



Adoption of Remote Work in the Nigerian Public Sector: Challenges and Opportunities in Delta State

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the adoption of remote work in Nigerian public agencies, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of implementing telework in a sector traditionally dominated by office-based practices. It shows how remote work can be leveraged to enhance productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational flexibility. **Methodology:** A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured interviews with human resource managers, policymakers, and employees from selected public agencies. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, perceptions, and organizational experiences related to remote work adoption. **Results and Findings:** The findings indicate that remote work offers important benefits, including increased flexibility, improved work-life balance, and potential cost savings. However, adoption is limited by key challenges, including inadequate ICT infrastructure, the absence of formal remote work policies, and low digital literacy among employees. Organizational culture and supervisory practices also significantly influence employees' readiness and ability to engage in teleworking. **Originality:** The study contributes to the limited empirical literature on remote work in Nigeria's public sector by highlighting context-specific institutional and cultural factors. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that effective remote work policies, supported by technological investment and capacity-building initiatives, are essential for successful telework integration in the Nigerian public sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Remote work has become a defining element of the contemporary workplace, accelerated dramatically by the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled by advances in digital communication

technologies. Globally, organisations across sectors have increasingly embraced flexible work arrangements as tools for enhancing productivity, employee well-being, and organisational resilience (Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024; Okolie & Egbon, 2023; Jamunarani & Syed, 2025). In developed economies, public agencies in countries such as Canada and the United States have adopted formal telework policies that support operational continuity and workforce flexibility. However, in many developing contexts, including Nigeria, remote work remains a relatively new practice, facing persistent structural and cultural barriers (Okolie & Egbon, 2023).

In Nigeria's public sector, work practices have historically emphasized physical presence, bureaucratic processes, and hierarchical supervision. Such office-centric norms often hinder the adoption of teleworking arrangements, even in situations where remote work could improve efficiency or accommodate employee needs. Although some studies have examined remote work in broader sectors of Nigerian employment, including its impact on workers, employers, and industrial relations (Okolie & Iwighren, 2023), empirical research focused specifically on public agencies is limited. For example, Olaniyi's (2022) study on teleworking in Nigerian public sector teams provided evidence of a relationship between remote work and team performance, yet highlighted the absence of formal policy frameworks and ICT infrastructure necessary to sustain teleworking practices. These insights underscore the emerging relevance of remote work in Nigeria while simultaneously pointing to significant challenges in institutional preparedness and organisational culture.

The particular complexities of remote work adoption in Nigeria stem from interlinked infrastructural, technological, and cultural factors. Unstable power supply and limited broadband connectivity remain pervasive constraints, affecting employees' ability to perform effectively outside traditional work premises (Okolie & Iwighren, 2023). Moreover, organisational resistance and managerial scepticism towards remote work are reinforced by enduring beliefs that productivity is tied to physical presence, a mindset that is deeply ingrained in many Nigerian public institutions. These contextual realities differentiate the Nigerian public sector from more digitally mature environments, suggesting that remote work adoption there is not merely a technical adjustment but a fundamental shift in human resource management practice (Okolie & Egbon, 2023).

Despite the growing discourse on remote work in Nigeria, the literature reveals a notable gap: there is insufficient empirical evidence examining how remote work is being adopted, experienced, and institutionalised within Nigerian public agencies. Existing studies either focus on the private sector or provide broad analyses of remote work impacts without in-depth exploration of public sector dynamics. This gap is significant because public agencies play a central role in governance, service delivery, and national development. Without targeted research, policymakers lack robust evidence to develop remote work policies that are responsive to the unique challenges of the Nigerian public context. Given this gap, this study investigates the challenges and opportunities associated with remote work adoption in Nigerian public agencies, with particular attention to organisational readiness, ICT infrastructure, managerial attitudes, and employee experiences. In line with the focus of the study, the following research questions are proposed:

- i. What constraints do Nigerian public agencies encounter in the adoption of remote working arrangements?
- ii. What opportunities does remote working offer for enhancing productivity, organisational flexibility, and employee well-being within Nigerian public agencies?
- iii. How does the level of organisational readiness affect the adoption and effectiveness of remote working in Nigerian public agencies?
- iv. To what extent do the availability and quality of ICT infrastructure influence the adoption of remote working in the Nigerian public sector?
- v. How do managerial attitudes and supervisory practices influence the implementation of remote working within public agencies?

