REMOTE WORK SYSTEM AND LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE IN ABIA STATE UNIVERSITIES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between remote work systems and lecturers' performance in Abia State universities, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigated the relationship between technological infrastructure and service delivery, as well as between flexible work schedules and employee commitment. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from lecturers at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, and Abia State University, Uturu. The study population comprised 2,246 lecturers, and a sample size of 340 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while hypotheses were tested with the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between technological infrastructure and service delivery, and between flexible work schedules and employee commitment. The study concludes that effective implementation of remote work systems can enhance lecturer performance if supported by adequate technological and institutional frameworks. It recommends that university management invest in digital infrastructure, training, and support systems to strengthen remote work practices and improve staff performance.

***Key words:** Technological Infrastructure, Service Delivery, flexibility in work schedule, employee commitment, Remote Work System, Lecturers Performance.*

Introduction

With the advancement of technology and the increasing availability of online platforms, lecturers in universities in Abia State, Nigeria, have been embracing remote work as a viable alternative to traditional in-person teaching. This shift has raised pertinent questions about the impact of remote work on the performance of lecturers and the overall quality of education in Abia State. The concept of remote work refers to the practice of carrying out professional responsibilities outside of a traditional office or physical workspace (Henry, Le Roux, & Parry, 2021). In the context of lecturers in universities, remote work involves delivering lectures, conducting research, and

engaging in administrative tasks from remote locations, often facilitated by digital tools and communication technologies (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2022). This arrangement offers lecturers greater flexibility in managing their time, reducing commuting stress, and integrating work-life balance. The performance of lecturers plays a crucial role in maintaining the academic standards and educational outcomes of universities in Abia State. Therefore, it is essential to examine how remote work influences the effectiveness and productivity of lecturers in this particular setting. Factors such as access to necessary resources, technological infrastructure, and institutional support become significant considerations in evaluating the impact of remote work on lecturer performance.

Remote work has a long history, originating in the 1970s when people started working from home to save money on commuting expenses caused by soaring gasoline prices (Dibua, et al, 2023). Remote work has become a prevalent practice in various industries around the world, including the field of education (Pregowska, et al Osial, 2021). Prior to COVID-19, most workers had little remote working experience, the unprecedented outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has required millions of people across the world into being remote workers, inadvertently leading to a de facto global experiment of remote working (Kniffin, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of remote work as a growing practice among lecturers in universities in Abia State, Nigeria, has raised important concerns regarding its influence on lecturers' performance and the overall quality of education. Despite the potential benefits of remote work, such as cost reduction, flexibility, and improved work-life balance, its implementation across universities in Abia State remains limited and poorly structured. Institutions continue to incur high infrastructure and operating costs without corresponding improvements in employee performance. The recent surge in petrol prices has further increased the financial burden on lecturers, affecting their job satisfaction and productivity. Moreover, inadequate access to essential remote work resources, such as reliable internet connectivity, digital tools, and functional technological infrastructure, has constrained lecturers' ability to deliver lectures effectively, engage in research, and manage administrative duties remotely. The weak state of digital infrastructure in Abia State and insufficient institutional support, including lack of training and guidance for lecturers, exacerbate these challenges. Consequently, many lecturers struggle to adapt to online teaching methods, potentially undermining the quality of education delivery. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the extent to which remote work practices influence lecturers' performance in universities in Abia State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to determine the relationship between remote work System and lecturers' performance in Abia State universities, Nigeria. While specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities, Abia State.
2. ascertain the relationship between flexibility in work schedule and employee commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

Research Questions

The following questions were used to achieve the research objectives:

a. What is the relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State?
b. What is the extent of the relationship between flexibility work schedule and employee commitment in Universities, in Abia State

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will guide the study:

H_{o1}: Technological Infrastructure has no significant relationship on Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State.

