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Flexible Work Environment and Organisational Competitiveness of Selected Telecommunication Firms in South-South Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of Flexible Work Environment on Organisational Competitiveness of Telecommunication Firms in South-South Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of remote work, job sharing and part-time-work on organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South - South, Nigeria. Three (3) objectives were raised and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey design was adopted with a population of 872 employees of randomly selected telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size was 269. The instrument adopted for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistic (means and simple percentage) was used to answer the demographic variables while multiple regressions were used to test the hypotheses using SPSS 25 at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study revealed that: there is a significant impact of remote work on organisational competitiveness (0.000); there is a significant impact of job sharing on organisational competitiveness (0.003) and there is a significant impact of part time work on organisational competitiveness (0.010) of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria. It was concluded that Flexible work environment is an excellent option for organisations seeking a healthy and a competitive advantage. It was recommended that managers and stakeholders should offer employees the flexibility to work from anywhere for this will laminate commuting and providing a better work-life balance and stakeholders should sustain the incorporation of job sharing to allow employee to gradually reduce their workload while still contributing to the organization.

Keywords: Flexible work environment, Organisational competitiveness, Remote work, Job sharing, Part-time work.

INTRODUCTION

Flexible work environment is an excellent option for organisations seeking a healthy and a competitive advantage. It is significant by helping employers to increase employee retention, reducing costs and standout in the competitive world; while it helps employees who are seeking work-life balance. Workplace flexibility is the existence of certain opportunities at a job (Ni, Xu, Cui, Qiao, Zhang, Li & Hickey, 2021). It typically refers to the ability of employees to choose their own hours instead of having to work within a traditional schedule. Madell (2024) reports that, flexible work environment is letting people work from home.

According to Idowu (2020), flexibility work environment is a working schedule which enables employees to vary the amount, timing, or location of their work for the benefit of both employees and employers. Zhang, De-Pablos and Xu (2021) posit that, flexible work environment adopts a boundless structure and culture with values, beliefs, and systems that encourage job commitment and productivity. They further stated that organizational with a flexible culture create a relationship among employees that shape their motivation, to contribute their knowledge to the success of the organization.

Remote work is the practice of working outside traditional office settings. Remote employees have the flexibility to complete their tasks from anywhere with an internet connection (Frank, 2022; Zhao, 2023; Kurdy, Al-Malkawi & Rizwan, 2023). According to Guedria (2023) and Silungwe (2024), remote work is defined as working from a different location of the primary office. It is also described as individual working from home using information technology Job sharing is when one job is performed by more than one person (Herrity, 2023). This occurred when an employer is hiring for a new role, but there is more than one standout candidate that seem to fit into the vacant position (Haycock & Hava, 2022). Part-time work is when employee works for fewer hours a week than a full-time employee (Janza, 2024). This gives more time and energy for employees to perform other activities**,** which make it better for family-oriented employees (Maverick, Howard & Velasquez, 2024). Implementing the elements of flexible work environment can be beneficial for employees and employers; it promotes work-life balance, eases public transportation coordination, helpful for working parents, avoid traffic, attracts prospective employees, increase productivity (Janza, 2024).

Organisational competitiveness is the ability of an organization to gain a competitive advantage in the market and maintain it over time; it involves factors such as dynamic capabilities, differentiated strategies, social capital, common goals, and organizational learning" (Zainal, Yousuf, & Salloum, 2020). Alexandra Robert and Yarilet (2024) defined **c**ompetitive advantage as "factors that allow organisations to produce goods or services better and cheaper than their rivals".

These factors allow the productive entity to generate more sales or superior margins compared to its market rivals. Competitive advantages generate greater value for a firm and its shareholders because of certain strengths or conditions. The more sustainable the competitive advantage, the more difficult it is for competitors to neutralize the advantage (Okreglicka, Mitta & Navickas, 2023).

