

REMOTE WORKING ARRANGEMENT AND MANAGING EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED CONSULTING FIRMS IN LAGOS. LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

- ▶ *The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of remote working arrangement on the management of employee's performance in two selected consulting Firms in Lagos, SIAO AND KPMG.*
- ▶ *The study employed descriptive research design with survey strategy, and a combination of secondary and primary methods of data collection.*
- ▶ *A random sampling technique was adopted to sample the respondents based on their units and departments in the organisation.*

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF STUDY

- ▶ Over the last couple of years, there have been changes in the systems of work all over the world and this has led to various working arrangements being employed by organisations.
- ▶ Some of these working arrangements include remote work, telework, work-from-home, virtual offices, etc. (Yijing, et,al, 2021).
- ▶ Working from home or remote work actually started at the beginning of year 2000s when technology innovation and advancement started and workers could afford to work from home to avoid physical contact, make the work flexible and have a better work-life balance (Yijing, et,al, 2021)

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF STUDY CONT'D

- ▶ However, before the World Health Organisation (WHO), declared Coronavirus as pandemic, only a small fraction of the workforce of most organisations were allowed to work remotely or from another location outside the office and this was mostly on a part-time or on an occasional basis (Guyot & Sawhill 2020).
- ▶ Many, if not all, organizations have adjusted their working patterns as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID19) outbreak. The adjustments that have been adopted in many organizations are intended to give long-term answers to the unpredictability of the workplace induced by the Coronavirus pandemic and other unforeseen events in the future (Guyot & Sawhill 2020).
- ▶ Remote work is now the norm for many organisations. In fact, today there are few organisations who do not engage in remote work. It is referred to now as the new normal.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF STUDY CONT'D

- ▶ The advent of Covid-19 disrupted the 'world of work'. Organisations were caught unawares and they had to strategize on how to work with minimal physical contact or no contact at all in ensuring work goes on and people are not infected with the virus.
- ▶ Remote work through virtual connection rather than face to face physical interaction became the new way to work even though most organisations had not prepared for this change.
- ▶ the challenges experienced by employees and their supervisors while working from home or in locations outside the office are further exacerbated as most managers, supervisors, workers and even their homes are not equipped to work in this manner (ILO Working Group, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW: CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH REMOTE WORK

- ▶ Effective monitoring and management of employees' performance remotely became a challenge.
- ▶ Ensuring that everyone working remotely maintains maximum performance standards, keeps to their output delivery timelines and maintains good quality of work at all times has proven to be a challenge for managers and team leads, with the sudden shift to remote work arrangements.
- ▶ How do you manage workers who are working remotely? You could do that through various means like ensuring there are deadlines set for tasks, have virtual meetings, telephone calls, provide the conducive environment for remote work such as laptops, telephones etc.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH REMOTE WORK

- ▶ The question that arises from remote working arrangement is whether workers would be able to maintain good performance while working remotely given the challenges with remote work; distractions at home, having to juggle activities at home with office work, lack of physical connection with co-workers, the feeling of isolation, impact on mental health, the need for self-discipline, to mention a few.
- ▶ And most especially whether the managers and supervisors are able to effectively manage the performance of their team members that are engaged in the remote working arrangement so as to ensure that their performance does not decline and they are still able to deliver on their key performance indicators (KPIs).

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH REMOTE WORK

- ▶ Greer and Payne (2014) in their study submitted that lack of face-to-face communication, interdependencies of work within a team, managing and monitoring employees in different locations, issues for non-teleworkers such as perceptions of unfairness, concerns about teleworkers being distracted at home, and a lack of resources, including technological resources, are challenges of remote work arrangement.
- ▶ Gleeson (2020) in his study also identified several challenges for remote managers, including the need to adapt to a lack of face-to-face supervision, address a perceived or actual lack of information about employees' day-to-day work, address challenges such as employee social isolation and distractions at home, and address increasing challenges created by workplace.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOTE WORK

- ▶ Many employees these days enjoy working remotely. Some persons especially the GenZs actually go out in search of remote work.
- ▶ While it is true that most employees enjoy remote work, however, it is important to note that there are added costs to them which the employer does not bear.
- ▶ Employees working remotely require several equipment such as laptops, WIFI, good internet connectivity, and there might be the need to have a workspace where they can work from if the level of concentration is going to be perfect (Lord, 2020).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Herzberg's Hygiene Two-Factor Theory

- ▶ Herzberg defines motivation and hygiene elements as two sets of criteria that influence employees' working attitudes and levels of performance (Robbins, 2009). Motivation factors are intrinsic characteristics that increase job satisfaction, whereas cleanliness elements are external variables that keep employees happy.
- ▶ Herzberg went on to suggest that having a full supply of Hygiene Factors does not ensure job satisfaction, and that in order to boost employee performance or productivity, incentive factors must also be addressed.

Herzberg's Hygiene Two-Factor Theory Cont'd

- ▶ Herzberg's Two Factor Theory would thus assist managers in determining what is important to employees in a position and, as a result, working with them to provide a good balance of working conditions, salary, personal life, working relationships, security, and status that would help to keep team members engaged.
- ▶ The Hygiene Factor, as defined by Herzberg, is pertinent to this study because it plays a significant role in the performance of remote project teams since it is critical that the team lead or manager understands the requirements of the team in order to successfully manage them.

McClelland's Theory of Needs

- ▶ Another well-known needs-based theory of motivation is McClelland's Theory (1987). Achievement, affiliation, and power are the three primary motivational paradigms described by McClelland in this theory.
- ▶ He outlined a motivational model that tries to explain how people's actions in a management setting are influenced by their desire for accomplishment, power (authority), and affiliation.
- ▶ Before allocating duties and responsibilities to team members, managers should consider implementing McClelland's Theory of Needs, since this will assist balance the team and ensure that each team member is in a position that is comfortable for them or her.