The study provides evidence-based insights that can inform public sector HRM policy reform, support effective telework implementation, and contribute to broader discussions on workforce transformation in developing economies.

Conceptual Framework

Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015) describe remote work, or telework, as the performance of job tasks outside the conventional office setting, typically relying on digital technologies to sustain communication, collaboration, and productivity. Similarly, Nakrošienė, Bučiūnienė, and Goštautaitė (2019) define remote work as a flexible work arrangement in which employees carry out their duties from locations other than the central workplace, with the support of information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure efficiency and task completion. Gajendran and Harrison (2007) emphasise that remote work enables employees to operate from non-traditional work sites, providing greater autonomy over the timing and location of work while maintaining connections and coordination with the organisation. Collectively, these definitions highlight that remote work combines flexibility, technological reliance, and continued organisational integration, allowing employees to perform their roles effectively outside the traditional office environment.

Remote work adoption is conceptualised as the extent to which teleworking is implemented, including employee participation levels, managerial support, and the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of remote work arrangements in achieving organisational goals. It captures both the structural adoption (formal policies, ICT systems) and behavioural adoption (employee engagement, managerial compliance, and work output).

The adoption of remote work is influenced by a dynamic interplay of institutional, organisational, and technological factors, which collectively shape how telework practices are implemented and sustained in the public sector (Scott, 2014; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). It recognises that the public sector context is highly regulated, norm-driven, and guided by deeply embedded cultural beliefs, making the adoption of remote work more complex than in private sector settings.

By situating remote work adoption as the central focus, the successful implementation depends not only on the availability of technological tools but also on organisational readiness, managerial attitudes, employee skills, and compliance with institutional norms and regulations. This comprehensive approach allows for an integrated analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with teleworking in Nigerian public agencies.

Challenges of Remote Work Adoption

Infrastructural Constraints

One of the most significant challenges facing remote work adoption in the Nigerian public sector is inadequate infrastructure. Reliable electricity supply and stable internet connectivity remain inconsistent across many parts of the country. Most government offices and civil servants depend on unstable power sources and costly internet subscriptions, which limit effective remote engagement. These infrastructural deficits make sustained teleworking difficult, particularly for ministries and agencies operating outside major urban centres (Adeleke & Aminu, 2022; World Bank, 2021).

Rigid Administrative Culture and Resistance to Change

The Nigerian public sector is traditionally structured around physical presence, bureaucratic hierarchy, and direct supervision. This administrative culture promotes the belief that productivity is best achieved through face-to-face monitoring rather than outcome-based performance.

Consequently, many senior officials view remote work with skepticism, perceiving it as a threat to discipline and accountability (Oluwatobi & Ogunrinola, 2023). Such resistance significantly slows institutional acceptance of flexible work arrangements.

Weak Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

Another challenge is the absence of a comprehensive national framework regulating remote work in the public service. Existing civil service rules and labour regulations were developed for conventional office-based work and offer limited guidance on teleworking, digital supervision, performance evaluation, and employee rights. This policy gap results in inconsistent implementation across government agencies and creates uncertainty for both managers and employees (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020).

Digital Skills Deficit

Effective remote work depends heavily on digital competence. However, many public sector employees lack adequate training in information and communication technologies (ICT), virtual collaboration tools, and cybersecurity practices. This skills gap reduces productivity, increases errors, and reinforces managerial doubts about the feasibility of remote work in public administration (Ayo, Oni, & Adebisi, 2021).

Data Security and Confidentiality Risks

Remote work increases exposure to cybersecurity risks, especially when sensitive government information is accessed outside secured office networks. Many public institutions lack robust data protection systems, secure virtual private networks, and cybersecurity awareness programmes. These vulnerabilities raise legitimate concerns about confidentiality, data breaches, and compliance with Nigeria's data protection regulations (National Information Technology Development Agency [NITDA], 2020).

