

Flexible Resourcing Strategies in Zimbabwean State Universities

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Abstract: This research examined the utility of flexible resourcing in counteracting the turbulent macro-economic environment, which has affected universities and their relevance in enhancing their "employer of choice" status. The research is guided by Atkinson (1984) Flexible Firm Model. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in data gathering. Stratified random sampling procedure was used in the selection of participants with the targeted population of 104. Research instruments used are interviews, questionnaires and secondary sources of data. The research has revealed that specific flexible resourcing strategies such as functional, temporal and financial flexibility are critical in branding an organization as an "employer of choice". The findings reaffirm the case for flexible resourcing in organisations and highlight the importance of HR bundling and strategic integration to ensure full utilisation of flexible resourcing strategies.

Key Terms: Flexible Resourcing, Functional Flexibility, Numerical Flexibility, Temporal Flexibility, Employer of Choice

I. Introduction

Many times organizations across the globe have had to deal with a turbulent environment in which they have been forced to restructure and respond to demands of the environment (Mahapatro 2010). Economic volatility, competitiveness and new technology have forced many organizations to actively seek more efficient and effective ways of utilizing their resources. This has culminated in State Universities flexibly adjusting the available internal and external labour market resources in line with supply and demand of the market with minimal disruption to the production. Thus the main thrust of this study was to assess whether flexible resourcing strategies are an adequate branding tool which can enhance employer of choice status in state universities. Atkinson's (1984) flexible firm model was roped in, in assessing the growth and utility of flexibility in enhancing employer brand. One of the major benefits of being regarded as an employer of choice is that potential employees seek out and approach employer of choice organisations culminating in reduced marketing, recruitment costs and reduced staff turnover. This study therefore seeks to evaluate the usefulness of flexible resourcing strategies as a tool for enhancing employer of choice status.

State universities in Zimbabwe are facing problems of rigidity in labour market, labour allocation and in labour contracts and are forced to seek efficient and effective ways of utilizing their labour. The adoption of Flexible resourcing strategies will render HRM as a strategic activity rather than a tactical activity. According to Brewster et al (2003) flexible labour entails the following:

- (i) For an individual worker, a wider range of tasks and abilities and a willingness to employ them on behalf of the organization, which purchases them,
- (ii) A greater variety in the time periods of employment;
- (iii) A greater ability by the employer to dispense with certain workers when not strictly essential to the production process and
- (iv) A greater capacity among workers to be so deployed, necessitating changed attitudes for all and skill and time management change for some.

Over the past two decades flexible resourcing have been one of the major areas of discussion in management literature as organizations seek more ways of increasing their competitive advantage through better utilization of human capital (Burke and Cooper 2005). This has culminated in the globalization of flexible work patterns, crafting of labour market policies, and massive research (both public and private) on the subject.

Zimbabwe has also faced a turbulent macro environment that has not spared state universities. The years 2000 to 2008 witnessed inflation rising to unprecedented levels. Other challenges included shortage of foreign currency, price distortions, and closure of most industries, capital flight, skills flight, and polarization along political lines, among other things. The downward spiral of the economy exacerbated by hyperinflation set in motion a whole set of HRM processes in organizations that undermined Taylorism which was riddled with rigidity. Most organizations had more fixed roles and practices, requiring tight job descriptions and people with a narrow range of highly toned skills. There were problems of rigidity in labour market, labour allocation and in labour contracts. The labour market had to undergo radical transformation as organizations were faced with

strong market volatility, heightened competition and narrowing profit margins. This has resulted in organizations focusing on their human capital as a source for sustainable competitive edge and thus enhances their 'employer of choice' (EOC) status. In a dynamic environment, as one obtaining in the country there is need for people with the ability to perform many tasks or functions to be multiskilled and capable of rapid change.

Flexible resourcing has its roots in the Resource Based View (RBV) which assumes that sustainable competitive advantage can be obtained by exploiting the organization's internal strengths and external opportunities whilst minimizing its internal weaknesses and the effects of external threat (SWOT) (Barney 1991). The organization's human resources are regarded as a key source of its competitive advantage as they add value, are rare in the marketplace, hard or impossible to imitate and cannot be easily substituted (Ployhart 2011). Thus, a lot of research has been done by organizations on the utility of flexible resourcing strategies as they seek ways to ensure their competitive edge through the deployment and redeployment of its human capital. However, there is gross negation of significant research on flexible work patterns in Africa hence the need for a particular research that focuses on the Zimbabwean context as it is currently facing a myriad of challenges.

