Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Effectiveness: Role of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Employee Intent to Stay

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: Human resource flexibility is an important domain of study in organizational research. 21st century organizations require a flexible system in its portfolio, which should encourage employees to be evolved with multiple job skills and abilities to sustain in the face of competitive result driven environment. In this context the purpose of the present paper is to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework to examine the interrelationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness. Further, it tries to establish the possible role of organizational citizenship behavior and employee intent to stay on the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

Design / Methodology/ Approach: The paper follows the method of in-depth and extant literature survey to critically examine and rationalize the influence of human resource flexibility on organizational effectiveness for Indian organizations.

Conclusions/Findings: The review provides a comprehensive theoretical framework to develop a conceptual model of human resource flexibility. The proposed model includes human resource flexibility, dimensions of organizational effectiveness, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee intent to stay.

Research and Practical Implications: The theoretical framework proposed in this paper on HR flexibility would help researchers and management expert to understand the role of HR flexibility in producing better results for business organizations. This paper has a number of implications for HR Practitioners and management experts which could be utilized to nurture good HR flexibility in its system for better performance of the employees as well as of the organization.

Original Contribution: The study contributes towards the broader understanding of the construct of HR flexibility and proposes a new theoretical model in the Indian context.

KEYWORDS: Human resource flexibility, organizational citizenship behavior, intent to stay, organizational effectiveness

I. INTRODUCTION

The nature of today's workplace is much more complex and unpredictable than ever before. After the introduction of globalization, privatization and liberalization, the competition in business scenario has increased in multifold. Today's workplace demands more energy, talent and multi skilling with specialized aptitudes in order to succeed and survive in the face of global competition. Therefore, work pressure, achievement of goals and targets within the shortest time, fulfillment of role expectations from friends, colleagues, organization and family has become an incessant challenge for an individual.

The perception of human resource flexibility has generated a great deal of research interest in the field of human resource management as it enables an organization to adapt to diverse and changing requirements from the external environment (Snow & Snell 1993; Wright and Boswell 2002). The notion of flexibility in an organizational set up has created space for employees to, think, feel and act in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives without putting much more stress on achieving the financial gains for organizations. Flexibility refers to the capability of an organization to take action on various demands from its environment (Sanchez, 1995). Many researchers have suggested that HR flexibility, in particular is an important organizational capability (MacDuffie, 1995; Milliman,

Von Glinow, & Nathan, 1991; Wright & Boswell, 2002; Wright & Snell, 1998). Human resource flexibility helps to achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Sanchez 1995; Hitt, Keats & DeMarie 1998) and this is quite relevant to the current business environment which is facing rapid economic transformation and shifting strategic demands. Thus the human resource flexibility is considered as one of the important aspect of organizational capability and is often focused on adopting employee attributes (i.e. knowledge, skill and behavior). Some of the research findings have described its nature, factors and budding contribution towards organizational performance (Wright & Snell 1998; Bhattacharya, Gibson & Doty 2005; Eldridge & Nisar 2006). There are three distinct sub dimensions of human resource flexibility and they are identified as employee skill flexibility, employee behavior flexibility and human resource practice flexibility. Among all these sub dimensions, human resource flexibility has found to have a positive and significant influence on financial performance (Bhattacharya et al. 2005). The relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational performance has been explained on the basis of resource based view. The resource based view of human resource flexibility refers to valuable organization specific capabilities inducing sustainable competitive advantage and enhancing organizational effectiveness (Bhattacharya et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2001).

It is important to note that another source of competitive advantage for organizations is derived from organizational citizenship behavior. Some of the recent findings have brought out the fact that employees who are interested in organizational citizenship behavior are bold and committed, work hard to meet organizational goal effectively, and have a need for developing innovative ideas in achieving organizational innovation (Yang & Konard, 2011). Hence organizational creativity and innovation are positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior that is instrumental in achieving competitive advantage. The organizational citizenship behavior in this context is found to be an inseparable phenomenon which is shaped by the organization's human resource system. Thus, one may expect the association between human resource flexibility and organizational citizenship behavior would likely to influence organizational effectiveness.