Telecommunication firms play a crucial role in economic development and growth of a nation; their objective is to provide goods and services that meet the needs of customers which can be considered as a source of wealth. It is important for telecommunication firms to develop superior performance to generate profit and aid competitive advantage as a driver of a firm's superior performance (Antunes, Pereira, Dias & da Silva, 2023). It is through the development of resource, abilities and flexible policies that business gain competitive advantages that leads to achieve exceptional performance.

Several factors such as: remote work, job-sharing, part-time work, compressed work schedule and flex time among others are considered inevitable by organisations when it comes to flexible work environment and organisational competitiveness. These factors attract and retain valuable employees; increase flexibility; allowing employees to manage the competing demands of work and personal interests (Chung, 2020; Oluwatayo & Adetoro, 2020). Based on the aforementioned, this study examined flexible work environment and organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South Nigeria.

The questions one may ask is, what are the impacts of flexible work environment on organisational competitiveness? To probe into this question, and the absence of ready answers indicate obvious gaps in knowledge that this study "flexible work environment and organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South Nigeria attempt to fill.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of Flexible Work Arrangement on Organisational Competitiveness of Telecommunication Firms in South-South Nigeria.

Specific objectives were to;

i. examine the impact of remote work on organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria;

ii. ascertain the impact of job sharing on organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria;

iii. examine the impact of part-time-work on organisational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis:

H_{o1}: There is no significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria.

H_{o2}:There is no significant impact of Job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H_{o3}:There is no significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flexible Work Environment

Flexibility means the capacity of freedom given in a timeframe. Anajaa and Peter (2022) defined flexible work environment as when, where and how employees do their work. It is an important source of organisational competitiveness. It is an essential part of creating an effective organization as well as meeting the organization goals and objective (Georgewill, 2021). Martínez-Sánchez, Vela-Jimenez, Abella-Garces and Gorgemans (2019) is of the view that flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs, for example having flexible start and finish times, or working from home. Song, Zhu, Klakegg and Wang (2018) opine that flexible work environment is the act of adapting to a constraint, an event or a work environment that allows the organization to act quickly and stay ahead of the competition in terms of innovative performance. Business environment is changing at a rapid pace, which means that organizations must keep up with this evolution to ensure their sustainability. Flexible employment is an excellent option for candidates seeking a healthy work-life balance. It can also help employers by increasing employee retention and reducing costs (Herrity, 2023). Some options that employers may consider when offering flexibility to their employees: flexible hours, condensed schedules, job sharing, remote work, freelancing, part time work, flex time, unlimited paid time off (Antunes et al., 2023; Mendoca & Kougiannou, 2024).

Organisations that want to create flexible work environment need to figure out how to create a culture in which flexibility can truly thrive. Some of the steps to take include (Asim & Nasim , 2022; Kratz, 2024): (1) Make a plan - Take time to investigate different flexible work plans, and then create a system that will work; (2) take the plan for test drive - once a plan is made, prepared and launch a pilot program to see how it works; (3) provide the right tools – to let employees shift their hours, work remotely, or enjoy other flex options, employer should make sure they have necessary facilities to foster productivity in such an environment; (4) Emphasize communication - flexible work environment will fail if there is no effective communication. Managers and their employees must learn each other's preferences for communication and act accordingly.

Prior research offers a multitude of approaches on the structural dimensions of organizational flexibility (Saeed et al. 2020). Some critical elements of flexibility: human resources, operations, market, finance, technology, and management. Organizational flexibility can be divided into four dimensions: operational flexibility, financial flexibility, structural flexibility, and technological flexibility. The definition of organizational flexibility for construction firms includes various dimensions. It can be interpreted as "operational", "tactical", or "strategic" flexibility. Other studies involved product development flexibility, supply chain flexibility, human resource flexibility, process flexibility, leadership flexibility, team flexibility, cross-cultural flexibility, and contractual flexibility (Martínez-Sánchez, Vela-Jimenez, Abella-Garces & Gorgemans, 2019).