Opportunities of Remote Work Adoption

Improved Work-Life Balance and Employee Well-Being

Remote work offers public servants greater flexibility in managing their professional and personal responsibilities. Reduced commuting time, particularly in congested cities such as Lagos and Abuja, can lower stress levels and enhance overall well-being. Improved work-life balance has been linked to higher job satisfaction and increased motivation among employees (Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2015).

Enhanced Productivity and Efficiency

When supported by appropriate technology and clear performance metrics, remote work can improve efficiency in public service delivery. Employees are often able to concentrate better outside traditional office environments, while digital workflows reduce paperwork and administrative delays. Studies suggest that teleworking can enhance task completion and responsiveness in public organizations when properly managed (ILO, 2020).

Cost Reduction for Government and Employees

Remote work presents an opportunity for cost savings in the public sector. Government agencies can reduce expenditure on office space, utilities, and transportation allowances, while employees save on commuting and daily work-related expenses. In a context of fiscal constraints, these savings are particularly significant for Nigeria’s public administration (World Bank, 2021).

Expanded Talent Pool and Regional Inclusion

Adopting remote work allows the Nigerian public sector to draw from a wider talent pool across the country. Skilled professionals living outside administrative capitals can contribute effectively without relocating. This supports regional inclusion, reduces urban migration pressures, and promotes more equitable public sector employment opportunities (Adeleke & Aminu, 2022).

Acceleration of Digital Transformation

Remote work can act as a catalyst for broader digital transformation in government. Increased reliance on digital platforms encourages the adoption of e-government systems, electronic record-keeping, and online service delivery. Over time, this transformation can enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in public administration (NITDA, 2020).

Institutional Resilience and Continuity

Remote work strengthens institutional resilience by enabling continuity of government operations during crises such as pandemics, security disruptions, or natural disasters. Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that teleworking can help maintain essential public services when physical offices are inaccessible (ILO, 2020).

Figure 1. Remote Work Adoption In Nigeria Public Sector



Source: Author’s Construction, 2025

Thus, the adoption of remote work in the Nigerian public sector presents a complex mix of challenges and opportunities. While infrastructural deficits, rigid administrative cultures, policy gaps, skills shortages, and cybersecurity concerns constrain effective implementation, remote work also offers significant benefits in terms of efficiency, employee well-being, cost savings, digital transformation, and institutional resilience. Addressing these challenges through targeted investments, policy reform, capacity building, and cultural change is essential for Nigeria to fully harness the potential of remote work in public administration.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Institutional Theory, which offers a robust analytical lens for examining the adoption of remote work within the Nigerian public sector, with specific reference to Delta State. Institutional Theory posits that organisational structures and practices are not shaped solely by considerations of efficiency or performance, but are largely influenced by the wider institutional environment in which organisations operate. This environment consists of formal rules, social norms, and shared cultural beliefs that prescribe acceptable and legitimate forms of organisational behaviour (Scott, 2014; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As a result, organisations often adopt or resist innovations such as remote work in response to institutional pressures rather than purely rational or economic calculations.

In the context of this study, the adoption of remote work in Nigerian public agencies can be explained through three interrelated institutional mechanisms: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pressures. Regulative pressures arise from formal laws, policies, civil service regulations, and accountability frameworks that govern public sector operations. In Nigeria, the limited presence of explicit national or subnational teleworking policies, coupled with rigid civil service rules, may restrict the formalisation and institutionalisation of remote work arrangements (Scott, 2014). Normative pressures emanate from professional standards, managerial expectations, and established organisational norms that define appropriate work practices. Within the Nigerian public sector, long-standing norms that prioritise physical presence, hierarchical supervision, and time-based performance assessment can undermine the acceptance of remote work, even where technological resources are available (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Cultural-cognitive pressures reflect deeply embedded beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions about work, productivity, discipline, and control. Such beliefs may foster scepticism towards remote work, with managers and employees perceiving it as incompatible with accountability and effective service delivery (Scott, 2014).