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between Flexibility work Schedule and employee's commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

Literature Review

Remote Work

Remote work is defined as a flexible work arrangement whereby workers work in locations remote from their central offices or production facilities. The worker has no personal contact with co-workers there but can communicate with them using technology (Galanti, 2021). Edokobi et al (2025) concur and add that it includes performing job tasks outside a traditional office, typically supported by information and communication technology. Remote work generally refers to organizational work performed outside of the normal organization confines of space and time. The technical definition of remote work, is, the activity of working at home while communicating with your office (Prasad, 2020). Remote work is the practice of employees doing their jobs from a location other than a central office operated by the employer. Such locations could include an employee's home, a co-working or other shared space, a private office, or any other place outside of the traditional corporate office building or campus (Adisa, 2021).

Remote work has become increasingly popular because it offers benefits for both employers and employees alike. It also gained a great deal of renewed attention because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many organizations to quickly shift from a traditional face-to-face work environment to a fully remote workforce for health and safety reasons. The long-term popularity of remote working is tied to the upsides it can provide, including reduced or eliminated commuting times, recruiting, and hiring advantages, and productivity improvements. (Sultana et al., 2021). Remote work refers to a flexible work arrangement where employees carry out their duties in locations separated from their central offices or production facilities. This arrangement involves the absence of personal contact with colleagues, but the ability to communicate with them using technology.

Adisa (2021) characterizes remote work as the completion of work tasks at home through the utilization of information and communication technologies that facilitate flexible working practices. Essentially, remote work pertains to work performed outside of the conventional boundaries of space and time set by an organization. It can be specifically defined as the act of performing work duties from home while maintaining communication with the office. Remote work encompasses the practice of employees undertaking their job responsibilities from a place other than the employer's central office, such as their own homes, shared spaces like co-working areas, private offices, or any alternative venue separate from a traditional corporate office building (Wang, 2021).

Technological Infrastructure

The rapid shift towards remote work arrangements, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has placed significant emphasis on the critical role of technological infrastructure in enabling and supporting a decentralized workforce (Ambrogio et al., 2022). Technological infrastructure, in the context of remote work, encompasses the hardware, software, and communication tools that enable employees to perform their duties effectively from locations outside of a traditional office setting (Kanike, 2023). One of the fundamental aspects of technological infrastructure for remote work is the availability and quality of devices, such as laptops, desktops, and mobile devices, provided to or used by employees (Seedoyal et al, 2023). These devices must be equipped with the necessary processing power, memory, and storage to handle the demands of their job functions. Additionally, the software and applications installed on these devices must be compatible, secure, and optimized for remote work, allowing employees to access the resources and tools they need to be productive.

Remote employees require stable and secure internet access to communicate with their colleagues, access cloud-based applications and file-sharing platforms, and participate in virtual meetings and collaboration sessions (Olson & Olson, 2022). The lack of consistent and reliable internet connectivity can significantly hinder an employee's ability to perform their duties effectively, leading to reduced productivity and frustration. Beyond the basic hardware and connectivity requirements, remote work also necessitates the implementation of robust and secure communication and collaboration tools (Nain et al., 2022). These may include video conferencing platforms, instant messaging applications, project management software, and cloud-based file storage and sharing solutions. The seamless integration and user-friendly nature of these tools can greatly enhance the ability of remote employees to stay connected, coordinate their efforts, and maintain a sense of team cohesion (Afzal, 2024).

Flexibility in work Schedule

Flexibility in work schedules refers to the ability of employees to have some control over the timing and duration of their work, such as adjustable start and end times, compressed work weeks, or the option to work part-time (Mwaniki, 2022). In the context of remote work, this level of schedule flexibility can have a significant impact on employee productivity, work-life balance, and overall Service Delivery. One of the primary benefits of flexible work schedules in a remote work environment is the potential for enhanced employee productivity (Chatterjee et al., 2022). When given the autonomy to manage their own schedules, remote workers can optimize their work hours to align with their individual productivity patterns and energy levels. This allows them to maximize their focus and output during the most productive periods of the day, leading to more efficient task completion and a better use of their time.