Organisational Competitiveness

Organisational competitiveness is an organization's ability to efficiently use its resources to offer products and services that exceed customer expectations. As a short-term capability, it refers to how a company manages its market position in both products and services to achieving corporate goals. This is the ability for a firm to produce products more efficiently and at a lower cost than its competitors Antunes et al. (2023) report, "Organizational competitiveness is the ability of an organization to gain a competitive advantage in the market and maintain it over time; it involves factors such as dynamic capabilities, differentiated strategies, social capital, common goals, and organizational learning".

The concept of competitiveness is complex and multidimensional, and it is influenced by the relationships between organizations and their environments. Organizations build competitive advantage using several strategies such as Research the market, Identify strengths, Evaluate finances, Review operations, Research and development and consider human resources among others (Asim & Nasim, 2022). Most organizations increase their competitiveness by strengthening their brands, raising barriers to new entrants, and the defense of intellectual property. Organization's competitiveness is the way it excels compared to its rivals. This advantage may be through cost leadership, differentiation, or focus. Identifying a firm's competitive advantage helps show how it is positioned to be more successful than its competitors, creating more revenue and generating greater profits (Zainal et al., 2020; Wang, et al., 2021; Okreglicka et al., 2023.).

In recent times in Nigeria, telecommunication firms have become prominent in the global economy as their contributions to gross domestic product have increased significantly. The telecom sector plays an important role in the development of any country, especially with regard to the pace of national innovative capacity and technological advancement (Mafeng & Okechukwu, 2020). However, the telecommunications industry remains complex, competitive and irregular due to market shifts, threats and emergent innovations within the external environment (Yu & Lin, 2017). Telecommunication companies have thus emerged with new strategies geared towards the restructuring of their networks in response to these swift changes in the environment. Nigeria used to have only one telecommunication firm but as a result of liberalization in the industry, it now has more than 37 new telecommunication firms in operation in the country (Emeagwali & Ati, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

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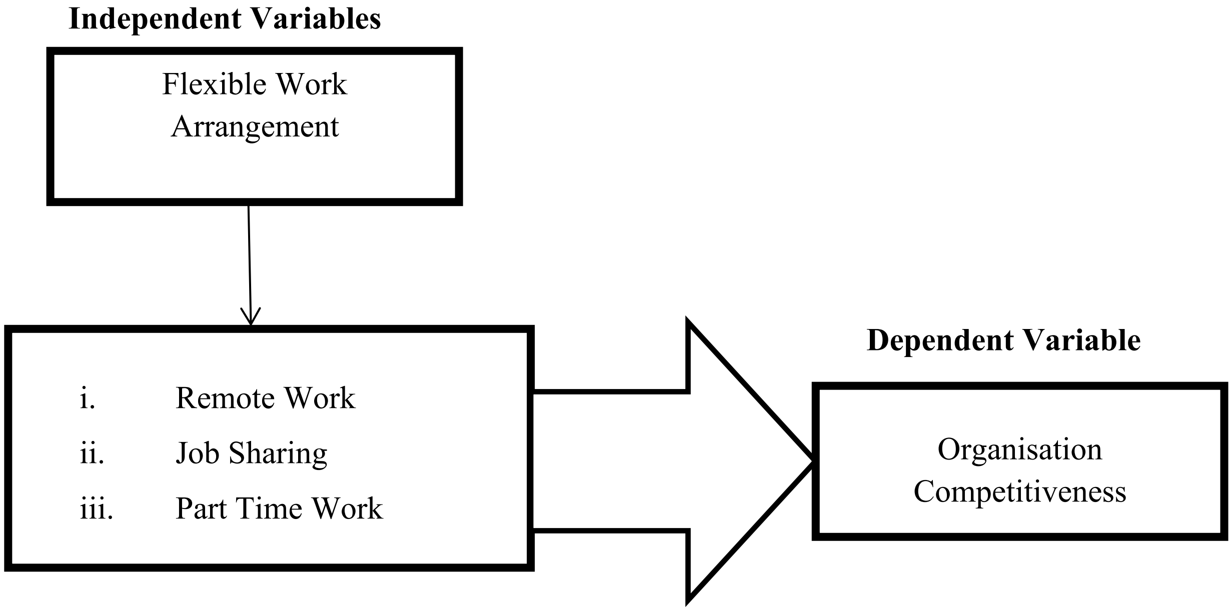

Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of the Study

Remote Work and Organizational Competitiveness

Remote work is working outside a work environment or office setting. Instead of commuting to a physical workplace; remote employees have the flexibility to complete their tasks from anywhere with an internet connection (Kurdy et al., 2023). In this, employees can work from the comfort of their homes, co-working spaces, or even while traveling (Danylenko, 2023). Suzanne and Hala (2024) argue that remote work is been discussed as a solution for reducing costs and for increasing productivity, efficiency, creativity, and flexibility. Remote work lead to employee retention, access to a wider talent pool and increased productivity. It can have a positive impact on the environment by reducing carbon emissions associated with commuting and reducing the need for large office buildings (Frank, 2022; Zhao, 2023).

The rise of remote working is closely linked to the widespread use of digital technologies. The development of high-speed Internet connections, smart mobile devices, and cloud computing and collaboration tools has enabled employees to access work and work with colleagues remotely (Mukherjee and Narang, 2023). The spread of this digital infrastructure has made it possible for work to no longer be confined to the traditional office environment. High-speed internet connectivity is the key to remote working. Apps on mobile devices offer a variety of collaboration and communication tools that enable employees to stay connected and get things done. Cloud computing technology has changed the way data is stored and shared. According to Schleier-Smith, Sreekanti, Khandelwal, Carreira, Yadwadkar, Popa, Gonzalez, Stoica, & Patterson (2021), employees can store files and data in the cloud, making them accessible on other devices. This cloud infrastructure not only simplifies data management but also provides data backup and security, thus increasing the feasibility of working remotely. The digital age has seen the emergence of a plethora of collaboration tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc. These tools allow employees to use instant messaging, video conferencing, file sharing and team collaboration. They offer a variety of ways to communicate at work. The push towards digital technology has changed not only the way employees communicate at work but also the business models of organizations (Bouncken, Kraus and Roig-Tierno, 2021). Organizations are actively adopting digital tools to increase productivity, reduce costs and attract global talent to provide greater flexibility and efficiency in the future work environment.

Since the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working went from being a luxury to a norm. Countries around the world took a series of lockdown and social distancing measures to contain the spread of the virus in order to preserve the health of communities and employees, as well as the opportunity to work (Balasa, 2020). As technology continues to evolve, more and more businesses and organizations are adopting a remote work (RW) model, which offers employees greater work flexibility and autonomy. COVID-19 has shown these leading-edge technology companies that their workers can be just as productive, or in some cases, even more so, when they stay at home (Johnson and Suskewicz, 2020). RW has both positive and negative effects on work communication.

Job Sharing and Organizational Competitiveness

Splitting a full-time position into two or more parts is an increasingly popular flexible work arrangement. Job sharing, which involves two or more employees splitting the responsibilities and hours of a full-time position, provides employers with a range of benefits, from increased productivity to reduced absenteeism and access to diverse skill sets, employers can reap the "benefits of this phased retirement solution; create a supportive and adaptable work environment that promotes "employee well-being, organizational competitiveness and organizational success" Job sharing is beneficial to both employers and employees. While job sharing may seem counterintuitive, job sharing can actually result in cost savings for employers. By hiring two part-time employees instead of one full-time employee, employers can save on benefits, such as healthcare and retirement contributions.