By applying Institutional Theory, this study highlights how entrenched rules, norms, and shared beliefs shape organisational readiness, managerial attitudes, ICT deployment, and employee experiences. The theory, therefore, provides a comprehensive basis for understanding both the constraints and enabling conditions influencing remote work adoption in the Nigerian public sector.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the adoption of remote work in public sector organisations in Delta State, Nigeria. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions, experiences, and contextual factors influencing remote work adoption. The quantitative approach was incorporated to measure patterns, prevalence, and trends using numerical data, expressed as percentages, to complement the qualitative insights.

Population and Sampling

The study focused on selected public sector organisations in Delta State, including

government ministries, agencies, and parastatals that had implemented or experimented with flexible work arrangements. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants with relevant knowledge and experience in human resource management, policy formulation, or direct engagement in remote work practices. The sample included HR managers, policymakers, and employees, ensuring multiple perspectives were captured. In total, 215 participants were interviewed for the qualitative component. Participants varied in demographic characteristics, including gender, age (ranging from 28 to 60 years), professional role, and years of experience in the public sector, ensuring a representative sample of stakeholders involved in remote work adoption.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit rich, detailed accounts of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding remote work. Interviews lasted approximately 40–60 minutes each and were conducted face-to-face or via digital platforms, depending on participant availability and organisational protocols. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved, with no new themes emerging after the 2nd interview, ensuring sufficient depth and coverage. Structured questionnaires were also administered to collect quantitative data, allowing key trends and responses summarised.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring patterns, perceptions, and organisational experiences related to remote work adoption. Themes were developed iteratively, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors influencing implementation. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics, with results presented as frequencies and percentages to indicate the proportion of participants reporting specific experiences, attitudes, or challenges.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure credibility, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review transcripts and confirm the accuracy of their responses. Dependability was enhanced through detailed documentation of data collection procedures and triangulation of data sources, comparing interview data with questionnaire findings to verify consistency. Confirmability was ensured by maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions and thematic development. These strategies collectively strengthened the trustworthiness of the study findings, ensuring they accurately reflect participants' experiences and the organisational context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study on the adoption of remote work in Delta State public sector organisations. The discussion focuses on two broad areas: the challenges constraining the adoption of remote work and the opportunities and benefits perceived by employees.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Participants by Demographics

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	120	55.8%
	Female	95	44.2%
Age (years)	28–35	50	23.3%
	36–45	90	41.9%
	46–55	60	27.9%
	56–60	15	7.0%
Marital Status	Single	70	32.6%
	Married	130	60.5%
	Divorced/Widowed	15	7.0%
Educational Qualification	Secondary School	20	9.3%
	Diploma/NCE	50	23.3%
	Bachelor’s Degree	110	51.2%
	Postgraduate Degree	35	16.3%
Total Participants	—	215	100%

Source: Author’s Computation, 2025

Table 1. presents the demographic distribution of the 215 participants provides insights into the composition of the sample in terms of gender, age, marital status, and educational qualification:

Gender: The sample consisted of slightly more males (120 participants, 55.8%) than females (95 participants, 44.2%), indicating a modest gender imbalance typical of public sector workforces in Delta State.

Age: Participants were predominantly in the 36–45 years age group (90 participants, 41.9%), followed by those aged 46–55 years (60 participants, 27.9%) and 28–35 years (50 participants, 23.3%). The smallest group was 56–60 years (15 participants, 7.0%). This distribution shows that the majority of participants are in the mid-career stage, likely with significant work experience relevant to remote work practices.

Marital Status: Most participants were married (130 participants, 60.5%), while 70 participants (32.6%) were single, and 15 participants (7.0%) were divorced or widowed. This suggests that a majority of participants may have family responsibilities that could influence their perspectives on flexible work arrangements such as remote work.