Some of the present findings in the field of human resource management have shown that employees who intend to stay with their organization don't think about the prospect of leaving the organization in the brink of change in its system. Tett & Meyer, (1993) has referred this attitude as employee's consciousness and deliberate willingness to stay in the organization. This kind of attitude mirrors the level of employee's attachment to his/her organization, the willingness to remain employed and to contribute to the same organization. Sometimes employee intent to stay refers to one's behavioral attachment towards his/her organization (Mueller et al., 1999) which is very important for achieving competitive advantage and organizational effectiveness. Thus employee intent to stay may have a dynamic role in predicting the influence of human resource flexibility on organizational effectiveness.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to focus on establishing the cumulative relationship among human resource flexibility, organizational citizenship behavior, employee intent to stay and organizational effectiveness. Based on previous work, a conceptual model linking to these construct together has been developed by us to empirically investigate and establish scientific evidence to enrich the knowledge in the domain of human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource flexibility: Human resource flexibility concentrates on the multi-talented nature of workers as indicated by the changing nature of their personality domain, for instance their expertise, behavior and learning. It refers to the ability to develop, organize and install human resource system in an organizational setup which will manage human resources as a whole to compete on the basis of environment responsiveness and innovation. Human resource flexibility has been perceived as a capability that helps an organization to adapt to changing environmental contingencies (Snell, Youndt & Wright, 1996). Beltran-Martin et al. (2008) has found that employees having the advantage of the flexible work system shows greater involvement towards organization which ultimately increases organization's performance. With the support of human resource flexibility, performance management system not only value current performance of the employees, but also demonstrates a further way for their advancement of capabilities, skills and knowledge in upcoming times. This will inspire them for positive conduct towards work and organization. At the same time, this will make employees to react aggressively and effectively to their respective portfolio, ultimately leading to effective organizational performance (Galinsky, Sakai, & Wigton, 2011). Employees with high human resource flexibility system are more satisfied with their employment than organizations with a lesser flexibility plan. It has a positive impact on employee performance (Ketkar & Sett, 2009). Based on the discussion we propose the following hypothesis.

H1- Human resource flexibility will have positive impact on organizational effectiveness.

Further, Human resource flexibility has three sub dimensions such as, employee skill flexibility, behavior flexibility and human resource practice flexibility (Wright & Snell, 1998).

Skill Flexibility: Skill flexibility is that option given by the association where workers can utilize their abilities. It has two attributes, (a) resource flexibility, and the number of potential alternative uses to which employee skills can be applied and (b) how individuals with different skills can be quickly reorganized. Resource flexibility in regard to employee competencies refers to the degree to which employees possess - or can quickly acquire - competencies that enable them to successfully perform alternative work-related activities (e.g., tasks, roles, jobs, etc.) and employ alternative technologies. Moreover, skill flexibility describes how quickly and effectively employees are adapting new skills that the organization gives them (Boxall, 1999).

Broadly speaking skill flexibility can be generated in two different ways. First, organizations may have employees who own a set of broad-based skills and are capable of using them under different require conditions. Broad-based skills are valuable because they generate output streams for existing requirements and are also capable of producing output for possible alternative requirements. However, skills possessed by employees, but not currently be of use may open up new opportunities of business for the organization, and indeed, may influence strategic choices (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 1988). Second, an organization may employ a wide variety of "specialist" employees who provide flexibility by allowing the firm to reconfigure skill profiles to meet changing needs. Neuman & Wright, (1999) have brought the findings stating that with this flexibility, when the need arises, the firm may reorganize its employees (e.g., through project teams) to achieve the desired skill profile to fit with the changed demand. Thus, a wide range of employee skills contributes to flexibility.

An organization may develop skill flexibility through processes such as job-rotation, cross-functional teams, and project-based work arrangements, all of which generate broad skill configurations specific to the organization that are not easily replicable. Employees having skill flexibility will easily cope with different type of job requirements. They can successfully meet the requirements of the market, customers and are more likely to manage the job stress effectively than the employees without having skill flexibility in them. This in turn makes them better performers contributing towards organizational effectiveness. It can be assumed that the higher the level of skill flexibility, the higher the organizational effectiveness. Accordingly, we have proposed the following hypothesis:

H1a- Skill flexibility will have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.

