



Telecommuting in the covid-19 period in Nigeria: Implications on public service delivery in Ogun State judicial service commission

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the need for telecommuting has enhanced the opportunities available to workers to perform their duties right from different locations outside their offices. Hence, the main objective of this study is to determine the extent to which telecommuting has enhanced public service delivery in Nigeria in the Covid-19 and Post Covid 19 era with specific reference to Judicial Service Commission in Ogun State. The article is anchored on both Technological, Organizational and Environmental (TOE) and Digital Era Governance Theory. The study adopted a descriptive-survey research design. A mixed method approach which comprises both qualitative and quantitative techniques was used. Data were sourced from Ogun State Judicial Service Commission through a structured questionnaire and interview while descriptive statistics such as frequency and tables were used in presenting the data, relevant hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square nonparametric technique of hypothesis testing. Qualitative data were content analysed. Secondary data were sourced from journals, articles, internet materials and among others. The finding of the study reveals that telecommuting enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission since the outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic and in the Post-Covid 19 era. Telecommuting contributed significantly in reducing the spread of Covid-19 virus in the Ogun State public service and the Judicial Service Commission in particular. The study also reveals that telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission. On the basis of the findings of the study, it concludes that telecommuting has been found to be an effective strategy that Government at all levels in Nigeria can employ in public service to prevent a disruption in socio economic activities whenever there is an outbreak of epidemic like Covid 19 pandemic in the country. The study recommends that there should be deliberate policy by the government at all levels to encourage Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to be technological compliant and to promote the use of telecommuting so as to engender efficient public service delivery.

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, there is no doubt that technology is presently promoting significant changes in the way employment and workplace in the public sector are organized, with potentially substantial implications for ICT skill development, labour standards, and workers' welfares (ILO, 2019) ^[41]. It is however, instructive to note that technology has not been able to spread evenly across the globe, with certain regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa has not been significantly affected. Nigeria happen to be one of the countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa that is still struggling with the lack of broadband, effective internet connection and available ICT tools that enable teleworking operates effectively and optimally (Gómez-Jordana Moya, 2020) ^[32].

The concept of telecommuting refers to the process of working from home by using a computer, telephone, email and internet. In the modern time, technology and globalization in particular has made it easier for people to work from any location because the world is now a global village.

Thus, with telephones and computers with in-built cameras and microphones, workflow can be facilitated and it has now become relatively easy to carry out government business with less stress from any location exactly the way it would be in an office setting (Daft, 2010).

In the literature the concept of telecommuting has also been referred to as teleworking or remote working. The conceptual has gained currency most especially following the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in 2019/2020 globally (ILO, 2020) ^[42]. Thus, a teleworker could use teleconferencing to hold meetings, i.e., conferences or discussions where members are in different locations using on-line tools such as Skype, Google Meet, Zoom and other communication means like telephone and video. It is on the basis of this that Daft (2010) opines that telecommuting can be described as the process whereby work is performed from a remote location with the use of computers and other telecommunicating equipment.

In Nigeria, according to Statista (2021) ^[65], there are over 101.72 million internet users, and by the year 2026 the number might have increased to 150 million. It is estimated that the extent of internet penetration Nigerian people was 47.1 per cent in 2018 and by the year 2026, the figure is expected to increase to about 84.5 per cent (Clement, 2019) ^[16]. Freedom House Index (2019) ^[29] has ranked Nigeria as the 47th in Sub-Saharan Africa and the 21st among 65 nations globally in terms of internet freedom. Clement (2019) ^[16] opines that about 50 million people have access to mobile smartphones with internet in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the use of Internet has been beneficial to telecommuting most especially in the provision of public service. Thus, the use of internet, telephones and other social media app such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google class and meet etc. has made remote work less stressful.