Flexible schedules can have a positive impact on the work-life balance of remote employees (Shirmohammadi & Beigi, 2022). By enabling them to adjust their work hours to accommodate personal responsibilities, such as childcare, eldercare, or other commitments, remote workers can better integrate their professional and personal lives. This can lead to reduced stress, improved mental health, and a greater sense of overall well-being, ultimately contributing to higher Service Delivery and retention rates. However, the successful implementation of flexible work arrangements in a remote setting requires a shift in managerial mindset and the establishment of clear communication and accountability protocols (Chimienti, 2022).

Employee Performance

Aguinis (2007) opines that employee performance is about behaviour or the output of the work of employees and it is determinedly in by a combination of declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, motivation, and commitment of the employees.

Employee performance relays basically on goal achievement made at business (Abualoush, 2018). It indicates financial and nonfinancial added value of employee's contribution to work to the attainment of both, directly and indirectly, organizational goals and the rate of realization of the purpose and activity outcomes level. In the other word is about worker achieving results or standards as cited by organizations (Kok, 2011).

Employee performance can be viewed considering two perspectives: employee perspective, which is the result of a series of behaviors and tasks performed daily. Manager's perspective outcomes are the key factor for work performance appraisals (Yilmaz, 2015). Thus, many business directors assess the employee performance on the yearly or quarterly basis to identify and suggest area needed for improvement (Hee, 2014). Employee performance is about employees achieving the results, goals or standards as per the expectations set by the organization. Employees are rated on how well they do their jobs compared to the performance standards set. In short, it is the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed, the initiatives they take, their creativity in solving problems and the resourcefulness in the way they utilize their resources, time, and energy (Rothman & Coetzer, 2013).

Service Delivery

The shift to remote work has significantly impacted how organizations approach service delivery (Shipmanet al., 2023). Ensuring seamless and high-quality service from a distributed workforce requires a multifaceted approach. At the core of effective service delivery in a remote environment is robust technological infrastructure. Remote employees must have reliable access to the necessary devices, software, and internet connectivity to enable seamless collaboration, communication, and access to company resources. Organizations need to invest in secure, high-speed internet, up-to-date hardware and software, and cloud-based productivity and communication tools. This technological foundation supports real-time information sharing, virtual meetings, and document collaboration - all critical for coordinating tasks and delivering cohesive service to customers (Rhymer, 2023). Aliuba et al. (2025) posit that the need for operational efficiency has spurred a wave of technological integration aimed at optimizing internal processes, cost reduction, customer loyalty, continuous improvement and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Adapting standard operating procedures and workflows is also crucial for service delivery in a remote work model. Organizations must re-evaluate their business processes and find ways to digitize, streamline, and make them compatible with a distributed workforce. This may involve automating routine tasks, implementing cloud-

based project management platforms, and developing clear guidelines for remote work practices, such as response times and status reporting. By aligning operational processes with the unique dynamics of remote work, organizations can ensure consistent and efficient service delivery. (Olawale et al., 2024)

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment refers to the emotional attachment that an employee has in an organization (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022). It is the extent at which employees appreciate to be members of an organization. Boyd and Nowell, (2023) posit that affectively committed employees are seen to have a sense of identification and belonging and this motivates them to increase their participation in the activities of an organization. Additionally, affective commitment makes employees to have willingness to meet the goals of an organization as well as the desire to stay in the organization. Yasin et al. (2023) noted that organizational members who have an affective level of commitment have a longing to remain in the organization because they view their values and goals to be congruent with those of the organization. Ren et al. (2023) point out that employee affective commitment is related with work attitude and positive feelings about their organization. The work attitude is related with how employees view the organization, and this attaches them to the institution. Employees with strong affective commitment would be motivated to high levels of performance and make more meaningful contributions than employees who expressed continuance and normative commitment (Ren et al., 2023)

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model propounded in 2001 by Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker. Which is a theoretical framework that explains the relationship between job characteristics, employee well-being, and work-related outcomes. It was initially proposed by researchers Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti but was accused of oversimplifying the complex relationships between work characteristics, employee behaviors, and organizational outcomes. Critics suggest that the model may overlook important moderating and mediating variables that could better explain the underlying mechanisms.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model is highly relevant to the study on the impact of remote work on the performance of lecturers in understanding the specific job demands faced by lecturers in remote work settings, such as increased workload and technological challenges. It allows researchers to explore the negative effects these demands may have on lecturer performance. The model emphasizes the importance of job resources in mitigating job demands and promoting well-being and performance. For remote work, job resources may include institutional support, training programs, technological infrastructure, and flexible work arrangements. The study can investigate

the availability and impact of these resources on lecturer performance and Service Delivery.

