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Intrinsically motivating idiosyncratic deals and innovative work behaviour

Idiosyncratic
deals

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31

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to determine the effect of intrinsically motivating idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) on innovative work behaviour (IWB) among tied life insurance agents in Kenya.

Design/methodology/approach – Standard multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses from data collected from a field study from 498 employees and 48 managers.

Findings – The study findings showed a positive relationship between both flexibility I-deals and IWB ($\beta = 0.461, p < 0.00$) and between task and responsibilities I-deals and IWB ($\beta = 0.171, p < 0.01$).

Research/limitations/implications – The cross-sectional collection of data weakens the author's claim of causality between the variables in focus. The study extends literature on the effects of flexibility as well as tasks and responsibilities I-deals on IWB.

Practical implications – Organizations must grant their employees with intrinsically motivating I-deals in order for display of IWB.

Social implications – These I-deals provided intrinsic motivation of the employees in displaying IWB in the organizations. The exchange relationship with the employers got enhanced through their granting motivating employees to look for new ways of doing their work.

Originality/value – This is the first study to investigate a linear relationship between intrinsically motivating I-deals and IWB.

Keywords Innovative work behaviour, Intrinsic, Flexibility I-deals, Tasks and responsibilities

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Research on innovative work behaviour (IWB) and specialized employment relationships have recently received increased attention (Hodgkinson and Kevin Ford, 2016). This upsurge in attention on these variables could be attributed to the importance they are attached to when it comes to organizations' need for competitiveness and effectiveness. IWB is an employee behaviour that helps in improving an organizations' effectiveness through the creation and application of new ways of producing ideas, products, procedures, and processes (Jeroen and Hartog, 2010; Noori *et al.*, 2017). The effectiveness, improvements and adaptations to new approaches and consumer demands in an organization are made possible through the implementation of new ideas explored by employees through their daily chores within their work roles (Duarte Alonso and Bressan, 2016). The exploration of the ideas may be made possible through trying to overcome challenges that present themselves while they perform their duties and as they interact with other employees from related firms and with their customers (Ayodeji *et al.*, 2017). In trying to overcome such challenges at work, the employee may pay attention to issues not normal in their daily chores and wonder how they may be improved in new ways, given their abilities to be innovative and efficient as considered by many employers (Singh *et al.* 2017).



A number of past research studies agree that IWB is related to creativity literature. The studies agree that creativity pertains to the initial stages of IWB which comprise idea exploration, idea generation and idea championing which comprise the first three components in the conceptualization of the dimensions of IWB (Agarwal *et al.*, 2014). Studies are also in agreement that the fourth stage of creativity, idea implementation, makes it IWB. It is a variable associated with diverse innovativeness in organizations (Carvalho *et al.*, 2017), a process that is measured by capabilities, processes, inputs and outputs. Hence, IWB is innovativeness championed by employees in organizations. I-deals may be of development, work flexibility and task and responsibilities specific and financial incentives (Liao *et al.*, 2014).

Idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) are special employment conditions that individual workers have bargained for, and that differ to some extent from normal methods applying to their peers (e.g. customized duties, individual career opportunities and variability in hours or workload; Rousseau, 2006). Intrinsically motivating I-deals is the predictor variable in this study. This variable is conceptualized by this study to comprise two components: tasks and responsibilities and flexibility. They are conceptualized as intrinsically motivating because they have been found to have strong relationships with attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). Tasks and responsibilities, as well as flexibility I-deals, have been specifically found to be associated with affective and normative commitment (Rosen *et al.*, 2013) and hence are more emotionally attached to the organization (Liao *et al.*, 2014).

In particular, flexibility I-deals refer to employment arrangements where employees negotiate with their managers on work schedules, accommodation of off-the-job demands on assigning duties, allowance to attend non-work related duties outside normal leaves, completion of work outside the main office and flexible work times (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). Tasks and responsibilities I-deals on the other hand refer to employment arrangements where tasks and responsibilities are negotiated between the employee and employer or his agent for extra tasks and responsibilities brought on the job, tasks which develop skills, fit personality and a position that require unique abilities brought to the job (Rosen *et al.*, 2013).

Development and flexibility I-deals have been found to boost family relationship, whereas tasks-specific and flexibility I-deals boost post-retirement employment (Rosen *et al.*, 2011). Ng & Feldman (2010) and Liao *et al.* (2014) also found out that I-deals are related to organizational commitment, job satisfaction and voice behaviour.

