location of employee choice. Usually, in telecommuting arrangements employees choose to work from home. Scholars named three categories of employees who are more likely to use telecommuting arrangements: women, married employees and employees with children (Duncan & Pettigrew, 2012). Also, it was noted that employees working part-time are more likely to telecommute than full-time employees (Gajendran & Harrison, 2017).

According to Families and Work Institute, the prevalence of telecommuting practices has increased considerably over the last ten years. Namely, in 2015 67% of surveyed organizations allowed at least some of their employees to work some regular paid hours at home occasionally, while 34% of organizations offered the same flexibility in 2005 (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2015; Matos & Galinsky, 2014). However, in 2013 a few of large companies – Yahoo was the first, then Best Buy, and Hewlett-Packard - announced that they are cancelling or tightening their telecommuting programs (Lavey-Heaton, 2014); Before these decisions, the advantages of telecommuting, such as time and costs saved in commuting to work and enhanced autonomy, were the focus of attention. Nonetheless, telecommuting has disadvantages also; For example, a few of the scholars noted telecommuting might result in weakened relationship with colleagues and supervisors, which, in turn, might lead to hinder growth in career (Gajendran & Harrison, 2017).

### **2.3. Employee Productivity**

The expectation of an employer or organisation from its employees is to have them produce value, which exceeds the cost of keeping them in the employment (Aka-Wolugbom & Onuoha, 2018). Employees are thus expected to add value to the bottom line of their organisation. Employee productivity is an evaluation of an employee's efficiency. It is defined as the output of an individual employee relative to the inputs with respect to a given period in time (Hanaysha, 2016). Managers therefore ought to understand what defines the productivity of their employees, how it could be assessed, enhanced and what ways it could be diminished. Knowledge of the factors that affect employee productivity is key to ensuring long term performance of an organisation. Various advantages are evident from a condition of higher degree of employee productivity. For instance, an organisation could attain increased profitability from higher employee productivity, and a sustained competitive advantage arising from strategic cost leadership and high quality product delivery (Childs, 2009).

Employee productivity according to Barnett Chiu, Franklin and Sebastiá-Barriel (2014) is the average product of labour, average output per worker or per worker-hour, an output which could be measured in physical terms or in price term. According to Andrews, Charlton and Moore (2021) employee productivity (sometimes referred to as workforce productivity) is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. Because much of the success of any organization relies upon the productivity of its workforce, employee productivity is an important consideration for businesses. Productivity may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. Typically, the productivity of a given worker will be assessed relative to an average for employees doing similar work (Battaglio & French, 2016).

Different productivity measures exist in the literature. The choice between them depends on the purpose of productivity measurement and, in many instances, on the availability of data. Majorly, productivity measures can be classified as single factor productivity measures (relating a measure of output to a single measure of input) or multifactor productivity measures (relating a measure of output to a bundle of inputs). Another distinction, of particular relevance at the industry or firm level is between productivity measures that relate some measure of gross output to one or several inputs and those which use a value-added concept to capture movements of output (Makinde, 2014). A primary objective of measuring productivity is to improve operation either by using fewer inputs to produce the same output or to produce more output with the same inputs.

According to Jain and Premkumar (2011), productivity pertains to how efficiently the resources of any organisation are allocated and utilized. Basically, the relationship between the amount of goods or services produced and the resources utilized in production explains employee productivity (Adedapo, 2020). Thus, the central focus in the measurement of employee productivity is production efficiency or increase in quality by reduction in wastages (Kampelmann, Rycx, Saks & Tojerow, 2018). Moore, Coates and Croucher (2019) suggest that there are three Es in productivity or performance management literature which are: Economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. However, for the purpose of this study, employee productivity is measured as employee effectiveness and employee efficiency.