Educational Qualification: Over half of the participants held a bachelor’s degree (110 participants, 51.2%), followed by diploma/NCE holders (50 participants, 23.3%), postgraduate degree holders (35 participants, 16.3%), and secondary school graduates (20 participants, 9.3%). This indicates a highly educated workforce, which may positively influence the capacity to adopt and adapt to remote work technologies.

Overall, the table shows that the study sample is predominantly mid-aged, married, male, and highly educated, characteristics that are relevant for understanding employee experiences, organisational readiness, and adoption of remote work in Delta State public agencies.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Employee Experiences, Organisational Readiness, and Remote Work Adoption

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Employee Experiences	Very Positive	40	18.6%
	Positive	95	44.2%
	Neutral	50	23.3%
	Negative	20	9.3%
	Very Negative	10	4.7%
Organisational Readiness	Very High	30	14.0%
	High	80	37.2%
	Moderate	70	32.6%
	Low	25	11.6%
	Very Low	10	4.7%
Adoption of Remote Work	Fully Adopted	20	9.3%
	Partially Adopted	95	44.2%
	Minimal Adoption	70	32.6%
	Not Adopted	30	14.0%

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of participants' responses regarding employee experiences, organisational readiness, and the adoption of remote work in Delta State public agencies.

Employee Experiences: The majority of participants reported positive experiences with remote work, with 95 participants (44.2%) indicating positive experiences and 40 participants (18.6%) indicating very positive experiences. About 50 participants (23.3%) were neutral, while a smaller proportion reported negative experiences (20 participants, 9.3%) or very negative experiences (10 participants, 4.7%). This suggests that overall, employees in Delta State public agencies generally view remote work favourably, although some challenges and dissatisfaction remain.

Organisational Readiness: Regarding the capacity of organisations to support remote work, 80 participants (37.2%) rated readiness as high, and 30 participants (14.0%) rated it very high. A substantial portion (70 participants, 32.6%) rated readiness as moderate, while 25 participants (11.6%) and 10 participants (4.7%) rated it as low or very low, respectively. These results indicate that while several public agencies have structures, policies, and ICT systems that support telework, organisational readiness is uneven, with some institutions still underprepared to implement remote work effectively.

Adoption of Remote Work: Only a small proportion of participants indicated that remote work is fully adopted in their organisations (20 participants, 9.3%), while 95 participants (44.2%) reported partial adoption. A notable number (70 participants, 32.6%) reported minimal adoption, and 30 participants (14.0%) indicated that remote work has not been adopted at all. This suggests that while remote work has begun to gain traction in some public agencies, full-scale implementation is limited, reflecting ongoing challenges related to policy, technology, and organisational culture.

Overall Interpretation: The data reveal a pattern where employee experiences are generally positive, but adoption is still partial and organisational readiness varies. This highlights the

opportunities for expanding remote work in Delta State public agencies, while also pointing to the challenges of uneven infrastructure, managerial support, and institutional policies that need to be addressed for full adoption and effectiveness.

Table 3: Employee-Perceived Challenges of Remote Work in Delta State Public Sector

Challenge Area	Statistical Evidence	Interpretation / Link to Interview Themes
Unstable electricity supply	≈ 78% of public employees report frequent power interruptions while working from home	Supports participants' claims that unreliable electricity disrupts work schedules, virtual meetings, and productivity
Poor or unreliable internet connectivity	≈ 72% report unstable or slow internet connections	Reinforces interview evidence that weak connectivity discourages sustained remote work adoption
High personal cost of remote work (data, power, personal expenses devices)	≈ 65% report increased personal expenses	Explains employee frustration and management's reluctance to institutionalise remote work
Lack of employer-provided digital tools	≈ 60% report not being provided laptops, support, or remote access systems	Aligns with concerns about limited organisational investment in remote work infrastructure
Difficulty monitoring performance/accountability concerns	≈ 58% of employees acknowledge performance tracking systems	Reflects managerial resistance and weak preference for physical supervision
Absence of a clear remote work policy	≈ 62% report unclear or inconsistent guidelines	Supports findings that remote work is treated as ad-hoc or emergency-based
Communication gaps and delayed feedback	≈ 55% experience delays in communication supervisors	Explains reduced coordination and weakened teamwork under remote arrangements
Work-home boundary blurring	≈ 47% report difficulty separating work from personal life	Highlights the psychosocial challenges associated with home-based work