Methodology

The study employed a survey research design to investigate a large population. The population of the study were academic staff of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike and Abia State University Uturu. From the personnel unit of the university, the academic staff of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike are 946 Staff while Abia State University Uturu has a total academic staff of 1,300 which gave a total of 2,246 Academic staff. Simple random sampling was used to ensure equal opportunity for each firm to be selected in the survey. Data for the research were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data, obtained through questionnaire, provided firsthand information from the respondents. Secondary information where sourced from textbooks, journals, earlier publications, and the internet. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the generated data, and hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Statistical Packages for Social Science (Version 25) at 5% level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analyses

This section is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected from the field of study and the test of hypotheses. The aim is to present the data in an interpretable form so that the variables of the study can be well understood. Out of the 340 distributed questionnaires, 205 were filled and retrieved.

Analysis of Data Related to Research Question

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State?

Table 1 Technological Infrastructure

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Remark
1	The quality and reliability of the technological infrastructure (e.g., devices, software, internet connectivity) available to me as a remote employee significantly impacts my productivity and job performance.	205	3.58	Accepted
2	The adequate technological support and training provided to me as a remote employee helps me effectively utilize the available tools and resources, leading to greater Service Delivery.	205	2.34	Rejected
3	My organization's investment in upgrading and maintaining its technological infrastructure is a critical	205	3.60	Accepted

	factor in the successful implementation and sustainability of remote work arrangements.			
4	The level of technological infrastructure available to me as a remote employee has a direct influence on my ability to collaborate, communicate, and stay connected with my colleagues and the organization.	205	4.21	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 Service Delivery

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Remark
5	I am happy with the feedback and coaching provided on remote work	205	4.15	Accepted
6	I am satisfied working from home	205	4.55	Accepted
7	I am not satisfied with the level of Service I render from working remotely	205	1.78	Rejected
8	The university do not provide a structured career development path and succession planning opportunities	205	3.86	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In Tables 1 and 2, all the items were addressing the first research question which is "What is the relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State?" From the data analysis, items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 obtained a mean rating above the criterion mean of 3.0 and items 2, and 7 obtained a mean rating below the criterion mean of 3.0. The result of the analysis indicated that majority of the respondents supported that technological infrastructure affects Service Delivery in Universities in Abia State

Research Question 2: To what extent does flexibility in schedule relates with employee commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

Table 3 Flexibility in Schedule

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Remark
9	The availability of flexible work schedules, such as flexible start/end times and compressed work weeks, positively affects my productivity and performance as a remote employee.	205	3.58	Accepted
10	The level of schedule flexibility provided to me as a remote employee significantly influences my work-life balance, Service Delivery, and overall wellbeing.	205	2.34	Rejected
11	The successful implementation of flexible work arrangements in my remote work setting requires different key factors compared to traditional office-based environments.	205	3.60	Accepted
12	My perceptions and attitudes towards flexible	205	4.21	Accepted

scheduling have a substantial impact on the adoption and effectiveness of remote work policies within my organization.

Table 4 Employee Commitment

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Remark
13	I am actively engaged to the success of my organization	205	2.30	Rejected
14	I always go above and beyond to achieve organizational goals	205	3.78	Accepted
15	I am always dedicated to deliver high-quality work	205	2.45	Rejected
16	I am pleased to act as an ambassador of the organization in the community	205	3.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From Tables 3 and 4, all the items were addressing the second research question which is " To what extent does flexibility in schedule relates with employee commitment in Universities, in Abia State" From the data analysis, items 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16 obtained a mean rating above the criterion mean of 3.0 and items 12 and 15 obtained a mean rating below the criterion mean of 3.0. The result of the analysis revealed that majority of the respondents supported that flexibility in schedule affects employee commitment in Universities in Abia State.

