



Work-Family Balance and Remote Working Among Women Entrepreneur In Nigeria

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ABSTRACTS

Organisations face the challenge of establishing ways to mitigate the negative effects of work after 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 the work-family balance of women working from home after 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 techniques and data collected was analysed using simple percentages. The study revealed that women were satisfied by working remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study recommends among others that organisations and governments should develop and implement work-family balance policies that would promote the increasing use of remote working arrangements with special reference to working women.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 1 Feb 2024

Revised 1 Maret 2024

Accepted 20 Maret 2024

Available online 1 April 2024

Keyword:

Work-family balance, Remote Working, Women Entrepreneur, Working Women, Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 outbreak that has spread throughout the world continues to cause anxiety among the global community. This threat further increases fear with the emergence of a new, more frightening virus variant. This fear is understandable considering that the number of Covid-19

cases is still high in many countries (Putro, 2020). Most assertions relating the genesis of Covid-19 pandemic started in December 2019, when China discovered and notified the world about the emergence of a deadly virus within some patients in the Hubei province of the country. The novel coronavirus SARS has its attendant illness

as coronavirus diseases or Covid-19 (Alfokoro, 2021). According to Thurner (2020) revealed that cases of transmission of this virus are still occurring in various parts of the world. The fact that the number of Covid-19 cases is still high in many countries shows how vicious this pandemic is, implying that body immunity alone is not enough to deal with it.

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 have changed, and as a result, work-family balance was disrupted and negatively affected the well-being of working women. Organisations' action in supporting the well-being of the workforce is critical to build and maintain workers' resilience. However, many organisations in Nigeria during the coronavirus pandemic were reluctant to develop and implement flexible work arrangements necessary to protect workers emotional, physical, social and financial well-being. 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 implemented 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. Therefore, the need for remote working arrangement to help working women achieves equilibrium between work and family domains. Popovici and Popovici (2020) 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.

2. METHODS

Cross-sectional research design and simple random sampling techniques were employed for this study (Wang & Cheng, 2020). 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 percentages.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1) Work Family Balance

According to Edwards & Rothbard (1999) on Liu et al., (2019) with P-E fit theory, the attainment of work-family balance will rise as organisational integration aligns more closely with an

individual's preferences. This alignment implies that adequate provisions are in place to fulfil the needs, desires, and goals of the individual. In such a scenario, both the individual and the organisation share congruent goals, and employees perceive ample support from the organisation.

Notwithstanding the significance and the myriad family-related advantages associated with achieving a work-family balance (Grawitch et al., 2013). Suggestions have been made that individual preferences regarding work-home boundaries are pivotal in determining family-related outcomes like work-family enrichment (McNall et al., 2015) and family performance (Liao et al., 2016). However, these studies have neglected contextual elements such as workplace provisions and the delineation between work and home. Our findings unveil a much more intricate scenario, indicating that outcomes in the family sphere hinge on the alignment or misalignment across different levels of individual preferences and workplace provisions. Balance effectiveness may operate differently than balance satisfaction in predicting work- and family-related outcomes (Wayne et al., 2017).

2) Findings

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

a. 73% of working women agreed that remote work arrangement or working from home during Covid-19 pandemic helped 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 they encountered more difficulties due to extra work-load of official duties in addition to family responsibilities. More shocking is the fact that over 63% of women reported that they effectively managed extra work-load and family responsibilities when 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 they suffered work-related stress during work from home while 43% reported that they did not experience 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 helps them create quality time for their family. 26% of the women wish they had more time for their family and 12% of them feel completely emotionally drained from working at home due to the fact that their work infringe on their family role.
- h. 13% reported that they suffered fatigue, series of persistence

- i. minor ailments, sleeplessness, lack of concentration, loss of appetite and anxiety attacks for working solely from home while 47% completely disagreed with the statement.
- j. 56% reported that they were able to spend more time exercising and taking medication for fitness while 21% of them were not interested in such activities.
- k. 44% working women reported working from home increased their performance and service delivery while 14% of them completely disagreed with the statement.
- l. 60% of them reported that they were satisfied with the working flexibility during work from home due to Covid-19 pandemic. Only 7% completely disagreed with the statement.
- m. 52% reported that they have regular interactions with colleagues and only 3% of them completely disagreed with the statement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study addressed the need to work remotely during and after covid-19 pandemic (Aloisi, 2022). Given the results of this study, participants who are working women from different sectors are willing to continue 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 encouraged 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,

rescued 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 10 years has doubled from 21% to 73%. The study therefore recommended that organisations should develop and implement work-family balance policies that would promote the increasing use of remote working arrangements with special reference to working women.

1) Policy Recommendations

1. Technology is an important factor in supporting work-family balance in remote working conditions and enables 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 it 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 faces difficulties while working from home, management should arrange meetings and interactive sessions to keep working women

6. comfortable through video calls or chats rather than sending emails.

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