

COVID-19: FLEXIBILITY IN WORK SCHEDULES AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown has caused the Nigerian government to put in place measures which affect directly the workforce, hence this study. This research work therefore examined the relationship between flexibility in work schedules and human resources implications on Nigerian public sector. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design using a cross sectional survey technique. The population of study constituted 158 HR managers and others who are directly involved with human resource practices and people-related issues as respondents who were drawn from 14 government agencies, civil services and public enterprises that makes up the Nigerian public sector. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The method was used because the number of respondents were on record. Using Taro Yamene's formula, a minimum sample size of 113 was derived by the Researcher hence, the sample size for each sector was estimated using Bowley's proportional allocation technique. A researcher designed and validated 30-item instrument was used for data collection, via the Google form/Survey Monkey Apps due to social distancing policy of the Federal Government amid Covid-19 pandemic period. Four research questions, four hypotheses and two theories guided this study. The research hypotheses were tested using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient determined through the use of Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). The results of the findings revealed that flexibility in work schedules has a significant relationship with human resources implications on Nigerian public sector. Therefore, it was recommended that the government through the public sector should encourage teleworking and job sharing amongst employees in order to get them committed and motivated especially in this period of Covid-19 global pandemic outbreak.

Keywords: Covid-19, Flexibility, Work Schedules, Human Resource, Implications, Public Sector

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV), which was first identified amid an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. It was initially reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on December 31, 2019. On January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency. On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, its first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009. Illness caused by SARS-CoV-2 was recently termed COVID-19 by the WHO, the new acronym derived from "coronavirus disease 2019." The name was chosen to avoid stigmatizing the virus's origins in terms of populations, geography, or animal associations. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will 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. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow). The COVID-19 infection is spread from one person to others via droplets produced from the respiratory system of infected people, often during coughing or sneezing. According to current data, time from exposure to onset of symptoms is usually between two and fourteen days, with an average of five days. At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments (Cennimo, 2020).

The first confirmed case of the pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 in Nigeria was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus, caused by SARS-CoV-2. On 9 March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. On 28 January 2020, the Federal government of Nigeria assured citizens of the country of its readiness to strengthen surveillance at five international airports in the country to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The government announced the airports as Enugu, Lagos, Rivers, Kano and the FCT. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control also announced same day that they had already set up coronavirus group and was ready to activate its incident system if any case emerged in Nigeria. On 31 January 2020, following the developments of COVID-19 pandemic in mainland China and other countries worldwide, the federal government of Nigeria set up a Coronavirus Preparedness Group to mitigate the impact of the virus if it eventually spreads to the country. On the same day, the World Health Organization listed Nigeria among other African countries identified as high-risk for the spread of the virus. The Covid-19 pandemic has created a crisis in the whole world. It is in the eve of such crisis that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) gives a strong guidelines and foundation to be observed by policy makers such as the federal and central governments globally. This focuses majorly on the most crucial roles of work in attaining a suitable and sustainable impartial recovery. The Federal government, businesses, companies and organisations adopt this policy to put in place a humanity-centered mechanism for protection of workers and enterprises (Wikipedia, 2020).

Organizational leaders often endorse the view that "human resources are our most important asset" (Guest, 2001). Implicit in this characterization is the idea that collective human resources

embodied in the workforce represents an economic resource of the organization in the sense that it is expected to generate future income streams (Flamholtz, 1999). This perspective is echoed in a growing body of scholarly work in strategy and strategic human resource management that examines firm-level human resource as a type of resource from which firms can potentially derive competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Lado & Wilson, 1994). The need therefore to protect workers who are regarded as the most important asset in the workplace to minimize the direct effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with WHO recommendations and guidance is now a necessity as the virus has forced companies to slow or halt physical operations, impacting productivity and profitability. This pandemic has brought an impact that has never been seen before in organisations, businesses, institutions and workforce globally. As the businesses and industries struggle to maintain their profits and operations during this trying times, employee's health and safety has been at the helm of the employer's consideration as well. Since the outbreak is not predictable to be stopping soon or rather slowing down, most if not all, companies and businesses have resorted to implement measures in line with the government regulations and restrictions that will see them through maintaining their revenue at the same time ensuring employees health and safety. Some have ensured their employees work from home, social distancing at work place, staggered working hours and even ensuring regular hand sanitising and putting on of masks at the work place as directed by the government.