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

The data in Table 3 indicate that while employees in the Delta State public sector recognise the benefits of remote work, significant structural and organisational barriers remain. The most critical challenges, electricity instability (78%) and poor internet connectivity (72%), confirm interview narratives that infrastructural weaknesses undermine remote productivity. Additionally, the absence of clear policies (62%) and lack of employer-provided digital tools (60%) explain why remote work has not been institutionalised and remains inconsistent across ministries and agencies.

Concerns around performance monitoring (58%) and communication delays (55%) further reinforce managerial skepticism identified during interviews, while the blurring of work-home boundaries (47%) suggests that remote work, if poorly structured, can create new forms of stress rather than relief.

Overall, the table empirically supports the conclusion that employee resistance is not the primary barrier; rather, systemic infrastructural, policy, and managerial shortcomings constrain effective remote work adoption in the Delta State public sector.

Table 4: Employee-Perceived Opportunities of Remote Work in Delta State Public Sector

Opportunity Area	Statistical Evidence	Link to Interview Themes
Workers preferring remote or flexible work	84%	Supports claims of improved work-life balance
Reduction in commuting stress (urban workers)	≈70% report improved well-being	Explains employee enthusiasm for flexibility
Employees reporting improved morale under hybrid work	≈63%	Supports HR managers' views on retention potential
Growth in remote job roles (Nigeria)	From ~5% to ~17%	Indicates expanding opportunity if supported

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

Table 4 highlights the positive perceptions and potential benefits of remote work as expressed by employees in the Delta State public sector, and it provides quantitative support for themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews.

First, the finding that 84% of workers prefer remote or flexible work arrangements strongly reinforces interview participants' claims that remote work enhances work-life balance. This high level of preference suggests that public sector employees in Delta State are not only receptive to remote work but actively desire it, particularly as a means of balancing professional responsibilities with family and personal obligations. The statistic indicates that resistance to remote work is less pronounced among employees than among management.

Second, approximately 70% of urban workers reporting reduced commuting stress and improved well-being explains the strong enthusiasm for flexibility noted during interviews. In Delta State's urban centres, such as Asaba and Warri, long commuting times, traffic congestion, and transportation costs are common challenges. Remote work, therefore, represents a practical solution that directly improves employees' daily experiences and overall well-being, making it an attractive alternative to full-time office attendance.

Third, the result showing that about 63% of employees report improved morale under hybrid work arrangements supports the views of HR managers who acknowledged the retention and motivation benefits of flexible work models. Improved morale is a critical organisational outcome, as it is closely linked to productivity, commitment, and reduced turnover. This finding suggests that, if properly institutionalised, remote or hybrid work could serve as a strategic human resource tool in the Delta State public service.

Finally, the growth in remote job roles in Nigeria from approximately 5% to 17% provides important contextual evidence that remote work opportunities are expanding nationally. Although this figure is not Delta State-specific, it indicates a broader labour market shift toward remote and flexible work. This trend underscores the potential for Delta State public sector organisations to align with national and global employment patterns, provided that infrastructural, policy, and managerial barriers are addressed.

Overall, Table 4 demonstrates that while remote work adoption in the Delta State public sector remains limited in practice, employee attitudes are largely positive, and the perceived benefits, improved work-life balance, reduced commuting stress, higher morale, and emerging labour market opportunities, create a strong case for more structured and sustainable remote work policies.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews reveal that the adoption of remote work in public sector organisations in Delta State remains limited and uneven. While some agencies experimented with teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, most participants reported that remote work has not been fully institutionalised. Instead, it is often treated as a temporary or emergency arrangement rather than a permanent work option.

One major theme that emerged is inadequate technological and infrastructural support. Participants consistently highlighted unstable electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, and limited access to digital tools as key barriers to effective remote work. Many employees noted that these challenges reduced productivity and discouraged management from sustaining teleworking arrangements.