Telecommuting in the civil service is a recent idea in Nigeria as it promotes flexible work arrangement in which civil servants perform all or a substantial part of their work physically separated from the location of office, using technological infrastructures for operation and communication (Baruch, 2001: 114). The Ogun State government has embraced telecommuting in driving and achieving public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission. Telecommuting has made Ogun state Judicial Service Commission to develop, enhance and accelerate justice administration likewise dispensation of justice expeditiously based on fairness and equity by deploying Information Communication and Technology (ICT) mode of techniques through technological infrastructural and apps such as Case Management and Scheduling System (The Sun, 2021, Hassan, 2021; Abiodun, 2020) ^[70, 34, 2].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Technology is presently promoting significant changes in the way employment and workplace in the public sector are organized, with potentially substantial implications for ICT skill development, labour standards, and workers' welfares (ILO, 2019) ^[41]. Yet, technology has unable to spread evenly across the globe, with certain regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa which Nigeria is not exempted. Nigeria is still struggling with the lack of broadband, internet connection and available ICT tools that enable teleworking operates effectively and optimally (Gómez-Jordana Moya, 2020) ^[32]. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic disruption that was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have started crippling Nigeria ailing economy as it caused many lockdowns in the activities of

most critical sectors of the economy (Adegbite, 2020) ^[3]. It became apparent and urgent to apply telecommuting practice in the provisions of social services for workers from grade level 14 below all over the country so as to avoid widespread of the disease. In the view of Baba – Ahmed (2020) ^[9], mass teleworking offers many opportunities but carries several risks and challenges as well. Challenges such as; inadequate electric power supply, high cost of airtime, poor network service from network providers may discourage the government workers in embracing telecommuting. These problems have been hampering the efficiency and efficacy of remote work activities and social distancing when it comes to effective service delivery. Scholars such as Baba – Ahmed (2020) ^[9], Adegbite, (2020) ^[3], Clement (2019) ^[16] *et al* in their studies emphasized the importance of technology in the world of work in the pre Covid-19 pandemic yet they failed to look at the level of preparedness from the concerned MDAs likewise the MDAs workforce which are shortfall of the requisite training that will drive the service delivery from home in the period of the pandemic. It is this identified gap in the extant literature that this study intends to fill.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the extent to which telecommuting have enhanced public service delivery in Nigeria with specific reference to Judicial Service Commission.

1. To determine the effect of telecommuting on efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission.
2. To know the implications of technological infrastructures of telecommuting on public service delivery in Ogun State Judicial Service Commission.

1.3 Research Questions

This study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions

1. To what extent can telecommuting enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic?
2. What is the effect of telecommuting system on the efficiency/performance of workers in the Judicial Service Commission?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. Telecommuting does not enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. Telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun state Judicial Service Commission.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Issues

For the purpose of this study, it is appropriate to conceptualize telecommuting, governance and public service delivery.

2.1.1 Telecommuting, Governance and Public Service Delivery

The terms telecommuting was first developed by Jack Nilles in 1973. This terms were used to define the practice of working in a location that is outside of the traditional office space (JALA International, 2007) ^[44]. Since then and as

technology advanced with remarkable speed, telecommuting has become increasingly prevalent in the workplace among workforce in private sector. Meanwhile, this concept become prevalent in public service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Telecommuting is a work arrangement in which otherwise known as telework, remote work, distributed work, virtual work, flexible work, flexplace and distance work that involves the use of telecommunication technology to get work done in any location away from the usual office space (Allen *et al*, 2015) ^[7]. Thus, telecommuting classifications include *home-based telework* where official activities are been carried out at home while *teleworking from remote offices* is refer to the means where official activities are remotely carried out from the main office and *mobile telework* where work is done by people whose work usually involves travel and/or spending time on customers' premises (Daniels, Lamond, & Standen, 2001: 1154; Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Soenanto *et al*, 2016) ^[10].

In the context of governance, public service delivery is the result of the intentions, decision of government and her institutions otherwise known as public policy, likewise the actions and decision undertaken by people employed in government institutions (Rakate, 2006:14). According to Oronsaye (2010:31), service delivery is the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures. It presupposes that the interaction between citizens and government results in value creation. Carlson (2005:41) conceptualised public service delivery as the relationship between policymakers, service providers and teeming citizens. According to them, it encompasses services and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These include social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that promote personal security (justice, police, etc).

At the wake of the pandemic, one of the ways governments sought to curb the spread of the coronavirus was to close down the economy, this meant people had to stay indoors for the period of time. Public sector of the economy had to explore the path of teleworking to continue economic activities so as to keep governance and public service delivery afloat (Ihekweazu, 2020) ^[40]. He stated further that telecommuting has gained a wide acceptance during this pandemic and it could prove to be an economic and more flexible work option, this is because telecommuting has to do with the social network that enhances social interactions such as Skype, Videoconferencing, WhatsApp, Google meet, and among others serve as means of promoting social interaction without necessarily involving physical contact.

