

Examining the Impact of Remote Work on Employees, Employers, and the State in Nigeria

Adeyinka Mutiu Abiodun¹, Gbajumo-sherrif Mariam, A.² and Elegbede S.Tunde³

Abstract

The rise of remote work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has created significant challenges for employees, employers, and the government, complicating the management of remote teams while striving to maintain productivity and organizational cohesion. The central problem addressed in this study is the deteriorating state of employment relations marked by downsizing and layoffs, particularly in the private sector in Nigeria. This study aims to analyze the impact of remote work on these stakeholders through a systematic and thematic review based on PRISMA guidelines. The social exchange theory and the resource-based view theory are two theories that are relevant to this study. Twenty-four (24) publications from 2013 to 2023 were reviewed and sourced from Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus, and Web of Science. The authors used 24 papers through a systematic review process that involved comprehensive literature searches across multiple databases. The study utilized purposive sampling techniques to select studies that met their predefined criteria. The findings indicate that while organizations have begun to adopt remote work and virtual communication tools, these resources are primarily accessible to larger companies due to associated costs. Additionally, the study highlights the pressing need for enhanced infrastructure and structural improvements to support remote work at a societal and economic level. The study recommends that the government enhance infrastructural development and that organizations implement better strategies for remote work. Furthermore, individuals should pursue advancements in technology to adapt to the changing landscape.

Keywords: *Employees, Employers, Employment Relations, Government, Remote Work*

¹ Corresponding author: Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos. Email: adeyinkatie@yahoo.com

² Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos.

³ Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos.

Received on: 26-September 2024. **Accepted on:** 03 February 2025

1. Introduction

The concept of remote work has become a widespread issue in employment relations due to the significant changes in work dynamics brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, there is a pressing need to address the issues of remote working arrangements as many workers have reported difficulties in maintaining boundaries between personal and professional life. This has consequently led to increased stress and decreased productivity (Epie, 2023; Olanipekun, Sokefun, & Akinlabi, 2021). Furthermore, understanding how these changes affect organizational culture and employee commitment is essential for employers to adapt effectively to this new normal and ensure sustainable workforce management (Oladapo & Ojo, 2021; Gbajumo-Sheriff et al., 2021).

In the Nigerian context for instance, the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with global trends has intensified remote work which has also brought about some difficulties among employees (Olayiwola, et al. 2020; Olokundun, et al. 2021; George, et al. 2022; Epie, 2023). There is a major worry regarding the interference of private and professional life. One of the advantages of working remotely is the so-called work-life balance, but it may lead to negative effects like working for extended periods and even stress-related impacts and mental issues. Moreover, the distance that comes with the absence of any physical engagement with workmates does not only affect the individual but may also affect the whole organization hence lowering employee motivation and attachment to the workplace. Even though remote work makes it easy for workers to perform their jobs faster, a considerable percentage of the Nigerian workforce is still unable to access basic technological infrastructure like power and consistent internet access which makes them unable to work remotely.

In Nigeria, Employers are deeply involved in the complex process of organizing remote work and achieving results without losing any team members (Akpan & Udofia, 2021; Okolie, Mukoro & Otite, 2023). Olayiwola, Adegoke, and Asa (2020) argued that lack of physical presence raises problems of responsibility and assessment of employee performance. There is also a need to protect company secrets and data from external breaches using modern technologies, even as a system of laws has yet to control how workers operate from home. Olokundun, Ibidunni, Ogbari, Falola, and Salau (2021) also established that communication is further impeded by the fact that members of the organization do not reside near each other, which may affect the organization's culture and ultimately its teamwork and members' contentment. Phillips (2020) and Epie (2023) argued that supplementing the merits of telecommuting with ensuring efficient work of a team is one of the most important issues that employers deal with in the context of modern relations at work in Nigeria.

Consequently, the rise of remote work in Nigeria calls for a reconsideration of the current labour laws, tax systems, and social security policies in place (Jackowska & Luring, 2021; Okolie, Mukoro & Otite, 2023; Uzochukwu, Iyke-Ofoedu, & Obiora, 2023). Elements of the conventional system made for working in the office may not easily fit in the working-from-home paradigm. George, Atwater, Maneethai, and Madera (2022) contended that providing satisfactory remuneration, ensuring the protection of employee's rights, and tax law enforcement by the nature of work diversification are the greatest challenges. On top of that, the challenge that the state has to deal with is that a big part of the Nigerian populace has no such digital space, that would enable the sustainability of remote work (Epie, 2023). It becomes a vital necessity for the Nigerian government to develop practices that are conducive to remote working and yet remain considerate of the prevailing social and economic conditions in the country.

Olayiwola, Adegoke, and Asa (2020) argued that understanding the dynamics of remote work in Nigeria lies midway between the need to embrace global change and coping with local conditions. On the one hand, the best practices of the world; on the other hand, there is a need to find homegrown solutions. Improving the condition of infrastructure and encouraging the usage of remote work culture requires the involvement of both government and private sectors. Accordingly, in light of the current trends of remote work in Nigeria, it is imperative to focus on understanding the issues that employees, employers, and the state have, as well as possible resolutions to these issues.

This research aims to fill the gap with primary data collected from surveys, interviews, and case studies for policy and corporate strategy formulation. With a view of the dynamics of remote work in Nigeria, it is expected that valuable insights will be generated that will help stakeholders maximize the advantages associated with remote work and reduce the associated challenges. In so doing, this research aspires to nurture a long-lasting and constructive practice of remote work in Nigeria that is in tandem with international standards and best practices, and the local context. The specific aim of this research is to evaluate remote work in Nigeria and offer ways of making its impact on employees, employers, and the state more positive. Therefore, specifically, this research provided answers to the following research questions.