Another dominant theme is organisational culture and managerial resistance. Several HR managers and policymakers expressed concerns about monitoring performance and maintaining accountability in a remote work environment. This reflects a strong preference for physical supervision and traditional office-based control mechanisms. Employees also reported that the absence of clear remote work policies created uncertainty and inconsistency in implementation across agencies.

Despite these challenges, participants identified notable opportunities associated with remote work adoption. Employees emphasized improved work-life balance, reduced commuting stress, and greater flexibility as significant benefits. Some HR managers acknowledged that remote work could enhance employee morale and retention if properly supported.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that employees in Delta State public sector organisations generally perceive remote work positively. Many participants expressed favourable experiences with teleworking, highlighting improvements in work-life balance, flexibility, and overall job satisfaction. These perceptions align with previous research suggesting that remote work can enhance employee well-being and engagement when effectively supported (Okolie & Iwighren, 2023; Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024). Positive experiences among staff suggest a strong willingness to participate in teleworking, provided that organisational support structures are in place.

Despite these encouraging perceptions, organisational readiness for remote work remains uneven across public agencies. While some organisations have developed appropriate structures, policies, and technological systems to support teleworking, others demonstrate limited preparedness. This inconsistency reflects broader challenges in the Nigerian public sector, where institutional rigidity, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and entrenched office-centric norms constrain the effective adoption of flexible work arrangements (Bentley & Teo, 2023; Zhang & Bhaumik, 2024; Scott, 2014). Organisational readiness is therefore a critical determinant of whether remote work can move from a temporary or emergency arrangement to a sustainable and institutionalised practice.

Adoption of remote work in Delta State is similarly partial and inconsistent. While some organisations have begun to implement telework practices, full-scale adoption remains limited. This reflects systemic barriers such as managerial scepticism, lack of formal policies, and inadequate digital skills among employees (Owolabi & Akinola, 2023; Lu & Zhuang, 2023). Nonetheless, the presence of partially adopted arrangements suggests that public agencies recognise the potential benefits of remote work, including operational efficiency, reduced commuting stress, and enhanced organisational resilience. The findings underscore the need for a comprehensive approach that combines infrastructural investment, policy development, and cultural transformation to maximise the effectiveness and sustainability of remote work in Nigeria's public sector.

Thus of this study indicate that the adoption of remote work in Delta State public sector organisations remains limited and uneven. While some agencies experimented with teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, these arrangements were largely temporary and emergency-driven rather than fully institutionalised. These results align with prior studies in Nigeria, which highlight that remote work adoption in public organisations is constrained by infrastructural, policy, and managerial factors (ILO, 2020; NBS, 2023).

A major challenge identified is inadequate technological and infrastructural support. Employees reported that unreliable electricity and poor internet connectivity hindered productivity, disrupted virtual meetings, and discouraged sustained teleworking. The absence of employer-provided digital tools, coupled with personal costs for data and devices, further limits adoption, reflecting broader infrastructural deficits in Nigeria.

Organisational culture and managerial resistance also impede adoption. HR managers and policymakers expressed concerns about monitoring performance and maintaining accountability remotely, reflecting a preference for traditional office-based supervision. Employees noted unclear policies and inconsistent guidelines, resulting in uneven implementation across agencies. Communication gaps and delayed feedback further weaken coordination, while blurred work-home boundaries illustrate psychosocial strains from poorly structured remote work. These findings corroborate previous research showing that the lack of formal frameworks and managerial buy-in impedes telework institutionalisation in developing countries (Owolabi & Akinola, 2023).

Despite these challenges, the study revealed notable opportunities. Employees reported that remote work improves work-life balance, reduces commuting stress, and provides greater flexibility. HR managers acknowledged its potential to enhance morale and retention when properly implemented. The growing trend of remote roles in Nigeria suggests opportunities that Delta State agencies could leverage, provided infrastructural, policy, and managerial barriers are addressed.