Behavior flexibility: Behavioral flexibility states about adjusting to new circumstance contradicted to the routine conduct. It represents an adaptable attitude of the employees as opposed to routine behaviors and the extent to which employees possess a broad range of behavioral characters that can be adapted according to the situation-specific demands. Resource flexibility in workforce behaviors refers to the degree to which the firm 's existing employees possess - and are willing (motivated) to employ - behavior scripts that can be applied to alternative uses (Weick, 1979; Wright & Snell, 1998).

Behavioral flexibility can be distinguished from skill flexibility in the sense that employees may be skilled but lack the behavioral motivation to change or they may be highly motivated but lack the necessary skills or knowledge to make change decisions (MacDuffie, 1995). Employee behavior flexibility is valuable because it enables the employee to deal with a variety of situations towards facilitating change implementation. Organizations having employees with enhanced learning behavior capabilities means that the organization does not need to hire new people with new attributes to address environmental changes. There is some evidence that behavioral flexibility at the organizational level contributes to organizational performance. Organizations having the culture of flexibility are adaptable to the changing environment which has a positive impact on organizational effectiveness (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Some studies have shown that organizations that are superior at learning and modifying its behavior reflect new knowledge and insights which can enhance organizational performance (Garvin, 1993; Hunt & Morgan, 1996). This is because employees with behavioral flexibility usually have more likability in the workplace and enjoy favorable relationships with colleagues, superiors and subordinates. They are more likely to behave positively in every situation and context that arises. This will help the employees as well as the organization to perform effectively in a wide range of contexts. Hence we propose that:

H1b- Behavior flexibility will have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.

Human resource practice flexibility: Human resource practice flexibility is about how rapidly, viably and productively human resource department adjusts and executes new human resource practices. Human resource

practice flexibility in workforce management refers to the degree to which the organization can quickly (and effectively) implement alternative human resource processes and structures - i.e., implement human resource practices that are different than those currently employed by the firm.

Families and Work Institute, (2008) in its national Study on the Changing Workforce has defined Human resource practice flexibility as having five classes, for example, 1- choices of overseeing time, 2- flexi time and flexplace, 3- reduced time, 4- time off, lastly 5- culture of adaptability. Whereas the Dension hypothesis (1998) has brought human resource flexibility composing of four collective qualities, for example, involvement, consistency, flexibility, and mission, which are key components of organizational effectiveness. From all these components, flexibility societies are giving stress on human resource flexibility as it is more related with worker behavior adaptability and human resource practice adaptability. It has an immediate effect on human resource management, i.e. worker, maintenance, work fulfillment (Ngo & Loi, 2008). Flexibility of human resource practices is the extent to which the organization's human resource practices can be adapted and applied across a variety of situations, or across various sites or units of the firm, and the speed with which these adaptations and applications can be made (Wright & Snell, 1998). Flexible human resource practices permits employees to have an adaptable work plan that makes them to perform adequately both particular and expert levels of work as the situation demands.

Human resource practice flexibility in workforce management refers to the degree to which human resource systems are comprised of human resource practices that can be staffing, developing, dismiss, retain, and motivate employees across different environmental contexts. Human resource practice flexibility allows the firm to offer similar human resource practices across different units in achieving strategic consistency while adapting parameters to meet local concerns. Organizations that develop human resource practice flexibility create an environment where the employees are able to respond more dynamically to environmental change, which is related to competitive advantage and thus bringing organizational effectiveness. It allows employees to work in a stress free condition, enhancing their effectiveness and productivity. On the basis of this, we propose the following hypothesis.

H1c- Human resource practice flexibility has a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of an organization is a key concern to management and for employees. It is more or less depends on the management, the way they organize staff and manage their human capital. Organizational effectiveness is described as a "necessary form of disciplined self-flagellation than a pursuit of happiness" (March & Sutton, 1997). Rogers & Wright, (1998) has stated that modern organizations are dependent on complex systems and the knowledge of their employees where organizational effectiveness refers to the degree to which the actual outcomes of the organization match those outcomes necessary for the organization to attain its goals and objectives. It is the role of HR managers to keep an eye on their employees and keep the door open for the talent flexibility which may result organizational effectiveness.