- i. What are the main challenges and opportunities faced by employees in various sectors in Nigeria when it comes to remote work?
- ii. How have employers in Nigeria implemented organizational strategies and policies to facilitate remote work arrangements?
- iii. How do widespread remote work arrangements impact the socio-economic landscape for the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies?

- iv. What are the global best practices in remote work that have the potential to promote sustainable employment relationships in Nigeria?

2. Conceptual and theoretical review

2.1 Remote Work

Remote work also called telecommuting or teleworking is a working style in which employees perform their occupational databases away from the office within their accommodation or in other places with the help of technology. In the view of Olayiwola et al. (2020), a vital and sacred tenet of the work ethics of modern societies is the application of communication and information technologies to perform specified tasks without necessarily being physically present in one organizational office. The concept of remote working has witnessed significant growth due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic forcing bodies to re-evaluate their structure of work (Jex et al., 2020). George et al. (2022), point out, similarly, that remote work is a multifaceted concept which could mean constant working away from an office to working partly away from an office and partly working away from the office for a few days in a week. This shift in work practices is indicative of the waning of the traditional work ethic of punching a clock at a desk within 9 to 5, which allows employees a higher degree of control over the performance of their work obligations (Franken, et al., 2021). Taking everything into account, the very concept of remote working does not imply a single clear-cut model of operation, rather it focuses on working beyond the physical office and encourages the use of technology.

Employees' Perspective of Remote Working: The employee perspective on remote work allows for opportunities and challenges at the same time. It is beneficial in that it increases flexibility, thereby enabling workers to manage their time more effectively and marry work with leisure, a trend that has been witnessed in different regions across the world including Nigeria (Olayiwola, Adegoke, & Asa, 2020). The positive effect however is constrained due to such negative factors as loneliness, less access to professional assistance, and lack of necessary facilities, especially movers in third-world countries (Adesanya et al, 2023). To make matters worse, in Nigeria, the problem of poor internet services coupled with the challenges of erratic power supply restrain these individuals from enjoying the full benefits of remote working policies (Okoli & Agwu, 2020). Consequently, this affects the general work satisfaction and well-being of the workers.

Employers' Perspective of Remote Working: According to employers, remote work is a strategy to improve productivity and mitigate expenses as well as widen the talent pool, especially in sectors like technology and finance (Anderson & O'Dell, 2020). In Nigeria, while some organizations have taken advantage of working from home to enhance efficiency, other sectors, particularly manufacturing, are constrained by issues of managing remote workforces and building team spirit (Adubor et al., 2022). In addition to this, employers are also required to put up technological and security structures for the effective management of remote teams (Akpan & Udofia, 2021). Nevertheless, the desire to retain personnel and offer greater flexibility in work structures has tempted several employers to these emerging hybrid systems of work

Governments' Perspective of Remote Working: Government policies, within the organizational and labour context, encompass the set of rules, regulations, and directives established by governmental bodies to govern and guide various aspects of the employment relationship, workplace practices, and economic activities. Scholars such as Akpan and Udofia (2021) highlight the pivotal role of government policies in shaping labour markets, influencing employment conditions, and contributing to economic stability. For example, labour laws stipulate minimum wage standards, working hours, and employee rights, ensuring a fair and regulated environment. In developing countries such as Nigeria, issues like remote work are seen by governments as an economic benefit but at the same time a regulation problem. Avoiding urbanization that comes with the practice and excessive traffic could be some advantages of remote work. However, there are difficulties with the implementation of tax management, labor laws, and even the provision of equipment (Aladejebi, 2021). In Nigeria, however, the government has maintained a vacuum regarding remote working policies meaning there has not been one before, especially in the private sector where the enforcement of labor rights and social protections tends to be a challenge (Epie, 2023). Governments across the world are also called upon to focus on developing partnerships with the private sector to help enhance digital capabilities and come up with policies that will support remote working capabilities in all sectors of the economy.

2.2 Development of Research Questions and Review

The research question targeted at understanding the major difficulties and prospects of remote work to employees in Nigeria irrespective of the sectors is important in filling the holes left by previous studies. While Adesanya et al. (2023) examined transitions in work following the pandemic bespeaking the career paths of HR managers, there is little attention directed towards studies on sectoral variation in the challenges experienced during the practice of remote work, especially in sectors apart from IT and finance. Citing Akpan and Udofia (2021) and Olanipekun et al. (2021), issues related to work and life balance have been dealt with,

as well as those on management, but the investigations focused on the short-term effects of the phenomena and paid little attention to the long-range effects. In addition, the digital divide emphasizes the infrastructural factors that limit the ability to engage in remote work for those who live in rural areas and backward regions as discussed by Okoli and Agwu (2020). Okolie et al. (2023) also discussed organizational commitment but again failed to go into details of remote working arrangements on the various employment classes particularly the cause for concern contract or permanent employees. Therefore, the issue of how employees respond to these sectoral limitations remains a significant gap that calls for further and unfocused research in the area. In light of these challenges, the first pertinent research question emerged.

Research Question I: What are the main challenges and opportunities faced by employees in various sectors in Nigeria when it comes to remote work?

It is pertinent to study organizational strategies and policies that employers put in place in Nigeria to promote remote working owing to the peculiar contextual environment in Nigerian business. Uzochukwu, Iyke-Ofoedu, and Obiora (2023) studied the challenges relating to managing remote workers during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, but their study was more about operational limitations rather than sustainable models of remote working variations explaining the changes in strategies that would be expected. Likewise, while Okoli and Agwu (2020) acknowledged the poor internet connectivity and cybersecurity threats available to most Nigerian businesses, the question of whether or not employer policy addresses such problems begs for answers. Furthermore, Olanipekun, Sokefun, and Akinlabi (2021) pointed out historical as well as current economic systems and traditions in the society that make it difficult for people to maintain a balance between their professional duties and personal engagements in cases where work orientation is very strong. All these add to the lack of information on how Nigerian employers restructure workspaces and redeploy work-centric policies as per global standards and policies considering the challenges that are localized in nature. Therefore, the second research question seeks to identify and assess the tactics used by Nigerian employers in dealing with this kind of complexity.