The economic downturn forced many organizations to come up with strategies of labour utilization. Great Zimbabwe University and Zimbabwe Open University are no exception as they are also vulnerable to changes in macro environment where changes in the funding policy and political thinking impact negatively on their capability to sustain resourcing strategies. State universities faced problems or challenges of recruiting, retaining qualified personnel and critical skills shortages and this forced them to come up with a number of survival strategies to remain on board. State universities failed to attract competent staff and faced severe skills shortage as people sought greener pastures in neighbouring countries and the developed world. In January 2007 GZU, had a staff compliment of 620 workers. By December 2007, 263 who constitute 42% of the total workforce had left the institution of which 213 of those employees were highly skilled. In 2008 the University failed to open its doors to the public and it only opened in February 2009 after the introduction of dollarization. The University's Personnel Management Department had the unenviable task of attracting people to the organization. Zimbabwe Open University whose origins date back to 1993 when a centre for Distance Learning was established within the Faculty of Education at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) was not spared from the economic challenges facing the country. The institution's financial sustainability received a battering from the hyperinflationary conditions obtaining in the country especially in 2007 and 2008. The situation was exacerbated by fees which were regulated by the state as well as unavailability of credit terms from suppliers and services. ZOU had established regional centres in each of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces. Each regional centre served as the hub for all the learning activities for students in that province: from registration to face to face tutoring and counselling and from assignment administration to a venue for invigilated examinations. In January 2007, ZOU had a staff compliment of 198 and they lost over 50% to skills flight. This marked a paradigm shift in the management of workers at the workplace, as the traditional Personnel Management tactics could not cope with dynamic environment obtaining in Zimbabwe. GZU and ZOU were forced to embrace HRM strategies such as flexible resourcing to attract the scarce resource, which gives an organization a competitive edge (human capital). The situation has improved but the universities are not yet out of the crisis as the GZU Vice Chancellor in his address on the 3rd Graduation Ceremony lamented the critical shortage of knowledge workers at the institution. He indicated that there were 187 vacant posts at GZU. Clearly this shows the difficulties state owned institutions are facing in attracting potential employees. Governments need to emphasize the advantages they can offer as compared to the private sector. If governments are both to compete successfully for talented applicants and retain high performing employees, they need to brand government as an employer of choice that provides challenging work and progressive human resource policies. State universities offered flexibility that is unparalleled even in some private sector organisations, the question is therefore; are these enough to attract talented employees and enhance the image of state universities as employers of choice?

Furthermore, state owned institutions still face a problem of declining image of the public sector. With few exceptions, young people (graduates) tend not to rate public employment highly. There is a belief that the public sector is bureaucratic, old fashioned and the prestige of the civil service is low in many countries. They trust that citizenship in government has decreased and this has a negative impact on the image of government. Further still Human Resource Management in state institutions is still old-fashioned and deters high-quality staff. In many countries seniority is more important than merit (Reichenberg 1996). Flexible resourcing strategies at least represent some current and best practices in HRM, in this research their relevance in employer branding is assessed.

II. Problem Statement

Resourcing the organisation with the most qualified and experienced staff has always been a challenge for many organisations. This is particularly so for the higher education sector in Zimbabwe given the challenges bedevilling the Zimbabwean economy in general. State Universities in Zimbabwe are struggling to adequately

resource themselves as manifested by the high number of unfilled vacancies and in some cases in the total closure of some departments. The panacea to such a scenario may lie in the branding of state universities as desirable employers in order to attract a wider pool of potential employees. This paper attempts to assess the use of flexible resourcing strategies by state universities in Zimbabwe as a method of branding the universities as “employers of choice”

Objectives

1. Investigate the effects of economic challenges on the implementation of HR practices.
2. Determine the impact of flexible resourcing strategies on enhancing employer of choice status in state universities.
3. Examine the utility of flexible resourcing strategies in enhancing ‘employer of choice’ status in state universities.
4. To proffer recommendations to state universities on how flexible resourcing strategies could be used in enhancing employer of choice status.

