



Work-From-Home, Job Satisfaction and Performance among Teachers in Nigeria

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Abstract

Recently, Corona Virus Pandemic (COVID-19) became a deadly global issue and governments around the world including Nigeria were forced to take some action to slow the spread of the virus. One of the policies was social distancing. As a consequence of this policy, workplaces including schools were temporary closed thereby making organizations to innovate new ways of working in the new normal. One of the innovations was 'work-from-home' (WFH) using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This study was framed to examine how working from home would impact the job satisfaction and performance of teachers in Nigeria. Using purposive sampling technique, data were collected in a cross sectional framework by distributing questionnaire on internet platforms to teachers in Nigeria. One hundred and ninety-seven (197) teachers participated in the study. They comprised of 115(58.4%) males and 82(41.6%) females. Their age ranged between 28 and 70 years. Two hypotheses were tested using Simple Linear Regression Analysis in IBM SPSS 23. Results show that work-from-home has significant positive impact on job satisfaction and performance among teachers in Nigeria. The study recommended that teachers should be allowed to teach from home as this work approach enhances job satisfaction and performance.

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Introduction

Nigeria like most countries is dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, and governments at the federal and state levels at some point took measures to limit the spread of the virus, including directing the shut-down of businesses and organizations involved in the provision of non-essential services. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a novel coronavirus and it affects majorly the human respiratory system. Earlier outbreaks of coronaviruses (CoVs) include the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-CoV and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)-CoV which have been earlier described as a great public health threat (Hussin & Siddappa, 2020). Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness (Ezenwile, 2020)

The coronavirus disease, 2019 (COVID-19) which was first discovered in Wuhan, China is spread like wild fire across the nations of the world (Said, 2020). In Nigeria, first case was confirmed in Lagos on the 27th of February 2020 and since then the numbers of infection and deaths have continued to rise. As at 16th of August, 2021, total confirmed cases recorded in Nigeria stood at 182,503. Out of the number, 167,132 cases were successfully treated and discharged while 2,219 deaths were recorded in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (<https://nairametrics.com/2020/06/08/covid-19-update-in-nigeria>).

COVID-19 is highly dreaded for its contagious nature, irrespective of age, race, gender or colour. The degree of its spread is increased with large gathering of people. This makes people within workplaces are vulnerable to the disease, as such it is of concern to employees and employers alike. Healthy workers will lead to increase productivity, higher quality of work, increased workforce morale, reduced employee turnover and overall quality of life (Ahmad, Saltar & Nawaz, 2016). Whatever affects the health of the employees will affect the productive capacity of the organization. Since organizations exist to produce need satisfying goods and services, whenever the ability of the organization to produce those things is threatened, the continuous existence of such an organization is affected.

One of the measures adopted by governments across the world to curb the spread of COVID-19 was the introduction of lockdown and physical and social distancing. In the same light, the federal government of Nigeria directed most workers especially those on non - essential services to stay and work-from-home. This directive most likely would affect the character and behaviour of the workers. Confirming this view, Ezenwile (2020) stated that individual behavioural change to avoid gathering above twenty (20) people was a challenge because Nigerians are not used to living an isolated life. Africans emphasize communal living rather than individualistic way of life (Onah, Ezebuilo, & Ojiakor, 2016), but the emergence of COVID-19 brought about social/physical distance which threaten the sustenance of this culture.

Literature Review

Work-from-home (WFH)

Work-from-home (WFH), is known as an alternative work approach to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. However, WFH is not new and has been brought to the attention of several schools of thought for many years. The WFH concept was initially mentioned by Nilles (1988) dating back to 1973, known as “telecommuting” or “telework” (Messenger & Gschwind 2016). WFH has been defined in various terms over the four decades, namely remote work, flexible workplace, telework, telecommuting and e-working. These

terms refer to the ability of employees to work in flexible workplaces, especially at home, by using technology to execute work duties (Gajendran & Harrison 2007; Grant, 2019). Gajendran and Harrison (2007) described telecommuting as “an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform tasks elsewhere that are normally done in primary or central workplaces, for at least some portion of their work schedule, using electronic media to interact with others inside and outside the organization,” notably, they indicated that “elsewhere” refers to “home”.

Work-from-home was compulsorily the only option for most organizations including schools which had no arrangement to cope with the new normal approach or physically distancing mode of work due to the high population of many Nigerian schools. Work-from-home was adopted by many countries of the world. For instance, Dingle and Neiman (2020) reported that 37% of the job could be completed at home during the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. Kinds of work mentioned included financial work, business management, professional and scientific services. Although the acceptance of WFH has increased worldwide, academics argue regarding its pros and cons. WFH has beneficial effects for both employers and employees. The advantages, include and are not limited to reduced commuting time, avoiding office politics, using less office space, increased motivation, improved gender diversity (e.g. women and careers), healthier workforces with less absenteeism and turnover, higher talent retention, job satisfaction, and better productivity (Mello 2007; Robertson, Maynard & McDevitt 2003).