Research has reveals that there are public services that can potentially be performed remotely especially when it comes to public sectors such as education, health, likewise granting grants to the citizens using online registration without breaking the protocol of social distancing. The pandemic makes the proliferation of teleworking become one of the most prevalent bases of flexibility in public service and with the expectation that the practice will become even more commonplace in the second wave of the pandemic, thus reduce community transmission of the virus. (Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2014; ILO, 2020, Hatayama *et al.*, 2020; ILO 2020h) ^[42, 43].

Meanwhile, public service delivery has positive relationship with governance. The concept of governance has acquired and enjoyed a leading status by researchers in the usage of

terminologies in the field of public policy and administration and even substituting it for the term 'public administration' or 'government' in many instances (Hwang, 2011:3) ^[39].

Governance as a concept can be considered by some to be synonymous with government, governance is generally understood to be a broader term, directing attention to the distribution of political power both internal and external to the state (Stoker, 1998:192) ^[67]. In the words of Taylor (2002:82) ^[69], whilst governance occurs without government, government cannot happen without governance. We can therefore assert that governance means many different things to many different people.

The World Bank (1989:10) ^[75] defines governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. The term "governance" according to Marsden and Murdoch (1998:1) refers to:

... a transformation in patterns and processes of governing; transformation here means that "governance signifies a change in the meaning (of) government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition from old to new ordered; or the new method by which society is governed"... At root, this shift is considered to be evident in the institutions and institutional relations which now formulate, implement and coordinate public policy.

In the view of Ninalowo (2005:29) ^[53], governance is the totality of the executive, bureaucratic or administrative functions of the state, with a view to fulfilling the terms of social contract or constitutional obligations to the citizenry. Yaqub and Abubakar (2005:31) ^[77] also defined governance as the totality of the process of constituting a government as well as administering a political community. Governance refers broadly to the exercise of power through a country's economic, social, and political institutions in which institutions represent the organizational rules, procedures and routines, formal laws, and informal norms that together shape the incentives of public policy-makers, overseers, and providers of public services (UNDP, 2007:18) ^[72].

Despite the aforesaid contextual definitions, governance has not been clearly defined. From the above, we can conclude that governance is the aggregation of policymaking and processes by which the decisions implemented or executed affects the general affairs of the commonwealth likewise the interest of all is been managed in the society.

2.2 Theoretical Review

To get a better understanding of telecommuting as one of the tools to reduce the spread of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, the study were anchored on Technological, Organisational, Environmental (T.O.E) and Digital Era Governance Theory.

2.2.1 Technological, Organisational, Environmental (T.O.E) Theory of Telecommute

This theory was proposed by DiPietro in 1990 to analyse the adoption of technological innovations on telecommuting in public institutions such as MDA's (Sanchez, 2011). The theory asserts that the ability for State Institution to successfully implement technological innovations is influenced by the technological and environmental context of such country (Sanchez, 2011). TOE framework lies on three pillars i.e. technology, organisation and environment. These pillars influence and show the operational procedures of public institution on how they adopts and accepts new technology in carrying out their mandates especially during

the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2.2 Digital Era Governance Theory of Telecommute

This study also anchored on Digital Era Governance Theory. The idea was adopted in 2005 by Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts to enhance telecommuting in relative to public service delivery. DEG theory focus on the aspect of digitization as it relates with telecommuting and effective public service delivery. Digital technologies significantly impacted positively on socioeconomic realities of the nation during the Covid-19 pandemic, making government institutions to remotely discharging their mandate from home effectively and efficiently (Bastow, 2016) ^[12].