Organizational effectiveness is "a company's long term ability to achieve consistently its strategic and operational goals" (Fallon and Brinkerhoff, 1996), Organizational effectiveness can be measured through three different dimensions, namely employee performance, operational performance and financial performance (Ketkar & Sett, 2010). Organizational effectiveness is the ability of an organization to mobilize its centre of power, for action, production and adaptation Mott (1972). He has developed a model for measuring organizational effectiveness which includes (a) productivity; (b) adaptability; and (c) efficiency. Employee performance is one of the dimensions of organizational effectiveness. If employees will perform better it will contribute to overall effectiveness of the organization. Employee performance is measured in terms of their commitment towards organization, willingness to change and to learn new skills. Some of the important factors which are related to individual performance are creativity, leadership, integrity, attendance and cooperation. Another sub-dimension of employee performance is how effectively and quickly the employees solve the problems they face, which refers to their Problem-solving skill. Some other factors which will be taken for measuring employees' performance is their ability to handle multiple types of tasks, and how much they are team oriented. The second dimension of organizational effectiveness is productivity of the organization. And the final one is financial performance of the organization. Likewise the effects of productivity, profitability, and cost-efficiency upon the organization will be taken for measuring organization's financial performance.

Interaction of HR Flexibility and Organizational Effectiveness: Tichy (1983) has emphasized that the capacity to manage change and strategic adaptation is a central element in any organization's effectiveness. There are mainly three aspects of flexibility which are likely to impact organizational effectiveness (1) First is the ability to perceive and respond to the external environment, (2) Second is the ability to respond to internal

customers. And finally (3) Reacting to either internal or external customers requires the capacity to restructure and re-institutionalize a set of behaviors and processes that allow the organization to adapt. Dension & Mishra, (1998) has stated that without implementing all these aforesaid aspects an organization can't be proved to be effective one.

Empirical research indicates that the use of human resource flexible practices influences positively on different measures of firm performance, such as employees' commitment and operational performance. Human resource flexibility has a positive impact on creativity and innovation, which leads to the organization effectiveness. The influence of human resource flexibility is not so conclusive, but empirical studies often find negative effects on employee and team performance which in turn could influence negatively on organization performance. In a dynamic and competitive environment, components of human resource flexibility should be viewed as strategic assets that provide long-term competitive advantage to the firm by developing the ability to flexibly achieve fit with constantly changing strategic needs for human resources (Wright & Snell, 1998). Thus we propose our hypothesis as higher the human resource flexibility higher will be the organizational effectiveness.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: In this competitive market, an organization will look out for employees who are willing to contribute to effective organizational functioning, regardless of their formal role requirements. Employee behaviors like citizenship behaviors become more important and even crucial for organizational survival. Organizational citizenship is something which is discretionary in nature and also promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is something which is very different from the usual job performance. If an individual is not involved in this behavior, he will not be held responsible or liable by the organization, but ultimately if exercised by self then it will surely lead for the betterment of the organization. Organizational citizenship behavior, though not a part of employee job behavior, but it plays a very important role in the functioning of organizations (Lee and Allen, 2002). Present day companies are looking for people who are not only technology savvy and emotionally intelligent, but having healthy organizational behavior also to compete with the globalized market need.

Employee involvement empowers members of an organization to make decisions and to solve problems appropriately according to the need of the organization. It is an action of responsibility and commitment of the employees to the organization. Dension, (1989) stated that involvement enhances organizational effectiveness through sharing of information, knowledge, rewards and powers by the employees. Employee involvement motivates employees, empowers them to take decisions which finally enhances innovative outcomes. High employee involvement is positively related with organizational innovation (Yang & Konrad, 2011). Involved and committed employees work hard to meet the organization's goal effectively.