Statement of the Problem

As governments make significant interventions in response to the coronavirus, businesses are rapidly adjusting to the changing needs of their human resource, their customers and suppliers, while navigating the financial and operational challenges. Key initial impacts of COVID-19 are the need to manage an immediate shift to remote working, along with preparing for higher rates of sick leave, travel restriction and office closures. There are a few current studies based on the COVID-19 pandemic. Majority of them based their studies on the impact of the pandemic on the exchange rates, on the GDP, on transportation, on education, on health of the population and on the foreign trade. Hence for this purpose, the study aimed at determining the effect of government measures on the flexibility of work schedules and on the human resource which is the backbone of every country since they contribute a sizeable percentage to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Flexible work schedules refer to practices that allow individuals to decide and manage their work schedules (Maxwell, Rankine, Bell & MacVicar, 2007). On the other hand, Gardiner & Tomlinson (2009) observe with regards to hours of work, based on these schedules, the employee is allowed to have some control over their job and can decide on the timing as well as the place where the job should be done (Lambert, Marler, & Gueutal, 2008). Flexible work practices are perceived by organizations as a strategy for obtaining and retaining high quality staff (Cole 2006). This has been a major basis for achieving a competitive advantage given the unique contributions of the highly satisfied and committed workforce (Nadeem & Henry 2003). The pandemic has caused government to put in place measures which affect directly the workforce and hence the study attempts to analyse the same.

Operational Framework of the Study

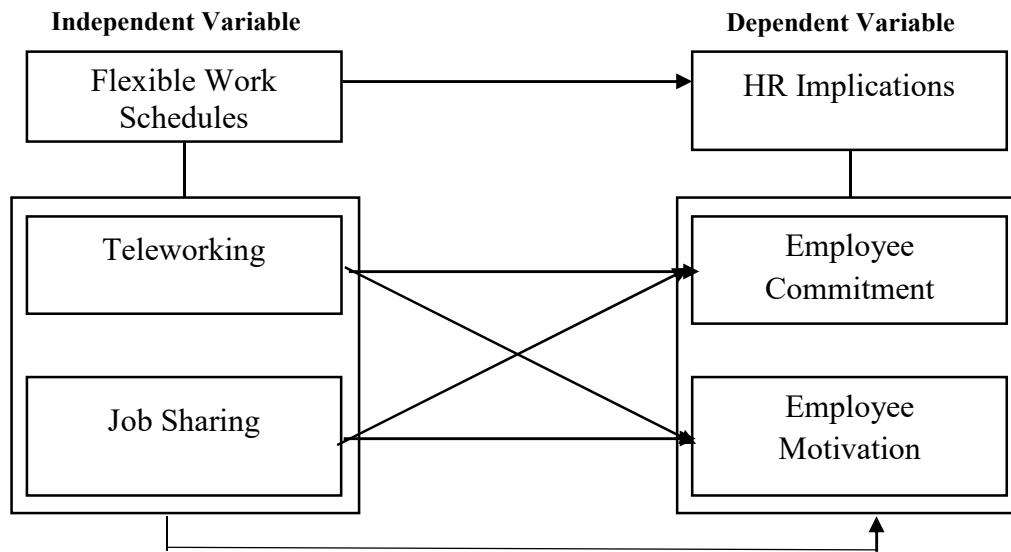


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Conceptualized by the Researchers (2020)

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this study is to examine the relationship between flexibility work schedules and human resources implications on Nigerian public sector during the covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the relationship between teleworking and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector.
- Determine the relationship between teleworking and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector.
- Investigate the relationship between job sharing and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector.
- Examine the relationship between job sharing and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector.

Research Questions

In the course of the research the following research questions were answered:

- What is the relationship between teleworking and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector?
- What is the relationship between teleworking and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector?
- What is the relationship between job sharing and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector?
- What is the relationship between job sharing and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector?

