Situational Teleworking and Employee Contextual Performance of Telecommunication Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the impact of situational teleworking on the measures of employee contextual performance. three research questions and hypotheses were formulated for this study. Relevant literatures were reviewed from the study. This study anchored on two theories which are institutional theory and organizational system theory. This study employed a descriptive correlational research design. The population of the study was forty-five thousand five hundred and eighty-four (45,584) from the entire staff of the four telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria with a sample size of 394 using Taro Yemene to determine it. Structured questionnaire was the only source of data collection. Inferential statistics and Spearman rank order correlation coefficient statistical tools were used to analyze the data with the aid of SPSS. The findings of the study, uncovered that situational teleworking was highly positive and statistically significant with the criterion measures. This study concluded that behaviours designed to facilitate work systems or formats that support teleworking features, like situational teleworking, improve the nature and content of employee relationships and help to close any social gaps or differences that may exist. Therefore, this study recommended among others that situational teleworking activities should be structured to allow for significant emotional balance, stress management and relief in a way that help employees effectively handle and manage work pressure as well as perform better in accordance with their responsibilities.

INTRODUCTION

Performance in any organisation is the degree of accomplishment of the tasks that make up an employee job. It reflects how well an employee is fulfilling the requirements of a job (Byars and Rue 2000). Armstrong (2006) defined performance in output terms as the achievement of quantified objectives and how these objectives are achieved. Performance in a given situation can be viewed as a result from the interrelationships among effort abilities and role perceptions. Therefore, employee performance refers to the level at which the employees are performing. It is an on-going activity with the ultimate goal of improving both individual and corporate

performance. To attain an acceptable level of performance a minimum level of proficiency must exist in each of the performance components (Byars and Rue, 2000).

Employee contextual performance refers to the workers capacity to relate and integrate effectively within the organizational system (Bernardin, 2013; Campbell, 2017). It describes a condition of interpersonal relations where workers are able to cooperate, share information and communicate substantially with their co-workers and that way enhance organizational intra-cohesion and connectivity. Saboor et' al (2018) described a noted and growing interest in employee contextual performance as resulting from the observed implications of such for the wellbeing of staff and the organization as well. This agrees with Shao, et' al (2012) observation that employee contextual performance is necessary for the emotional development of the employee and at the same time enriches the content and exchanges that occur within the workplace.

The concept of employee contextual performance, according to Wekesa & Nyaroo (2013) relates to the ways in which individuals are able to identify with others such that it enhances their own functionality. One could therefore argue that employee contextual performance is a capacity for interpersonal relations which serves the purpose of the improved role and task performance within the organization (Elnaga & Imran, 2013).

Teleworking describes the various processes and forms in which members of the organization are able to sustain their functions and consistently follow-up on their responsibilities to the organization from various locations or regions outside the organization's workplace. Teleworking according to Rohanizad &Bohns (2017) facilitates organizational flexibility and allows for operational robustness given workers continued functionality despite possible disruptions and change events within the context of the organization. It is considered highly useful in maintaining organizational operational stability and thus is fundamental to organizational survival. However, as Bloom (2015) noted, there are certain conditions and premises upon which effective teleworking systems and practices are based – these comprise the technology, culture and structure of the organization.

Situational teleworking is one of the flexibilities systems and is defined as "performing work at a location other than one's primary office" (Jensen Perry et al., 2018). Even though situational teleworking has existed for a very long time, companies officially began to give the opportunity of flexible working not before 1980. The organization International Business Machine Corporation IBM introduced it then, in some workers homes, so that they could work in a more flexible way. In 2009, 40 % of the employees at international business machine corporation (IBM) were situational teleworking from home which resulted in reduced working office/place which also resulted in higher annual profit for the company (Dishman, 2019).

As the social and technological environments trends are changing, so does the way of working. Today workers at different organizations have more freedom and flexibility than ever to work from anywhere else than the "traditional" office. What we mean with traditional office is an office where people mainly work on their computers, but still are together in the same place. It is mainly about those working on the computer on their own, such as banking workers, insurance company workers

and workers with different administrative responsibilities in the organization. What people want to achieve is a cheaper, faster, and greener way of working.