As explained in the preceding paragraph, I-deals have in the recent past been studied as predictors of employee outcomes other than IWB. In most of those studies, I-deals have been recognized as important predictors of employee outcomes. There are few known studies however, that have specifically studied the relationship between I-deals and IWB, save for the study by Spiegler *et al.* (2014) which used financial incentives and flexible working times as the predictors of IWB. Task and responsibilities and development I-deals were not used in the study to predict IWB in that particular study. The findings revealed that flexibility working intrinsically motivated employees to enhance IWB, while financial incentives negatively affected IWB by individual employees but collectively enhanced it.

The current study, in bridging the gap above, investigates the relationship between flexibility and tasks and responsibilities I-deals with IWB. In doing this, the study conceptualized these two I-deals as intrinsically motivating because of the nature of motivation it generates to employees at work (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). Both I-deals have been used in past studies to predict other employee outcomes like organizational citizenship behaviour, employee commitment, creativity and voice behaviour (Vidyarthi *et al.*, 2014b). As to the best of the knowledge of the authors, there are few known studies on the relationship between I-deals and IWB, except for the study by Spiegler *et al.* (2014),

the current study used much theoretical literature from I-deals and other employee outcomes. In most of the findings of those studies, both flexibility and task and responsibilities I-deals intrinsically motivated employees to display important behaviours and attitudes that improved the overall effectiveness of an organization. The current study examined how these I-deals predicted IWB in the context of the life insurance industry in Kenya.

The current study differs from [Spieglare et al.'s \(2014\)](#) study through its address on tasks and responsibilities variable which is an additional component of I-deals construct. Moreover, the current research studied I-deals-IWB relationship specifically using the guidance of the I-deals theory ([Arthur and Rousseau, 2001](#)). This study therefore used this theory to explain a conceptual model where intrinsically motivating I-deals explain IWB. Finally, this study was done in the Kenyan context, and particularly in life insurance companies because of the flexible nature of their work schedule and tasks and responsibilities of the employees. The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

RQ1. Do flexibility I-deals affect IWB among life insurance firms in Kenya?

RQ2. How do tasks and responsibilities I-deals affect IWB among life insurance firms in Kenya?

The current article is organized into five major sections. First, we describe the theoretical foundations of the research, describe the conceptualization of I-deals, compare I-deals with related constructs, delineate the different forms of I-deals, and explain the conceptual framework for the study. In the second major section, we address methodological issues, including the variability in measures, sample and data collection procedures and the analytical approaches. Next, in the third and fourth sections, we present the findings and discussions, summarizing the response rate, sample characteristics, descriptive, correlation, factor analysis and hypotheses testing. Finally, is a discussion of the study limitations and implications for theory and practice.

Theory and hypothesis

The study is anchored on the social exchange and I-deals theories ([Arthur and Rousseau, 2001](#); [Blau, 1964](#)). Social exchange theory explains input and outcome relationship between employees and their employers and/or their agents. The theory is important in studying various types of I-deals and employee outcomes in organizations. The theory revolves around interpersonal relationships and states that a relationship is based on the self-interest of each party which has a motive to improve oneself through the relationship ([West and Turner, 2010](#)). This analogy may be applied to an employer who benefits through improved services through increased IWB while an employee benefits from I-deals but suffers the cost of “effort” expended while working innovatively. According to [Shore et al. \(2009\)](#), social exchange relationship takes the form of interactions of parties, one reciprocating a favour given by the other party (e.g. an I-deal).

I-deals theory on the other hand is about non-standardized work arrangement initiated by an employee and approved by an employer or his agent, associated to [Arthur and Rousseau \(2001\)](#). I-deals can take two forms depending on the time they were arranged: “ex ante” during recruitment or “ex post” in an ongoing employment relationship ([Rousseau, 2006](#)). A supervisor is a crucial negotiating party for I-deals as an agent of an employer ([Anand et al., 2010](#)) implying that work arrangements may be endorsed by supervisors in the absence of the actual employers.

I-deals have four distinguishing features from other employment relationships: individually negotiated, heterogeneous, mutually beneficial, and vary in scope (Rousseau and Kim, 2006). They are individually negotiated because not all employees have similar requirements, contributions or characteristics; therefore, each has different needs and values that they articulate individually (Anand *et al.*, 2010). They are heterogeneous because they vary even with employees doing similar work in an organization (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001), and they are mutually beneficial because both parties benefit from the arrangement (Hornung *et al.*, 2008), implying that they comprise goal-oriented social exchange relationships benefitting not only the individual employee but also the organization. They therefore differ from skewed and favouristic arrangements that benefit only a single party in an employment relationship (Rousseau, 2006). Finally, I-deals vary in scope (Anand *et al.*, 2010) meaning a single or multiple items in the employment contract may be negotiated.