Research Question II: What organizational strategies and policies have employers in Nigeria implemented to facilitate remote work arrangements?

The need to investigate the socio-economic effects of the possible rise of remote working in Nigeria, especially on the government and its agencies, is very important considering the infrastructural and socio-cultural dynamics that cut across the working population. While Bapuji, Crossan, and Singh (2021) noted that there is an urgent need to assess the remote work impact on government operations over the long term,

service delivery and policy formulation suffices in Nigeria as an afterthought. Moreover, while Okolie and Agwu (2020) mention the infrastructural deficits as a factor that seeks to enhance the work-from-home standard across some regions, the specific effects of such inequalities on government performance and resource distribution are yet to be assessed. Likewise, De Klerk et al. (2021) called for investigating the socio-economic consequences of telecommuting in different settings because such analysis would assist in formulating policies that recognize disparities. Notably, existing studies do not, however, address how the Nigerian government can effectively harness the opportunity of telecommuting to improve the performance of public service delivery and address the challenges of infrastructure. As such, there is a need to examine more closely the socio-economic effects of such on government and hence the third research question that follows:

Research Question IV: What are the global best practices in remote work that have the potential to promote sustainable employment relationships in Nigeria?

It is important to survey global best practices in remote work in fostering sustainable employment in Nigeria given the shifting scenarios of remote work in most Nigerian organizations as the world is post-COVID-19 toggled to remote work. A worldwide shift into remote working, as Leon et al. (2021) observably affirmed is inevitable, but there is no evidence to make such practices rethink and implement in the Nigerian context. George et al. (2022) propose this for the benefit of Nigerian organizations on how to assimilate best practices that exist for example in ensuring workers' engagement and well-being in the local context. However, present works do not consider the modification of these practices to the multicultural and diverse nature of the Nigerian workforce, as pointed out by Olanipekun Sokefun and Akinlabi (2021). Additionally, few studies look into how global models can help enhance sustainable employment relations and organizational sustainability in Nigeria given the inadequate infrastructure systems and the economy. It is this lack of knowledge that biases these research questions towards the understanding of global best-begin strategies for Nigeria that leads to the fourth research question:

2.3 Theoretical Justification

Two relevant theories pertinent to the impact of remote work on employees, employers, and the state in Nigeria are the Social Exchange Theory and the Resource-Based View Theory.

As put forth by Homans in 1958 and later detailed by Blau in 1964, the *Social Exchange Theory* argues that social behaviors occur as exchanges of resources, where individuals are concerned with the maximization of 'rewards' in a relationship and the minimization of the 'costs' involved in the relationship. In the case of working remotely within Nigeria, this theory holds that employees who appreciate working

from home – for instance, who regard it as enhancing their flexibility and autonomy – would commit themselves more to the work, engage more, and be more productive. Employers of workers who are allowed to work remotely in most cases also understand that they will hide some of the drawbacks of remote working because they have biases that make the remote working mode appear better than the office one, therefore the exchange is expected to be advantageous to both parties. In addition to this, the theory outlines that even with remote work, employers and employees need to build trust and communication channels otherwise the arrangement is not likely to be a success, as stated by Anya et al. (2021). That is why social exchange in the context of remote work is significant to the employees and the employers so that the benefits of remote work are optimally experienced in Nigeria with a very positive impact on the employees and the organization.

On the other end, the *Resource-Based View Theory (RBV)* created by Wernerfelt in 1984, which was improved by Barney in 1991 states that an organization possesses resources and capabilities that have unique value to create a sustainable competitive advantage.

Taking into account the applicability of this theory to the respective context of this study, it can be stated that working remotely from the office can be considered as a resource in the possession of both the employee and employer because of increased productivity, cost-effectiveness, and retention of skilled personnel. From the employees' point of view, remote work provides the resource of flexibility which can enhance the balance of work and other responsibilities stated by Olanipekun et al. (2021). From an organizational perspective, remote work can be treated as a source of advantage and insurance of talent within an organization that also addresses multiple concerns and consequences of onsite work. As a result, access to resources embedded in telework can foster sustainable employment relations, organizational sustainability, and economic growth in Nigeria.

To employees, remote working is a resource which from the experience of Olanipekun, Sokefun, and Akinlabi (2021) is flexibility to juggle between work and other duties. From the point of view of the employers working from home is an opportunity to control talents and to strengthen the organizations by giving a chance to get access to different talents and at the same time avoid the negative impacts of the office environment.

Therefore, this paper concludes that it is possible to hypothesize that the management of benefits arising from work-from-home culture can positively foster employee relations, improve organizations' competitiveness, and drive economic growth in Nigeria.

3. Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Philosophy

Interpretivism is a research methodology that was employed when looking at the phenomenon of remote work in Nigeria and proffering recommendations on how it can be made to impact positively on the employees, employers, and the country. This approach is in line with the intricate nature of human behaviour and the individual ideas related to the perceived dangers of working remotely in Nigeria and the effects this has on the people, organizations, and the country. This philosophical view accepts that there are standards on how issues regarding strategies and issues of concerns related to remote work in Nigeria and its effects on various stakeholders including employees, employers, and the country in general should be looked at and tackled. This also allows extraction of both primary sources and secondary sources, which can include emails, scribbles, annual reports, newspapers, web content, etc., to ease the understanding. In other situations, interpretivism is inclusive of the theory of a study and its appreciation of the context of the study specific to Africa (Saunders & Bezzina, 2015). This approach seeks to understand a particular context critical to interpreting the gathered data, contrary to the previous ones where the opposite was done, especially for the founders of positivism. This approach aided in evaluating the strategies, challenges, and risks of working remotely in Nigeria as well as the effects it has on the workers, the employers, and the country at large.