It is important to keep in mind that situational teleworking not always has to be implemented because of a crisis like COVID-19; it can just be a "natural" way of working in some organizations, even in "normal" times, where no external crisis forces them to do so. Further the article tells that different studies have strengthened the fact that people who have the flexibility to situational teleworking are more satisfied which leads to fewer turnovers. When situational teleworking the workers often tend to work harder and manage the long working hours better. Another important issue is the balance of work life and private life. Studies shows that people who engage in situational teleworking experience less conflicts related to the work-family balance, even though it can be hard to ignore and not get affected of things or stressful situation at home that occur when you are "at work" (Jensen Perry et al., 2018).

Situational teleworking is directly tied to an increase in productivity (Bloom et al., 2013, Choudhury et al., 2019), with some evidence of real income increase (Choudhury et al., 2019). However, situational teleworking also has downsides, such as, feelings of loneliness and isolation (Bloom et al., 2013, Choudhury et al., 2019, Grant et al., 2013, Jensen Perry et al., 2018). Situational teleworking also serves to integrate work-life and leisure time, blurring the boundaries between the two. This has been perceived as both positive and negative, where the increased socialization at home is seen as positive by those who have families, but where the blurring of the boundaries led to increased stress and the inability to leave work when the workday ends (Grant et al., 2013). Where some situational teleworkers missed the socialization at work, others found that socialization in their families. Situational teleworking also removes the need for commuting, thereby reducing the stress and reduction in wellbeing which comes with a daily commute, additionally the carbon emissions that would have otherwise been produced by the commuter are also reduced (Bloom et al., 2013, Chatterjee et al., 2020, Choudhury et al., 2019).

Statement of Problem

Adi (2015) argued that Nigerian telecommunication industry, is highly mix with workers from various cultural, national and religious affiliations and the growing competition within the industry, even within the organizations (for promotions, positions, responsibilities) are such that continually impact on the relationship between staff, affecting their level of cooperation, information sharing and communication (Oghojafor, et' al, 2014). This has resulted in outcomes of poor co-worker's support and as such a weak level of social tie within the workplace. Concerns of poor performance resulting from these factors are mostly contextual in nature, and thus focus on the nature and content of relationships and interactions between workers, specifically the extent to which workers are able to engage in healthy and beneficial relationships and correspondence with their co-workers.

Studies, in addressing the issue of work relationships in line with employee contextual performance, have observed that there is a mix of results and controversial positions when it comes to the nature and structuring of roles and responsibilities. However, little has addressed the extent to which situational teleworking as a practice or feature of the organization, either contributes or

negates outcomes of employee contextual performance. Linos (2019) argued that situational teleworking advances several key benefits to the individual worker (health, convenience, and control) and the organization as well (effectiveness, operational continuity, robustness). Despite these, the author notes that existing empirical evidence has not substantially demonstrated the nature of the impact of situational teleworking on the behaviour of employees, especially with regards to their relations with co-workers. In this regard, this study can be considered as an imperative, as it examines the relationship between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance of telecommunication firms in the South-South, Nigeria.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this investigation is to determine the relationship between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance in GSM telecommunication firms in the South-south of Nigeria. The related objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine the relationship between situational teleworking and employee cooperation in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria
ii. Determine the relationship between situational teleworking and employee knowledge sharing in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria
iii. Ascertain the relationship between situational teleworking and employee communication in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions are structured to address the concerns of the study. They are stated as follows:

i. what is the relationship between situational teleworking and employee cooperation in GSM telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria?
ii. what is the relationship between situational teleworking and employee knowledge sharing in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria?
iii. what is the relationship between situational teleworking and employee communication in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses are based on the operationalized relationship between the variables of interest. They are stated as follows:

Ho1: there is no significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee cooperation in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria

Ho2: there is no significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee knowledge sharing in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria

Ho3: there is no significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee communication in telecommunication firms in the South-South of Nigeria

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Situational Teleworking

The working environment is changing along with the social and technological environment. More freedom and flexibility than ever before are available to employees of various companies to work from locations other than the "traditional" workplace. A traditional workplace is one in which employees spend most of their time together in one location while using computers for work. It mostly concerns those who work independently on computers, such as those employed by banks, insurance companies, or organizations with various administrative duties. What people want to achieve is a cheaper, faster, and greener way of working. One flexible working approach is situational teleworking, which is described as "performing work at a place other than one's primary office" (Jensen Perry et al., 2018).