Work-from-home and Job Satisfaction

The most widely cited of the many advantages of teleworking is improved job satisfaction (Virick, DaSilva, & Arrington, 2010). Job satisfaction has been defined and measured as both a global construct and a multi-dimensional variable (Lund 2003) as a perceived correlation between what one wants from work and what one perceives it to offer. Job satisfaction is described as a person’s emotional state when something pleasant and beneficial has occurred as a result of their job appraisal or work experience. Workers experience a sense of fulfillment as a result of the features that aid and facilitate the achievement of their work’s values. When scholars and companies refer to teleworking or working from home, they seek to develop a new way of organizing work to support and increase the work–life balance of their employees (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés 2020). One possible determinant that will create innovation as a result of working from home is workers’ satisfaction (Ellis & Webster 1998). This is taken as an effort to increase employee job satisfaction while working from home and has a mixed effect on workers’ work–life balance, well-being, stress-related outcomes, and satisfaction (Kim, Henly, Lonnie, & Lambert, 2019; Roz 2019).

Irawanto, Novianti and Roz (2021) in a study using 472 workers who were forced to work-from-home all over Indonesia revealed that working from home had a significant effect, both directly and indirectly, on job satisfaction. Previous study by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) also suggest that telecommuting can increase job satisfaction. When employees work-from-home, they don’t need to spend time, money and energy on going to the office or on business trips. They also enjoy not having to wear formal attire during working hours, which allows them a greater match between their work self and true persona. Telecommuters are less stressed and therefore less likely to change jobs leading to lower staff turnover; they are also more satisfied with their daily job activities. Moreover, another study suggested that the relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction is curvilinear, meaning that its effect will be positive at a lower level of telecommuting (around 15.1 hours per week). But when employees spend a large amount of time telecommuting, their satisfaction can decrease due to a feeling of social and professional isolation. The curve is flatter for jobs that are highly independent ((Virick, DaSilva, & Arrington, 2010).

Work-from-home and Job Performance

Workers who work-from-home have the ability to modify and customize their own work environment; therefore, it can increase their job performance. Working out of their office can also eliminate the time and cost they need to spend on work. It also creates a feeling of freedom that can impact job performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Bloom, Liang, Roberts, and Ying (2015) conducted a field experiment in a large Chinese travel agency to analyze the effect of working from home on employees' performance. Call center agents were randomly assigned to two work locations; home and office. Bloom et al. measured overall performance as number of phone calls and length of phone calls and found out that working from home increases overall performance of employees.

In a study conducted by Uchenna, Uruakpa and Uche (2018) work-from-home was found to impact job performance. Using a survey research design and spearman rank correlation coefficient analytical tool, the study found that arrangement that allows employee to work at agreed location has a significant relationship with speedy service delivery. Although the researchers strongly opined that there should be a strong mechanism on ground to monitor the activities of the employees who work-from-home.

Hypotheses

Owing from the literature review, it is hypothesized that:

- i. Work-from-home will have significant positive influence on job satisfaction among teachers in Nigeria.
- ii. Work-from-home will have significant positive influence on job performance among teachers in Nigeria.

Method

Design

The design of this study was expost-facto survey. The experiences of the respondents about work-from-home, job satisfaction and performance were assessed after strict measures (work-from-home inclusive) to contain COVID-19 by Nigerian government were relaxed.

Participants

A total number of 197 teachers participated in this study. Out of this number, 115 (58.4%) were males and 82 (41.6%) were females. The ages of the participants ranged between 28 and 70 with mean age of 44 years. Data showed that 12(6.1%) had completed Senior Secondary Certificate in Education, 8(4.1%) had Ordinary National Diploma or National Certificate in Education, 44(22.3%) were teachers with Higher National Diploma or Bachelor degrees qualification, 74(37.6%) had master degrees and 59(29.4%) of the teachers had Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Data also indicated that 96(48.7%) were teachers of tertiary institutions, 67(34.0%) were of secondary schools while 34(17.3%) respondents were primary school teachers. Furthermore, 73(37.67%) were employees of private schools, 88 (44.7%) were employees of public owned schools, 20(10.2%) were faith based school teachers and 15(7.6%) of the respondents were teachers of Community schools.

Instruments for Data Collection

Data for the study were collected using a set of questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised three scales adopted from the research of Susilo conducted in the 2020. The instruments were modified to suit the purpose of this study. The instruments adopted include Work-from-home Questionnaire (WFHQ), Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ) and Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ).