Hypotheses Testing

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis if P-value < 0.5; if otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis One

H_{o1}: Technological Infrastructure has no significant relationship on Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State.

Table 5 Correlations between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities, in Abia State.

		Technological Infrastructure	Service Delivery
Technological Infrastructure	Pearson correlation	1	872**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	205	205
Service Delivery	Pearson correlation	.872**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	205	205

Source: SPSS version 27 Outputs.

Table 5 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities in Abia State, with r = 0.872 n = 205 and p value of 0.031 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities in Abia State.

Hypothesis Two

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between Flexibility in Schedule and employee's commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

Table 6: Correlation between Flexibility in Schedule and employee's commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

		Flexibility Schedule	Employee Commitment
Flexibility in Schedule	Pearson correlation	1	.913**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	205	205
Employee Commitment	Pearson correlation	.913**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	205	205

Source: SPSS version 27 Outputs.

Table 6 shows that there is a positive significant correlation Flexibility in Schedule and employee's commitment in Universities, in Abia State with r = 0.913, n = 205 and p value of 0.026 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis and conclude that there is a positive significant correlation between Flexibility in Schedule and employee's commitment in Universities, in Abia State.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one revealed that Technological infrastructure has a significant positive relationship with Service Delivery in Universities in Abia State, with r = 0.872 n = 205 and p value of 0.031 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between Technological Infrastructure and Service Delivery in Universities in Abia State**.** The correlation value of 0.872 indicates that there was a strong positive relationship between technological infrastructure and Service Delivery amongst employees. Essentially, employees who felt more independent in their work had higher levels of Service Delivery. The finding suggests that when employees feel they have the necessary technological tools and resources to perform their work independently, it contributes significantly to their overall Service Delivery. Technological infrastructure appears to have empowered the employees and allowed them to work more autonomously, which in turn enhanced their Service Delivery.

Hypothesis two indicated that income disparity has a positive significant relationship with operational efficiency in public hospitals in Abia State with r = 0.647, n = 294 and p value of 0.015 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accepted the alternate hypothesis and concluded that income disparity has a positive significant relationship with operational

efficiency in public hospitals in Abia State. The result of Hypothesis two indicates that as the level of schedule flexibility increased, employee commitment also increased substantially. The results imply that providing employees with more control and flexibility over their work schedules can help them better manage their work-life balance, leading to greater empowerment, engagement, and commitment to their roles and the university. This finding suggests that universities should prioritize offering flexible work arrangements, as this can contribute to improved employee retention and a more productive workforce.

Conclusion and Recommendations

When employees have the opportunity to work remotely, they experience higher Service Delivery, leading to improved performance. Remote work provides greater flexibility, reduces commuting time, and enhances work-life balance, resulting in increased productivity and engagement. It also positively impacts employee retention and commitment by enabling better integration of work and personal life, leading to higher Service Delivery and loyalty to the organization. To fully leverage the advantages of remote work, universities should ensure they have the necessary technological infrastructure, effective communication channels, and clear guidelines in place. By embracing remote work, Universities in Abia State can enhance employee performance, Service Delivery, and overall well-being. This approach has been proven to be a valuable strategy for improving employee performance and creating a productive and flexible work environment. By embracing remote work, organizations can create a supportive and flexible work environment, ultimately enhancing employee performance and contributing to their well-being.

The study thus recommends that the University Management needs to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current technological capabilities across different departments and job functions within the universities. Identify gaps, bottlenecks, and areas for improvement.
2. Develop and implement flexible work policies that allow employees to have greater control over their schedules, such as flexible start/end times, compressed work weeks, and the ability to work remotely when appropriate.

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