- **Employee Effectiveness**

Employee effectiveness refers to how well an employee accomplishes the job assigned to him/her at the expected time schedule for its completion (Robbins, Judge & Sanghi, 2009). For an employee to be effective is also dependent on the available resources at his/her disposal. Secondly, employee completion of the assignment must be in line with the goals of the organization. Therefore, employee effectiveness is a function of resource acquisition as well as goal accomplishment (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2003; Sinding and Waldstrom, 2014). For instance, if a customer relationship employee in the banking sector that is required to be effective when attending to customers is not provided with functional internet fast computer system; such employee may not be effective because; instead of attending to five customers within twenty minutes, it may take the employee an hour.

Therefore, all the organizational support that employees require to perform their job must be provided for them to be effective. Lastly, each assignment must fall within organisational goals otherwise; employees will not have direction in the workplace. Employee effectiveness is measured in terms of goal accomplishment and resource acquisition (Edeh & Ukpe, 2019). Goal accomplishment refers to when an employee completes his/her assignment or task as at when due or expected (Edeh & Ukpe, 2019). Thus, an employee is effective when the job or work assigned to him/her is in line with the goal governing the job itself. Resource acquisition refers to when all the resources that are required by the workforce to accomplish a goal are available or at the disposal of the workers (Edeh & Dialoke, 2016).

- **Employee Efficiency**

Employee efficiency is an employee characteristic, which relates to the speed and accuracy of an employee at the job task (Okwudili, 2015). The concept relates to employee productivity, which provides that the more efficient an employee is, the more productive they will be if well-managed (Fandom, 2017). Invariably, employee efficiency is a complex measurable parameter which characterizes an output produced by efforts and by achievements of an employee (Task Management Guide, 2018). According to Ghemawat and Ricart (1993), two categories of efficiency are often referred to, and they are: static efficiency and dynamic efficiency. Static efficiency relates to refining existing products, processes or opportunities; making improvements within existing conditions. Dynamic efficiency refers to the continuous development of new products, processes or opportunities so that profitability can improve.

According to Awotidebe (2019) in most cases, the employee efficiency answers these questions like: is this employee useful to organization? (i.e. Does he produce more value than he consume?) How useful is this employee? (i.e. What is the worth of what he produces exactly?) While productivity measures quantity, efficiency measures quality. You could calculate a very high productivity number per employee, but that number alone does not give you any insight into the quality of work (in theory, an employee could seem very productive, but actually be producing horrible outputs). To compare the productivity numbers against a benchmark, you can compare the current productivity with the standard amount of effort needed for the same output (Okwudili, 2015).

## **2.4. Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Productivity**

Mungania, Waiganjo and Kihoro (2016) carried out study to determine the influence of flexible work arrangement on performance of the banking industry in Kenya. The results of regression analysis revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between flexible work arrangement and performance. Baltes (2019) also found positive effects of flexible work schedules on productivity in their meta-analysis. On the other hand, in reviewing the results from studies conducted, Kossek and Ozeki (2019) concluded that a more limited amount of flexibility was optimal in predicting improved performance, with employees specifying in advance what hours they would work, rather than varying their schedule on an ad hoc basis. Findings by Porter (2018) argued that flexible work arrangement and demand for services have substantially increased. As work become more flexible, they demand new management skills, hence better and reliable service delivery, as well as more responsive services; As a consequence, to improve flexible arrangements on e.g. day off, annual leave and night outs, workers needs and expectations satisfy them hence provide excellent services to the employer.

De-Tumi (2015) who argued that understanding the nature of the flexible work one provides to the employee allows for an appreciation of how the workers see the services provided. According to De-Tumi (2015), in any work flexibility, the employee's performance is crucial to one's ability to ensure that they are satisfied beyond expectation. This helps to give employees not what is obvious but also fulfill a multitude of less obvious employee's needs (De-Tumi, 2015). In a study by Christopher (2014), the respondents indicated that having the opportunity to adapt their work schedule according to their own needs brings along positive attitudes not only in their personal life but also in their work-life. The study showed that flexible working hours offered respondents the opportunity to put in the necessary effort and energy in their work during the moments that counted most.