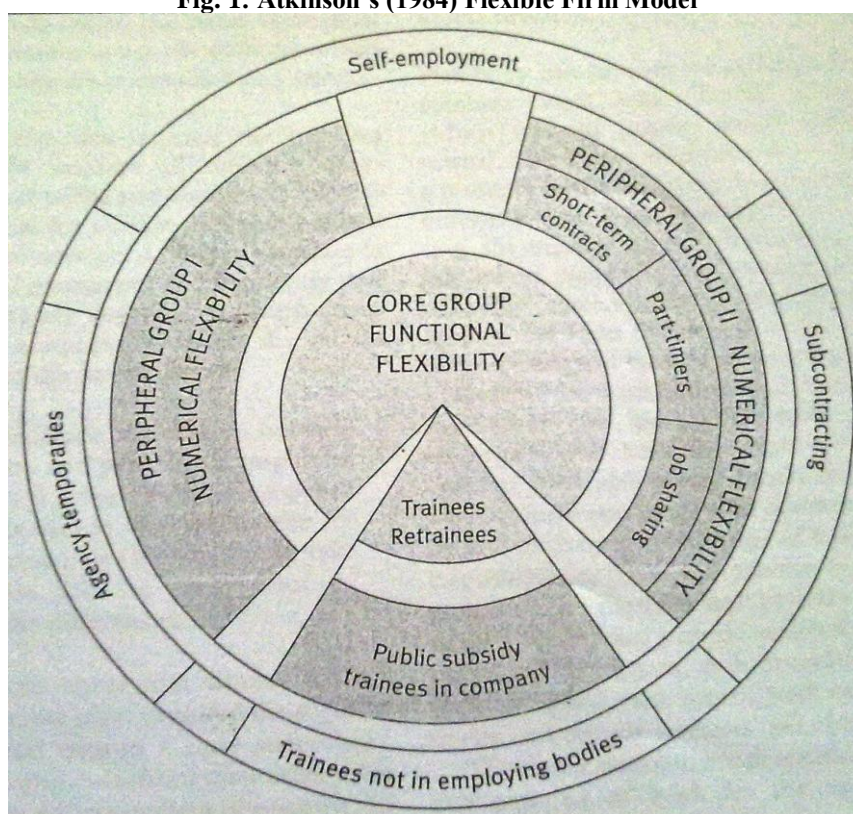
Conceptual Framework

The notion of Flexible Resourcing has its roots in HRM which believes that people are the organization’s most valuable asset whose actions lead to superior performance. HRM involves the establishment and execution of policies, programs and procedures that influence the performance, capabilities and loyalty of the employees of an organization. It is through these policies and procedures that individuals are attracted, retained, motivated and developed to perform the work of the organization. To this end the research is guided by Atkinson’s (1984) Flexible Firm Model. According to Sarantinos (2007) Atkinson (1984) suggested a division of employees into two main groups, core and peripheral workers. Core workers are skilled employees participating in decision making, enjoying significant opportunities for training and development and are relatively well paid, and secure. Dyer (1998) describes peripheral workers as low paid; enjoying little security in their job and their degree of autonomy inside the organization is limited.

Atkinson (1984) Flexible Firm Model

Atkinson’s Flexible Firm Model analyses the segmentation of the workforce utilizing the concepts of core and periphery as Figure 1 illustrates.

Fig. 1: Atkinson’s (1984) Flexible Firm Model



Adapted from Atkinson (1984)

According to Brewster et al (2003) the Flexible Firm Model is based on a break with unitary and hierarchical labour markets and organization of internal means of allocating labour, in order to increase a core workforce and a cluster of peripheral employment relations. Thus, the Flexible Firm Model redefines the organization into two broad segments i.e. the core and the periphery. The core is made up of highly skilled group of employees with internal career paths. This group of workers have a positive psychological contract and high degree of job security as the organization is most likely to build their strategies around these workers. Resources are easily availed for training in firm specific skills not readily bought in and are closely associated with functional flexibility. The second segment which is the peripheral workforce is mainly concerned with the organization's day to day activities that are important but not vital to the organization that is the development of qualitative or numerical flexibility. Employees in this segment are offered a job not a career. Brewster et al (2003) assert that the main focus of the flexible firm model is to closely match organizational (labour) resources with work demand, increasing the efficiency of human resource utilization while dampening the effects of market volatility and uncertainty, thereby increasing organizational effectiveness. For the peripheral group, there is minimal organizational commitment, negative psychological contract and a high degree of job insecurity. Management's major thrust is to ensure worker compliance with preset rules and regulations. If the organization needs to beef up its workforce either the core or peripheral workforce, the secondary peripheral workforce solves this through part time temporary or subcontracting work. Thus, there is no disruption of organizational activities.