The prevalence of I-deals in research literature in the recent past can be attributed to changing individual, organizational, global and labour market conditions (Farber and Western, 2000; Freeman, 1999). Individual changes occasioning this include the increased competition for employees' talent, increased employee negotiability and increased need for career progression (Michaels *et al.*, 2001; Farber and Western, 2000), whereas changes in environmentally associated conditions include changing nature of work, labour market changes, decreased trade unionism and increased career progression (Tietze *et al.*, 2003).

IWB is one of the ways in which empowered employees contribute to the organization through initiating new approaches of producing products, services and processes (Noori *et al.*, 2017). The innovative activities start from the exploration of new ideas followed by the generation of the possible ways of making the explored ideas useful and making everyone in the work group enthusiastic of the new ideas. Finally, it involves implementing them so as to produce the desired results. For it to be exhibited by employees, they require to be empowered through motivation (Kangetta and Kirai, 2017). There are several ways that employees can be empowered in an organization: through extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). Extrinsic motivation may take the form of development and financial I-deals. Intrinsic motivation on the other hand may take the form of tasks and responsibilities and flexibility I-deals (Rosen *et al.*, 2013), which is the focus of the current study as explained earlier in this paper.

Relationship between flexibility idiosyncratic deals and innovative work behaviour

IWB is an extra-role work behaviour that is hardly recognized by the normal reward system as explained by Janssen (2004). Although it is not paid for, it has a great contribution to the overall effectiveness and performance of a business organization (Atalay *et al.*, 2017). This is possibly because the behaviour engages the employees' thinking beyond the normal working manner as they will be concerned with doing it in new ways that help ease their work difficulties, reduce time spent on specific tasks and responsibilities and in the long-run improve the level of output and profitability of the firm (Atalay *et al.*, 2017).

As innovative work ideas are generated from work-related problems (Dorenbosch *et al.*, 2005), the employee needs to be motivated in such a way that he/she can reciprocate by displaying them. One of the effective ways of doing this is through employers/agents approving flexibility I-deals (Rousseau, 2006). These I-deals evoke intrinsic motivation of employees through consideration of their personal needs, accommodation of their off-the-job demands; giving them time to attend non-work-related activities outside their formal leaves and allowing them time to do work from outside the main offices, when negotiating their work schedules.

With these I-deals, employees are motivated to reciprocate IWB, as they have time to do their activities from an environment where they access industry experts who would help them explore superior ideas to incorporate in their work activities. The effect of their flexible working thus exposes them to resource persons that are experienced in the industry, and with clients who have unique challenges that evoke their creative and innovative thinking.

The foregoing explanation is consistent with past literature. For instance, in the meta-analytic study by [Liao et al. \(2014\)](#), flexibility I-deals were found to be positively related to job satisfaction, affective commitment, continuity at work after retirement, voice behaviour and were negatively related to work–family conflict. With job satisfaction, employees can reciprocate through activities that improve their job experience to be more satisfying. This could be through creating goods and services that are competitive in the market by incorporating novel ideas in their work activities ([Crawford, 2015](#)). Similarly, with affective commitment, they are likely to be enthusiastically involved in the success of their organizations in any spheres that improve effectiveness, such as through IWB ([Noori et al., 2017](#)). In conclusion, intrinsic motivation through job design strategies like the granting of flexibility I-deals may present the best way to empower employees to reciprocate through IWB ([Spieglare et al., 2014](#)). Flexibility I-deals also provide an avenue for autonomy of employees to experiment new ways of working through trial and error, making them explore new ways of doing things that will benefit their organizations:

H1. Flexibility I-deals have no significant effect on IWB among tied life insurance agents in Kenya.

The relationship between tasks and responsibilities idiosyncratic deals and innovative work behaviour

The relationship between tasks and responsibilities I-deals and IWB is based on the social exchange relationship emanating from an employee reciprocating favours from the employer/manager in the form of negotiating how they do their job, extra responsibilities taking advantage of what they bring to the job, tasks that develop their skills, those that better fit their personalities, skills and abilities, those that allow flexibility in completing a job and those that enable for a desirable position that makes use of unique abilities.

The nature of IWB requires that employees be intrinsically motivated in order to display those behaviours which are demanding though not rewarded ([Janssen, 2004](#)). With tasks and responsibilities I-deals, motivation is possible since employees choose to negotiate for tasks and responsibilities that fit their abilities, personalities and skills. This is more so practical in the Kenyan insurance life industry where motivation of employees is deemed as one way to improve the distribution of the life insurance product ([Kangetta and Kirai, 2017](#)). When employees perform duties that they like and fit them, they are likely to improve their performance by researching for new ways of undertaking their tasks ([Janssen, 2004](#)). This will motivate them to stretch their job descriptions through exploring, generating, popularizing and putting into action the new ideas, processes, products and procedures they have acquired.