Cooperation, which is a significant work behavior shown by the employees, has three basic characteristics, such as, (1) individuals working together to achieve a common goal, (2) goal-interdependent agents engaged in social interactions, and (3) individual actions that maximize the collective gain of the organization (Chen et al., 1998). Some scholars have found employees who are interested in the organizational citizenship behavior; pay much attention to employee morale, which reduces turnover rate of employees (Jackson et al., 2012). The positive relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and adaptability leads employees to be more cooperative and involved toward meeting organizational goal which stands helpful for gaining better output (Shoss, Witt & Vera, 2012). As a necessity, organizations will become more dependent on employees who are willing to contribute to effective organizational functioning, regardless of their formal role requirements.

Dimensions of OCB: Different scholars have different views about OCB dimensions. Organ (1988) has categorized OCB into five dimensions: (1) altruism which entails the helping of an individual co-worker on a task, (2) courtesy, alerting others in the organization about changes that may affect their work, (3) conscientiousness, carrying out one's duties beyond the minimum requirements, (4) sportsmanship, refraining from complaining about trivial matters, and (5) civic virtue, participating in the governance of the organization. In the year 1997, Organ has defined the synonym of the concept of organizational citizenship behavior as contextual performance means performance which supports the social and psychological environment of the organization (Organ, 1997). Later on Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch (1994) has classified organizational citizenship behavior into three dimensions: organizational obedience, loyalty and participation in terms of involvement and cooperation. Organizational obedience reflects the behavior of accepting organizational rules, regulations, policies which result punctuality, low rate of absenteeism, meeting organizational goal effectively

among employees. Organizational loyalty states the behavior of loyalty among employees. Finally, organizational participation, describes the involvement of employees in the decision making process of the management and cooperation in their implementation. Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) described seven dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior such as, (1) Helping Behavior, (2) Sportsmanship, (3) Organizational Loyalty, (4) Organizational Compliance, (5) Individual Initiative, (6) Civic Virtue, and (7) Self Development. However, among all these said dimensions Organ's work stands widely accepted. Literature review on his insights of organizational citizenship behavior has shown undisputed acceptance of those dimensions. From the above literature, it is clear that human resource flexibility will lead to higher level of organizational citizenship behavior will result in higher organizational effectiveness. Hence it is more likely that organizational citizenship behavior will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness. On the basis of this we propose the following hypotheses.

H2: Organizational citizenship behavior will mediate the relationship between HR flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

H2a: Altruism will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

H2b: Courtesy will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

H2c: Conscientiousness will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

H2d: Sportsmanship will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

H2e: Civic virtue will mediate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

IV. EMPLOYEE INTENT TO STAY

Employee turnover is a prominent issue in most of the organizations now-a-days as it negatively affects the prospects of the organizations. But the decision to leave an organization most often is not an instantaneous one. Employees, who intend to leave, usually keep analyzing the pros and cons of leaving an organization for quite a long time before leaving it. On the other hand employees who intend to stay usually do not think about the prospects of leaving the organizations. This refers to employees' conscious and deliberate willingness to stay with the organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993), and mirrors the employee's level of attachment to his organization and the willingness to remain employed in the same organization.

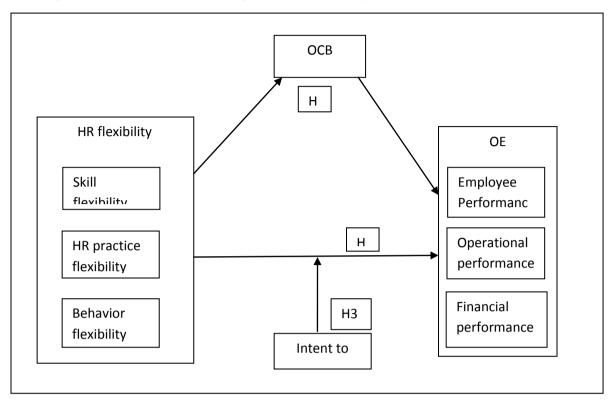
Intention to stay refers to the propensity to stay, or sometimes behavioural attachment (Halaby, 1986 & Mueller et al., 1999) whereas; intent to leave is likely to affect employees' performance in the organization. Employees who intend to leave may try to avoid responsibilities. They may lose their sense of belongingness to the organization and may not get that motivation to work hard for the organization. Similarly, employees who intend to stay feel it like home and have more of the sense of belongingness. They put their effort to do their best for the organization. It can be argued that employees having suitable traits like flexibility and adaptability, if do have the intent to leave or do not have the intent to stay will not be able to convert their suitability to job performance. Hence it is presumed that intend to stay is likely to moderate the relationship of flexibility with organizational effectiveness. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Intent to stay will moderate the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