Atkinson (1984) suggested four main types of flexibility, which are functional flexibility, numerical flexibility, temporal flexibility, and financial flexibility. Functional flexibility allows employees to combine skills and competencies in order to increase their mobility across the various channels of production. It relies on extensive training and thus it is likely to be pursued when there is no longer a stable relationship between employees and the organization (Sarantinos 2007). It entails horizontal or vertical multiskilling, teamwork and job rotation. Sarantinos (2007) describe numerical flexibility as the possibility of the organization to adapt the number of its labour on a short-notice, increasing or decreasing it as it sees fit. This category of employees is more easily replaceable and hired according to the needs of the organization. Thus, it has much more to do with varying the size and the structure of the workforce and it include temporary contracts, agency work, labour pool, part-time, outsourcing, subcontract and freelance. Temporal flexibility entails shifting working hours so as to meet production demands. It involves shift work, rostering, annualized work, part time, sabbatical leave, variable working pattern and compressed workweek. Sarantinos (2007) asserts that financial flexibility is linked with efforts on behalf of the organization to reduce labour costs in order to protect profitability. It is closely linked with performance related pay and output –driven reward. It enables the organization to adjust its wage and salary outgoings in accordance with fluctuations in output.

III. Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in data gathering. The researcher applied three data gathering methods in this research in order to triangulate the findings. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1999) triangulation as a strategy has the advantage of raising the social scientist above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. Indeed, triangulation increase the credibility and validity of the results (Somekh and Lewin 2005). Thus, the researcher employed triangulation to overcome the weaknesses that arose from employing one investigator or one method of research. In this study, questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence were all used as instruments of collecting data for the research. The questionnaire was pretested before it was used to collect data. Self-administered questionnaires were used as they have a high response rate. To ensure validity, Cronbach's alpha was employed. The SPSS was roped in for descriptive analysis. Creswell (2003) posits that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of the research problem by converging (triangulating) both numeric trends from quantitative research and the detail of qualitative research. Case study was chosen on the strength of its ability to explore a topic where there has been scant prior investigation, knowledge or understanding

Sampling Procedure

The researcher used stratified random sampling which is a sampling procedure which provides equal opportunity of selection for each element in the population. The population was divided into four groups called strata so that each element of the population belonged to one and only one stratum and it was based on one attribute of job description. These strata were formed on the basis of seniority as follows, senior management, senior lecturers, junior lecturers and non- teaching staff. Within each stratum the 'lottery technique' where names of participants are placed in a container, mixed well and then the lucky participants drawn that constitute the sample was employed.

Sample Size

The total sample size was 104 with 6 from Senior Administrators, 10 Senior Lecturers, 52 Lecturers, 36 from Non-teaching staff. Senior management employees and senior lecturers responded to semi structured interviews while the Lecturers and non-teaching staff responded to the questionnaire.

Delimitations of the Study

The study assessed the utility of flexible resourcing strategies in enhancing employer of choice status in state universities using the cases of Great Zimbabwe University and Zimbabwe Open University. Research participants included fulltime employees, part time employees and contract workers.

IV. Results And Discussion

Demographic Structure of Respondents

Out of the total of 100 questionnaires distributed to the different employee categories, the response rate for teaching staff was 52 constituting 92% and that for Non-teaching staff was 36 constituting 72% and thus the total response rate was 82%. Table 1 below shows the demographic for both Teaching and Non Teaching staff from the two state universities.

