

■ ARTICLE DE RECHERCHE / RESEARCH ARTICLE

Remote Work Practices and Employee Productivity in the Post COVID-19 Business Environment

Chijioke Esther Chisom

Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State, Nigeria

Okonkwo Karyn Kosisochukwu

Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State, Nigeria

Received: 15 April 2026

Accepted: 22 May 2026

Available online: 28 June 2026

How to cite:

CHIJOKE, E.C. & OKONKWO, K.K. (2026). Remote Work Practices and Employee Productivity in the Post COVID-19 Business Environment. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Scientific Studies*, 6(3), pp. 5661-xxxx.

Résumé

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly transformed workplace practices worldwide, compelling organizations to adopt remote work arrangements to ensure business continuity during lockdowns and social distancing measures. Although remote work existed before the pandemic, its adoption increased substantially and has remained a prominent feature of the post-COVID-19 business environment. This study examined the relationship between remote work practices and employee productivity in the post-pandemic era. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, utilizing documentary sources such as academic journals, textbooks, government reports, policy documents, organizational publications, and reports from international institutions. Data collected were analyzed using content analysis. The study is anchored on the Self-Determination Theory, which emphasized autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of employee motivation and productivity. Findings reveal that remote work has both positive and negative effects on employee productivity. On the positive side, remote work promotes flexibility, employee autonomy, improved work-life balance, reduced commuting time, and lower operational costs for organizations. However, challenges such as communication difficulties, technological limitations, social isolation, cybersecurity risks, and performance monitoring concerns may hinder employee effectiveness and organizational performance. The study concluded that organizations that effectively integrate digital technologies, performance-based management systems, employee support mechanisms, and efficient communication strategies are more likely to achieve higher productivity in remote work settings. It recommended the adoption of hybrid work models, continuous employee training, investment in digital infrastructure, strengthened cybersecurity measures, and the development of comprehensive remote work policies to maximize productivity and organizational sustainability in the evolving business environment.

Mots-clés : Remote Work, Employee Productivity, COVID-19, Telecommuting, Business Environment, Organizational Performance

1. Introduction

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 and its rapid spread across the world created unprecedented disruptions in business operations, economic activities, and workplace arrangements. Governments implemented lockdowns, travel restrictions, and social distancing measures to contain the spread of the virus. Consequently, organizations were forced to rethink traditional work structures and adopt alternative methods for maintaining productivity and ensuring business continuity. One of the most significant transformations that emerged during this period was the widespread adoption of remote work practices. Remote work, which involves employees performing their job responsibilities outside the traditional office environment through the use of digital technologies, became a necessity rather than a choice during the pandemic (Deci, 2025). Organizations across various industries rapidly transitioned to virtual work arrangements to sustain operations while protecting the health and safety of employees.

Although remote work had existed before the pandemic, its implementation was often limited to specific industries and job categories. However, the COVID-19 crisis demonstrated that many organizational functions could be performed effectively outside conventional office settings. As a result, remote work has evolved from an emergency response strategy into a long-term component of contemporary business operations.

The post-COVID-19 business environment is characterized by increasing digitalization, flexible work arrangements, technological innovation, and changing employee expectations. Many organizations have adopted hybrid work models that combine remote and office-based work, while others have embraced fully remote operations. This transformation has generated considerable interest among scholars, policymakers, and business leaders regarding the implications of remote work for employee productivity (Yang, 2022). Employee productivity remains a critical determinant of organizational success. Productivity refers to the efficiency with which employees utilize available resources to achieve organizational objectives.

While proponents of remote work argue that it enhances flexibility, autonomy, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, critics contend that it may contribute to communication challenges, employee isolation, reduced collaboration, and difficulties in monitoring performance.

These divergent perspectives highlight the complexity of remote work and underscore the need for a comprehensive examination of its implications in the post-pandemic era.

This study therefore investigates remote work practices and employee productivity in the post-COVID-19 business environment, with particular attention to the opportunities, challenges, and strategies for enhancing organizational performance.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1 Remote Work Practices

Remote work refers to an employment arrangement in which employees perform their assigned duties outside the traditional workplace using information and communication technologies. It encompasses various forms of flexible work arrangements including telecommuting, virtual work, work-from-home arrangements, distributed teams, and hybrid work models. Remote work practices involve the utilization of digital technologies such as email, video conferencing platforms, cloud-based applications, instant messaging systems, and collaborative software to facilitate communication, coordination, and task execution.