The findings of studies by several researchers examining flexible working arrangements has associated employee participation in these arrangements with higher levels of self-reported focus, concentration, and motivation (Raabe, 2016), and Lewis's (2017) case study research found that reduced working hours on a voluntary basis resulted in greater self-reported productivity and efficiency for chartered accountants. Hashim, Ullah and Khan (2017) focused was to determine the relationship between time

flexibility and employees' productivity and found a significant correlation between the variables. Mwebi and Kadaga (2015) also studied the effects of flexi-time work arrangement on employee performance. The study focused on establishing the effects of flexi-time work arrangement on employee performance in Nairobi central business district commercial banks. Findings revealed that flexi-time affects employee performance.

Chow and Keng-Howe's (2016) study of workers in Singapore revealed that the more flexible their schedules, the greater their self-reported productivity. With regard to contextual performance, the perceived usefulness of available practices has been found to predict increased organizational citizenship behavior (Lambert, 2010). The findings of this study from the qualitative data indicated that employees desired to have more considerations on flexible work arrangements and avoiding reporting to work early would ensure they do not leave the organization. Respondents desired that their banks would consider such practices for increased performance. They also noted that their organizations should offer scholarship and support further education as part of flexible work arrangements hence this would ensure increased performance. Reduction of working hours was also sated as a way in which the banks would enable employees have quality time with family, personal leisure and work which would enable them to increase their performance.

McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley & Speare-Finch (2015) suggest that employees working flexible hours may enable organizations to keep up with a workload that is inherently variable throughout the year; flexible working arrangements may invoke the principle of reciprocity, wherein employees work extra hours during peak times in exchange for the ability to tailor their hours to suit their own needs at other times. A study of the '100 Best Companies for Working Mothers' by Gerdenitsch, Kubicek, and Korunka (2015) revealed that organizations offering work-life balance practices enjoyed increased profit rates.

Klindzic and Marić (2019) came up with several important conclusions amongst which are that companies that apply telecommuting reported high employee productivity and low levels of turnover and absenteeism. This could be attributed to telecommuting being able to allow employees to minimize stress and cost of travel to work and by meeting their need for flexibility (Kotey & Sharma, 2016). This assertion is further reinforced in Lee and DeVoe (2012) study which reported that flexi-time increases profitability only when practiced within an employee-centred strategy. Positive effects of part time arrangements have been highlighted in some other studies. Working part time is positively associated with employee productivity and perceptions of organizational performance (Mamaghani, 2012). The employee working from remote home feels management has confidence in him and this boosts his self-worth, independence, self-discipline and control over his work. Furthermore, the analysis opines that flexi-time is positively associated with profitability, employee retention, and negatively related to turnover and absenteeism (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2012). In the same vein, it is argued here that, all things being equal with respect to infrastructural provisions and development, home-based work and telework are positively related to organizational performance though they do not have a significant association with turnover (Stavrou, 2005).

Although it is expected that employer-driven arrangements will be predominantly found to have positive effects on organizational performance to be able to justify its purpose of increased productivity, it is not always the case. The findings from studies are mixed with some actually showing their negative effects on organizational performance. For instance, Stavrou (2005) and Stavrou & Kilaniotis (2010) aver that though weekend work, shift work and overtime have a positive relationship with turnover, no significant association with organizational performance was found. Furthermore, Shen and Dicker (2008) aver that shift work is associated with increased absenteeism, and increased turnover of employees with higher tenure in organizations although Battisti & Vallanti (2013) reported lower levels of turnover in companies that apply more temporary work considering that having more fixed-term workers implies a

lower dismissal probability for permanent workers. Thus, the following null hypotheses are presented for testing in the course of the study:

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between flexi-time and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing on effectiveness and sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between part time work and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and effectiveness of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between flexi-time and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>6</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>7</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between part time work and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**HO<sub>8</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and efficiency of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Cross-sectional survey involving collecting data across top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria was employed. These companies were: Literamed Publications Nigeria Ltd, University Press PLC, Learn Africa PLC, Extension Publication, West Africa Publishers, Cassava Republic, Evans Publishers Limited, Book Craft Africa, Kachifo Limited and Black Tower Publishers Nigeria Ltd. Twenty (20) sales representatives each from top ten (10) book publishing companies in Nigeria were surveyed using convenience sampling technique. Out of the 200 questionnaires administered, 162 copies of questionnaire were filled correctly and returned. Dimensions of flexible work arrangements as well as measures of employee productivity were measured on four point Likert scale ranging from 4= Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2= Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree. Cronbach Alpha was employed to ascertain the internal consistency of the instruments and they fall within 0.70 -.080 threshold. Validity of instrument was determined using face and content validity. Views of respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) with the aid of statistical package for social sciences version 22.0. Statistical instrument employed to analyses the hypotheses was Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (rs).

## 4. Data Presentation, Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics according to Flexible Work Arrangements

Under this subsection, the researcher analyzed aspects of flexible work arrangements which include flexi-time, job sharing, part time and telecommuting.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Flexi-time**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
My job does not have rigid start and end times	162	4.05	0.676
My job requires me to work for certain number of hours per day/week	162	3.85	0.772
My job gives me the flexibility to choose my start and end times by fulfilling the mandatory core hours	162	3.92	0.737
My job allows me to leave an hour earlier if I can cover it up on another working day in that week	162	3.9	0.829

Table 1 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation values expressing respondent's responses to the items on the flexi-time construct. The mean values range from 3.85 to 4.05 for the variables composed, which signifies that tendency is more towards the scale of 'Agree to 'Strongly Agree'. The standard deviation for the same items is between 0.676 and 0.829. This implies that all responses were not far from each other in their responses. It therefore implies that flexi-time impact on productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Job Sharing**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
It is possible to split my responsibilities with someone else in my workplace	162	3.13	0.993
It is possible to generate better ideas and contribute more if two people are sharing the same position	162	3.72	0.903
I would not mind the income and other benefits which need to be sacrificed due to sharing my job with another person as I would get more personal time	162	3.45	0.991
It is possible to understand and connect with others in a much better way if the organization practices job sharing method	162	3.92	0.920

Table 2 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation values expressing respondent's responses to the items on the job sharing construct. The mean values range from 3.13 to 3.92 for the variables composed, which signifies that tendency is more towards the scale of 'Agree to 'Strongly Agree'. The standard deviation for the same items is between 0.903 and .993. This signifies that the responses from the respondents were of close range. It therefore signifies that job sharing impacts productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Part Time**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
My company supports part time working schedule which enables them to attract external expatriates	162	3.77	0.856
I utilize part time working hours	162	3.53	0.913
Employees who engage in part time attest that it enhances work performance	162	3.72	0.870

Table 3 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation values expressing respondent's responses to the items on the part time construct. The mean values range from 3.53 to 3.77 for the variables composed, which signifies that tendency is more towards the scale of 'Agree to 'Strongly Agree'. The standard deviation for the same items is between 0.856 and 0.913. This implies that all respondents were not far from each other in their responses. It therefore signifies that part time influences productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Telecommuting**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
I prefer telecommuting over traditional working arrangements	162	3.91	0.729
I get the opportunity to work from out of office with the aid of technology for a certain number of hours each week	162	3.41	1.018
It can be much convenient to integrate work and life due to telecommuting.	162	4.03	0.734
I do not think that telecommuting acts a barrier to career advancement anymore in the 21st century	162	3.72	0.865