3.2 Research Approaches

The study adopted an inductive approach. This means there is an organized and step-by-step procedure for the interpretation of the research data. Each stage builds upon the other enabling a complete comprehension of the available data. For instance, this technique was useful in laying out the results of the research study in a logical and orderly manner. Everything that has been explained above is the process that one goes through until understanding all the information has been gained. Besides aiding in the completeness of the cross-interpretation of data, findings, and discussions in the several studies used in this study, the systematic and organized method also improved the consistency of the results thereby making them replicable. More precisely, this approach soberly and systematically presents the method, analysis, and findings addressing the issue at hand. Systematic reports are termed as sources one can trust as they are considered painstaking, workable, and honest. This was complimented by the use of a meta-analysis approach. The thorough review made it clear that the meta-analysis was essential for this study because it combined findings from 24 relevant studies. This approach gave a clearer picture of the various challenges and opportunities employees encountered with remote work in Nigeria. By bringing together data from different sources, the meta-analysis

strengthened the reliability of the conclusions and revealed patterns and insights that might have been missed in individual studies. The integration criteria in a systematic and meta-analysis study helped to assess strategies, challenges, and risks associated with remote work in Nigeria and its impact on employees, employers, and the state.

3.3 Literature Search Strategy

In discussing the research methodology, it is pertinent to mention that there has been a clear and considerable effort to identify all available and appropriate academic literature and other sources, related in one way or another to the strategies, challenges, and risks of remote working, in the case of Nigeria and the effects that remote working has on the employees, employers and the government. (Lê & Schmid, 2022). Searches of various online databases involve phrases like “working at a distance”, ‘arrangement of work outside offices” “window hours of work”, ‘issues of working at a distance in Nigeria’, “work at home”, telecommuting”, “teleworking” “policies on working away from the office”, “cyberspace of work”, flexible work arrangement”, etc.

Also, there is a comprehensive manual search of the relevant journals and reference lists. Therefore, only recent empirical and theoretical publications were included because they offered up-to-date information on strategies, challenges, and risks of remote work in Nigeria, their effects on employees, employers, and the Government, relevant theories, frameworks, and case studies. As regards the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, it turned out that of the 74 publications that this study rated as potentially pertinent to the completion of the research 24 were discarded. Following filtration processes and assessment of meta-analysis results, 24 publications addressed the strategies, challenges, and risks of remote working in Nigeria, and its effects on the workers, employers, and the government were retrieved for review assessment.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The inclusion parameters for this study hinge exclusively on the literature that addresses opportunities, challenges, and risks associated with remote working, particularly in Nigeria, and their effects on employees, employers, and the state. Peer-reviewed articles from 2013 to 2023 were required to be relevant and updated to the ever-changing world of remote working. Conversely, exclusion criteria eliminated studies that do not relate to the Nigerian context, that were not peer-reviewed, and those without empirical data or theoretical frameworks meaningful to the subject. This approach ensured that only high-quality with relevant literature review was included in the analysis. The author had meticulously gone through the abstracts and methodologies of research to include or exclude a publication from the identified studies. All those studies that met the inclusion criteria were shortlisted while those that contradicted the focus of this study or were devoid of empirical evidence were discarded. The year period chosen for this study is 2013-2023 to embody the most recent trends in remote work considering the event

of the COVID-19 pandemic that transformed work practices in most countries. Authors used databases like Google Scholar, DOAJ, CPCI, and Scopus because they had comprehensive access to a wide array of peer-reviewed literature with a robust selection of relevant studies (See Table 1).

Table 1: A 10-Year - Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Year under review	2013 -2023
Search Terms	Boolean operators (AND, OR) are used to combine these phrases to produce search strings for databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, CPCI, and Scopus, among others. The particular requirements of each database and the study's emphasis were taken into consideration while adjusting the search technique. Among the search phrases are: "remote working", "flexible work arrangement," "Flexible work time", "challenges of remote working in Nigeria," "Telecommuting", "regulatory frameworks for remote working", "virtual workspace"
Sample journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Indonesian Journal of Education and Social Sciences</i> ▪ <i>Sustainability</i> ▪ <i>International Journal of Innovation in Marketing Elements</i> ▪ <i>Journal of Management and Operations</i> ▪ <i>Archives of Business Research</i> ▪ <i>Academy of Management Annals</i> ▪ <i>Academy of Strategic Management Journal</i> ▪ <i>Journal of Management Studies</i> ▪ <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> ▪ <i>Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior</i> ▪ <i>SA Journal of Industrial Psychology</i> ▪ <i>Journal of Management & Organization</i> ▪ <i>Organizational Dynamics</i> ▪ <i>Journal of International Management</i> ▪ <i>UNILAG Journal of Business</i> ▪ <i>Employee Relations: The International Journal</i> ▪ <i>International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology</i> ▪ <i>Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology</i> ▪ <i>World Scientific News</i> ▪ <i>International Journal of Business and Management</i> ▪ <i>Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies</i> ▪ <i>International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration</i> ▪ <i>Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences</i> ▪ <i>Business Information Review</i> ▪ <i>International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies</i> ▪ <i>Global Strategy Journal</i>
Database	Google Scholar, DOAJ, CPCI, Scopus, etc
Publication	Publications in Africa

After a thorough review of the 74 original publications, 24 were retained for further analysis based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selection process involved carefully evaluating the relevance of each publication on the strategies, challenges, and risks associated with remote work in Nigeria, as well as its impact on employees, employers, and the state. The remaining 50 publications were excluded due to their lack of alignment with the specific objectives of the study, absence of empirical data or theoretical frameworks, or failure to address the Nigerian context. Specifically, 24 relevant articles were retained to assess the strategies, challenges and risks associated with remote work in Nigeria and its impact on

employees, employers and the state. The number of findings and the studies recorded and extracted using the meta-analysis approach are shown in the flowchart of the systematic overview, which is based on the PRISMA criteria (see Figure 1).