Table. 1 Demographic Profiles of GZU and ZOU Respondents

AGE	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL
	Teaching	Non Teaching	Teaching	Non Teaching	
20 - 30	9	3	3	2	17
31 - 40	18	13	5	3	39
41 - 50	16	6	6	6	34
51 - 60	4	3	3	0	10
60 +	4	0	0	0	4
Total	51	25	17	11	104

GZU and ZOU staff have served for an average period of 4 years and considering that GZU has been in existence for less than 10 years and ZOU has been in existence since 1999 4 years is relatively a long period of time. The gender component of the respondents was biased towards male respondents with only 26% of the respondents being female. This may be attributed to the gender structure at GZU and ZOU, which has fewer women as lecturers and administrators. Most of the respondents are relatively educated as evidenced by 69% of the respondents being degree holders the remainder were Diploma holders. This validates their responses as they qualify to comment on flexible resourcing on the basis of their academic qualifications. The fact that GZU and ZOU are able to attract highly educated individuals who have stayed with the organization for a relatively long period of 4 years is ample evidence that GZU and ZOU are employer of choice organizations.

Characteristic that best describes industry.

The data revealed that GZU and ZOU employees view the Universities as centres for knowledge management as evidenced by the 70% respondents who identified knowledge work as the characteristic that best describes the industry. Knowledge generation is closely associated with Universities and this explains the high number of respondents with degrees (69%). However, the fact that 23% of the respondents felt that their industry was highly technical and competitive shows that they do not know what universities should be doing which is knowledge management. These responses (23%) could have been elicited from diploma holders.

Contribution of different types of Flexibility to Employer Brand.

Eighty (80) respondents constituting 91% rated temporal flexibility as critical in ensuring organisational citizenship. It could be because employees were happy with the shifting of working hours such as flexitime, part-time, contact leave and sabbatical leave. It helps in reducing absenteeism and staff turnover. Functional flexibility also plays a significant role in ensuring that workers remain loyal to GZU and ZOU with 52 representing 59% of the respondents ranking it in the second best category. Sarantinos (2007) asserts that functional flexibility allows employees to combine skills and competencies in order to increase their mobility across the various channels of production. It could be that employees were happy with staff development programmes. Numerical flexibility plays an insignificant role in ensuring employer of choice status in state universities as all respondents ranked it in the least category. This is in tandem with Dyer's (1998) observation that peripheral workers are low paid and enjoy little security in their job. Indeed, Snell and Lepak's (1999) HR Architecture assert that they are victims of compliance based HR configuration.

Contribution of Macro-Economic Environment to Skills Flight.

Forty Six percent (46%) of the respondents attributed skills flight to the hyper inflationary conditions, which were obtaining in the country. Poor remuneration (32%) as well as political persecution (21%) also had an impact on skills flight as skilled personnel left the country in large numbers. Thus, this data validates the researcher's assertion that the macro-economic quagmire contributed to skills flight. This forced organizations to move away from bureaucratic culture associated with rigidity in labour market, allocation and contracts to focusing on human capital as a source of competitive advantage through flexible resourcing. Two respondents asserted that skills flight forced GZU and ZOU to lower benchmarks or qualifications for one to become a lecturer. Grade Seven for Assistant lecturers was created and most departments were manned by Assistant Lecturers who had the same load as fulltime lecturers. This culminated in procedural changes in work practices-particularly in the restrictions associated with lines of demarcations, a (re)combination of jobs and the provision of mechanisms to support and encourage these changes, through training and development. Thus, one can safely conclude that there has been improved employee flexibility by breaking down existing horizontal and vertical skills demarcations among employees, thus increasing the range of tasks or the amount of discretion or both. Most departments at both GZU and ZOU were virtually run by Assistant lecturers. Forty percent of the respondents also revealed that the two universities introduced flexitime for the highly qualified staff and this is in sync with Atkinson's (1984) concept of the core worker who enjoys autonomy in decision making and experiences a high degree of job security. Thus one can safely conclude that flexible work patterns contribute immensely to employer brand. Low students turn out did not contribute significantly to skills flight as evidenced by only 1% of the respondents who mentioned it as contributing to skills flight. Thus, this data validate the researcher's assertion that the turbulent macro-economic environment contributed immensely to skills flight at GZU and ZOU.

Recommendations on how flexible resourcing strategies can enhance an Employer's Brand.