The key features of the Digital Era Governance and its more advanced version – Essentially Digital Governance (EDGE) are reintegration (referring to the architecture of State administration), need-based holism (focusing on citizens' needs) and digitization changes (concerning cultural, social and technological adaptation)

2.3 Empirical Review

There have been some studies on the impact of telecommuting on productivity for specific occupations. Tamunomiebi *et al*, (2018) ^[68], investigated the relationship between telecommuting and organizational performance of mobile telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt Nigeria. They concluded that telecommuting influences the organizational performance of telecommunications companies as it increases profitability, timeliness and efficient service delivery of the company. Ansong and Boateng (2017) ^[8], revealed that adopting telecommuting in the operations of a telecommunication company in Ghana led to increased productivity and increased revenue for the organization. Glenn-Dutcher (2016), studied the productivity of telecommuting among students. Two sets of experiments were carried out, a set was controlled in the laboratory (office) and the other was in the field. They found that, the out of laboratory environment increased productivity while the laboratory environment (office) reduced productivity. Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garces (2020), analysed the implementation of teleworking as a security practice to face the COVID-19 spread. They revealed that many companies in Spain embraced teleworking to ensure their employees safety and provide continuity in economic activity during the outbreak of the pandemic. However, on the effect of teleworking on these firms, Morikawa (2020) ^[52] also affirmed that Japanese firms adopted teleworking during the COVID-19 lockdown, he studied the effect of teleworking on these firms. He revealed that there are limits to productivity when working from home, because for firms some tasks requires working in an office area and having face to face contact with other colleagues. Notwithstanding the foregoing, he concluded that working from home is best for now because of the risk of being infected with covid-19. Hence, expanding teleworking will help to reduce costs to the economy and society.

Although working from home is quite flexible for employees, Singh *et al* (2017) is of the view that it poses both positive and negative issues for employee professionalism. Furthermore, Harbert and Tucker-Tatlow (2013) ^[33], in a survey of literature reported that though telecommuting has its own challenges, many researches has pointed to the positive cost benefit of telecommuting such as, saving cost on maintenance, utility bills, rents and others. Other

quantified benefits to employer included increased productivity, decreased turnover and reduced absenteeism.

2.4 Telecommuting and Ogun State judicial service commission

Covid-19 pandemic have revolutionised public service delivery especially the Ogun State Judicial Service Commission. The lockdown as necessitated the State government to think out of the box through the launching of Case Management and Scheduling System. The platform was put together in conjunction with the US Embassy in Nigeria, with technical support from Olaniwun Ajayi LP. Governor Abiodun described the system as a significant first step towards the automation of judicial processes in the State (The Sun, 2021) ^[70].

Launching the digital platform inside the Ceremonial Court, Judiciary Complex, Abeokuta, the State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, said the system would enhance effectiveness and efficiency of justice administration system with data-driven technology-based initiatives. This innovative platform which is being piloted with six judges of the Ogun State High Court will provide end-to-end digital case management tools to enable electronic management of cases to curb delays in the judicial process and promote convenience for both the judiciary and parties who come before the court (Abiodun, 2021) ^[1].

The Chief Judge of the State stated that the case management and scheduling system would enable judges have access to the details of cases assigned to them at touch of a button from either their laptops or mobile phones. Digitisation will also aid quick dispensation of cases; it makes the job of the judges easier with the ripple effect of attracting investors to the State. She is of the view that once the judiciary is fully digitalised, each judge will have access to his docket on his laptop/mobile phone (Dipeolu, 2021) ^[21].

The Chairman of the Sagamu branch of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), speaking on behalf of members of the bar noted that the platform would give lawyers the hope of a new dawn in Ogun judicial system. He insisted that, full digitisation of the judicial system can only be achieved through financial autonomy for judges which would also guarantee their welfare (Adeniyi, 2021 and Adeniran, 2021) ^[4].

3. Methodology

The philosophical foundation that guide the study is pragmatism paradigm or philosophy. This is because of the mixed method approach that was used. The paper aim to know whether telecommuting have enhanced public service delivery in Nigeria during the period of Covid-19 in Ogun State Judicial Service Commission. Data for the paper were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. The purposive sampling technique was also adopted in selecting participants for the study and primary data was collected through the use of interviews and questionnaires. Fifty questionnaires were administered to the respondents which comprises of thirty-five Staff of the commission, ten lawyers that are working with the commissions and 5 Judges of the commission. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviations were used while the stated hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square non parametric techniques with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Data presentation and analysis