Overall, the findings highlight a complex interplay between opportunities and constraints. While remote work can enhance employee well-being, productivity, and retention, systemic barriers related to infrastructure, organisational policy, and managerial practices continue to restrict effective adoption. These results are consistent with studies showing that in developing countries, infrastructural limitations and institutional rigidity hinder telework, reinforcing reliance on physical presence and hierarchical supervision (Bentley & Teo, 2023; Zhang & Bhaumik, 2024; Jamunarani & Syed, 2025).

The study also confirms that flexible work arrangements have the potential to improve work-life balance and job satisfaction (Okolie & Iwighren, 2023). However, benefits remain largely unrealised in the Nigerian public sector due to the absence of formalised policies, limited digital skills training, and weak performance management systems (Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024; Lu & Zhuang, 2023). Managerial resistance underscores the critical role of leadership attitudes and organisational culture in shaping remote work outcomes. Studies show that without results-oriented management and trust-based supervision, telework initiatives are likely to face sustained opposition (Bentley & Teo, 2023; Lu & Zhuang, 2023).

Thus, these findings highlight the need for a context-specific remote work framework for the Nigerian public sector, one that acknowledges infrastructural realities while progressively transforming managerial mindsets, leadership practices, and HR systems. Such a framework would enable public organisations to harness the benefits of remote work while addressing institutional barriers that currently limit its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the adoption of remote work in the Nigerian public sector, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing teleworking arrangements in a traditionally office-centred environment. Findings indicate that while remote work has the potential to improve organisational flexibility, employee well-being, and operational efficiency, its adoption remains limited due to structural, cultural, and policy-related constraints. These insights highlight the complex interplay of infrastructural, managerial, and organisational factors that shape telework practices in Delta State public agencies.

In conclusion, infrastructural inadequacies, such as unreliable electricity, limited internet connectivity, and insufficient access to digital tools, significantly hinder sustainable remote work

adoption. In addition, entrenched office-centric organisational cultures and managerial scepticism reduce trust in employees and limit the development of flexible performance management systems. The absence of formal policies and clear guidelines further perpetuates inconsistent implementation, reinforcing structural and cultural barriers to teleworking in public sector organisations.

Despite these challenges, remote work presents notable opportunities for enhancing employee motivation, engagement, and work-life balance, as well as reducing operational costs and improving organisational resilience. Successful integration of telework in Nigerian public agencies will therefore require a holistic strategy combining infrastructural investment, capacity building, cultural transformation, and robust policy frameworks. By addressing these barriers and leveraging its potential benefits, remote work can be institutionalised as a strategic tool for modernising public service delivery and strengthening governance effectiveness.

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that while remote work in the Delta State public sector presents significant opportunities for improving work-life balance, employee morale, and flexibility, its adoption is constrained by infrastructural, organisational, and managerial challenges. To address these barriers and fully leverage the benefits of remote work, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. To facilitate sustainable remote work, public sector organisations in Delta State should prioritise investments in reliable electricity, high-speed internet, and digital tools for employees. Providing staff with essential equipment such as laptops, secure remote access systems, and data allowances will reduce barriers to teleworking and improve productivity. Strengthening infrastructure will also enhance employees' confidence in remote work and encourage consistent adoption beyond emergency situations.
- ii. The study highlights the absence of formal policies as a key barrier to institutionalising remote work. Therefore, public sector agencies should formulate clear, comprehensive remote work policies that outline eligibility, performance expectations, communication protocols, and procedures for monitoring productivity. Such policies will create consistency across agencies, reduce managerial uncertainty, and provide employees with a structured framework that supports flexible work arrangements.
- iii. Organisational culture and managerial resistance were identified as significant constraints. Public sector organisations should provide training for managers on supervising remote teams, performance tracking, and digital collaboration. Encouraging a results-oriented culture rather than strict physical supervision will foster trust and accountability, enabling employees to work effectively from home while maintaining organisational standards. Additionally, initiatives to promote awareness of remote work benefits among leaders and staff can enhance acceptance and adoption of flexible work arrangements.

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