Research Hypotheses

- Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector.
- Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector.
- Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment on Nigerian public sector.
- Ho4:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee motivation on Nigerian public sector.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Flexible Work Schedule

Flexible work schedules is a significant issues in this 21st Century. Nevertheless, it is not until in the recent past that these practices came to be perceived as beneficial for both employees and employers (Clutterbuck, 2003). Studies supporting the benefits of flexible work schedules recognize the positive although indirect contribution of these practices to organizational profit (Morgan, 2009). Organizations and employees have realized the potential advantages of the practices as far as creating a satisfied workforce, promotion of employee wellbeing, reducing the rate of absenteeism, employee commitment and improvement in organization citizenship behaviour is concerned (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills & Smeaton, 2003). On forms of flexible work schedules, flexible work schedules occur in many forms for example teleworking, flexitime, compressed work week, leave, job sharing, phased retirement, contract work, part time jobs and term time working.

Teleworking

Telework, alternatively called telecommuting, is a flexible work arrangement that affords employees the ability to “periodically, regularly, or exclusively perform work for their employers from home or another remote location that is equipped with the appropriate computer based technology to transfer work to the central organization” (Hunton & Norman, 2010, p. 67). Although telecommuting is commonly thought to have first began in the 1970s as a result of the oil crisis (Bailey & Kurland, 2002), this practice did not become popular until the early 1990s, after which the percentage of teleworking employees proliferated. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (2006), for example, the number of U.S. workers who telecommuted increased by more than 200% from 1992 to 2002. The Department of Transportation also indicated that the average number of days per workweek spent telecommuting increased during the same period from 1 to 2 days to 3 to 4 days.

Job Sharing

Job sharing is an arrangement where two employees share the work of one full-time position. Salary, leave and benefits are divided between them according to the proportion of time each person works (Curson, 1986). Job sharers are together responsible for the entire job, and in principle each one retains the prospects and status of a full-time employee. Each partner has his/her own contract of employment with pro-rata pay and benefits. The job is normally divided by task and time in a variety of ways, depending on both the requirements of the job and the needs of the job sharers. In most cases the full-time working hours are divided equally between the partners,

either on the basis of one partner working mornings and the other afternoons, or alternate day working, or alternate three days/two days, or two-and-a-half days' splits.

Concept of Human Resources Implications

Organizations are managed by people and through people. Without people, organizations can never exist. Indeed, people who make up the human resources of a company are unique and they can make or break an organization, depending upon their level of commitment, contribution and cooperation. Human resources are a whole consisting of inter-related, inter-dependent and interacting physiological, psychological, sociological and ethical components. Human resources are the only assets that appreciate over a period while physical resources just depreciate with years. HR alone can produce an output larger than the input. This is possible due to the creative skills of humans. Creative thinking is the process of predicting, envisioning and then inventing an idea, concept or insight along innovative and alternative lines. People in the organization are the only basis for such creativity and there is no obvious limit to their imagination. Organizations require human resources of different types to operate all physical resources. Thus, they provide utility value to each one of the physical assets. In fact, the real worth of a physical asset depends on the quality and calibre of the people working with it. An incompetent workforce will spoil the physical resources available to it.

Employee Commitment

Several attempts have been made to define "employee commitment." Perhaps the most comprehensive of those definitions is that of Meyer, Stanley and Parfyonova (2012) who define commitment using a multidimensional approach and consider it to have affective, continuance and normative perspectives. The affective dimension of commitment refers to an emotional attachment to and involvement with an organisation; continuance commitment denotes the perceived costs of leaving an organisation; and normative commitment refers to the felt responsibility to support and remain a member of an organisation. Thus it can be discerned from definitions such as the one above, that employee commitment is a bond between the employee and the organisation such that he/ she (the employee) wants to continue serving the organisation and to help it achieve its objectives. The importance of "employee commitment" is well captured by different authors. Yilmaz and Çokluk-Bökeoğlu (2008) expound that employees with high organisational commitment feelings affect organisational performance in positive ways because they lessen the frequency of performing negative behaviour and improve quality of service. A committed employee is a more compatible and productive individual who has higher levels of satisfaction, loyalty and responsibility. They continue to observe that organisational commitment not only increases the success in a certain role, but also encourages the individual to achieve many voluntary actions necessary for organisational life and high standard system success.