Horibe (1999) asserts that there is need to reward employees who use their heads more than their hands to produce value as the organization is most likely to build their strategies around these workers. This is validated by a big chunk of respondents 46% who recommended the increase in employee benefits as well as flexibilising working time, upgrading and developing staff. Flexibilising work time provide the opportunity to combine work outside activities which allows employees to maintain presence in the workforce which may not otherwise have been possible. Four respondents also advocated for the rewarding of highly qualified staff with commensurate salaries and this is supported by Snell and Lepak's HR Architecture who believe that new organizations are composed of 4 district groups of workers who are treated differently and have different expectations. However, 23% of the respondents recommended the relaxation of requirements for one to be tenured where one has to publish an article before being tenured. The researcher discovered from the GZU Social Sciences Faculty Planning Committee Minutes that the process of getting tenured is cumbersome as lecturers would be at the mercy of the top brass who may deny one for not being a good citizen. The GZU regulations are very clear on publications where one has to publish if he or she is to be tenured and is proving to be a source of stress to the lecturers. Non teaching staff does not have to publish as they are tenured after serving only one year with the university. One respondent quipped "It's either you publish or you perish". This requirement is associated with job insecurity because if one fails to publish within 3 years from the date of appointment he or she may be forced to leave the organization. The researcher failed to get ZOU regulations on publications but was informed by three respondents that publications are needed before one gets tenure. These work patterns help in the recruitment and retention of human capital by providing employees with employment opportunities, which suit their requirements. People have greater freedom to work where and when they like, planning their day around travel schedules, domestic requirements and personal proclivities (Walton 1999). One respondent felt that if flexible resourcing strategies were to be successful there was need to move away from a bureaucratic culture to a people oriented culture where the university should allow academic freedom without equivocation. This could be because of a culture of fear under which lecturers are operating in, where they are afraid of victimisation.

Impact of Flexible Resourcing on State Universities

The concepts of temporal, functional and financial flexibility as enunciated by Atkinson (1984) proved popular with the knowledge workers at GZU and ZOU as evidenced by 64% respondents who highlighted that they sustained the university. Lecturers were also happy with staff development programmes, local allowances and parallel allowances and this is in tandem with Snell and Lepak's (2002) HR Architecture which acknowledge that employees do not all contribute in the same way based on their human capital, that multiple HR configurations are used within firms for different skills groups depending on the nature of their contribution. Lecturers at GZU, because of their criticality in ensuring that the university gains a competitive advantage are given parallel allowances and more local allowances to motivate them to work harder. ZOU, however, does not

have parallel programmes so there are no parallel allowances but still the lecturers get 100% more than the non teaching staff. The researcher discovered that ZOU has a core staff who are permanently employed who enjoy many benefits and a large workforce who are part timers and are paid for marking assignments, examinations and contact time. The organisation can flexibly get rid of this staff when it's off season and this is in sync with Snell and Lepak's (2002)HR Architecture. The GZU's reward management policy shows a bias towards lecturers in terms of local allowances where they get 150% more than the non-teaching staff. ZOU teaching staff gets 100% more than the non teaching staff. However, 41% of the respondents were not happy with numerical flexibility asserting that it was associated with increased job insecurity and increased stress. However, this scenario seems to have created two antagonistic camps at GZU and ZOU, the core group (teaching staff) and the peripheral group (non teaching staff). Within the core group there are different camps as Temporary full time lecturers and Assistant lecturers are being given very short contracts and do not get paid over holidays and thus there is a feeling of insecurity and stress as there is compliance based HR configuration. The Flexible Firm Model has been criticized by Brewster et al (2003) for its promotion of variation in terms and conditions of employment within organizations, the outcome of which is the creation of a polarized workforce with an elite core workforce and disenfranchised low-skilled, low wage peripheral workforce and this is what is obtaining at GZU and ZOU. Such perceptions of inequity and unfairness are in direct violation of employer of choice principles where equity and fairness are upheld. However, it provides a useful framework for insight and explanation into the utility of flexible resourcing in State Universities. The high numbers of people who wish to join the institution is ample evidence that flexible resourcing is critical enhancing employer brand. Eighty four percent(84%) of the respondents were very grateful to the government for hiking their salaries above the poverty datum line. This validates Sarantinos' (2007) assertion that flexible resourcing enables the organization to adapt the number of its labour on a short notice, increasing or decreasing it as it sees fit that is the organization can hire and fire at will and this is in sync with Snell and Lepak's HR architecture Quadrant 3 where there is contractual work arrangements and a compliance based HR configuration. Labour turn over at GZU has gone down as evidenced the 11 employees who left the institution in 2010 who constitute 0.017% and they were cases of disciplinary action. This is ample evidence that indeed state universities are employers of choice as those who left did not leave on their own volition.