Past research findings support the above explanations. For instance, according to [Rosen et al's., \(2013\)](#) study, I-deals pertaining to work and responsibilities were found to explain the greatest variance on employee attitudes and behaviours as compared to the other types of I-deals. This is because they evoke emotions of an employee. The implication is that such emotion-oriented I-deals are likely to bring great benefits to the organization through IWB,

with their reciprocation. [Hornung et al. \(2010\)](#) support the contributions of tasks and responsibilities I-deals in predicting employee initiatives and behaviours by positing that they decrease employee stress and job complexity, as well as promote job control in organizations. With the control, employees are able to do jobs which they are interested, skilled and have abilities of doing. These thus promote their job engagements and lower their turnover intentions hence allowing them a spare time for IWB:

H2. Tasks and responsibilities I-deals have no significant effect on IWB among tied life insurance agents in Kenya.

Conceptual framework

The framework of this study suggests that a tied life insurance agent displays IWB based on the intrinsically motivating I-deals variables, flexibility, tasks and responsibilities, which are the independent variables and IWB which is the dependent variable. The model is based on the outcomes of the individual level I-deals which comprise development, flexibility, tasks and responsibilities and financial incentives ([Liao et al., 2014](#)). The outcomes of these I-deals include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, work-family conflict, psychological contract fulfilment, work motivations, work engagement, in-role performance, OCB, voice behaviour and creativity ([Liao et al., 2014](#)). The current model extends it by incorporating IWB as an additional outcome of these individual level I-deals ([Figure 1](#)).

Methods

Sample and procedure

The hypothesis was tested using a target population of 1,954 tied life insurance agents from eight life insurance companies that control 86.67 per cent of the life insurance business in Kenya [[Insurance Regulatory Authority \(IRA\), 2016](#)]. The assumption was that the high control of the industry implied that these firms had employees with the requisite innovative characteristics. Tied life insurance agents work for an individual insurance company hence are employees of a specific company. Out of the targeted population, a sample size of 498 agents was chosen. Stratified sampling was used to identify the sample size for each insurance company branch that was proportionate to the total agents per branch. The actual agents participating in the study in each company branch was identified through simple

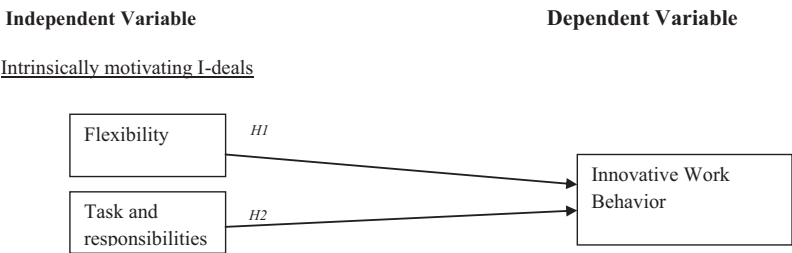


Figure 1.
Conceptual
framework

Note: A conceptual framework of flexibility and task and responsibilities I-deals and Innovative Work Behaviour
Source: Adapted and modified from [Liao et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Spieglare et al. \(2014\)](#)

random sampling from their unit managers. Data were collected from primary sources through structured questionnaires. They were administered on employees and their managers who evaluated the employees. Surveys were administered for one week at different times of the day and collected later.

Idiosyncratic
deals

Measures

Innovative work behaviour. IWB was measured using a nine-item scale that was developed and validated by [Jeroen and Hartog \(2010\)](#) with some modification. The scale measured IWB using its four dimensions of idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing and idea implementation. Idea exploration was measured with two items, idea generation with three items, idea championing with two items and idea implementation with three items.

Intrinsically motivating idiosyncratic deals. Flexibility and tasks and responsibilities I-deals were measured by adapting and modifying [Rosen et al.s' \(2013\)](#) 16-item multi-dimensional scale titled ex-post I-deals scale. Flexibility and task and responsibilities I-deals were represented in this scale. Flexibility was measured with five items and tasks and responsibilities with seven items. A seven-point Likert scale was used with scores ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for each item shown in the [Table I](#) below.