Employee Motivation

The word motivation originated from the concept of motive which describes an individual's drives and needs that are essential to achieve certain desires (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012). Several definitions of motivation were seen in previous researches. According to Maduka and Okafor (2014), motivation refers to the willingness of an individual to put greater efforts to attain particular goals. Therefore, the concept of motivation stresses on an individual's feeling of enthusiasm and attentiveness to be able to achieve his or her goals in an effective manner. Correspondingly, Robbins (2001) reported that the motivation of an individual represents the energies that could

inspire, direct, and maintain or enhance his/ her efforts. Motivation was also previously expressed as an internal inner wish that exists within an employee to accomplish his or her tasks successfully, because such tasks are exciting and match his or her interests (Gouws, 1995). Employee motivation can be expressed according to the inner desire of an individual to exemplify his or her capabilities to achieve certain goals for an expected reward. Motivation is an art with a purpose to get individuals to work willingly, and influencing them to behave in a certain manner to accomplish their tasks (Maduka & Okafor, 2014). Certain scholars (Coetsee, 2002; Robbins, Judge, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2009) demonstrated that employees' motivation at the work place appears through their willingness to effectively use their knowledge and skills to achieve the desired organizational objectives in relation to their satisfaction and needs. Motivation is one of the key issues for any organization either public or private (Muogbo, 2013; Zameer, Ali, Nisar, & Amir, 2014). Particularly, in order to drive the success of an organization, motivation has a significant role. Chintallo and Mahadeo (2013) revealed that all organizations, including the public or private sector encounter the issue of employee motivation.

Flexibility in Work Schedules and Human Resources Implications

Human resource management (HRM) has been recognized as a potential source of competitive advantage for some time now (Becker & Gerhart, 1996) and is not losing in popularity due to the fact that its practices can stimulate firm performance (Amarakoon, Weerawardena, & Verreyne, 2016). This is particularly significant in increasingly hypercompetitive markets so, in order to respond to the unpredictable environment with better organizational flexibility, organizations employ HRM practices that promote more flexible work (Stavrou, 2005). Practices which can improve individual and/or organizational performance through alternative forms of work schedules are known as flexible work arrangements (FWAs; Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999; de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011). FWAs are useful for achieving the more efficient use of human resources (HR) because they provide an opportunity to allocate employees and their time depending on the nature of work that has to be done (Berkery, Morley, Tiernan, Purtill, & Parry, 2017). FWAs have recently gained a considerable popularity mostly in the European Union (EU) and Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Kattenbach, Demerouti, & Nachreiner, 2010; Battisti & Vallanti, 2013). Large scale surveys such as the European Working Conditions Surveys (Eurofound, 2017), the Workplace Employment Relations Series and the Work Life Balance Study (de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011) and a recent comparative analysis by Gialis & Taylor (2016) confirm the rising popularity of FWAs in both highly developed (e.g. UK, Italy, Netherlands) and less developed EU countries (e.g. Greece, Romania, Portugal).

Other studies have also confirmed increasing proportions of workforce using FWAs in many countries worldwide such as Japan, Australia, USA and Canada (International Labour Organization, 2011; OECD, 2012; Spreitzer, Cameron, & Garrett, 2017). The increasing popularity of FWAs is a consequence of both the organizations' desire to gain more flexibility and institutional recommendations from the EU, OECD and International Labour Organization (Kattenbach et al., 2010; Kottey & Sharma, 2016).

The first attempts of exploring the impact of FWAs date from the 1970s and were focused on their effect on individual worker performance (deMenezes & Kelliher, 2011). In the following years, the research of FWAs' impact on individual performance expanded to work-life issues, health

outcomes and work engagement (Allen, Johnson, Kiburtz, & Shockley, 2013; Rudolph & Baltes, 2017). Recently, studies explored the impact of specific FWAs on firm performance in terms of productivity, profitability, turnover, absenteeism etc. (e.g. Dex & Smith, 2002; Berkery et al., 2017), but de Menezes & Kelliher (2011) point out in a systematic literature review based on 148 publications that previous studies about the effects of FWAs on firm performance are inconclusive and should be additionally examined. Moreover, literature is almost completely silent about different clusters of FWAs practices, especially with regard to their primary "beneficiaries".

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on Signaling Theory and Psychological Contract Theory.

Signaling Theory

According to Grover & Crooker (1995) Signaling theory has been used to explain how flexible work schedules can lead to positive perceptions. By offering flexible work schedules, organizations show that they support employee's well-being by allowing them to attend to their personal needs such as child care or elder care, attendance to health matters like exercise and professional development. In feeling supported by their organizations, employees may experience more control to cope with work-family demands. This will in turn yield into job satisfaction and commitment among the employees and hence higher productivity). Randel, and Stevens (2006) explained that the availability of flexible work schedules may lead to perceptions of control over work-family matters and positive effect, which can help employees cope with work-family conflict.

