



## Work-Family Balance and Remote Working among Women in Nigeria during Covid-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

Organisations face the challenge of establishing ways to mitigate the negative effects of work during coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic. As a result work-family balance was disrupted and negatively affected the employees' well-being especially working women. Against this backdrop, this study examined work-family balance of women working from home during covid-19 pandemic. Cross sectional research design was employed and data were collected via a survey of 126 from medical, education, banking, and finance and service sectors in Nigeria. The 126 women were selected using simple random sampling technique and data collected was analysed using simple percentage. The study revealed that women were satisfied by working remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study recommends among others that organisations and government should develop and implement work-family balance policies that would promote the increasing use of remote working arrangement with special reference to working women.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has created many drastic and negative changes in contemporary organisations with regard to working women. The spatial boundary separating work from workplace has been blurred and due to the extension of working time at home, time limits has changed, and as a result, work-family balance was disrupted and negatively affected the well-being of working women (Adeola & Adebisi, 2016). Organisations' action in supporting the well-being of workforce is critical to build and maintain workers' resilience. However, many organisations in Nigeria during coronavirus pandemic were reluctant to develop and implement flexible work arrangements necessary to protect workers emotional, physical, social and financial well-being (Ekwoaba *et al.*, 2015). Research indicates that remote working and other forms of flexible arrangements allow work-family balance to be maintained and facilitate the establishment of a balance between professional and private life during Covid-19 pandemic (Chung & Lippe, 2020; Palumbo, 2020). Ozimek (2020:1) pointed out that "the widespread use of remote working practices were caused by restrictions implement worldwide in connection with Covid-19 pandemic in March, 2020".

Women that are empowered, committed and work from home during and after the pandemic is considered important for the effective running of modern organisations this is because it was very challenging for working women to take care of family and professional responsibilities as well as managing performance related stress during the pandemic (Yadav & Jadhav-Tilekar, 2021:2063). Bhumika (2020) examined the challenges of work-life balance during Covid-19 induced worldwide lockdown: Exploring gender difference in emotional exhaustion in the Indian setting and found that working women were more loaded with office duties and personal responsibilities which make it difficult for them to balance their work and personal life duties (Okolie & Irabor, 2017). Therefore, the need for remote working arrangement to help working women achieves equilibrium between work and family domains. Popovici and Popovici (2020?:469) argued that "remote work revolution is necessary to enable employees who work from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain a satisfactory work-family balance". Arising from the foregoing, this study examined the challenges faced by working women during work from home due to coronavirus lockdown (Naveen & Raju, 2014).

## 2. METHOD

Cross-sectional research design and simple random sampling technique were employed for this study. Data was collected via a survey of 126 working women from Medical, education, banking, finance and service sectors constituted the sample size for the study. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study as well as interview and observation. Data collected was analysed using simple percentage.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1. Characteristics of Respondents

Arising from the analysis, the results below is quite revealing:

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender	Male	89	48.9%
	Female	93	51.1%
Total		182	100%

- a. 73% of working women agreed that remote work arrangement or working from home during Covid-19 pandemic help women maintain balance between work and personal life domain while 19% reported that despite working from home, they struggle to balance work and personal responsibilities. Only 7% of women reported that they were not able to maintain balance between work and personal life despite working from home.
- b. 37% of working women reported that encountered more difficulties due to extra work-load of official duties in addition to family responsibilities. More shocking is the fact the over 63% of women reported that they effectively managed extra work-load and family responsibilities why working from home.
- c. 80% of the working women reported that working from home enabled them to concentrate on their career advancement during the covid-19 pandemic.
- d. 16% of women reported that suffered work-related stress during work from home while 43% reported that they did not experienced any work-related stress.
- e. 37% working women reported that their respective organisations provide flexible working hours for work from home and 48% completely disagreed with the statement.
- f. 65% of working women reported that they work less than 40 hours per week and 23% reported that they work more than 48 hours per week due to the fact that the work role becomes embedded in the family domain.
- g. 74% of working women reported that work from home help them crate quality time for their family. 26% of the women wish they has more time for their family and 12% of them feels completely emotionally drained for working at home due to the fact that their work infringe on their family role.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study addressed the need to work remotely during and after covid-19 pandemic. Given the results of this study, participants who are working women from different sectors are willing to continuing working from home in the post covid-19 pandemic if they are encouraged and supported by their respective organisations. It is concluded therefore that if remote or tele-working arrangement is encourage in Nigerian organisations, working women efficiency and job satisfaction will increase and maintaining work-family balance will be common among working women. The main perceived benefits of remote working arrangement during and after covid-19 pandemic include lack of commute, recued distraction at the office and fewer unnecessary meetings, all of which were shared by 67% of the participants and the expected growth rate of full-time remote work arrangement in Nigeria over the next 10years has doubled from 21% to 73%. The study therefore recommended that organisations and should develop and implement work-family balance policies that would promote the increasing use of remote working arrangement with special reference to working women.

#### 5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Technologies is an important factor in supporting work-family balance in remote working conditions and enable a better connection with colleagues as well as better monitoring

of work by superiors. Therefore, organisations should provide the necessary technologies to promote working from home for working women.

2. Government should invest more on technological innovation to support the effective implementation of tele-working as will increase the number of women in the workforce during the post covid-19 pandemic era.
3. Organisations should provide e-training on the application of technologies available to work from home such as Google, video call, chat, etc.
4. Working women should create a workspace in their apartment that is conducive for tele-working arrangement or practice.
5. Effective communication should be maintained between employers and working women. If any staff faced difficulties while working from home, management should arrange meetings and interactive sessions to main working women comfortable through video calls or chats rather than sending emails.

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