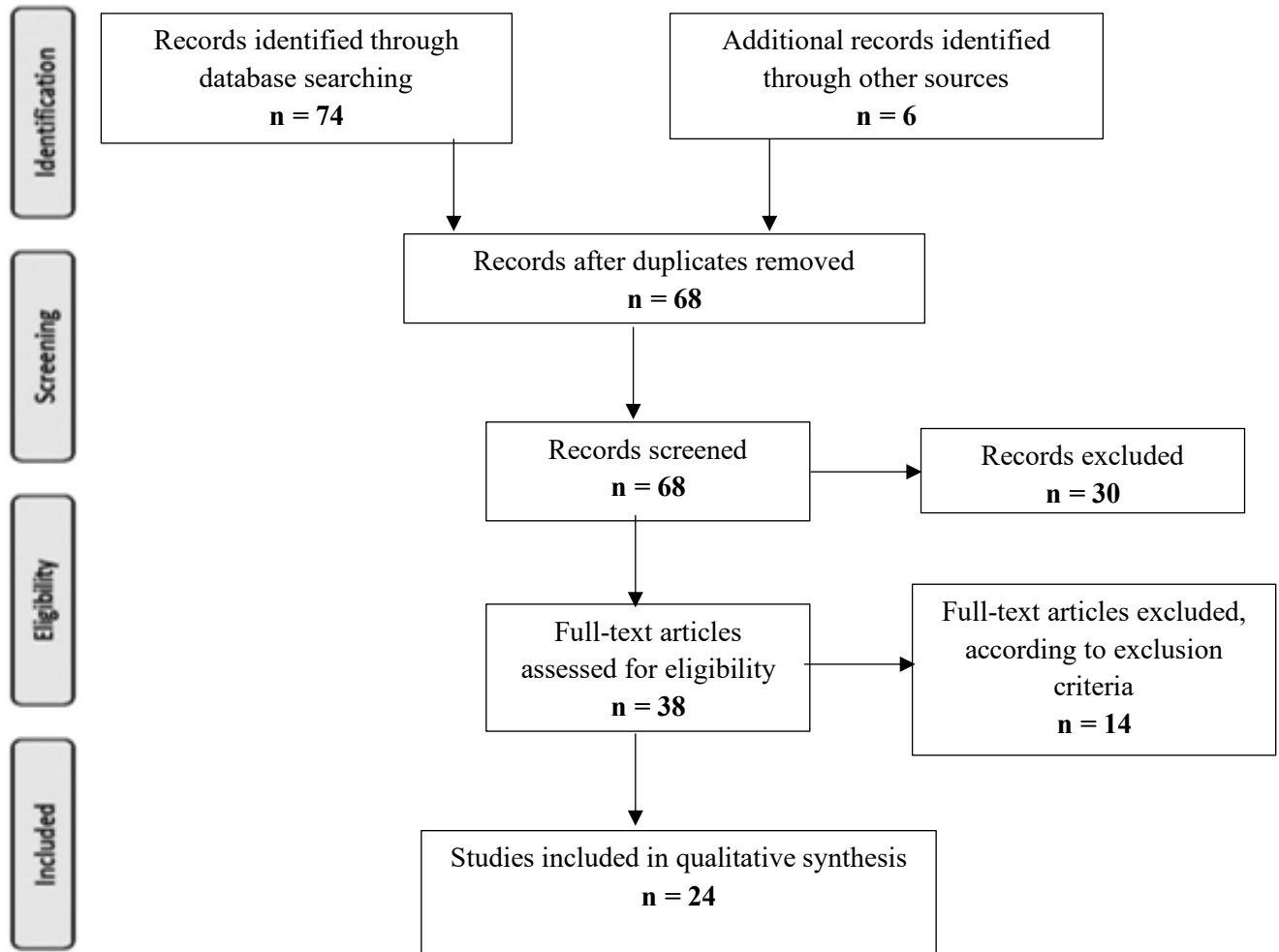


Figure 1: Systematic review flow diagram based on PRISMA guidelines

Only articles/journals indexed in reputable printing companies, such as Sage Publications, Elsevier Publication, Inderscience Publishing, Springer, Allied Academies Publishing, Academy of Management Publishers, Scopus/WoS, Google Scholar, and Taylor & Francis Publications were selected for this study, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: No of Selected Publications

SN	Publishers	No of Papers Assessed for Eligibility [N=74]	No of Papers Selected for Qualitative Synthesis [N=24]
1	Sage Publications	7	3
2	Elsevier Publications	10	4
3	Wiley-Blackwell/MDPI	32	10
4	Taylor & Francis Publications	15	3
5	Springer/ Springer Nature	10	4
Total		74	24

A sum of 74 articles from 5 diverse publishers was evaluated for suitability, of which 24 were chosen for qualitative synthesis. The distribution is as follows: Sage Publications made available 7 papers out of which 3 were selected, Elsevier Publications contributed 10 papers and 4 were in scope, Wiley-Blackwell/MDPI had the highest number 32 papers 10 of which qualified for selection, 15 papers came from Taylor & Francis Publications 3 of which were selected and lastly Springer/Springer Nature provided 10 papers 4 of which were included.

3.4 Time Horizons

In considering the strategies, challenges, risks, and impacts of remote work in Nigeria to employees, employers as well and the state, a longitudinal approach such as the one covering the period 2014 – 2024 is useful as it paints a clearer picture of the trends and dynamics that triumphed in this period. All the abnormal changes in the relations between employers and employees can be analyzed in detail, which makes it possible to discuss how enlargement strategies were formed, transformed, or interfered with managed processes. Analyzing the data of course for a decade, this research managed to register the most important features of such employment relations development as market integration, regulatory changes, technology, and geopolitics.