Variable	Measurement	Measurement scale
IWB	pays attention to non-daily work issues wonders how things can be improved searches new working methods, techniques or instruments generates original solutions to problems makes others enthusiastic for innovative ideas finds new approaches to execute tasks convinces people to support innovative ideas introduces innovative ideas at work contributes to implementation of new ideas	Seven-point Likert scale
Flexibility I- deals	accommodation for off-the-job demands personal needs when negotiating tasks additional time off outside formal leaves completion of a portion of work outside the main office doing work from somewhere other than the main office	Seven-point Likert scale
Tasks and responsibilities I-deals	flexibility in completing work opportunities taking on desired responsibilities outside formal job requirements extra responsibilities outside formal job requirements taking advantage of skills brought tasks that better fit personality, skills and abilities negotiate how to do my job negotiate for tasks that better develop skills desirable position that makes use of my unique contributions	Seven-point Likert scale

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table I.
Operationalization of
the research
variables

Analytical approach

Coding of data was done by assigning numerical symbols for quick entry and to minimize errors to facilitate further analysis. It was checked and cleaned to minimize outliers and inconsistencies. Missing responses were deleted to ensure accuracy and completeness. Data were then entered into SPSS version 20. Scale reliability and validity were assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and factor reduction using factor analysis. The study hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis.

The regression equation was:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \varepsilon$$

where:

Y_1 = IWB;

β_0 = Constant;

X_1 = Tasks I-deals;

X_2 = Financial I-deals;

β_1, β_2 = Coefficient of Regression or the change induced; and

ε = Error term.

Findings and discussion*Response rate*

From a total of 498 questionnaires administered, 385 were filled and returned translating to a response rate of 77.3 per cent which was high enough for accuracy in survey research (Rea and Parker, 1997).

Sample characteristics

In this study, most managers (48.2 per cent) were in the 31 to 40 age range. With regard to gender, more than two thirds (78.4 per cent) of the respondents were male with the female managers accounting for only 21.6 per cent of the number. The majority (84.9 per cent) of the respondents had attained a bachelor's degree. This was followed by 11.2 per cent who had attained a Diploma. Majority (55.3 per cent) of the managers had tenure of 5 to 10 years, 44.4 per cent (171) of them had worked for less than five years and 0.3 per cent (1) for 11 to 15 years. From the results, 58.7 per cent of the respondents noted that six to ten employees reported to the manager, 38.7 per cent of them reported that 11 to 15 employees reported to the manager and 2.6 per cent of them stated that less than five employees reported to the manager. Employees below 30 years comprised the majority (63.1 per cent), 33.5 per cent of them were 31 to 40 years and those between 41 to 50 years comprised the least group at 3.4 per cent. These findings suggest that the study was dominated by employees below 30 years of age.

Descriptive analysis of the study constructs

The results for the aggregated items for each of the independent showed flexibility I-deals had a mean of 5.471, a standard deviation of 0.880, skewness of -0.146 and kurtosis of -0.079 . For tasks and responsibilities I-deals, the mean was 5.445, standard deviation 0.875, skewness of -0.279 and kurtosis of -0.624 . Finally, IWB had a mean of 5.226, standard deviation of 0.944, skewness of -0.42 and kurtosis of -1.286 . Further, to test the normality distribution, the study examined the skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness is used to measure the symmetry of a distribution while kurtosis is used to measure the peakness or flatness of a distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Based on the results showed above, the values of skewness and kurtosis revealed that the data was normally

distributed because they were all below the threshold of ± 2 (Hair, 2010). The findings in Table II provide descriptive statistics for all the study variables. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was used to measure the internal consistency of the instruments used. From the results, the Cronbach's alpha test showed values of 0.722 for flexibility I-deals, 0.789 for tasks and responsibilities I-deals and 0.883 for IWB. These findings were in line with the benchmarks suggested by Hair (2010) where a coefficient of 0.60 is regarded to have an average reliability while that of 0.70 and above indicates that the instrument has a high reliability standard. Thus, it can be concluded that data collected from the pilot study were reliable and have obtained the acceptable level of internal consistency. Therefore, all items were included in the survey instrument. The coefficient alphas of the variables were reported in Table II below.

Idiosyncratic
deals

Factor analysis

The results from factor analysis for IWB showed that the factor loading results were above 0.5. This implied that all the factors were retained for further analysis. To sum up, the first factor accounted for 53.562 per cent while the second factor accounted for 18.097 per cent of the total variance. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure value (0.76) was above 0.5, hence acceptable. Also, the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant. Table III shows the above results. Factor analysis for flexibility I-deals was conducted to ensure that all of the items used were valid and reliable before proceeding for further analysis. The first factor accounted for 37.608 per cent, while the second one accounted for 28.124 per cent of the total variance. Sampling adequacy was tested using the Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure (KMO) of sampling adequacy. As evidenced in Table III below, KMO was greater than 0.5, and