In this section, attempt is made to present and analyse the data collected using the primary instrument of data collection

which is questionnaire. Moreover, all questionnaires filled were adequately retrieved and returned.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percentage %
Sex	Male	19	38%
	Female	31	62%
Age	Below 30 years	15	38%
	31-40 years	25	50%
	41-50years	7	14%
	51 years and above	2	4%
Marital status	Single	13	26%
	Married	33	66%
	Divorced	3	6%
	Widowed	1	2%
Staff Position	Junior Staff	23	46%
	Intermediate	6	12%
	Senior Staff	12	24%
	Management	8	16%
Educational qualification	O'Level	5	10%
	OND/NCE	6	12%
	B.Sc/HND	31	62%
	MSC/PGD/PhD	7	14%
ICT Knowledge	Yes	41	82%
	No	5	10%
Working experience	Below 10 years	31	62%
	10 – 20 years	10	20%
	21 – 30 years	4	8%
	31 years and Above	5	10%

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022

Majority, of the respondents are female (62%) with 80 percent of them up to 40 years old likewise (66%) of them are married. It was discovered that the sample used for the study are ICT compliant as 82 percent have ICT related knowledge.

As for educational qualifications, (31%) have a minimum of HND/BSC degree while (14%) have post graduate qualifications. 62 percent of the respondents have up to 10 years of working experience.

Table 2: Telecommuting and Public Service Delivery in Nigeria in the Covid-19 Era

S/NO	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	S.D
1.	Telecommuting system have enhanced public service in the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid–19 pandemic	22 (44.9%)	21 (42.9%)	2 (4.1%)	3 (6.1%)	1 (2%)	1.78	.941
2.	Telecommuting have helped Judicial Service Commission to reduce awaiting trial in our judicial system	16 (32%)	23 (46%)	6 (12%)	5 (10%)		2.00	.926
3.	Telecommuting have facilitate more case hearing by judge per day during the Covid–19 pandemic	18 (36%)	18 (36%)	5 (10%)	9 (18%)		2.10	1.093
4.	Introduction of telecommuting system by the judicial service commission have help the Correctional Services in the prison decongestion	13 (26%)	25 (50%)	8 (16%)	4 (8%)		2.06	.867
5.	Telecommuting play a pivotal roles in the administration of justice during the Covid–19 pandemic	15 (30.6%)	24 (49%)	6 (12.2%)	4 (8.2%)		1.98	.878
6.	Telecommuting have make effective public service delivery attainable when it comes to administrative activities of Ogun State Judicial Service Commission in the period of Covid-19 pandemic	11 (22.4%)	26 (53.1%)	4 (8.2%)	5 (10.2%)	3 (6.1%)	2.24	1.109
Grand Total							2.03	0.969

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022

Table 2 shows that 87.8 percent of the respondents agreed that telecommuting system contributes positively on public service delivery in Ogun State Judicial Service Commission during the Covid–19 pandemic ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 0.941$); 78 percent agreed that telecommuting have helped Judicial Service Commission to reduce awaiting trial in our judicial system ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.926$); likewise 72 percent agreed that telecommuting have facilitate more case hearing by judge per day during the Covid–19 pandemic ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.093$) while 76 percent agreed that introduction of telecommuting system by the commission helped the

Correctional Services in the prison decongestion during the Covid–19 pandemic ($M = 2.06$, $SD = .867$). Also, 79.6 percent agreed that telecommuting played a pivotal roles in the administration of justice during the Covid–19 pandemic ($M = 1.98$, $SD = .878$) and 75.5 percent agreed that telecommuting have make effective public service delivery attainable when it comes to administrative activities of Ogun State Judicial Service Commission in the period of Covid-19 pandemic ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.109$).

The grand mean of 2.03 shows that on average, the respondents agreed that telecommuting have enhanced public

service delivery in Nigeria during the period of Covid-19. The grand standard deviation of 0.969 which is less than 1.0 signifies that the respondents have similar opinions about

telecommuting and public service delivery during the Covid-19 era since the responses were clustered around the mean.

Table 3: Telecommuting System, MDA's Operational Performance and Public Service Delivery