WFHQ is an 8-item scale and it was modified to assess teachers' experience of working from home particularly at the peak of COVID-19 in Nigeria. The sample questions include "at the peak of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria, I always communicated with the other people remotely for my work". The test items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, starting from strongly disagree =1 to strongly agree =5.

Job satisfaction questionnaire is a 6-item scale that measures the job satisfaction of teachers that worked from home at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The sample question include "at the peak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria, I was satisfied to do my job without risking my safety from the COVID-19 virus". The test items were scored based on 5-point Likert scale, starting from strongly disagree referring to 1 to strongly agree referring to 5.

Job performance questionnaire is a 2-item scale and it is scored on 5-point Likert format beginning from strongly disagree being 1 to strongly agree being 5. Sample question include "at the peak of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Nigeria, I finished my job responsibilities without any significant problems even as I worked from home".

Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaire on internet platforms (including Telegram and WhatsApp) to teachers in Nigeria. Although some people who were not teachers also responded, they were screened out as the study was designed specifically for teachers in Nigeria. The sampling technique was purposive because it was intended for teachers who had direct experience of working from home as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic.

Data analysis

Data were analysed in IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. Also, descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used in analysing demographic data of participants.

RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of Simple Linear Regression showing the Impact of Work-from-home (WFH) on Job Satisfaction among Teachers in Nigeria

Variable	R	R ²	F	β	T	Sig
Constant	.534	.285	77.624	-	8.992	.000
WFH				.534	8.810	.000

Source: Fieldwork 2021

The result in Table 1 indicates that work-from-home significantly impacted job satisfaction of teachers in Nigeria ($R^2 = .285$; $\beta = .534$; $t = 8.810$, $P < 0.01$). WFH positively accounted for 28.5% of the variance in job satisfaction confirming the proposition that WFH has positive impact on job satisfaction of Teachers in Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of Simple Linear Regression showing impact of Work-from-home on Job Performance among Teachers in Nigeria

Variable	R	R ²	F	β	T	Sig
Constant	.488	.238	60.797	-	5.782	.000
WFH				.488	7.797	.000

Source: Fieldwork 2021

The result in Table 2 shows that work-from-home significantly impacted job performance of teachers in Nigeria ($R^2 = 23.8$; $\beta = 488$; $t = 7.798$; $P < 0.01$). WFH accounted for 23.8% of the variance in job performance thereby confirming the proposition that WFH has positive impact on job performance of Teachers in Nigeria.

Discussion and Recommendations

The study was designed to assess the impact of WFH on job satisfaction and job performance among teachers in Nigeria. The study concludes that work-from-home has significant impact on job satisfaction. The result implies that, flexibility of work environment among teachers is related to their job satisfaction. This could be possible due to the advantages of working from home which guarantees frequent breaks and reduced commuting which invariably entails reduced financial expenses. The result is consistent with the findings of Gajendra and Harrison (2007) that, employees who work-from-home were less stressed and therefore, less likely to change jobs leading to lower staff turn-over. They are also more satisfied with the daily job activities. The result is also in line with Virick, DaSilva, and Arrington (2010) who posits that, the widely cited of many advantages of working from home is improved job satisfaction. Finding of Irawento, Novianti and Roz (2021) from Indonesian sample is also in agreement with the result of this study. Their results revealed both direct and indirect significant effect of working from home on job satisfaction.

Result of the study also shows that work-from-home has significant impact on job performance of teachers in Nigeria. The result implies that, there is high level of positivity surrounding working from home as it enhances performance levels. The result is similar to that of James (2016) where it was found that working from home provides employees with freedom which can be a huge benefit as it allows employees to carry out their daily work as build in other personal tasks that they may need to complete throughout the day. The result of this study is equally in line with findings by Bloom, Liang, Roberts, and Ying (2015) who reported that, working from home increases overall performance of employees. This is explained by higher productivity associated with a quieter working atmosphere and also by higher work effort. Similarly, Uchena, Uruakpa and Uche (2018) reported a significant positive impact of work-from-home among Nigeria sample. On the contrary, a study carried out by Canonico (2016) is not supported by result of this study. Canonico reported that working from home can negatively affect organizational performance, which in turn may impact on overall culture within the organization. The conclusion of this study is not surprising because work-from-home assessed in this study was

occasioned by a pandemic which could be controlled by staying away from people who are potential transmitters. The perceived safety from COVID-19 virus alongside autonomy arising from work-from-home could spur teachers to good performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Teachers should be allowed to teach from home as this work approach enhances job satisfaction.
- ii. School proprietors should provide state-of-the-art facilities to facilitate work-from-home as it impacts teaching positively.

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