To management, job sharing provide a flexible work environment , management can gain twice as many skills, knowledge, talent and experience from employees resource to apply to one role; often there is less managerial input as job sharers support, coach and feedback to each other, resolve challenges together and learn from one another; improved productivity by reduced strain of staff balancing work and personal responsibilities - quality control of outputs can be done by job sharers for each other, increased morale as there is greater control over personal and professional lives; provides continuous job coverage – when one person has a short term absence or leaves the post to pursue other things quite often the other will step up until a suitable job share partner can be found (Mendoca & Kougiannou, 2024).

Part-Time-Work and Organizational Competitiveness

Part-time work is when employee works for fewer hours a week than a full-time employee. This gives more time and energy for employees to perform other activities, which make it better for family-oriented employees (Janza, 2024). The biggest advantage of working part-time is the increased free time with which to pursue extracurricular activities. A part-time job can also help individuals gain experience and training in fields unfamiliar to them.

Part time work offers numerous benefits to employees, including, flexibility in scheduling, opportunity for work-life balance and additional income. One of the main positive impacts of part time work is flexibility. Employers can work around other activities and responsibilities, creating a work schedule that works for employees (Okreglicka et al., 2023). Part-time work attracting applicants from a wider employment pool; retaining valued employees who may not want or be able to work full-time; possibly enabling the employer to reduce costs without reducing staff; enables the employer to cover busy periods efficiently; more free time, flexibility, and work-life balance for employees; enhances employees morale, productivity, and commitment and reduces absenteeism and tardiness (Gyemanga et al., 2020; Alnoor, et al., 2023).

Employer who may be reluctant to hire an inexperienced person on a full-time basis, may be inclined to hire an eager candidate on a part-time basis if they express an enthusiastic desire to learn the trade (Maverick et al., 2024). Part time workers may be more productive than full-timers because of reduced tiredness, stress and absenteeism. Part time work may be positively related to productivity because it enables firms to extend operating hours and manage demand fluctuations at lower wage costs. On the other hand, part time work may be negatively related to productivity because of increased administrative costs and other complexities entailed in coordinating different work arrangements (Nwekpa et al., 2020)

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory

This theory was developed by George Homans (1958). This theory is concerned with the concepts of understanding workplace dynamics. The social exchange theory thrives on the assumption that activities taken by the organization to encourage its employees leads to employee commitment to the organization. Based on the assumption of the theory, employees when they join the organization expect that the organization will provide good working conditions and good culture. The employee will then apply their knowledge and abilities to achieve the goal of the organization. The favorable exchange between the organization and its employees leads to an increased commitment to the organization. The social exchange theory is based on three principles which include; reciprocity, rationality and specificity which explains the relationship between employer. The rationality principle explains that employees will have an association with the organization which will result to rewards and satisfaction of the needs and wants of the employees. The reciprocity principle reasons that social relationship is always reciprocated between the employer and the employee. The specificity principle theorizes that the reciprocity type is able to endure an exchange relationship between the organization and the employee.

Empirical Review

Suzanne and Hala, (2024) determined the effect of remote work on the employee performance in Asian. Sample size of 150 employees selected by a random sampling method with different age and positions. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data were analyzed using multiple regressions through SPSS V.26. The findings showed that Remote work didn’t have related with Challenges, they are not related and correlated. When Remote work increase then Motivation increases too, they are related and correlated. When Remote work increase then Performance increases too, they are related and correlated.

Wesonga (2023) examined how the Kenya Commercial Bank’s competitive advantage was affected by reward management. The Equity theory of motivation served as the study’s theoretical cornerstone. The study’s target group was 108 senior and mid-level executives at the KCB headquarters. It was conducted using a case study methodology. Census data were used because the population was not very large. A questionnaire was used to gather the information. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics for frequency and percentages, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple and multiple linear regression. The study found that reward management significantly boosted commercial banks’ competitive advantage ($r = 0.786$, p-value = 0.000). The simple linear regression analysis, used to test the null hypothesis, resulted in its rejection because the t-values were higher than the critical t-values. The majority of respondents maintained that KCB’s competitive advantage was influenced by incentive management. Therefore, the study recommended that commercial banks should use suitable reward management to increase their competitive advantage.