Remote work practices have become increasingly important in modern organizations due to technological advancements, globalization, changing workforce expectations, and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 Employee Productivity

Employee productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees perform their assigned responsibilities to achieve organizational goals. It measures the extent to which employees convert inputs such as time, skills, knowledge, and resources into valuable outputs. Productive employees contribute to organizational performance by achieving targets, maintaining quality standards, meeting deadlines, and supporting innovation.

In remote work settings, productivity is often assessed through performance outcomes, task completion rates, quality of work, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

2.3 Post-COVID-19 Business Environment

The post-COVID-19 business environment refers to the economic, social, technological, and organizational

conditions that have emerged following the global pandemic. This environment is characterized by increased digital transformation, remote work adoption, technological innovation, workforce flexibility, and evolving management practices. Organizations operating in the post-pandemic era face new challenges and opportunities related to workforce management, employee well-being, cybersecurity, organizational resilience, and technological adaptation.

3. Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory

This study is anchored on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985). The theory explains human motivation and emphasizes the importance of psychological needs in influencing behavior and performance. According to Self-Determination Theory, individuals possess three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the desire for self-direction and control over one's work activities. Competence involves the need to feel effective and capable in performing tasks. Relatedness concerns the desire to establish meaningful relationships and social connections with others.

The theory is particularly relevant to remote work because remote work arrangements often provide employees with greater autonomy regarding when, where, and how they perform their duties. Increased autonomy can enhance motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity. However, remote work may also affect relatedness by reducing face-to-face interactions and social connections among employees.

The theory suggests that organizations can improve employee productivity in remote work environments by supporting employees' autonomy, providing opportunities for skill development, and fostering social connections through effective communication and collaboration mechanisms.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on documentary sources. Documentary research is appropriate because it allows for the examination of existing literature and evidence relating to remote work practices and employee productivity. Data were collected from documentary sources including scholarly journal

articles, textbooks, organizational reports, government publications, conference proceedings, policy documents, and reports from international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The study employs content analysis as the method of data analysis. Content analysis involves the systematic examination, interpretation, and synthesis of information contained in documentary sources. Through this approach, recurring themes, patterns, and findings relating to remote work and employee productivity were identified and analyzed.

5. Remote Work and Organizational Transformation

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated organizational transformation on a global scale. Businesses that traditionally relied on physical workplaces were compelled to adopt digital technologies and remote work arrangements. This transformation significantly altered managerial practices, communication patterns, employee interactions, and organizational structures. Remote work enabled organizations to maintain operations despite movement restrictions and public health concerns (WHO, 2020).

The successful implementation of remote work demonstrated the potential of digital technologies to support organizational productivity beyond traditional office environments. Consequently, many organizations have retained remote or hybrid work arrangements even after the easing of pandemic-related restrictions. The shift toward remote work has encouraged organizations to prioritize flexibility, innovation, and employee well-being.

6. Benefits of Remote Work for Employee Productivity

One of the most significant advantages of remote work is increased flexibility. Employees can often organize their schedules more effectively and work during periods when they are most productive. This flexibility contributes to higher job satisfaction and improved work performance. Remote work also eliminates commuting time, enabling employees to devote more time and energy to productive activities. Reduced commuting stress contributes to improved physical and mental well-being, which can

positively influence productivity.

Furthermore, remote work promotes greater autonomy. Employees who have control over their work environments and schedules often demonstrate higher levels of motivation and engagement (ILO, 2020). Increased autonomy aligns with the principles of Self-Determination Theory and contributes to enhanced performance outcomes. Organizations also benefit from reduced operational costs associated with office space, utilities, and facility management.

7. Challenges of Remote Work and Employee Productivity

Despite its benefits, remote work presents several challenges that can affect employee productivity. Communication difficulties are among the most commonly reported challenges. Virtual communication may limit spontaneous interactions, reduce opportunities for collaboration, and create misunderstandings among team members. Social isolation is another significant concern. Employees working remotely may experience feelings of loneliness and disconnection from colleagues, which can negatively affect morale, engagement, and productivity (Messenger, 2019).

Technological challenges also influence remote work effectiveness. Poor internet connectivity, inadequate digital infrastructure, software failures, and cybersecurity risks can disrupt workflow and reduce productivity. Additionally, remote work can blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. Some employees experience difficulties managing work-life balance, leading to burnout, stress, and reduced performance.