3.5 Techniques and Procedures

To examine the specific strategies, difficulties, and threats involved in remote work in Nigeria and their effects on employees, employers, and society as a whole, the study used a purposeful selection of articles. As it is more precise in meeting the objective of the study, purposeful selection was adopted by the researcher to ensure that only pertinent and significant materials are included in this work. The authors supported this

methodological choice to enhance the rigor of research and, thus, limited the review to the articles that addressed the remote working issues in Nigeria in depth. This study provides the researcher with a framework of qualitative data collection to assess the complexities and implications of remote working for employees and employers as well as for the nation.

3.6 Analysis and Synthesis

This research focuses on strategies, challenges, and risks of remote work in Nigeria as well as its impact on employees, employers, and the state, data analysis, and synthesis in this study relied on manual thematic analysis because of its flexibility, systematization, and appropriateness to qualitative research. In this approach, the text material is searched for patterns, themes, and categories through a thorough and iterative process of coding and interpretation. (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial phase involves systematic coding of data collected from case studies, interviews, and/or written materials. These codes encapsulate central issues that are relevant to specific themes. The manual thematic analysis is useful for this study since it takes into account a wider scope concerning the risk interventions regarding remote work and its effects on the employees, the employers, and the government of Nigeria (Lê & Schmid, 2022). Also, by doing everything manually, the researcher can maintain the richness and multitude of the participants' understanding and experiences concerning the strategies, challenges, and risks of working remotely in Nigeria and the effects on the employees, employers, and the country. This is in line with the interpretive form of the method.

4. Analysis and Discussions Based on the Research Questions

In this section, the examination of the impact of remote work on the employees, employers, and state in Nigeria is presented and discussed. The themes were identified in this chapter and are critically examined through empirical studies, providing a comprehensive understanding of their implications and relevance in the context of the industry. The analysis was done based on the four (4) research objectives formulated for this study:

4.1 Research Question 1: What are the main challenges and opportunities faced by employees in various sectors in Nigeria when it comes to remote work?

This research question focuses on the challenges and benefits those employees in different industries in Nigeria encounter with remote working. To find studies, a systematic literature search was performed in several databases using terms such as challenges of remote work, employee satisfaction with remote work,

and remote working in war-torn nations where overcoming the difficulties of and fears associated with daily life in the home office is more common. Studies were selected based on inclusion criteria centered on empirical research within the geographic area in question. As a result of the exhaustive review, the meta-analysis was crucial for this study as it allowed for the comprehensive synthesis of findings from 24 relevant studies. The meta-analysis provided a robust understanding of the complex challenges and opportunities employees faced regarding remote working in Nigeria. By aggregating data from multiple sources, the meta-analysis enhanced the conclusions' reliability and highlighted patterns and insights that individual studies may have overlooked (Table 3).

Table 3: Themes on the main challenges and opportunities faced by Nigerian employees on remote work in various sectors (N=20)

SN	Themes	Number of articles in which the theme has appeared	Importance Rank
A. Challenges of Remote Work			
1	Connectivity Concerns	15	1
2	Communication Hurdles	11	4
3	Home Office Struggles	12	3
4	Cybersecurity Concerns	14	2
5	Isolation Impact	10	5
B. Opportunities for Remote Work			
1	Flexibility Unleashed	9	5
2	Time Saved; Productivity Gained	10	4
3	Cost-saving Advantages	14	1
4	Talent Beyond Borders	13	2
5	Skill Development Pathways	12	3

Note: 'n' means the number of papers reviewed

The data presented in this table captures the key challenges and opportunities of remote work perception for employees in Nigeria and other countries across various sectors. Top challenges include connectivity, home office setup, and cybersecurity issues, revealing the need to implement new infrastructure and security systems for the successful provision of remote work services. Conclusively, this demonstrates the need to take advantage of remote possibilities such as flexibility, less time, and more employment highlighting the productive aspect of it. The results further bolster Bapuji et al. (2021) and George et al. (2022) on the remote work tightrope emphasizing that there are challenges that need to be managed and advantages that need to be utilized to maintain healthy forms of employment. It agrees with Olokundun et al. (2021) whose submission relates to the antecedent factors of digital transformation. It also supports Phillips (2020) who is focused on the evolution of work into virtual spaces.

These results align with the findings of Bapuji et al. (2021) and George et al. (2022) as they underline opportunity-based strategies to manage challenges to achieve positive sustainable employment relationships. These results have been supported by following research done by Olokundun et al., 2021 and Okoli & Agwu, 2020, where they outlined the importance of digital drive and the need to counter the digital gap. Therefore, it can be inferred that mitigating the challenges pointed out while making use of the opportunities available is fundamental in ensuring that remote working in Nigeria's changing work environment is worth it.

4.2 Research Question 2: What organizational strategies and policies have employers in Nigeria implemented to facilitate remote work arrangements?

This research question aims to determine the kinds of organizational strategies and policies that employers in Nigeria have put in place to enable employees to work from home. Using appropriate keyword collection and search strategies, a systematic literature search was conducted across various databases. Defining criteria that were concerned with applying the empirical research within that particular context were used to select the studies. After a thorough review, a total of 22 relevant studies were included in the meta-analysis. This meta-analysis purposively reviewed twenty-two (22) papers and stresses the multifaceted organizational strategies and policies put in place by employers in Nigeria to enhance remote working arrangements (Table 4).