Employee Contextual Performance

Employee contextual performance refers to behaviours that support the environment in which the technical core operates. Employee contextual performance further refers to activities that are not task or goal specific but that make individuals, teams and organizations more effective and successful. These behaviours are important for achieving organizational outcomes and particularly for supporting long-term success (Witt et al., 2002). Employee contextual performances are activities that contribute to the social and psychological core of the organization. Examples of employee contextual performance include volunteering for additional work, endorsing, defending and supporting organizational objectives as well as following organizational rules and procedures even when personally inconvenient, assisting and cooperating with co-workers, spending more time and effort to fulfil your responsibilities better. It is actually a form of a voluntarily behaviour which is beyond the content of job description. (Witt et al., 2002).

Employee contextual performance shows employees' tendency to participate and interact with other members of the organization. According to Van Scatter & Motowidlo's (cited in Witt et al., 2002) model of measuring performance, employee contextual performance consists of two different behaviours which include: behaviours facilitating interpersonal relationships and behaviours related to job dedication. Behaviours facilitating interpersonal relationships show collaboration and helpful behaviours that facilitate colleagues' performance while Job dedication shows effort, innovation, perseverance, and individual discipline.

Measures of Employee Contextual Performance

Employee Cooperation

The accomplishment of organization transformation rest on, in part, the success of workers' cooperation regarded as essential building blocks of locally-managed organizations (Crow & Pounder, 2000). This cooperation depends on the inspiration and abilities of workers who gratefully give their energy and trustworthiness through cooperative efforts and teamwork processes (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Duignan & Macpherson, 1993; Glickman, 1993; Henkin et al., 2000; Pounder, 1998). Workers' cooperation may function to strengthen organizations. They may

assist to counter effects of conservative institutional configurations and inflexible supervision thinking that guarantee operative steadiness and certainty, but discourage creativities and cooperation that support performance. Sitorus (2008) suggested that we cannot confirm that individuals have the same viewpoint about how good is a good cooperation. In a social system like organization, a worker has to be mature enough to recognize how far his/her circle of influence and responsibility is. Workers occupied by connection, trusting and commitment involved in cooperative decision making can permit modifications that improve the practicality of professionals and workers outcomes and, simultaneously, offer the group support and basic structural honours that inspire a more cooperative work setting or context and support the need to involve, and remain one of the whole (Dee & Henkin, 2001; Harris & Sherblom, 1999; Murphy, 1991; Neher, 1997; Pounder, 1999).

Employee Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge is a powerful source of organizations. The importance of knowledge for the development of organizations globally took attention to the researchers in the late 1990s. The World Bank (1998) explained that knowledge, specifically the way a society produced, processed, and integrated knowledge into their lives, was a crucial factor for the organizational development. At present, knowledge is considered as an essential issue of production in an organization as like land, labour, and capital. Knowledge is a fluid mix of experience, contextual information and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information (Davenport & Prusak, 1997). In organizations, knowledge is divided into two types: explicit and tacit knowledge (Nonaka, 1991). Tacit knowledge is the hands-on skills, best practices, special know-how, heuristic, intuitions, and so on. It is personal in origin, context and job specific and difficult to formalize and codify, difficult to capture, communicate and share, and poorly documented but highly operational in the minds of the possessor (Polanyi, 1973; Serban & Luan, 2003).

Explicit knowledge is easily codified, storable, transferable, and easily expressed and shared. Sources of it are manuals, policies and procedures, and databases and reports (Serban & Luan, 2003). All the activities related to the transmission and distribution of knowledge among individuals, groups or organizations are considered as knowledge sharing (Lee, 2001; Ling et al., 2009). Knowledge sharing is defined as the activity through which knowledge, such as information, skills, plans, innovation, ideas, goals, insights, or expertise is exchanged among people, peers, community, friends, families, or organizations (Bukowitz & Williams, 1999). It refers to the exchange of knowledge between at least two parties in a reciprocal process allowing reshape and sense making of the knowledge in the new context (Willem, 2003).