Table 4 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation values expressing respondent's responses to the items on the telecommuting construct. The mean values range from 3.41 to 4.03 for the variables composed, which signifies that tendency is more towards the scale of 'Agree to 'Strongly Agree'. The standard deviation for the same items is between 0.856 and 0.913. This implies that all respondents were not far from each other in their responses. It therefore signifies that telecommuting influences productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Employee Productivity**

Statements	N	Mean	Std
I am always encouraged to work hard	162	3.55	0.879
I always make sure i accomplish my task	162	3.60	0.804
I can come to work anytime I am are called upon	162	3.72	0.805
I put the goals of my organization above my personal goals	162	3.39	0.913
I am very versatile in knowledge and skills even with new technologies which might seem difficult	162	3.47	0.976

Table 5 illustrates the mean and the standard deviation values expressing respondents responses to the items on the employee productivity construct. The mean values range from 3.39 to 3.72 for the variables composed, which signifies that tendency is more towards the scale of 'Agree to 'Strongly Agree'. The standard deviation for the same items is between 0.804 and 0.976. It therefore signifies that FWAs affect productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria.

## 4.2. Analyses of Hypotheses

**Table 6. Correlation between Flexi-time and Employee Effectiveness**

		Flexi-time	Employee effectiveness
Flexi-time	Pearson Correlation	1	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.798**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 6 above shows the correlation analysis result between flexi-time and employee effectiveness. A high correlation coefficient of .798\*\* was recorded amongst the two variable thereby showing a positive significant of .000 which is less than 0.05. Thus; null hypothesis is hereby rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 7. Correlation between Job Sharing and Employee Effectiveness**

		Job Sharing	Employee effectiveness
Job Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.801**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.801**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 7 above shows the correlation analysis result between job sharing and employee effectiveness. The results indicate a high correlation coefficient of .801\*\* as well as positive significant level of .000 which is less than 0.05. Based on this result; the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 8. Correlation between Part time and Employee Effectiveness**

		Part time	Employee effectiveness
Part time	Pearson Correlation	1	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 8 above shows the correlation result between part time and employee effectiveness. A correlation coefficient of .785\*\* shows there is a high positive correlation; and the significant result also indicate that  $p < 0.05$ . Thus; null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 9. Correlation between Telecommuting and Employee Effectiveness**

		Telecommuting	Employee effectiveness
Telecommuting	Pearson Correlation	1	.822**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.822**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 9 above shows the correlation analysis between telecommuting and employee effectiveness. A positive correlation coefficient of .822\*\* was found and the significant level indicates that  $p < 0.05$  which means that null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 10. Correlation between Flexi-time and Employee Efficiency**

		Flexi-time	Employee efficiency
Flexi-time	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.812**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 10 above shows the correlation analysis result between flexi-time and employee efficiency. A high correlation coefficient of .812\*\* was recorded amongst the two variable thereby showing a positive

significant of .000 which is less than 0.05. Thus; null hypothesis is hereby rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 11. Correlation between Job Sharing and Employee Efficiency**

		Job Sharing	Employee Efficiency
1 Job Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.777**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.777**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 11 above shows the correlation analysis result between job sharing and employee efficiency. The results indicate a high correlation coefficient of .777\*\* as well as positive significant level of .000 which is less than 0.05. Based on this result; the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 12. Correlation between Part time and Employee Efficiency**

		Part time	Employee Efficiency
Part time	Pearson Correlation	1	.885**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.855**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 12 above shows the correlation result between part time and employee efficiency. A correlation coefficient of .785\*\* shows there is a high positive correlation; and the significant result also indicate that  $p < 0.05$ . Thus; null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Table 13. Correlation between Telecommuting and Employee Efficiency**

		Telecommuting	Employee Efficiency
Telecommuting	Pearson Correlation	1	.819**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Employee effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.819**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

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

Table 13 above shows the correlation analysis between telecommuting and employee efficiency. A positive correlation coefficient of .819\*\* was found and the significant level indicates that  $p < 0.05$  which means that null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