Psychological Contract Theory

The psychological contract theory explains a two-way exchange process of perceived promises and obligations between employees and their employers. According to Armstrong (2006) it is an open ended agreement about what the individual and the organization expect to give and receive in return in the employment relationship. The contract represents a dynamic and reciprocal deal. Armstrong (2006) posits that the theory holds that employees expect to be treated fairly as human beings, to be provided with work that utilizes their abilities, to be rewarded equitably according to their contribution, to be able to display competence, to have opportunities for further growth, to know what is expected of them and to be given feedback on how well they are doing. On the other hand, employers expect employees to do their best on behalf of the organization, to be fully committed to its values, to be compliant and loyal and to enhance the image of the organization to its customers and suppliers. Bratton and Gold (2007) contend that at the heart of the psychological contract theory is an exchange of individual employee commitment, motivation and task performance beyond expected outcomes by the organization. According to Lam (2001) these actions which are beyond formally prescribed roles and job descriptions that is extra role behaviour rather than role behaviour is what is called employee productivity. The provision of flexible work schedules is therefore perceived by employees as a favour that deserves to be reciprocated.

Empirical Review

Flexible work arrangements is defined as an alternative to the standard working day (Rau & Hyland 2002). It usually comprehends to organizational initiatives which enhance employees' flexibility on the time and place where work has to be accomplished, and also various policies

exerting influence on the number of hours worked. Economic, technological, social and family changes have encouraged the introduction of flexible working arrangements. The flexibility arrangements includes; flextime, absence autonomy, compressed work weeks, reduced schedule, telework, extra vacation days, limited schedule of meetings (meetings cannot be scheduled too late at the end of the day), flexible holidays and keeping with the schedule (employees work the mandatory 8 hours/day and do not extend their schedules longer). Hill et al., (2001) investigated the extent to which flexible hours and flex place arrangements resulted in benefits for individuals (more satisfactory work family balance) and organizations (longer work hours). They reported that given a reasonable work week which they considered to be between 40 and 50 hours) per week, employees who perceived flexibility in the timing and location of their work, had less difficulty with work-family balance. Moreover Hill et al., (2001) reported that employees with perceived flexibility in the timing and location of work could work longer hours be for work- family balance was perceived to be a problem. From a business perspective, Hill et al., (2001) results suggested that given a heavy workload perceived flexibility in the timing of work enables employees to work an extra day a week i.e. 60 hour a week, compared to 52 hours without flexible hours. O'Driscoll et al., (2003) suggests that the extent to which individuals have control and flexibility is a critical factor in the reduction of work family conflict. Flexible work arrangements are connected to a number of positive outcomes for employees who access them including better mental health and reductions in stress, burnout, turnover and absenteeism and increases in retention, loyalty, job satisfaction, innovation, creativity and productivity (Galinsky, Bond, Sakai, Kim & Giuntoli, 2008).

Methodology

The study adopted the quasi-experimental design using a cross sectional survey technique because the variables were not under the control of the researcher and the research intend to generate new act without intentional manipulation of variables. The target population covers all government agencies, civil services and public enterprises that makes up the Nigerian public sector. However, the accessible population was 158 employees of 14 Federal Government Agencies that at least have a liaison office in Port Harcourt. The selection of this 14 government agencies was based on easy access to information to ensure that the aim of this study is effectively achieved. The names of the 14 selected agencies are Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Niger Delta River Basin Authority, Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), Nigerian Aviation Management Authority (NAMA), Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Nigerian Maritime and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and Nigerian Road Safety Corpse. HR managers and others who are directly involved with human resource practices and people-related issues were selected as respondents because they typically have the kind of factual information required in this study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The method was used because the number of respondents were on record. Using Taro Yamene's formula, a minimum sample size of 113 was derived hence, the sample size for each commission was estimated using Bowley's proportional allocation technique which is given as $nh = nN_h/N$. where nh = number of units allocated to each sub group (that is each institution used in the study), N_h = number of respondents in each institution, n = sample size and N = total population. Thus, the number of questionnaire given to each institution was 11, 11, 11, 8, 11, 3, 3, 9, 8, 10, 7, 6, 6, and

