

WORKING FROM HOME AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE NEW NORMAL.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of working from home on employee performance in the new normal era in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted and data collection was done through questionnaires. The effect of working from home on employee performance was analyzed using regression analysis method (E-view 7.1 package) to test the hypothesis. The study revealed that working from home has a significant and negative effect on work stress and on work–life balance due to the fact that employees are not able to divide their time between work and personal life. It was opined that this is because employees are used to having fixed working hours. One the other hand, working from home has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with adjusted R square of 0.63 at 5 percent level of significance. Working from home is statistically significant to employee performance; this is indicated by the calculated t-sign of 10.45, 9.64 and 8.49 which are greater than the tabulated t-sign of 1.658 or with their p values of 0.000 which were less than the critical value of 0.05. The study recommended that leaders of organizations need to pay attention to their employees’ job satisfaction during their working from home. It is undeniable that working from home can interfere with employees’ work life balance and work stress.

Key Words: WFH, Employee, Performance, COVID 19, Pandemic, ERA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) ravage the globe and rules on protection like social distancing, wearing a properly fitted mask, and washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers

frequently were made to help reduce the spread of the virus (Chinwe Lucia Ochu C.L., Akande O.W., Oyebanji O., Aderinola O., Ogunbode O., Atteh R., Okwor T., Oguanuo E., Ojumu T., Ofoegbunam C., Ebhodaghe B., Joseph G., Ibekwe P. and Ihekweazu C., 2021). The impact is not just health but a global economic and social shock. Globally, economies were shutdown, schools, places of work, worship centers, market gatherings, tourist attraction sites, and even some public transportation and ordered people to work from home. Many companies also followed government regulation to work from home. However, until now the effect of work-from-home on job performance of employees remains debatable (Baruch, Y., 2001), thus creating a research gap.

Researchers have argued that workers can work at home by utilizing video conference platforms for communication. One of the most observable changes as a result of the COVID19 pandemic is teleworking, telecommuting, or the working from home policy across occupations (Kramer and Kramer 2020). From the problem, the broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of working from home on employee performance in the New- Normal. The specific objectives are to examine the nature of working from home on work–life balance, examine the effect of working from home on work stress, and to examine whether working from home is positively related job satisfaction (employee performance). The basic research questions and hypothesis are geared towards testing the research hypotheses for the purpose of this study was formed accordingly in order to fill the gap. This study will enable organizations both private and public to reassess the design and evaluation of working from home on employee performance in the new normal in Nigeria with intentions of sustaining effective personnel utilization towards efficient service delivery.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of working from home was first put forward in the 1970s as telework or telecommuting, a new alternative in performing work from different locations (office, home, or another place) using technological assistance (van Meel, 2019) that completely replaced work-related travel (Nilles, 2019). According to Nakrošienė et al. (2019), Teleworking or work from home allows for worker to develop time management skills, flexibility of time and to access an organization's documents from home, the suitability of having a workplace at home, the possibility to work from home in cases of sickness, and being able to take care of family

members. Empirical studies found several outcomes of working from home, such as increased job performance, improved job satisfaction, lesser turnover intentions, and reduced rates of stress (Contreras et al. 2020; Fonner and Roloff 2019; Cohen and Liani 2019; Chung 2018). Many scholars described that teleworking or working from home can support work– life balance positively (Fisher et al. 2019; Ellis and Webster 1988) and negatively (Wessels et al. 2019; Novianti and Roz 2020). The conceptual framework of this research can be seen at Figure 1.