Specific flexible resourcing strategies which enhance employer of choice status.

The data revealed temporal flexibility such as flexitime (40%), sabbatical leave and contact leave (21.5%) as specific flexible resourcing strategies, which enhances employer brand. These strategies were popular with the respondents as they allowed employees flexibility to do other errands to sustain their families. Local allowances fall within Atkinson's (1984) financial flexibility which enabled lecturers to gain the extra dollar through the chemusha and chemazizi initiatives. The lower number of respondents (9.5%) can be attributed to its unpopularity with the non-teaching staff at both GZU and ZOU who do not benefit as it caters for the lecturers only and this information was gleaned from the GZU's reward management policy. Moreover, parallel allowances are only available to lecturers from faculties with parallel students of which there are only two such faculties at GZU, that is, Faculty of Commerce and Faculty of Social Sciences. For ZOU employees they all receive local allowances but teaching staff have more benefits such as cell phone allowance and are also paid for marking examinations. Employees are not happy with unequal treatment in terms of pay and benefits and this threatens the psychological contract and a source of increased stress. Headhunting had the least number of respondents (12%) and it could be because of the difficulties encountered in trying to entice individuals to join the university. Qualified personnel shunned universities as they were associated with poor remunerations and lecturers had become the laughing stock of the public.

Staff development programmes managed to get 12% of the respondents and it is clear that greater job satisfaction and motivation are associated with those employees who are given the opportunity to develop their skill range. The beneficiaries of staff development programmes feel indebted to the University for giving them a chance to enhance their skills and thus become loyal to the organisation. The low response rate could be attributed to limited training opportunities for low skilled workers, and those on fixed term contracts, casual and part-time workers where there is weak employment relations marked with a Compliance based HR Configuration. This also explains the GZU management's reluctance to avail funds for this staff development programme citing a number of lecturers who reneged on the agreement to be bonded by the university.

Other HRM processes that enhance Employer of Choice status.

Fifty two percent (52%) of the respondents felt that a reward management system, which includes non-monetary benefits such as house loans and car loans, tie the individual to the organization and respondents who were interviewed who suggested the need for golden handcuffs supported this view. HRM bundles were also suggested by 41% of the respondents and it entails the implementation of several HR practices together so that they are interrelated and therefore complement and reinforce each other (Armstrong 2004). It is based on the

premise that 'more is better'. This will ensure that human resources become committed to the university. Earning EOC status is difficult and complex for an organisation to achieve. EOC comprises of a wide array of contributing factors which together influence employee decisions to be initially attracted to or stay with an organisation. Excellent leadership, regular and positive communication and a strong focus on all the elements that contribute to employee engagement appear to be the necessary components for an organisation to achieve EOC status. Findings in this research support Noe(2000)'s argument that extrinsic factors must also be present for an organisation to be an EOC. Factors such as safety, pay, comfortable/efficient work environments, employee status and recognition, company image and individual empowerment are considered superior to what other organisations offer. The current economic environment in Zimbabwe makes extrinsic factors more important as such flexibility is ideal for those already employed who want to make an extra dollar through part time working. For those whose sole survival is based on a ZOU or GZU paychequenumerical flexibility poses a threat to their wellbeing and therefore not necessarily an employer of choice.

Perception of lecturers and administrators on resourcing strategies used by GZU/ZOU to attract employees.