8. Technology and Remote Work Effectiveness

Technology serves as the foundation of successful remote work practices. Digital tools enable communication, collaboration, project management, and information sharing across geographically dispersed teams. Video conferencing platforms facilitate virtual meetings and team interactions (OECD, 2021). Cloud computing systems enable employees to access organizational resources from any location. Collaborative software supports teamwork and project coordination. Organizations that invest in reliable digital infrastructure and employee training are better positioned to maximize

the productivity benefits of remote work.

9. Leadership and Performance Management in Remote Work Settings

Leadership plays a critical role in determining the success of remote work arrangements. Effective leaders establish clear expectations, provide regular feedback, support employee well-being, and foster trust within virtual teams. Traditional supervisory approaches based on physical presence are often ineffective in remote work environments (Prasad, 2020). Consequently, organizations increasingly rely on performance-based management systems that emphasize outcomes rather than attendance.

Trust-based leadership, transparent communication, and employee empowerment contribute significantly to productivity in remote work settings.

10. Employee Well-Being and Productivity

Employee well-being is closely linked to productivity in remote work environments. Organizations that prioritize mental health, work-life balance, and employee support are more likely to achieve positive performance outcomes. Well-being initiatives may include flexible scheduling, counseling services, wellness programs, virtual social activities, and workload management strategies. Such initiatives help reduce stress, improve engagement, and enhance overall productivity (Savic, 2020).

11. Hybrid Work Models in the Post-COVID-19 Era

Many organizations have adopted hybrid work models that combine remote and office-based work (Toscano, 2020). Hybrid arrangements seek to balance the flexibility of remote work with the collaborative benefits of physical workplaces. Hybrid models enable employees to maintain autonomy while preserving opportunities for teamwork, innovation, and social interaction. As a result, many scholars and practitioners view hybrid work as the future of work in the post-pandemic business environment.

12. Conclusion

Remote work practices have become a defining feature of the post-COVID-19 business environment. The widespread adoption of remote work has transformed

organizational operations and challenged traditional assumptions about workplace productivity. Evidence suggests that remote work can enhance employee productivity through increased flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance. However, challenges such as communication barriers, social isolation, technological limitations, and performance management difficulties remain significant concerns. Organizations that effectively address these challenges through technological investment, supportive leadership, employee development, and flexible work policies are better positioned to achieve sustainable productivity gains. The future of work will likely be characterized by hybrid models that combine the strengths of remote and traditional workplace arrangements.

13. Recommendations

- Organizations should develop comprehensive remote work policies and guidelines.
 - Employers should invest in reliable digital infrastructure and cybersecurity systems.
 - Continuous training should be provided to improve employees' digital competencies.
 - Organizations should adopt performance-based management systems that focus on outcomes rather than physical presence.
 - Employee well-being programs should be strengthened to address mental health and work-life balance concerns.
 - Effective communication channels should be established to enhance collaboration and team cohesion.
 - Organizations should encourage virtual and physical social interactions to reduce employee isolation.
 - Hybrid work models should be adopted where feasible to balance flexibility and collaboration.
 - Managers should receive training on remote leadership and virtual team management.
 - Organizations should regularly evaluate remote work practices and make necessary adjustments to improve productivity.
-

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Donnelly, R., & Johns, J. (2021). Recontextualising remote working and its HRM in the digital economy. *Irish Journal of Management*, 40(2), 1–13.

International Labour Organization. (2020). *An employers' guide on working from home in response to the outbreak of COVID-19*. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.

Messenger, J. C. (2019). *Telework in the 21st century: An evolutionary perspective*. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *The future of teleworking*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

Prasad, K. D. V., Vaidya, R. W., & Mangipudi, M. R. (2020). Effect of occupational stress and remote working on psychological well-being of employees. *International Journal of Management*, 11(5), 234–245.

Savi, D. (2020). COVID-19 and work from home: Digital transformation of the workforce. *Grey Journal*, 16(2), 101–104.

Toscano, F., & Zappalà, S. (2020). Social isolation and stress as predictors of productivity during remote work. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 9804–9817.

World Health Organization. (2020). *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Situation report*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.

Yang, L., Holtz, D., Jaffe, S., Suri, S., Sinha, S., Weston, J., ... Teevan, J. (2022). The effects of remote work on collaboration among information workers. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(1), 43–54.