Kurdy, Al-Malkawi and Rizwan (2023) examined “the various factors that influence the productivity (PR) of employees who worked remotely in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during the COVID-19 pandemic”. The study adopts a quantitative approach to analyze data collected online from 110 respondents using the snowball sampling technique during the pandemic. The analysis of the data was conducted using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique of Smart PLS (Partial least squares) to evaluate the direct and moderating variables. The results indicate that direct variables such as workload, job satisfaction, work–life balance and social support have a significant positive impact on employee PR in the UAE. However, the analysis of the moderating variable indicates that job level is not a significant moderator of the above relationships. The findings, generally, provide support for social exchange theory.

Zhao (2023) explored “the impact of remote working on workplace communication, focusing on trust and relationship building, non-verbal communication, and the use of digital tools in Malaysia”. Quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were adopted. A group of remote working employees were studied to understand the challenges and opportunities they face in a virtual work environment. The study found that trust building plays a key role in remote working by facilitating more open and honest communication and reducing misunderstandings and conflicts. The effective use of non-verbal communication helps to convey emotions and information and enhances the quality of work exchanges. In addition, the use of digital tools has a positive impact on work communication, but requires appropriate training and support. Whilst the findings provide important insights into remote working environments, there are some limitations, including sample limitations, subjectivity and environmental factors. Future research could provide insight into the impact of industry-specific needs and emerging technologies on work communication to provide a more comprehensive understanding and solutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design which attempts to collect data from members of a population to determine the current status of the population which in this study is flexible work environment and organizational competitiveness of twelve selected telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. 3.2

Study Population

The population of the study comprised of all employees of the following randomly selected telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. This is because a random sampling technique allows all elements equal opportunities to be included into a sample. The names of the firms are: Samsung, Asaba, Delta State (58); Mass Telecom Innovation, Asaba, Delta State (62); Topnotch Royal Technologies Ltd, Benin City, Edo State (44); Kennix Global Resources Limited, Benin City, Edo State (72); Airtel, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State (86); MTN Communications, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State (112); Global Access SMS, Port Harcourt, Rivers State (62); Biolinks Network, Port Harcourt, River State (76); Antel Sat Communication, Calabar, Cross River State (66); Ifetex Communications, Calabar, Cross River State (54); Starcomms, Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State (92); and Visafone Communication, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (88), which amounted to a total population of 872.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of this study was 269, derived from the total population of 872 using Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Calculation. 269 respondents were selected from 12 randomly selected telecommunication firms in the South-South, Nigeria,

Multi-stage sampling techniques were adopted in this study. Firstly, the six states in South-South, Nigeria were chosen using purposively sampling technique: Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River and Akwa-Ibom. Secondly, random sampling techniques was used to select two (2) telecommunication firms from the capital city of each of the States namely: Samsung, Asaba, Delta State; Mass Telecom Innovation, Asaba, Delta State; Topnotch Royal Technologies Ltd, Benin City, Edo State; Kennix Global Resources Limited, Benin City, Edo State; Airtel, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; MTN Communications, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State; Global Access SMS, Port Harcourt, Rivers State; Biolinks Network, Port Harcourt, River State; Antel Sat Communication, Calabar, Cross River State; Ifetex Communications, Calabar, Cross River State; Starcomms, Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State; and Visafone Communication, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Thirdly, based on availability, employees were selected from the above-mentioned telecommunication firms based on availability at the time of the questionnaire distribution in respect to the sample size distribution for each of the firms.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was face and content validated by two experts in Business and Administration Department which were the researcher's supervisors with particular reference to the relevance of items to the topic of the study, un-ambiguity of statements/questions, clarity of language and adequacy of the items. The reliability of the instrument was established by using the test and re-test method.