V. RESEARCH GAP

Today's workplace demands more energy, talent and multiple skills with specialized aptitudes in order to succeed and survive in the face of global competition. This exerts enormous stress on employees, contributing to their poor performance. Human resource flexibility can be one of the antecedents to improve the organizational performance. From the literature, we found that human resource flexibility may not directly predict organizational effectiveness rather it is prophesied through the effect of organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, this study will examine the relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational effectiveness with the mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior. The relationship between human resource flexibility and organizational citizenship behavior is required to be empirically explored. Further, as we discussed above the probable moderating effect of intent to stay, a model needs to be developed which will be suited to the context. Hence, based on the above literature and discussion, we propose

the following conceptual model to test the effect of HR flexibility on organizational effectiveness through the mediating effect of OCB and the moderating effect of intent to stay.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- [1] To examine the impact of human resource flexibility on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and organizational effectiveness.
- [2] To examine the impact of organizational citizenship behavior on organizational effectiveness.
- [3] To examine the mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior and the moderating role of Intent to stay in the relationship of human resource Flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

VI. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 21st century is increasingly characterized by globalization, internationalization, and rapid technological advances, which are destined to significantly influence the ways in which employees seek and do their jobs. Jobs are now becoming more complex and unpredictable than before, for which employees are facing greater challenges in coping with work transitions. As a part of the organization, human resource department is now getting more importance in the hierarchy of the organization, for proper utilization of its human capital towards enhancing organizational performance and correspondingly gaining organizational effectiveness. HR flexibility focuses on the multitalented nature of the workers in terms of expertise, conduct and learning. This will help the organization to effectively manage human resources that enhance the capacity of the firm to compete with others on the basis of market responsiveness and innovation. This will also help an organization to be effective in its human resource management system in terms of employee engagement, employee turnover, employee commitment and satisfaction which will lead to better performance and increased organizational effectiveness. Therefore, HR flexibility is considered as a strategy for organizations in today's time to perform and succeed in the face of global competition. Keeping this in view, we have felt that it is important to investigate the effect of human resource flexibility on organizational effectiveness. The researchers will also attempt to examine the effects of some intervening variables (organizational citizenship behavior and employee intent to stay) on the relationship between HR flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS: The present paper will help researchers to understand a broader prospective of human resource flexibility in enhancing employee performance and organizational effectiveness. This paper also would be helpful for further researchers to examine the interrelationship between a host of variables within the framework of HR flexibility and organizational effectiveness. The present conceptual model also posses challenges for future researchers to empirically examine the possible role of organizational citizenship behavior and employee intent to stay on the relationship between HR flexibility and organizational effectiveness. This will definitely enrich the knowledge of HR professionals and organizational researchers to understand the dynamics og HR flexibility in organizational affairs.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: As this is a review paper, empirical study on this topic can be conducted in future. Future researchers can also incorporate some other variables such as consequences of HR flexibility like increased employee commitment, job satisfaction, performance. Some moderator and mediator variables like age, experience or gender variables can be taken into consideration.

VII. CONCLUSION

With the help of human resource flexibility an organization can maximize its innovative performance. Managers should give adequate importance to HR flexibility because it is accepted as an indispensable tool for achieving organizational performance and effectiveness. Organizations having human resource flexibility system can reduces job stress, increased role overload and work family conflict. It has a positive impact on financial performance and sustenance of the organization. Hence, flexibility in the workplace is a necessity for employees, employers and for the organizations for their survival.

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