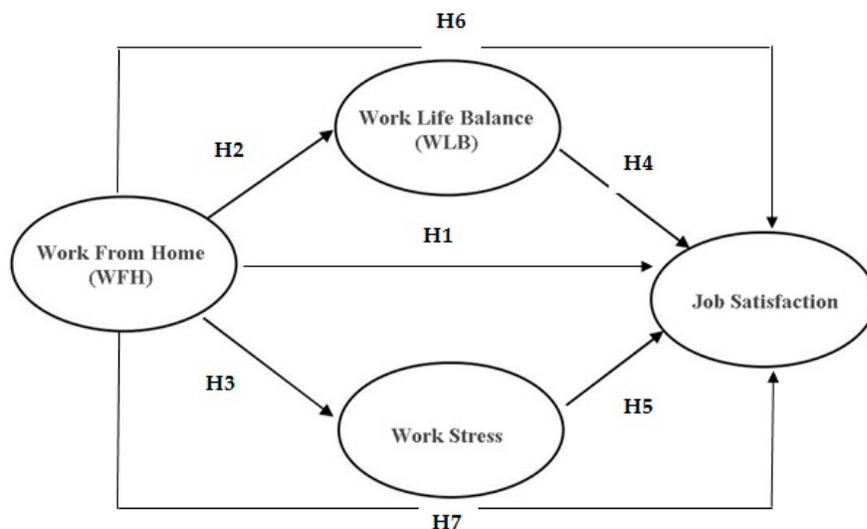


Figure 1. The conceptual model in this research.

Concept of Work-Life Balance and Work-Stress

Work-life balance is described as achieving a balance between employees’ family or personal life and work lives (Jyothi and Jyothi 2012). It is built on the idea that work life and personal life complement each other in presenting perfection in one’s life. On the other hand, work stress is a condition that affects the emotions, thought processes, and the thinking process. The gap between the demands of work with existing resources will cause work stress and make people feel more negative and dissatisfied.

Theory of Job Performance

The theory backing Job Performance according to the founder of the theory is influenced by three main factors: individual, organizational environment, and job demand. The first factor is individual, which consist of the vision, values, philosophy, knowledge, nature, competencies, career path, style and interests of the workers. The second factor is the organizational

environment, which consists of the culture and climate, structure and systems, industrial maturity, organizational strategic position, core competencies and the greater context. The third factor is the job demand, which consist of duties, functions and roles of each member in the organization. Dutcher (2017) investigates how working from home influences individual productivity by conducting a real-task laboratory experiment at a US university. He also considers the nature of the job task by distinguishing between creative and boring tasks. He found that working from home increases productivity of individuals when doing creative tasks. Though, he finds that working from home has a negative influence on productivity if the task is too boring. Bellmann and Hubler (2020) find that working remotely has no long-run effect on work-life balance, and that a switch to WFH increases job satisfaction only temporarily. Barrero et al. (2020) estimate that WFH reduced total commuting time among US workers by more than 60 million hours per work day at the height of the pandemic, and that about 35% of this time saved was reallocated to work.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodology that was be used to carry out the study. The research was conducted in Rite Food Limited, Ogun State precisely. Data obtained from the study were collated and analyzed using inferential statistics.

Research Design

The survey research method was used to ascertain effect of working from home on employee performance. The design was quantitative to allow for descriptive and inferential analysis. The populations of Rite Foods Limited was found to be six hundred and eighty-six (686) employees of which it consist of 406 senior staff and 280 junior staff. This was established from the Human Resources Department of the organization. The table below shows how the population of the case study looks like.

RITE FOOD LIMITED	POPULATION
JUNIOR STAFF	406
SENIOR STAFF	280
TOTAL	686

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The sample size of the respondent was calculated using simple random sampling technique to select the respondent to the questionnaire. The method is expressed below $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

Where N= total number of Employee that constitute the population of the study

E = Level of significance (0.05)

Approximately 253 questionnaires was administered base on the size of the industry.

Junior Staff = $280/686 \times 253 = 103$

Senior Staff = $406/686 \times 253 = 150$

For this research work, stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents for this study. Two Hundred and Fifty Three (253) respondents were randomly selected as sample size from Rite Foods Limited in Ososa Ogun State Nigeria

Model Specification

The below model was built for the purpose of achieving the best result in this research work.

$$EP = f(WFH) \dots \dots \dots \{i\}$$

From the above equation

Let Working from Home (WFH) (Independent Variable)

Let Employee Performance = EP be represented with work life balance (WLB), work stress (WS), and job satisfaction (JS) - Dependent variables.

Therefore:

$$EP = f(WLB, WS, JS) \dots \dots \dots \{ii\}$$

By substituting equation {ii} into equation {i} the equation becomes

$$WLB, WS, JS = f(WFH) \dots \dots \dots \{iii\}$$

The above can be expressed using simple regression equation.

$$WLB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WFH + \mu$$

$$WS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WFH + \mu$$

$$JS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WFH + \mu$$

Where:

WFH = Working from Home

WLB = Work Life Balance

WS = Work Stress

JS = Job Satisfaction

β_0 = Parameter Estimates.