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the respondents indicated that the resourcing strategies employed at GZU and ZOU were very effective as evidenced by the high response rate to the advertisements. The researcher was shown 48 application letters in response to one job advert by one administrator. Twenty one percent of the respondents also felt there was need to avail more funds for sabbatical leave and contract leave as there was a huge backlog and this would help attract more knowledge workers. This provides further evidence that temporal flexibility as enunciated by Sarantinos (2007) is critical in ensuring organizational citizenship. Flexible arrangements culminate in organizational citizenship as opposed to bureaucratic, rigid and hierarchical structures. However, two administrators were sceptical of unequal treatment in terms of pay and benefits as a potential source of tension between temporary and permanent employees. The reward management policy is very clear on paying lecturers involved in parallel programmes more allowances and this could be the source of friction between teaching and non teaching staff as they do not benefit from chemazizi despite the fact that they would have done all the administrative work. They (two administrators) also cited the ad hoc nature of recruitment of temporary employees as causing problems for them as they complained of the quality and attitude of these employees and they also cited an increased sense of diminishing control over the workforce. It seems there is lack of significant and long term investment by GZU and ZOU on a durable resourcing strategy. Twelve percent (12%) lecturers were uncomfortable with limited training opportunities especially for assistant lecturers citing the reluctance of the university to send them on staff development programmes. These lecturers also questioned the wisdom of giving them short contracts when they had served the university loyally for many years. This can be a source of stress and threatens the psychological contract. The researcher discovered from the GZU reward management policy that Assistant lecturers' contracts were not renewed during semester breaks and were only renewed when it opens citing the need to save meagre resources and this explains their agitation as their terms, conditions and employment opportunities are significantly less favourable than the full time 'core' workforce despite the fact that they are engaged in work of similar skill demand (work of equal value).

V. Recommendations

Flexible resourcing strategies have contributed immensely to the enhancement of employer brand at GZU and ZOU. However, there are a number of challenges to the full utilization of human resources to ensure organizational citizenship at the two institutions. The researcher wishes to recommend the following strategies that GZU and ZOU HR departments can adopt in using flexible resourcing strategy as an HR strategy.

1. There is need for HR bundling. The researcher recommends the use of HR practices and policies which are interrelated and internally consistent because 'more is better' with respect to the impact on performance because of the overlapping and mutually reinforcing effect of multiple practice. Instead of relying on one flexible resourcing strategy alone, there is need to blend with other strategies which elicit motivation from the human resources.
2. There should be a departure from a bureaucratic culture to a people oriented culture in universities. Bureaucracy is associated with rigidity and hierarchical structure, which has no place in today's turbulent macro-economic environment. There is need for organisations which are flexible and adaptable to change.
3. There is need for support from top university management. Management of the flexible workforce requires meticulous planning and coordination and support by senior management that is there is need for a long term commitment to creating the necessary environment and conditions supported and resourced by top management. There is need for vertical integration between the HR department and the university's top brass. This helps to ensure that topuniversity managementbuy in to strategies crafted by the HR department.
4. There is need for strategic integration which ensures alignment between HR functions and activities and other line management functions which have an impact on flexible resourcing in universities like the faculties, staff development department and the bursary.
5. There is need for proper management of the psychological contract for peripheral workers because of the variable

nature of the employment relationship and the changing demands on the internal external labour they are susceptible to increased stress and job insecurity. Proper management of this group will ensure the retention and maintenance of these resources. Temporary employment can be used as an opportunity or prerequisite for a permanent employment and this explains why respondents called for a waiver on stringent requirements for one to be tenured especially for those who soldiered on when others left for greener pastures.

6. There is a need for state universities to identify incentives other than salary if they want to be able to recruit and retain high quality employees and go beyond flexibility. The possible areas that must be dovetailed to support implementation of flexible resourcing include working hours, flat hierarchies and the use of the latest technical equipment. Other non-monetary incentives that can be offered include co-operative leadership, open communication; sufficient freedom to display initiative and make decisions; good working conditions; good opportunities for training and personal development; telecommuting; family-friendly personnel policies; job rotation; assignments in private sector companies, other public services or international organizations; and opportunities for educational leave or leave for other personal reasons.

VI. Conclusions

The study attempted to determine the extent to which the HR departments at GZU and ZOU are employing flexible resourcing strategies to enhance employer brand. GZU and ZOU were selected as prototype universities in Zimbabwe and it is the researcher's fervent hope that these findings can be generalized to any other Zimbabwean University. The study discovered that temporal flexibility, functional flexibility and financial flexibility were critical in ensuring employer of choice status in State Universities. Not all types of flexibility apply to state universities and there is a blend of the old personnel management and HRM. The fact that they get orders from the government makes it difficult for them to completely wean themselves from bureaucracy. Furthermore, it seems there is lack of integration between HR department and other line management functions and between the HR department and University's top brass which has witnessed low funds being availed for staff development programmes, contact leave, sabbatical leave and ensure equity in local allowances.

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