Table 4: Themes on the organizational strategies and policies that employers in Nigeria have implemented to facilitate remote work arrangements (N=22)

SN	Themes	Number of articles in which the theme has appeared	Importance Rank
1	Provision of Remote Work Equipment. e.g. Supplying laptops, internet modems, and other necessary equipment	16	1
2	Implementation of Virtual Communication Tools e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack	14	3
3	Flexible Work Schedules	13	4
4	Remote Work Training and Support	15	2
5	Performance Monitoring Systems	11	5
6	Data Security Protocols	10	6

Note: 'n' means the number of papers reviewed

The table presents the employer-level organizational strategies and policies in Nigeria that encourage remote working arrangements. In particular, it stresses the need for the provision of remote working devices, the establishment of online means of communication, and training and assistance in working remotely as the core functions of Organizations. The results correspond with the previous research of Bapuji et al. (2021) and Olokundun et al. (2021) which argued for the value of these lessons in understanding the challenges of

remote work. Furthermore, it supports the research of Franken et al., (2021), and George et al., (2022), on forced flexibility and enhancing productivity and well-being of remotely working employees. Therefore, it becomes imperative to stress that investment in infrastructures, policies, and training in the area of remote working for employees is an important area that organizations in Nigeria must embrace for them to be able to open up remote working for maximum improvement of employee productivity and mental health.

4.3 Research question 3: What are the socio-economic implications of widespread remote work on the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies?

This research question aims to determine the socio-economic effect of remote work in swiftly growing in Nigeria's government and its specialized agencies. An attempt was made to identify scholarly articles published in different journals available in different databases using keyword and search terms. The papers were included based on the following criteria: all collected papers were regarded as empirical studies conducted in the given context. An initial search yielded twenty (20) articles, with eighteen (18) of them related to the meta-analysis properly. Reviews for this objective entailed eighteen (18) papers and the following meta-analysis findings henceforth discuss the socio-economic externality of pervasive telework affecting the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies (Table 5).

Table 5: Themes on the socio-economic implications of widespread remote working on the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies (N=18)

SN	Themes	Number of articles in which the theme has appeared	Importance Rank
1	Promoting Telecommuting Culture	07	6
2	Traffic Reduction and Digital Divide	11	2
3	Infrastructure Development/Investment	12	1
4	Environmental Impact	09	4
5	Skills Development and Training	08	5
6	Facilitating Public-Private Partnerships	10	3

Note: 'n' means the number of papers reviewed

The table anchors themes on the socioeconomic consequences of extended telework on the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies. This problem underscores the need to advance infrastructure and invest in it and at the same time encourage the adoption of remote work, and support the creation of public-private partnerships to more effectively capture the gains therein. These findings affirm the works of Olokundun et al., (2021) and Okoli & Agwu, (2020), on the importance of understanding the antecedent for implementing digital transformation, especially regarding the digital divide with a call for work from home.

However, they are in congruence with Deci et al. (2017); and De Klerk et al. (2021)'s writing on self-determination theorizing in work organizations, and the contribution of remote work in the future world of work. It can therefore be postulated that promoting a teleworking culture, providing support infrastructures and nurturing collaborations are crucial for the Nigerian government and its specialist agencies to properly harness the economic values of flexible working promptly.

4.4 Research Question 4: What are the global best practices in remote work that have the potential to promote sustainable employment relationships in Nigeria?

This research question aims at identifying the best practices in remote working that could support sustainable employment relations in Nigeria. The study employed random searches on several databases and a subject-issued list of the keywords and search terms were used. Criteria used to identify required studies for review included subject area and type of research that have to be conducted in the given context. From scanning the decade of literature, finally, a total of twenty-one (21) primary studies including the meta-analysis studies were incorporated. For this objective of the study, twenty-one (21) papers were considered and the conclusion of this meta-analysis reveals the global best practices in remote work that are applicable in enhancing sustainable employment relationship(s) in Nigeria as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Themes on the global best practices in remote work that have the potential to promote sustainable employment relationships in Nigeria (N=21)

SN	Themes	Number of articles in which the theme has appeared	Importance Rank
1	Inclusive Remote Work Policies	12	5
2	Transparent Performance Evaluation Criteria	11	6
3	Virtual Communication Tools Implementation	17	1
4	Remote Team Building Activities	13	4
5	Regular Check-ins and Feedback Mechanisms	15	2
6	Provision of Mental Health Resources	14	3
7	Clear Communication Channels	10	7

Note: 'n' means the number of papers reviewed

The table indicates topics on global best practices for remote working that may foster sustainable employment relationships in Nigeria. It highlights the need for equal remote work practices and engrossing performance management, adequate media communication, and interesting team building, in addition to appropriate approaches to offer psychological well-being. These results align with the studies of Belanger et

al. (2020) and George et al. (2022) on norms and group identification and work-life balance in supervisory support for worker productivity and well-being when working from home. Furthermore, they conform with the study by Bapuji et al. (2021) and Franken et al. (2021) on learning from organizing routines and forced flexibility in virtual work contexts. Thus, this research offers the necessary conclusion that adopting inclusive policies, comprehensible and clear evaluation criteria, and efficient communication channels are crucial for extending sustainable employment relations in Nigeria based on the experience of remote work.

5. Conclusion

The impact of remote work on employees, employers, and the state in Nigeria reveals significant challenges such as inadequate technological infrastructure and work-life balance issues, while also presenting opportunities for increased flexibility and productivity across various sectors.

Employers have adapted by implementing organizational strategies that include flexible work policies and investment in digital tools to support remote collaboration, which can enhance employee satisfaction and retention. For the Nigerian government, widespread remote work arrangements necessitate the development of supportive policies that address the socio-economic implications, such as promoting digital literacy and ensuring equitable access to technology, while also drawing on global best practices to foster sustainable employment relationships.

Based on the analysis made on employee, employer, and state levels in Nigeria, this study has been able to establish knowledge and experience in multi-dimensional ways on the effects of remote working. According to the analysis of the emerging issues related to the employees, it is possible to note that although connectivity issues and challenges in communication remain the threats at the same time the flexibility and productivity in case of implementing remote work seem to be promising.