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
FIDEALS	5.471	0.880	−0.146	−0.791	0.722	5
TIDEALS	5.445	0.875	−0.279	−0.624	0.789	6
IWB	5.226	0.944	−0.420	−1.286	0.883	9

Notes: Legend: IWB = Innovative Work Behavior; FIDEALS = Flexibility I-deals; TIDEALS = Task and Responsibilities I-deals

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table II.
Aggregate mean
descriptive analysis
of study constructs

Variables	Loadings	Total variance explained: rotation sums of squared loadings			KMO and Bartlett's test		
		Initial eigen values	% of Variance	Cumulative (%)	KMO	Bartlett's test	Sig.
IWB	0.802	4.821	53.56	53.56	0.760	2519	0.000
		1.629	18.1	71.66			
FIDEALS	0.740	2.395	37.61	37.61	0.736	420.6	0.000
		1.406	28.12	65.73			
TIDEALS	0.881	2.546	42.43	42.43	0.704	865.6	0.000
		1.422	23.7	66.13			

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Legend: IWB = innovative work behaviour; FIDEALS = Flexibility i-deals; TIDEALS = tasks i-deals

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table III.
Factor analysis

Bartlett's Test was significant. Factor analysis for task and responsibilities I-deals was also done to ensure that all the construct items were reliable and valid. Two factors were loaded. The first factor accounted for 42.426 per cent of the total variance while the second accounted for 23.70 per cent. Sampling adequacy was also tested using the KMO measure of sampling adequacy. As evidenced in Table III, KMO was greater than 0.5 and Bartlett's test was significant. The factors obtained were transformed and computed into one index for each variable using the SPSS procedure and used for further analysis.

Correlation findings

The correlation findings from the study revealed that flexibility I-deals were positively and significantly correlated to IWB ($r = 0.416$, $\rho < 0.01$). Likewise, tasks and responsibilities I-deals were positively correlated with IWB ($r = 0.166$, $\rho < 0.01$). This implied that flexibility (FIDEALS) and task and responsibilities (TIDEALS) I-deals were expected to influence IWB.

Hypothesis testing

A regression test to determine the effects of independent variables was done. The findings revealed that 33.5 per cent variation of IWB was predicted by FIDEALS and TIDEALS ($R^2 = 0.335$). Their joint prediction was significant as shown by the F value of 96.107, $\rho < 0.05$. The VIF values were less than 4 indicating the absence of multicollinearity and thus the variation contributed by each of the independent variables was significant. On flexibility I-deals, it was hypothesized that there was no significant effect of flexibility I-deals on IWB among tied life insurance agents in Kenya. The study findings ($\beta = 0.461$, $p = 0.001$) agreed with reviewed literature on the effects of flexibility I-deals on employee outcomes. For instance, according to a study by Vidyarthi *et al.* (2014a) on information technology employees in India, these types of I-deals engendered a positive attitude of employees towards the organization when their granting increased. Hence, employees find a sense of care on their welfare from the organization or its management when there is an increase in those I-deals. This may be because employees associate them to efforts by the organization to make them engage in their own other beneficial activities, but with a focus on completion of their assigned activities through the arrangement agreed (Table IV).

The study by Vidyarthi *et al.* (2014a), however, gives some caution to employers not to over demand from the employees when they grant those I-deals. This could have the implication that employees need to evaluate the benefits they accrue from the organization as compared to their outcomes. Employers therefore need to provide these I-deals in such a way that it fosters motivation that employees feel, is commensurate to their input, and not to view their granting to have the impact of increased workload as an immediate response. When employees perceive such kind of a response, they may construe an unequal social exchange relationship, which may make them not to reciprocate with display of IWB that benefit the organization in the long run, yet they are beneficial behaviours may not be part of their initial contract with the organization.

It was also hypothesized that there was no significant effect of tasks and responsibilities I-deals on IWB. However, the findings ($\beta = 0.171$, $\rho = 0.014$) indicated that there was a significant effect of these I-deals on IWB. The support to this hypothesis is based on the importance of these I-deals to the employee motivation that arises from his/her interests and likes in the work roles. It is specifically based on the motivation that the employee derives from how he or she does his/her job, the extra responsibilities that take advantage of skills

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			Correlations		Collinearity statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.631	0.273		5.975	0.000				
FIDEALS	0.479	0.054	0.461	8.929	0.000	0.562	0.416	0.652	1.533
TIDEALS	0.184	0.056	0.171	3.3	0.001	0.443	0.166	0.652	1.533
<i>R Square</i>	0.335								
<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	0.331								
<i>R Square Change</i>	0.335								
<i>F Change</i>	96.107								
<i>df1</i>	2								
<i>df2</i>	382								
<i>F</i>	96.107								
<i>Sig.</i>	0.000b								

Notes: A Dependent Variable: IWB; FIDEALS = flexibility idiosyncratic deals, TIDEALS, tasks idiosyncratic deals

Source: Research Data (2016)

Table IV.
Testing hypothesis
for direct effect of
ideals on IWB

he or she brings to the job, tasks that better develop skills and those that better fit personality, skills and abilities.