β_1 = Coefficient of Working from Home

μ = Error Term.

Note:

WLB= f (WFH)

WLB = $\beta_0 + \beta_1 WFH + \mu$ ----- Model for Hypothesis One

WS= f (WFH)

WS = $\beta_0 + \beta_2 WFH + \mu$ ----- Model for Hypothesis Two

JS= f (WFH)

JS = $\beta_0 + \beta_3 WFH + \mu$ ----- Model for Hypothesis Three

A' Priori Expectation.

The model above is considered on A' Priori expectation that the explanatory variables would have a positive relationship with the explained variable. Other inferences would be considered from result obtained from the standard error test, the student t distribution, the coefficient of determination (R^2), F- test and the Durbin Watson autocorrelation result.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study presents the results of data collected during the research study. The instrument (questionnaire) used for this study is divided into two sections (section A and section B).

4.1 PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data used in carrying out the analysis were collected majorly from raw scores generated from the questionnaire administered to 253 respondents on effect of working from home on employee performance. Out of 253 copies of questionnaires distributed, all were completed and returned. This represents 100% rate of returns. Below are tabulation of analysis of respondent sex, age, marital status, occupations and educational level which belongs to each respondent.

Table 4.1.1: Gender

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
Male	147	58.10
Female	106	41.90
Total	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.1 show the gender of the respondents. 58.10% of the respondents were male, showing that most of the respondents considered as male. 41.9% of the respondents were female. Finally the researchers could presume that in the above percentage, suggests a considerable number to be the female of the population.

Table 4.1.2: Age

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
Below 30 years	69	27.27
31-40 years	77	30.43
41-50	60	23.72
Above 50	47	18.58
Total	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.2 reveal the ages of the respondents, majority of them were in between the ages of 31-40 years (30.43%). While the remaining respondents were between the age of less than 30 (27.27%), the age of 41-50 years (23.72%), and the age of greater than 50 (18.58%).

Table 4.1.3: Marital Status

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
Unmarried	159	63.64
Married	92	36.36
Total	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.3 reveal the marital status of the sample population, 63.64% of the respondents were single, while 36.36% of the respondents of this study were married. It can thus be inferred that majority of the respondents are single.

Table 4.1.4: Educational Status

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
O Level	38	15.01
NCE/OND	72	28.46
HND/B.Sc	119	47.04
POSTGRADUATE	24	9.49
	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.4 above presented information on the educational status of the respondents. It shows that 72 respondents have an NCE/OND degree making up 28.46% of the total respondents. 119 respondents have a HND/Bachelor's degree representing 47.04% of the total respondents. 24 respondents have a postgraduate degree representing 9.49% of the total respondents. 38 respondents have an O' Level certificate making up 15.01% of the total respondents. It is vivid that majority of the respondents have a Higher National Diploma/ Bachelor's degree as their highest academic qualification.

Table 4.1.5: Job Status

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
Junior Staff	103	40.71
Senior Staff	150	59.29
Total	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from 4.1.5 reveal, senior staff representing 59.29% of the total respondents, while 103 respondents are junior staff making up 40.71% which is the lowest numbers.

Table 4.1.6: Tenure

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
1–5 years	76	32.34%
6–10 years	55	21.74%
11–15 years	36	14.22%
16–20 years	41	16.21%
>20 years	45	17.79%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.6 above presented information on the tenure of the respondents. It shows that 76 respondents have used 1-5 years in the organization making up 32.34% of the total respondents. 55 have used 6-10 years representing 21.74% of the total respondents. 36 respondents have used 11-15 in the organization representing 14.22% of the total respondents. 41 respondents have used up to 16-20 years making up 16.21% of the total respondents.

Table 4.1.7: Length doing WFH

Respondents	Numbers of Respondents	% of Respondent
<1 Year	74	29.25%
1–2 Years	121	47.83%
>2 Years	58	22.92%
Total	253	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The findings from table 4.1.7 show the length of WFH of the respondents. 29.25% of the respondents WFH <1 Year , 47.83% WFH between the period of 1–2 Years and 22.92%

Respondents WFH more than 2 year.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis

We specified in chapter three that effect of working from home on employee performance would be analyzed using regression analysis. The results of the regression analysis are presented below.