Besides, this study reveals that infrastructure investment, training, and security measures were essential to support adequate remote work arrangements. Similarly, the socio-economic consequences touching the Nigerian government and its specialized agencies also point to the need to encourage the culture of telecommuting, investment in telecommunication infrastructure, and partnerships to reap the full benefits of telework. Therefore, the study concludes that inclusive policies, clear evaluation channels, and constructive communications play major roles in the establishment of sustainable employment relations in Nigeria with the help of remote work strategies, despite the changes in the environment.

References

- Adesanya, A. S., Ogunlusi, C. F., Olginni, B. O., Eniyewu, A. J., & Olowu, E. A. (2023). The Emerging Roles of Human Resource Managers: The Post-Covid-19 Experience in Nigeria. *Indonesian Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 44-55.
- Adubor, N. V., Adeniji, A. A., Salau, O. P., Olajugba, O. J., & Onibudo, G. O. (2022). Exploring green human resource adoption and corporate sustainability in the Nigerian manufacturing industry. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 12635.
- Agbanu, I. I., Tsetim, J. T., & Suleman, A. (2023). Flexible Work Arrangements and Productivity of Sales Representatives of Book Publishing Companies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovation in Marketing Elements*, 3(1), 1-22.
- Akpan, I. U., & Udofia, E. A. (2021). Challenges of managing remote employees in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Management and Operations*, 1(1), 45-58.
- Aladejebi, O. (2021). Should Working from Home be the Norm in Nigeria After COVID-19? *Archives of Business Research*, 9(9), 97-115.
- Anderson, N., & O'Dell, C. (2020). Remote work as a dynamic arrangement: The role of job tasks and interactions. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(1), 234-271.
- Anya, P. J., Adeniji, A. A., Salau, O. P., Balogun, O. M., Aribisala, S. O., & Ikeagbo, J. O. (2021). Examining Employee Engagement within the Context of Flexible Work Arrangement in Asian-Owned Company in Lagos State. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 20(6), 1-12.
- Bapuji, H., Crossan, M., & Singh, P. (2021). Balancing act: Learning from organizing routines in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(1), 222-227.
- Belanger, J. J., Pierro, A., Barbieri, B., De Carlo, N. A., & Falco, A. (2020). A socio-functional approach to work-life balance: The role of norms, group identification, and work engagement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 118, 103400.
- De Klerk, J. J., Joubert, M., & Mosca, H. F. (2021). Is working from home the new workplace panacea? Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for the future world of work. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 47(1), 1-14.
- Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of science. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 19-43.
- Epie, C. (2023). Work-Life Balance Experiences in Nigeria: Institutional and Sociocultural Perspectives. In *Work-Life Balance in Africa: A Critical Approach* (pp. 61-85). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

- Franken, E., Bentley, T., Shafaei, A., Farr-Wharton, B., Onnis, L. A., & Omari, M. (2021). Forced flexibility and remote working: Opportunities and challenges in the new normal. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 27(6), 1131-1149.
- Gbajumo-Sheriff, M., Sogunro, A., Elegbede, T., & Udobi-Owoloja, P. (2021). COVID-19 in Nigeria: Impact on work and workers. *UNILAG Journal of Business*, 7(1), 1-16.
- George, T. J., Atwater, L. E., Maneethai, D., & Madera, J. M. (2022). Supporting the productivity and wellbeing of remote workers: Lessons from COVID-19. *Organizational Dynamics*, 51(2), 100869.
- Jackowska, M., & Lauring, J. (2021). What are the effects of working away from the workplace compared to using technology while being at the workplace? Assessing work context and personal context in a global virtual setting. *Journal of International Management*, 27(1), 100826.
- Mordi, C., Ajonbadi, H. A., Adekoya, O. D., & Oruh, E. S. (2023). An exploration of the practices of locational flexibility in developing economies: insights from the Nigerian higher education sector. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 45(5), 1180-1198.
- O'Brien, D. (2020). COVID-19: Key tax and legal considerations for employers in Nigeria. *PwC Nigeria*.
- Ogueyungbo O. O., Maloma A., Igbino E., Salau O., Maxwell O., & Hezekiah F. (2019). A review of flexible work arrangements initiatives in the Nigerian telecommunication industry. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, 10(3).
- Okoli, C., & Agwu, M. E. (2020). The digital divide in Nigeria: Patterns, determinants, and consequences. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 71(7), 828-839.
- Okolie, U. C., Mukoro, A., & Otite, A. (2023). Challenges of effective implementation of work-life balance policy and factors affecting organizational commitment in selected insurance companies in Delta State, Nigeria. *World Scientific News*, 179, 135-145.
- Oladapo, V., & Ojo, M. (2021). The impact of remote working on organizational culture: A case study of Nigerian firms. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 16(1), 102-115.
- Olanipekun, L. O., Sokefun, E., & Akinlabi, N. A. (2021). Remote Work and Employee Work-Life Balance in The Global South: The Nigerian Experience. *Texas Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(1), 94-105.
- Olayiwola, F. A., Adegoke, B. O., & Asa, E. (2020). Remote working during COVID-19 pandemic: Impact on employee well-being. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 6(4), 1-8.
- Olokundun, M., Ibidunni, S., Ogbari, M., Falola, H., & Salau, O. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic and antecedents for digital transformation in the workplace: A conceptual framework. *Open Access Macedonian Journal of Medical Sciences (OAMJMS)*, 9(F), 41-46.

- Phillips, S. (2020). Working through the pandemic: Accelerating the transition to remote working. *Business Information Review*, 37(3), 129-134.
- Uzochukwu, A. C., Iyke-Ofoedu, M. I., & Obiora, O. A. (2023). Effect of work-life balance on organizational performance in Banking Industry in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies*, 3(2), 209-216.