### 4.3. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed from data collected that flexible work arrangements have a significant relationship with productivity of sales representatives in the book publishing sector in Nigeria. The major findings of the study were presented according to the objectives of the study as follows:

- **Relationship between Flexi-time and Productivity (Employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of Sales Representatives of Top 10 Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria**

The result of data collected and the analysis presented in Tables 6 and 10 revealed that there is significant relationship between flexi-time and productivity (employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance level. Positive correlation

coefficients of 0.798\*\* and 0.812\*\* were found and the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. This result corroborates the finding by Hashim, Ullah & Khan (2017) which revealed that there is a significant relationship between time flexibility and employees' productivity. This finding also agrees with Mwebi & Kadaga (2015) who also found that flexi-time work arrangement significantly affects employee productivity in Nairobi central business district commercial banks.

- **Relationship between Job sharing and Productivity (Employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of Sales Representatives of Top 10 Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria**

The findings of the study as presented in Table 7 and Table 11 indicated that there is significant relationship between job sharing and productivity (employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance level. Positive correlation coefficients of 0.801\*\* and 0.777\*\* were found and the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. This result supports that of the finding of the study by Rahman (2019) who found that there is significant positive effect of job sharing on employee productivity among the female teachers in the higher education sector in Bangladesh.

- **Relationship between Part time and Productivity (Employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of Sales Representatives of Top 10 Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria**

The analysis of the data collected from the respondents as presented in Table 8 and Table 12 also revealed that there is significant relationship between part time and productivity (employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) in Benue State University Teaching Hospital Makurdi. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance level. Positive correlation coefficients of 0.785\*\* and 0.885\*\* were found and the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. This can be statistically given as  $P\text{-value } 0.010 < \alpha = 0.05$ . The findings of this study agrees with Mamaghani (2012) who found that working part time is positively associated with employee productivity and perceptions of organizational performance.

- **Relationship between Telecommuting on Employee Productivity (Employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of Sales Representatives of Top 10 Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria**

The findings of the study as presented in Table 9 and Table 13 indicated that telecommuting has a significant effect on productivity (employee effectiveness/employee efficiency) of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance level. Positive correlation coefficients of 0.822\*\* and 0.819\*\* were found and the Sig. (2-tailed) value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. The findings of this study are in line with a previous study by Klindzic & Marić (2019) as well as Kotey & Sharma (2016) whose studies both found that companies that apply telecommuting reported high employee productivity and low levels of turnover and absenteeism and that telecommuting has been able to allow employees to minimize stress and contribute maximally in terms of their productivity.

## **5. Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the study finding, the study concludes that flexible work arrangements affects productivity of sales representatives of top 10 book publishing companies in Nigeria. Thus making time and location flexible for employees, the book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria could significantly enhance productivity of their sales representatives.

From the above findings and conclusion, this study made the following recommendations:

- Since flexi-time is found to have the potential to affect employee productivity, management of book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria should avail all categories of staff the opportunity to choose start and close time where necessary.
- Job sharing should be allowed by management book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria as this has the potential of impacting productivity.
- Management of book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria should embrace part time working since it has significant positive effect on productivity of their sales representatives.
- Management of book publishing sector organizations in Nigeria should provide all their sales representatives with internet facilities standard device to enhance opportunities for telecommuting as this will relieve employees the pressures associated with combining work and personal life.

For future studies, more options of FWAs like compressed week work and self-roistering could be added to the survey instrument in addition to the ones identified in this study which could lead to new findings. Moreover, this study has only covered just a segment book publishing sector in Nigeria. It is believed that a comparative analysis could be performed by comparing and contrasting the practices of FWA in diversified sectors such as health and banking sectors. Consequently, this might not only help the employees to compare and choose their preferred employment sectors from the outlook of flexibility, but also help the management of different sectors to understand the importance of FWAs. Other studies should explain more FWAs such as compressed week work and self-roistering.

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