Employee Communication

According to Farace, et al (cited in Ryu et al, 2003), there are three main kinds of communication at a workplace. They are task-related communication, innovation-related communication (new ideas), and maintenance-related communication (social topics that maintains human relationships). In this study, however, the task-related communication and innovation-related communication (new ideas) are jointly referred to as work-oriented communication. For instance, in an

organization, managers tell subordinates what their tasks are and how to accomplish these tasks; salesmen report to their superiors about how much they have sold this week; employees of a newsroom talk with the other employees of the technique support department about how to use a new system (Ipe, 2003). This type of communication may happen at a weekly meeting within departments, or may just be via email. On the other hand, managers may also share the good news about their children with their subordinates; the salesmen may also tell superiors about the recent fighting with boyfriends or girlfriends; the journalists may also chat with the computer guy about an interesting online game. These kinds of communication are referred to as social-emotional-oriented communication.

Theoretical Review

Institutional theory; the main focus of institutional organization theory is on the institutional isomorphism which explains the similarity among organizations in an organizational field (Tipurić, 2014) and how organizations become similar to their competitors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Isomorphism explains the degree of conformity of organization to norms and practices that have been established in a given organizational field (Johnston, 2013).

Organizational System theory; systems theory has long informed theoretical developments in employment relations and HRM. There is a rich and interdisciplinary underpinning to systems logic stretching back to classic research in work and organisations (Burns & Stalker, 1961), Dunlop's (1958) Industrial Relations Systems, and foundational organisation theory (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Today, systems theory is still frequently theoretically invoked, if less empirically employed.

Empirical Review

Kurland & Egan, (1999). focused their attention on the adoption of teleworking as a job design, which they defined as working outside of the conventional workplace.

Bailey and Kurland (2002) conducted a review of telework research to date at that point. They were specifically interested in who telework, especially considering the lack of a definition of teleworking, as well as why they telework, and what happens when they do. They found that, unlike popular depictions or connotations, the teleworking population as a whole does not work remotely on a fulltime basis, but rather only five to six days per month. The key finding in their review was that despite telework frequency being a strong moderator for work outcomes, frequencies were low among the populations studied—indicating that attention had been funnelled to the wrong variables, such as isolation (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a survey and descriptive correlational research design. The population of the study was forty-five thousand five hundred and eighty-four (45,584) from the entire staff of the four teleworking firms in South-South, Nigeria with a sample size of 394 using Taro Yemene to determine it. Structured Questionnaire was the only source of data collection also validated by academicians in my school. Inferential statistics and Spearman rank order correlation coefficient

statistical tools was used to analyze the data with the aid of SPSS Version 20. The reliability assessment for the instruments for this investigation was carried out using the Cronbach alpha.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Population and sample distribution for the study

GSM Mobile Firms	Population	Sample
MTN Nigeria	19, 288	168
Globalcom	3, 379	29
9Mobile	5000	44
Airtel Nigeria	17, 917	156
Total	45, 584	397

Source: Online survey: www.wikipedia.com

Research Questions

Table 2 All workers spend most of their time corresponding online

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	58	15.8	15.8	15.8
	D	25	6.8	6.8	22.7
	A	266	72.7	72.7	95.4
	SA	17	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	366	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Workers in this organization work from diverse locations

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	8	2.2	2.2	2.2
	D	59	16.1	16.1	18.3
	A	299	81.7	81.7	100.0
	Total	366	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 Workers are not required to visit the physical office space based on the digital nature of their roles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	158	43.2	43.2	43.2
	D	24	6.6	6.6	49.7
	A	184	50.3	50.3	100.0
	Total	366	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 This organization can switch its work formats to that of remote functions when necessary.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	42	11.5	11.5	11.5
	D	106	29.0	29.0	40.4
	A	218	59.6	59.6	100.0
	Total	366	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 This organization has the capacity for online or digital work format

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	25	6.8	6.8	6.8
	D	131	35.8	35.8	42.6
	MA	17	4.6	4.6	47.3
	A	185	50.5	50.5	97.8
	SA	8	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	366	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics of Situational Teleworking

		Statistic	Bootstrap[a]			
			Bias	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Part work	N	366	0	0	366	366
	Minimum	1.00				
	Maximum	4.50				
	Mean	3.0656	.0030	.0476	2.9775	3.1625

		.92463	-.00328	.02891	.85989	.97451
Std. Deviation						
N		366	0	0	366	366

Source: SPSS Data output, 2021

Hypotheses Test

Situational teleworking and employee contextual performance

The relationship between the situational teleworking and employee contextual performance is addressed in this section of the study. The test assessed the nature of the correlation between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance outcomes. This anchors on establishing the role of situational teleworking with regards to outcomes such as cooperation, knowledge sharing and communication.