S/NO		SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	S.D
7.	The adoption of telecommuting system have reduced the spread likewise the fear of contracting Covid-19 virus during the pandemic	17 (37.8%)	21 (46.7%)	1 (2%)	6 (12%)		1.91	.973
8.	Adoption of Telecommuting System in the Covid-19 Era have enhanced MDA's Operational Performance	19 (39.6%)	27 (56.3%)	2 (4.2%)			1.65	.565
9.	The Adoption of Telecommuting System does not jeopardize the operation of other MDA's that collaborate with the Judicial Service Commission	9 (18.8%)	33 (68.8%)	6 (12%)			1.94	.561
10.	MDA's operational performance has been enhanced with the introduction of Telecommuting	18 (38.3%)	25 (53.2%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (2.1%)		1.72	.682
11.	Special multipurpose video Apps have enhanced remote working	21 (44.7%)	19 (40.4%)	3 (6.4%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (2.1%)	1.81	.970
12.	Telecommuting system have enhanced the technological skills and self-development of both Judicial Service Commission and MDA's employees in relations to public service delivery.	17 (36.2%)	22 (46.8%)	2 (4.3%)	5 (10.6%)	1 (2.1%)	1.96	1.021
13.	The Adoption of Telecommuting System should be sustained and encourage in the post Covid-19 pandemic for ultimate public service delivery.	18 (36.7%)	18 (36.7%)	6 (12.2%)	7 (14.3%)		2.04	1.040
14.	Administrative bottlenecks have been greatly reduced by the concerned MDA's since the adoption of telecommuting system by the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 pandemic	18 (36.7%)	18 (36.7%)	5 (10.2%)	7 (14.3%)	1 (2.0%)	2.08	1.115
15.	The absence of technological infrastructures likewise erratic power supply make telecommuting challenging	18 (38.3%)	24 (51.1%)	1 (2.1%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (2.1%)	1.83	.916
16.	Telecommuting system make workflow look like the office conventional system of working	17 (34.7%)	24 (49%)	6 (12.2%)	2 (4.1%)		1.86	.791
17.	The Telecommuting system have created a strong collaboration among MDA's such as Correctional Service, Nigeria Police Force and Judicial Service Commission in relations to effective public service delivery in Ogun State, Nigeria	17 (34.7%)	25 (51%)	3 (6.1%)	4 (8.2%)		1.88	.857
Grand Mean							1.88	0.86

Source: Field Survey Data, 2022

Table 3 shows that 84.5 percent of the respondents agreed that the adoption of telecommuting system have reduced the spread of the virus likewise the fear of contracting Covid-19 virus during the pandemic ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.973$); 95.9 percent agreed that the adoption of telecommuting system in the Covid-19 Era have enhanced MDA's operational performance ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.565$); 87.6 percent agreed that the adoption of telecommuting system does not jeopardize the operation of other MDA's that collaborate with the Judicial Service Commission ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.561$). Also, 91.5 percent agreed that MDA's operational performance has been enhanced with the introduction of telecommuting ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.682$) likewise 83 percent agreed that the telecommuting system have enhanced the technological skills and self-development of both Judicial Service Commission and MDA's employees in relations to public service delivery ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.02$) while 73.4 percent agreed that the adoption of telecommuting system should be sustained and encourage in the post Covid-19 pandemic for ultimate public service delivery ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 1.04$); 73.4 percent agreed that the administrative bottlenecks have been greatly reduced by the concerned MDA's since the adoption of telecommuting system by the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 pandemic ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.115$); 83.7 percent agreed that telecommuting system make workflow look like the office conventional system of working ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.115$); 89.4 percent agreed that the absence of technological infrastructures likewise erratic power supply make telecommuting challenging ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 0.916$);

85.1 percent agreed that the special multipurpose video Apps have enhanced remote working ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 0.970$) while 85.7 percent agreed that the telecommuting system have created a strong collaboration among MDA's such as Correctional Service, Nigeria Police Force and Judicial Service Commission in relations to effective public service delivery in Ogun State, Nigeria ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 0.857$).

The grand mean of 1.88 shows that on average, the respondents agreed that telecommuting system enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun state Judicial Service Commission while the grand standard deviation of 0.86 which is less than 1.0 signifies that shows that the respondents have similar opinions about telecommuting on the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission during the Covid – 19 pandemic since the responses were clustered around the mean.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Telecommuting does not enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 4: Pearson Chi-Square Analysis is used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Having given a careful analysis of the responses obtained from the respondents questionnaire administered, the hypotheses formulated were tested, and in doing so, SPSS was used to perform statistical analysis of various hypotheses

using Chi-square(X^2) and with a value of 0.05 (level of significance) that corresponds to a 95% confidence level. The acceptances of these values are based on the respective values of the asymptotic significance given in the above output table.