8 respectively. Questionnaire was used for data generation and the questionnaire applied a five points likert scale format which are strongly agree (5 point), Agree (4 point), Neutral (3 point), Disagree (2 point) and strongly Disagree (1 point). Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, it was obvious that administering of copies of questionnaire through one-on-one contact to respondents now or in the near future will not be feasible. On this note, the researcher used electronic method/e-survey/e-research (survey monkey/Google form) in this study. In using electronic mail surveys, a survey (copy of questionnaire) was sent to respondent's email address. Respondents then reads, scroll down the message, answer the questions by filling the copy of questionnaire and then simply 'reply' by sending the survey back to the researcher via e-mail. Respondents that did not answer online printed the survey out and then answer it like a paper questionnaire and mail/fax it back to the researcher. The content validity was employed in this study. The cronbach alpha was used in testing the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of teleworking and job sharing gave an alpha values of .834 and .729 and respectively. While the reliability of employee commitment and employee motivation were .731 and .882 respectively. The spearman's rank order correlation coefficient statistical analysis was used in analysing the stated hypothesis through the use of Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS).

Results

A total of 113 copies of the structured questionnaire were electronically distributed via email by the researcher to the agencies, civil services and public enterprises that makes up the Nigerian public sector under study and 113 copies of the questionnaire were electronically retrieved via email and in usable form representing 100% response rate. The electronically retrieved copies of the questionnaire were properly checked to ensure that they were properly filled. They were thoroughly edited to see that errors detected were effectively corrected.

Hypothesis One

Table 4.24: Spearman's rank correlation of teleworking and employee commitment.

Correlations				
			Teleworking	Employee commitment
Spearman's rho	Teleworking	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.600**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	113	113
	Employee Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.600**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

As shown from the data analysis using a sample size of 113 on table 4.17 the relationship between teleworking and employee commitment is strong, positive and significant evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient is .600** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .600$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words teleworking significantly predicts employee

commitment. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee commitment, and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between teleworking and employee commitment.

Hypothesis Two

Table 4.24: Spearman's rank correlation of teleworking and employee motivation.

Correlations				
			Teleworking	Employee Motivation
Spearman's rho	Teleworking	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.697**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	113	113
	Employee Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	.697**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

From statistics of the data analysis using a sample size of 113 on table 4.18 the relationship between teleworking and employee motivation is strong, positive and significant evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient is .697** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .697$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words, teleworking significantly predicts employee motivation. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee motivation, and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between teleworking and employee motivation.

Hypothesis Three

Table 4.24: Spearman's rank correlation of job sharing and employee commitment.

Correlations				
			Job Sharing	Employee Commitment
Spearman's rho	Job Sharing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.861**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	113	113
	Employee Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.861**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	113	113
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

From statistics of the data analysis using a sample size of 113 on table 4.19 the relationship between job sharing and employee commitment is very strong, positive and significant evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient is .861** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .861$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words, job sharing significantly predicts employee commitment. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment, and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment.

Hypothesis Four

Table 4.24: Spearman's rank correlation of job sharing and employee motivation.

Correlations				
			Job Sharing	Employee Commitment
Spearman's rho	Job Sharing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.533**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	113	113
	Employee Motivation	Correlation Coefficient	.533**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	113	113

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From statistics of the data analysis using a sample size of 113 on table 4.20 the relationship between job sharing and employee motivation is moderate, positive and significant evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient is .533** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .533$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). This means job sharing significantly predicts employee motivation. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee motivation, and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between job sharing and employee motivation.

Summary of Hypotheses Testing Result

S/N	Hypotheses	Result	Decision
HO ₁	There is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee commitment.	$\rho = .600$ $p\text{-value} = .000$	Reject HO ₁ since $p\text{-value} < 0.005$ significance level.
HO ₂	There is no significant relationship between teleworking and employee motivation.	$\rho = .697$ $p\text{-value} = .000$	Reject HO ₂ since $p\text{-value} < 0.005$ significance level.
HO ₃	There is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee commitment.	$\rho = .861$ $p\text{-value} = .000$	Reject HO ₃ since $p\text{-value} < 0.005$ significance level.