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The questionnaire was administered to twenty-five (25) employees that were not part of the sample size. After two weeks of administration, the same set of instruments was re-administered to the same respondents and the responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha in SPSS 25.

Method of Data Analysis

Collected data from the administration of questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistic: means and simple percentage were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions via SPSS 25 at a¯significant level of 0.05.

The model of multiple regressions as follow:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3$ ………..+ β_nXn

$OC = \beta_0 + \beta_1RW + \beta_2JS + \beta_3PT$

Where:

OC = Organizational Competitiveness = Dependent Variable

RW = Remote Work

JS = Job Sharing

PT = Part-Time-Work

Independent Variables

β_0 = the value of BP when all the independent variables

$\beta_1,\beta_2,\beta_3,\beta_4$ = the estimated regression coefficients.

RESULT OF DATA ANALYSIS

Out of the 269 distributed copies of the questionnaire, 263 copies were retrieved for data analysis. The research questions were analyzed with simple percentages and mean, while multiple regressions was used to testing the hypotheses at a significant alpha level of 0.05.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Demographical Data of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	145	55
	Female	118	45
Years	Below 25	40	15
	25-40	71	27
	41-60	92	35

	Above 60	60	23
Educational Background	SSCE	13	5
	NCE/OND	75	29
	HND/BSC	121	46
	M.Sc.	25	10
	Ph.D	29	11

Source: Field Study (2026)

Demographic table shows that 145(55%) of the total respondents were males while 118(45%) were females. It also shows that 40(15%) of the total respondents were below 25 years; 71(27%) were between the age bracket of 25-40 years, 92(35%) were between 41-60 years while 60(23%)were above 35 years. Educational background indicated that 13(5%) of the total respondents were SSCE holder, 75(29%) respondents were NCE/OND holder, 121(46%) were HND/B.Sc. holder, 25(9.51%) were M.Sc holder while 29(11%) /Ph.D holder.

OUTPUT OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS IN SPSS 25

Table 2: Model Summary

	r	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error	Durbin-Watson
	0.961[a]	0.924	0.922	0.16662	0.256

In Table 2, r value = 0.961, which implies that there is a strong and positive correlation across the variables since the value of r (0.961) tends to 1. The r^2 value = 0.924. This implies that 92% of the variation in organizational effectiveness can be explained by RW, JS and PT.

Table 3: Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	86.202	5	17.240	620.972	0 .000[b]
	Residual	7.135	257	0.028		
	Total	93.338	262			

The value of Sig (0.000) in Table 4 shows that, the independent variables (RW, JS and PT) combined has a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable (OC).

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Table 4: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	(Constant)	.388	.109		-3.543	.000		
	RW	.479	.079	.459	6.088	.000	.052	19.104
	JS	.505	.071	.409	7.122	.003	.090	11.108
	PT	1.087	.105	.850	10.378	.010	.044	22.529

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria.

The Sig-value (0.000) of RW in Table 4 shows that, there is significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria; since the Sig-value (0.000) < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria is rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria.

For every additional effort of improving remote work, organizational competitiveness is expected to increase by 0.479 (Table 4) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant impact of Job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

The Sig-value (0.003) of JS in Table 4 shows that, there is significant impact of job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria; since the Sig-value (0.003) < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was significant impact of job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria is rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact of job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

For every additional effort of improving job sharing, organizational competitiveness is expected to increase by 0.505 (Table 4) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in

South – South, Nigeria.

The Sig-value (0.010) of JS in Table 4 shows that, there is significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria; since the Sig-value (0.010) < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria is rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria.