The finding is consistent with past literature and past empirical research studies. For instance, the meta-analytical study by [Liao et al. \(2014\)](#) reported that employees with task and responsibilities I-deals had higher satisfaction with their job and with a greater attachment with their organization. This satisfaction could arise from the nature of these I-deals in conferring intrinsic motivation to an employee. The intrinsic motivation could be associated to the satisfaction derived by the employee doing activities that fit specific skills, interests and personalities. The continued performance of the same activities by the employee is also likely to make the employee more skilled and developed in expertise in those skills because of specialization. Specialization creates creativity that results from autonomy in job performance, consistent with [Liao et al. \(2014\)](#) explanation on the importance of employee freedom and autonomy in boosting career satisfaction. The above view also draws support from the scientific management era principles of specialization and division of labour ([Lawrence and Pirson, 2010](#)). [Xifang and Wan \(2018\)](#) additionally content that transformational leadership is also related to creative behaviour in organizations which heralds IWB with implementation.

Discussions

Empirical findings of this study confirmed the significant relationship between the intrinsically motivating I-deals and IWB. Intrinsically motivating I-deals comprise flexibility and tasks and responsibilities. Hypothesis one in this study stated that flexibility I-deals have no significant effect on IWB among tied life insurance agents in Kenya. However, the findings did show that these I-deals were significantly related to IWB ($\beta = 0.461$, $p = 0.00$). This finding confirmed literature and theory on flexibility I-deals ([Hodgkinson and Kevin Ford, 2016](#)) which posit that they contribute to employee outcomes in organizations. These outcomes include job satisfaction, post-retirement working, voice behaviour and affective commitment ([Liao et al., 2014](#); [Spieglare et al., 2014](#)). These I-deals

also make employers develop positive attitudes towards the organization that they work in (Vidyarthi *et al.*, 2014a; Ng and Feldman, 2010). Such positive attitudes make employees perform extra role functions not recognized by the traditional reward systems like IWB as reciprocation to the granted favour by the employer or his agent. This is more so in the insurance industry that is highly competitive and that has a high employee turnover. To make them committed in IWB needs strong fairness among co-workers when it comes to granting I-deals.

Furthermore, these I-deals have been known to be negatively related to work family conflicts (Hornung *et al.*, 2008). This is more so to the African context and specifically the Kenyan context where extended family values and attachment are highly upheld and family conflicts are highly discouraged. Flexibility I-deals thus reduce these conflicts and motivate the employees to work autonomously to realize the organization's effectiveness through innovative ideas that are explored, generated, championed and commercialized in an atmosphere of peace of mind of the respective employees. This is more pronounced and meaningful in the African economic context where specialization in labour and occupations is a rare phenomenon. In addition, the intrinsic motivations so derived from these I-deals empower the employees such that they become engaged in their work. Engaged employees greatly improve the organizational effectiveness (Agarwal, 2014) because they immerse themselves in the work role such that they explore new ways of performing it. Finally, since these I-deals are associated with continued stay in employment (Bal *et al.*, 2012), they are likely to make employees get entrenched and networked in their specific industries which make their innovative skills thrive. This is made possible with the nature of the negotiated duties that are fulfilling to the employees' desires for flexibility in work performance which include consideration for personal needs when allocating work, accommodation for off-the-job demands when allocating work hours, additional time off to attend non-work related activities outside formal leaves and sick times, unique arrangements allowing doing work somewhere other than the main office and an allowance to doing work outside the office. The above views are corroborated by a study by Faiza *et al.* (2018) which posits that work place happiness, organizational climate, affective commitment and transformational leadership affect IWB.

Hypothesis two stated that tasks and responsibilities I-deals have no significant effect on IWB among tied life insurance agents in Kenya. However, from the study findings they were found to be significantly related ($\beta = 0.171$, $\rho = 0.001$). This finding is consistent with literature and theory on I-deals (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001) that agree that these type of I-deals were intrinsically motivating, as they emanate from a social exchange relationships that comprise negotiation between an individual employee with his/her employer or the employer's agent based on how they do their job, the extra responsibilities taking advantage of what they bring to the job, tasks that develop skills, tasks that better fit their personalities, skills and abilities, those that allow flexibility in completing the job and that enable for a desirable position that make use of unique abilities brought to the job by employees. Hence, tasks and responsibilities I-deals may improve organizational effectiveness through IWB developed through employees engaging themselves in their work.