HO4	There is no significant relationship between job sharing and employee motivation.	rho = .533 p-value = .000	Reject HO4 since p-value < 0.005 significance level.
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Discussion of Findings

This research was carried out with the aim of examining the relationship between flexible work schedules and human resource implications on Nigerian public sector. The results of this research work have clearly shown that there is a significant relationship between flexible work schedules and human resource implications on Nigerian public sector. It also revealed a correlation between all dimensions of flexible work schedules and human resource implications on Nigerian public sector.

Hypothesis One Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one between teleworking and employee commitment revealed a strong, positive and significant relationship evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient of .600** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .600$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words teleworking significantly predicts employee commitment. This means that, if civil service commissions in Nigeria strengthen their teleworking practice especially during this period of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, they will gain the commitment of employees. This result is in accordance with the study conducted by Galinsky, Bond, Sakai, Kim & Giuntoli (2008) which revealed that teleworking arrangements are connected to a number of positive outcomes for employees who access them including better mental health and reductions in stress, burnout, turnover and absenteeism and increases in retention, commitment, loyalty, job satisfaction, innovation, creativity and productivity.

Hypothesis Two Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis two between teleworking and employee motivation revealed a strong, positive and significant relationship evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient of .697** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .697$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words, teleworking significantly predicts employee motivation. This means that, if civil service commissions in Nigeria strengthen their teleworking practice especially during this period of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, employees will be highly motivated in the discharge of their duties. This result is in agreement with the study carried out by Major et al. (2008) which revealed that performance increased because teleworkers felt more motivated, had fewer interruptions than they did at the office, and had less anxiety about the care of their dependents.

Hypothesis Three Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis three between job sharing and employee commitment revealed a very strong, positive and significant relationship evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient of .861** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .861$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words, job sharing significantly predicts employee commitment. This means that, if civil service commissions in Nigeria strengthen their job sharing practice especially during this period of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, employees will be highly committed in the discharge of their duties. This result is in line with the

study conducted by Hill et al., (2001) which revealed that employees with perceived flexibility relating to job sharing in the timing and location of work could be committed to their duties.

Hypothesis Four Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis four between job sharing and employee motivation revealed a moderate, positive and significant relationship evident in the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient of .533** and the probability value less than the critical value (i.e. $r_s = .533$, $p = .000 < 0.05$). In other words, job sharing significantly predicts employee motivation. This means that, if civil service commissions in Nigeria strengthen their job sharing practice especially during this period of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, employees will be highly motivated in the discharge of their duties. This result support the work of O'Driscoll et al., (2003) which suggests that the extent to which individuals have control and flexibility in terms of job sharing is a critical factor in motivating employees and in the reduction of work family conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Flexibility in work schedule which affords employees the ability to periodically, regularly, or exclusively perform work for their employers from home or another remote location that is equipped with the appropriate computer based technology to transfer work to the central organization significantly influence employee commitment and motivation. It therefore means that, if the Nigerian public sector strengthen their work schedule practice especially during this period of outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the restriction of movement owing to lockdown, employees will be highly committed and motivated in the discharge of their duties. The study therefore recommends that:

1. Nigerian public sector should implement teleworking arrangements that guarantee employees a better mental health and reductions in stress, burnout, turnover and absenteeism and increases in retention, commitment, loyalty, job satisfaction, innovation, creativity and productivity thereby increasing employee commitment and motivation.
2. Nigerian public sector should encourage teleworking arrangements for employees as this will lead to employee motivation thereby increasing performance and reduce interruptions and anxiety.
3. Nigerian public sector should consistently share job amongst employees especially in the timing and location of work as this will lead to work-life-balance thereby making the employees to be more focused and committed to their duties.
4. Nigerian public sector should persistently encourage work flexibility schedule in terms of job sharing as a critical factor in motivating employees and in the reduction of work family conflict.

Contribution to Knowledge

1. This study has bridged the gap in the existing body of literature on flexibility in work schedules and human resources implications on Nigerian public sector should.

2. This research work has revealed the various dimensions of flexible work schedules such as teleworking and job sharing and various measures of human resource implications such as employee commitment and employee motivation.
3. The work will serve as useful, handy and practical material to students and scholars in the field of human resource management. The study will also help government in the formulation of policies regarding flexibility in work schedules and human resources implications especially on Nigerian public sector.

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