4.3.1 Presentation of Result

Hypothesis One

H₀: That Working from home is not significantly related to work–life balance.

H₁: That Working from home is significantly related to work–life balance.

Table 4.3.1

Dependent Variable: WLB

Method: Least Squares

Date: 11/04/21 Time: 09:39

Sample: 1 - 253

Included observations: 253

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
WFH	-0.442271	0.067783	10.456208	0.0000
C	0.278794	0.322777	0.863736	0.0035
F-statistic	51.95305	Durbin-Watson stat		1.946637
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: Author’s Computation 2021 (E View)

$$WLB = f(WFH)$$

$$WLB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WFH + \mu$$

Interpretation of Results

On the basis of the results of hypothesis testing that was carried out, the findings indicated that the proposed hypothesis was accepted because the path coefficients were significant. Working from home ($\beta_1 = -0.442$, $t = 10.456 > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) had a significant and negative effect on work– life balance. The findings above, reveals that the probability of t statistics p-value is 0.0000 indicates that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value.

The a’p priori expectation for the explanatory variable was (work life balance) was not satisfied.

We therefore reject the null hypothesis and simply accept the alternative hypothesis and this means that Working from home was significantly related to work–life balance. As reported by the t- statistics.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: That Working from home is not significantly related to work stress

H₁: That Working from home is significantly related to work stress

Table 4.3.2

Dependent Variable: WS

Method: Least Squares

Date: 11/04/21 Time: 09:39

Sample: 1 - 253

Included observations: 253

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
WFH	-0.452073	0.065947	9.642669	0.0000
C	0.278794	0.322777	0.863736	0.0035
F-statistic	51.95305	Durbin-Watson stat		1.946637
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: Author's Computation 2021 (E View)

WS= f (WFH)

$$WS = \beta_0 + \beta_2 WFH + \mu$$

Interpretation of Results

On the basis of the results of hypothesis testing that was carried out, the findings indicated that the proposed hypothesis was accepted because the path coefficients were significant. Working from home Likewise, working from home ($\beta_2 = -0.452$, $t = 9.642 > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) had a significant and negative effect on work stress. The findings above, reveals that the probability of t statistics p-value is 0.0000 indicates that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value.

The a priori expectation for the explanatory variable was (work stress) was not satisfied.

We therefore reject the null hypothesis and simply accept the alternative hypothesis and this means that Working from home was significantly related to work stress as reported by the t-statistics.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: That Working from home is not significantly related to job satisfaction.

H₁: That Working from home is significantly related to job satisfaction

Table 4.3.3

Dependent Variable: JS

Method: Least Squares

Date: 11/04/21 Time: 09:39

Sample: 1 - 253

Included observations: 253

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
WFH	0.424559	0.004438	8.496245	0.0000
C	0.278794	0.322777	0.863736	0.0035
F-statistic	51.95305	Durbin-Watson stat		1.946637
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

Source: Author's Computation 2021 (E View)

$$JS = f(WFH)$$

$$JS = \beta_0 + \beta_3 WFH + \mu$$

Interpretation of Results

On the basis of the results of hypothesis testing that was carried out, the findings indicated that the proposed hypothesis was accepted because the path coefficients were significant. Working from home Likewise, working from home ($\beta_3 = 0.424$, $t = 8.496 > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) was found to have a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction. The findings above, reveals that the probability of t statistics p-value is 0.0000 indicates that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value.

The a priori expectation for the explanatory variable was (job satisfaction) satisfied.