They are also intrinsically motivating, because they appeal to the emotions of the individual employees and as well impact on their attitudes and behaviours (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). The motivation derived makes them explore, generate, champion and implement new ways of distributing the insurance services innovatively to the targeted customers. Tasks I-deals also empower the employees to concentrate on those tasks and responsibilities that fit their training hence motivate them to explore, generate and champion new ideas that

culminate in innovative ideas during the implementation stage. In conclusion, the two intrinsically motivating I-deals are significantly related to IWB that is important for organizational effectiveness during this era of competition and technological advancement, particularly in the life insurance industry in Kenya, based on the study findings.

Limitations for the study

The fact that both the intrinsically motivating I-deals (flexibility and tasks and responsibilities) construct is conceptualized only at the individual level, there is need to study them at the group and organizational levels ([Liao et al., 2014](#)). The other limitation arises from the cross-sectional nature of the study. There is need for future researchers to apply longitudinal designs for credible generalizations to be achieved given the fact that innovativeness needs to be studied for a great deal of time for meaningful generalizations as it may not be fully understood at one moment in time. The self-reported responses by the insurance employees particularly on the predictor variables could be a source of bias, although the outcome variable by the managers evaluated the employees IWB. Finally, the assumption that the eight life insurance companies that controlled the industry were fit for the study was a notable limitation given that the insurance industry in Kenya has a total of 23 life insurance companies.

Implications for future research

This study adds to research ventures that use social exchange and I-deals theories in advancing knowledge on the effect such exchanges on employee outcomes particularly on IWB issues in organizations on an individual level. Therefore, future researches on social exchange relationships should focus on the effects of extrinsically motivating I-deals (development and financial incentives) on IWB among employees on both the direct and indirect mechanisms. Moreover, as this study used data on the individual level only, future research should investigate these I-deals with IWB at both at the group and the organizational levels.

Secondly, most past researches concentrated more on samples from technology and manufacturing industries. This research extends literature on idiosyncratic and IWB research through the exploration of intrinsically motivating I-deals which have not been done by other known studies. This study is also the first of its kind in Kenya, an African context and in the insurance sector. There is need for these variables to be studied in other sectors using different theoretical guidelines.

This study was done in the life insurance industry as a respond to the calls by [Hornung et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Walton et al. \(2016\)](#) on investigation of other sectors of an economy. The preceding call is also supported by the advice by [Pouwels and Koster \(2017\)](#) in a conceptual study on inter-organizational cooperation and organizational innovativeness that an empirical bias emanates from studies that focus on only one sector. Therefore, future research on intrinsically motivating I-deals should focus on other sectors other than the insurance industry. Thirdly, future research should also focus on the indirect relationships pertaining to intrinsically motivating I-deals and IWB so as to observe the variance emanating from the intermediate mechanisms ([Vidyarthi et al., 2014a](#)). Fourthly, the effect of these I-deals on IWB should be studied from group or organizational levels. Finally, as the study focussed on data collection from only eight life insurance companies that controlled 86.67 per cent of the industry in Kenya, other researchers may investigate the other remaining companies.

Implication for practice

The findings of this study provide an insightful explanation to industry management practices, as it pertains to initiation of proactive human resources practices that help in improving their overall performance. As these I-deals are emotion-oriented, they may appeal to employees' commitment to the organization's objectives and ideals that promote enhanced performance through generation of new ideas that are innovative. Therefore, industry practitioners should consider approving such I-deals to their employees to gain from the IWB emanating from the motivated employees. Specifically, employers need to appreciate the importance of these I-deals in enhancing employees' reciprocation of outcomes in the organization. For instance, tasks and responsibilities I-deals provide an opportunity for an employee to perform tasks that may fit their programmes and those that they are talented as well as interested in performing. Therefore, employers need to have keener commitment to approve tasks and responsibilities I-deals initiated by their employees so as to enable for their reciprocation through IWB.

Life insurance companies' management and other related employers should also see flexibility I-deals as crucial for employees' social exchange relationships for improvement of their performance through IWB. Therefore, given the complexity of the current employment environment, there is need to motivate and to benefit from such motivated employees through reciprocation. Therefore, life insurance companies' management, as well as other employers in related industries, should consider approving such I-deals negotiated by their employees. Managers should take keener interest on how various employee outcomes and rewards are granted to ensure that fairness prevails among the co-workers. This will ensure sustained employee innovative behaviour within job roles.

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