For every additional effort of improving part time work, organizational competitiveness is expected to increase by 1.087 (Table 4) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

Regression equation is therefore given as:

$OC = 0.388 + 0.479RW + 0.505JS + 1.087PT$

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the test of hypothesis 1 revealed that, there is a significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria. Remote work gives happier, healthier and better work-life balance; enables organization to embrace diversity and inclusion; supports variety of sustainability initiatives; increases productivity and competitive advantage. This findings agrees with the finding of Kurdy et al. (2023), Frank (2022) and Zhao (2023) who reveal that remote workers tend to be happier and more lay which increase productivity. The finding also support the view of Danylenko (2023); Smith and Johnson, 2023), who are of similar view that remote work allows talented professional to contribute to organizations regardless of their location which promote diversity and inclusivity.

The findings from the test of hypothesis 2 revealed that, there is a significant impact of job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South–South, Nigeria. Job sharing gives high job satisfaction and moral to perform better; offer valuable professional development opportunities which in-turn enhance organizational performance and competitiveness; gives sense of job security which makes perform better; and reduce working hours without compromising career progression or financial stability. This finding agree with Agha et al. (2017); Dhal et al. (2021); and Barnes (2020) who similarly reveal that job sharing increase flexibility, motivation, job satisfaction, time for other commitments, and facilitates the development of partnerships. Castro and Giraldi (2018); Asim and Nasim (2022) and Höse et al. (2023) have similar view that job sharing provide extra security for employers and employees.

The findings from the test of hypothesis 3 revealed that, there is a significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria. Part-time-work helps firm attract and retain employees; helps firm reduce cost without reducing the numbers of employees; enable employer to cover busy periods efficiently; more free time, flexibility, and work-life balance for employees; and enhances productivity, commitment and reduces absenteeism and tardiness. This finding is in line with the findings of Gyemanga et al. (2020); Nwekpa et al. (2020) and Janza (2024) who are of a similar view that part-time work attracting applicants from a wider employment pool; retaining valued employees who may not want or be able to work full-time.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the impact of Flexible Work Environment on Organizational Competitiveness of Telecommunication Firms in South-South Nigeria.

The summary of the findings of the study revealed that:

1. There is a significant impact of remote work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria. Remote work gives happier, healthier and better work-life balance; enables organization to embrace diversity and inclusion; supports variety of sustainability initiatives; increases productivity and competitive advantage.

2. There is a significant impact of job sharing on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria. Job sharing gives high job satisfaction and moral to perform better; offer valuable professional development opportunities which in-turn enhance organizational performance and competitiveness; gives sense of job security which makes perform better; and reduce working hours without compromising career progression or financial stability.

3. There is a significant impact of part time work on organizational competitiveness of telecommunication firms in South – South, Nigeria. Part-time-work helps firm attract and retain employees; helps firm reduce cost without reducing the numbers of employees; enable employer to cover busy periods efficiently; more free time, flexibility, and work-life balance for employees; and enhances productivity, commitment and reduces absenteeism and tardiness.

Conclusion

Flexible work arrangement is an excellent option for organizations seeking a healthy and competitive advantage. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant impact of flex time on organizational competitiveness. A flexible work environment results in happier and healthier employees, as well as better work–life balance; enables organizations to embrace diversity and inclusion; supports a variety of sustainability initiatives; and increases productivity and competitive advantage. It gives high job satisfaction and morale to perform better and gives a sense of job security. A flexible work environment also attracts and retains talented employees; reduces costs without reducing the number of employees; enables employers to cover busy periods efficiently; provides more free time and flexibility; enhances productivity and commitment; and reduces absenteeism and tardiness. It leads to more driven and productive employees and benefits team productivity. It lets employees work during the hours they are most physically and mentally productive to increase productivity.

Recommendations

1. Managers and stakeholders should offer employees the flexibility to work from anywhere, as this will eliminate commuting and provide a better work–life balance.

2. Managers and stakeholders should sustain the incorporation of job sharing to allow employee to gradually reduce their workload while still contributing to the organization.

3. Stakeholders should implement part time work to attract applicants from a wider employment pool; retaining valued employees who may not want or be able to work full-time

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