We therefore reject the null hypothesis and simply accept the alternative hypothesis and this means that Working from home was significantly positively related to job satisfaction as reported by the t- statistics.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis confirmed that working from home has a significant and negative effect on work-life balance. Employees are not able to divide their time between work and personal life because they are still used to having fixed working hours. Creating boundaries between work and personal life to create a work-life balance condition is not an easy thing, especially in the

pandemic situation that has many restriction policies. A previous study notes that telecommuting work in the digital workplace may offer a strategy for creating flexibility that opens workers' creativity as long as the work–life balance strategies are stretched and implemented well by the workers through organizational support (Lee and Sirgy 2019). Therefore, it is noted that Nigerians needs more time in terms of the nation-wide policy for working from home, with the correct strategies in this digital work setting, innovation could be boosted. The negative consequences may impact on personal well-being, but in terms of productivity and innovation, the opportunity is still wide open, acknowledging the fact that Nigeria is a collective society where a good pace of teamwork setting in the digital space may open up creative ideas (Valcour and Hunter 2017)

The second hypothesis confirmed that working from home has a significant and negative effect on work stress. The present pandemic forces workers to do extra work, even working overtime because they have to be able to finish the job they were meant to do. Social isolation leads to employees being disconnected from their working environment and triggers work stress. This result is somehow congruent with the study of Gajendran and Harrison (2017), wherein the authors found that the more intense the job load through a telecommuting setting, the more stress was placed on the workers. The study found that in the early stages of the pandemic, the workers were still adapting and the employees were still setting up the correct pace of the work from home policy, wherein the stress levels were still lower; this may prove that in adaptation to the new work setting, the workers may have felt stress but at the same time, the closeness the family members may have reduced their stress levels (Hilbrecht et al. 2018).

The construct of this research was teleporting or working from home related to employees outcomes such as job satisfaction. The third hypotheses result confirmed that working from home has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. Employees have the flexibility and autonomy in balancing their work and personal life and tend to increase their job satisfaction. This result is somewhat congruent with the study of Song and Gao (2019), wherein non-fixed workers had more job satisfaction when the organization gave them the flexibility to work from home, as it was reported in the demographic information that the majority of the respondents were classified as being in the early stage of work (tenure less than 5 years) as in the organizational behavior literature they are still regarded as adapting to the workspace, and in the

early stages of their career, people tend to be flexible within tight work deadlines, which may be related to the workload of the non-fixed worker.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The major aim of this research is to examine Impact of working from home on employee performance. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives: To examine the nature of working from home on work–life balance (employee performance); To examine the effect of working from home on work stress (employee performance); To examine whether working from home is positively related job satisfaction (employee performance). In addition to the objectives, chapter one contains the statement of research problem, the research questions, significance of the study, hypotheses, scope and limitations, definitions of terms as well as an operationalization of the research variables used in the study. The following section is an extensive literature and various theories on working from home such as job performance theory and job characteristics model. Section three, focus on the methodology, the researcher adopted the descriptive research design and the survey method. The research instruments used for data collection were the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to two hundred and fifty three staff of Food Rite Company Ijebu Ode Ogun State. All questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed. The fourth section involves the presentation and analysis of data which was gotten from questionnaires administered. Descriptive statistics was used for the analysis of the bio-data; multiple linear regression analysis was also used to test all the hypotheses.

Conclusions

This study examined effect of working from home on employee performance in new-normal in Nigeria. Though, working from home in Nigeria was not regulated well, neither from the government nor the policy itself within the organization, the concept was rarely discussed in the collectivist setting. In this study, the closer a worker is to their family, the more positive is the performance index, which in some areas could increase their job satisfaction, while in the other side, work from home needs to be monitored due to distraction. Work from home can affect job satisfaction in a normal work setting; however, in this study, where workers were forced to work from home, work from had a positive impact on job satisfaction. The study reveals that working from home as the new climate of working for Nigerian workers can maintain their job satisfaction, and it is expected that they commit to their work and fulfill their task accomplishment

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the study provides several practical recommendations for the use of the working from home policy in the Nigerian context, especially in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. The leaders of organizations need to pay attention to their employees' job satisfaction during their working from home. It is undeniable that working from home can interfere with employees' work life balance and work stress.
2. In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the workload that must be completed, considering that working in remote conditions has obstacles such as lack of IT support and other jobs that result in a decreasing job satisfaction.
3. Future research needs to re-conceptualize the boundaries of telecommuting work and working from home, as it is visually the same, but in some areas, non-digital workers are not familiar with the concepts of telecommuting work settings. Where possible, dyadic research is encouraged so that the conceptualization of work from home from the perspectives of supervisor or manager can be operationalized.

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