Table 8 correlation between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance outcomes

			Situation	Cooperate	Knowledge	Communicate
Spearman's rho	Situation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.548**	.517**	.723**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	366	366	366	366
	Cooperate	Correlation Coefficient	.548**	1.000	.686**	.751**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	366	366	366	366
	Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient	.517**	.686**	1.000	.592**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	366	366	366	366
	Communicate	Correlation Coefficient	.723**	.751**	.592**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	366	366	366	366

Source: SPSS Data output, 2021

Result on the relationship between situational teleworking and the measures of employee contextual performance reveals evident and significant levels of correlation between the variables. The test demonstrates the role of situational teleworking as a possible predictor of employee performance outcomes where correlations shows situational teleworking significantly impacts on cooperation (rho = 0.548; P = 0.000), knowledge sharing (rho = 0.517; P = 0.000) and

communication (rho = 0.723; P = 0.000). The result goes to show that situational teleworking plays a key role in advancing outcomes of employee cooperation, knowledge sharing and communication. Thus, in line with the noted result, the following position is stated:

i. There is a significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee cooperation in GSM telecommunication firms in the South-south of Nigeria
ii. There is a significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee knowledge sharing in GSM telecommunication firms in the South-south of Nigeria
iii. There is a significant relationship between situational teleworking and employee communication in GSM telecommunication firms in the South-south of Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

Situational teleworking and measures of employee contextual performance

The relationship between situational teleworking and the measures of employee contextual performance are established as significant and also positive in nature (Abendroth & Reimann, 2018; Limon, 2020; Kim, 2018). The study reveals that work forms and formats that reflect situational teleworking contribute meaningfully towards outcomes of employee contextual performance – thus the findings point to the role of situational teleworking in advancing organizational features which necessitate and serve to advance the wellbeing of employees and the health of the organization. The findings agree with the position of previous studies (Sarbu, 2018; Roman, 2020; Serletis, 2014) which identify situational teleworking as a dynamic capability, stressing on its imperatives for organizations operational within highly turbulent or unpredictable environment.

Research on situational teleworking is such that bothers primarily on the effectiveness of organizations to change adapt effectively to the emerging challenges of its environment or context. (Schulte, 2015) observed that competent organizations are such that understand and are able to predict the trends in their environment; and building on that knowledge are also able to advance functional forms that allow for efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. This also corroborates the position of Robelski et al (2019) who affirmed to the role of teleworking in enabling organizational robustness and consistency. These features further provide a basis for improved levels of interconnectivity between various individuals, groups and levels within the organization as it ensures communication lines are maintained; in this regard employee contextual performance are enhanced on a substantial level. From this position it is evident that situational teleworking is important to effecting change behaviour in organizations.

Conclusion

The correlation between situational teleworking and contextual performance of employees offers a perspective on the implementation and significance of situational teleworking in promoting higher levels of cooperation and relationships among employees. The findings highlight the necessity of functional designs and worker autonomy in order to facilitate increased effectiveness and consequently, higher levels of assurance and confidence in one's job, which are also critical for improving contextual performance outcomes. The study through its empirical facts thus

identifies situational teleworking as a significant antecedent of employee contextual performance, especially within the Nigerian telecommunication industry.

Thus, based on the data gathered, this study draws the conclusion that behaviours designed to facilitate work systems or formats that support teleworking features, like situational teleworking, improve the nature and content of employee relationships and help to close any social gaps or differences that may exist.

Recommendations

In line with the discovered relationship between situational teleworking and employee contextual performance, the following recommendations are proffered:

i. It is recommended that situational teleworking activities be structured to allow for significant emotional balance, stress management and relief in a way that help employees effectively handle and manage work pressure as well as perform better in accordance with their responsibilities.

ii. This study recommends that the implementation of situational teleworking activities should be planned to guarantee regular meetings and the integration of roles and functions so that participants are always connected to one another and be able to relate with other participants in the organization.

iii. Organizations should take the initiative to ensure that workers have the necessary training and tools, including the ability to work remotely, in order to ensure operational consistency, flexibility and adaptability.

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