Table 4

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.936 ^a	12	.011
Likelihood Ratio	21.955	12	.038
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.907	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	48		

a. 16 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

Interpretation

The Chi-square coefficient computed in Table 4 shows that telecommuting has enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic as the respective asymptotic significance values of the hypothesis formulated are all well below 0.05 which is less than the decision criterion values. This means that all variables related to this hypothesis is well correlated. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypotheses given in the above test statistical table, which gives H_1 : Telecommuting enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic ($X^2=25.936^a$; Df = 12; and Asymptotic sig. = 0.011).

Decision

Null hypothesis is not accepted, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This signifies that telecommuting has enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 5–Hypothesis Two: Telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission.

Table 5

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.339 ^a	9	.706
Likelihood Ratio	7.559	9	.579
Linear-by-Linear Association	.237	1	.626
N of Valid Cases	47		

a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

Interpretation

The Chi-square coefficient computed in Table 5 reveals that telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission as the respective asymptotic significance values of the hypothesis formulated is beyond 0.05 which is above the decision criterion values. This means that all variables related to this hypothesis is not correlated. Therefore, we accept the null hypotheses given in the above test statistical table, which gives H_0 : Telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission ($X^2=6.339^a$; Df = 9; and Asymptotic sig. = 0.706).

Decision

Null hypothesis is accepted, while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This signifies that telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission.

4.1 Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study is based on the hypothesis tested as the first hypothesis reveal that telecommuting has enhanced public service delivery at the Judicial Service Commission during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Telecommuting plays a pivotal role likewise serve as a tool that was used in reducing the spread of Covid-19 virus at the workplace (Judicial Service Commission) as physical contact are avoided likewise social distancing technique was observed. The study observes that the only option left to revive the nation ailing economy at that period and also promotes public service delivery is remote working as the nation cannot afford to lock down its economy as a result of the pandemic. This finding is in line with previous research that has shown by Lister and Harnish, (2011) ^[50] that telework serves as the only alternative for organisations be it public or private in discharging their duties in the period of the pandemic.

Also, the second hypothesis reveals that telecommuting system does not enhance the efficiency and performance of workers in the public service with reference to Ogun State Judicial Service Commission based on lack of continuity of the system. The reason may be as a result of the fear of difficulty in assessing employees' performance, inadequacy of ICT infrastructures and the fear of corporate data theft that are likely to affects both the organisation and workforce in the nearest future serves as the key factors inhibiting the adoption of telecommuting in the Nigeria post Covid-19 era. This finding is in line with previous study that has been carried out by Koleayo *et al.*, (2021) that partial and full reopening of all operational governmental activities may make telecommuting not serves as much relevance compare to when there is total lockdown.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that telecommuting is an effective strategy that the Nigerian Government at various levels can adopt in all facet of the public sector so as to avoid the spread that would disrupt the socioeconomic activities of the nation. The present study also has some important practical implications for public sector organisations. Public organizations have often implemented teleworking initiatives without taking the time to evaluate their programmes. As a result, many telework programmes have not been successful and teleworkers can feel dissatisfied with their introduction. Given the potential downsides highlighted in this study, telework programmes should be carefully designed and implemented, and organizations should take the necessary steps to reduce the potential negative effects. Here, one possibility would be to focus on the role of managers and help them develop the necessary sensitivity to the needs of their subordinates.

The study recommends that there should be deliberate policy by the government at all levels to encourage all MDA's to be technological compliance to enable telecommuting to be active and efficient in promoting public service delivery. This can be done due to the existence of viable telecommuting policy that is central to an effective telecommuting work

culture. Thus, employers should devise or engage the service of expertise to develop telecommuting policies that best suit the work culture of civil service as well as adaptation of internal organisational structure to the workings of telecommuting, so that all the lofty benefits of telecommuting can be creatively harnessed to stimulate appreciable service delivery in the public sector.

Moreover, the MDA's should define a policy that can articulate what specific tasks are expected of their workers and by when the task must be completed. This can be achieved through automated monitoring features that will serve as surveillance on the activities of employees on the organisation database so that there will be effective supervision.

Therefore, government institutions need to weigh the risks against the possibilities before they invest and roll-out a new piece of technology to the workforce as there is an ever-growing number of tools and software available to track and monitor the activity of workers, especially when working from remote locations and away from the traditional workplace context. Tools that can track workflow activities such as are keyboard strokes, mouse movements or the physical location of workers have an intrusive nature.

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