McClelland's Theory of Needs Cont'd

- ▶ The manager or team lead of remote teams must create clear goals, offer feedback, reward individuals, and organize the team, according to McClelland's Theory of Needs, which is also pertinent to this study.
- ▶ This theory is relevant to this research because it may assist the manager in better understanding the motivations of each member of his or her team and using that knowledge to better manage them.

METHODOLOGY

- ▶ This study used a descriptive survey research design as its research method. A descriptive survey investigation examines a group of people or products by collecting and analyzing data from a small number of individuals or items that are considered typical of the full group (Nworgu, 2017).
- ▶ The research was carried out at two (2) chosen consulting businesses with offices in the Lagos neighborhoods of Ikoyi and Victoria Island (SIAO in Ikoyi and KPMG Nigeria in Victoria Island). Smith Sule and Associates, Ighodalo and Associates, OA Financial Consulting Limited, and Robert Ade-Odiachi and Co. merged to become SIAO. SIAO's headquarters are in Ikoyi, Lagos, and the company also has a branch in Abuja FCT.

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- ▶ The population of this study comprised all male and female employees employed across all the departments at SIAO and KPMG Nigeria. This includes the partners, senior managers, managers, assistant managers, seniors, experienced associates, associates, trainees, interns and contract staff.
- ▶ The population size of the two (2) firms, SIAO and KPMG, is a total of 716 and the representative sample for the study was calculated through the adoption of the Taro Yamane Statistical Formula for finding sample size and this gave us a total number of 257 employees as the sample size. The simple random sampling technique was adopted and it was carried out by randomly selecting the participants from each department and across the different cadres.

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- ▶ In respect of the study population and required sample size, the questionnaire was administered through a Google form to all the two hundred and fifty-seven (257) employees which is the sample size selected from the two consulting firms used as the units of study, and a total of one hundred and thirty-one (131) responses were received and used for data analysis.
- ▶ This represents approximately 50.97 percent response rate which is suitable for the study as maintained by Baily (1994) that a sample of 100 and above is sufficient for a study.

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- ▶ The information gathered from respondents via the Google form was statistically analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, respectively. Inferential statistics use regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.
- ▶ Descriptive statistics use frequency tables and percentages, whereas inferential statistics use regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

- ▶ **H₀**: Remote working arrangement does not have significant effect on the management of employees' performance in SIAO and KPMG consulting Firms in Ikoyi and Victoria Island, Lagos
- ▶ **H₁**: Remote working arrangement has significant effect on management of employees' performance in SIAO and KPMG consulting Firms in Ikoyi and Victoria Island, Lagos.
- ▶ In terms of how the dependent variable is influenced by the independent variable, the model revealed that remote working arrangement has no significant effect on management of employees' performance ($\beta = .149$, $p > .05$) hence, the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

METHODOLOGY CONT'D

- ▶ This finding backs up Okechukwu, et al., (2017) claim that remote working has no effect on employee performance management, but that virtual employee performance is dependent on effective communication and collaboration in the workplace, as well as a strong relationship between employees and the firm's management, as this determines employee satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment.

Findings and Discussion

- ▶ 76.3% of the staff in SIAO and KPMG had no previous experience working from home before the Covid-19 lockdown.
- ▶ 87.0% of the respondents said that the remote working arrangement that started in year 2020 due to the Covid-19 lockdown was their first experience in remote work.
- ▶ 74.8% of the employees in SIAO and KPMG hold their meetings with their management virtually.
- ▶ 71.0% of the employees agreed with the statement that two firms provide all the tools needed for their employees to work from home.

Findings and Discussion Cont'd

- ▶ It can be inferred from this analysis that employees (80.9%) of the two selected consulting firms, take all instructions on things they need for their work from the management through emails and other online channels.
- ▶ It can therefore be assumed from the analysis that two firms conduct their training programmes and seminars through audio-conferencing platforms like zoom and other online channels (90.8%).
- ▶ Hence, it can be assumed from the analysis that majority of the employees of the two selected consulting firms submit their reports to their bosses or superiors via emails and other online channels (96.2%).

Findings and Discussion Cont'd

- ▶ 74.1% of the employees disagreed with the statement which implies that remote working arrangement has no significant effect on the management of employees' performance in the SIAO and KPMG.
- ▶ 84.7% the employees of the two firms connect with their direct managers when working remotely as well as if they were in the office.
- ▶ It can be inferred from the analysis that 85.5% of the employees of SIAO and KPMG receive prompt support from their managers whenever they have any challenges on the job while working from home.

Findings and Discussion Cont'd

- ▶ It can be inferred from this analysis that 83.2% of employees stated that the more frequent the managers of SIAO and KPMG communicate with their subordinates on the progress of their work, the better the subordinates understand what to do.
- ▶ It can be inferred from this analysis that majority of the respondents, 48.9% who participated in the study agreed that it is not necessary to have the check-in meetings between their manager and the team every week in a remote work arrangement because they do not need that much supervision before they know what to do.

CONCLUSION

- ▶ This study examined the effect of remote working arrangement on the management of employees' performance in two selected consulting Firms, SIAO and KPMG.
- ▶ From the analysis of the data collected from the respondents, it was revealed that remote working arrangement does not have any significant effect on the management of employees' performance as the p-value which is 0.089, is greater than the significant value of 0.05 therefore, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis.
- ▶ The study therefore concluded that the performance of employees working remotely can be managed by the manager or management successfully.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ The study has successfully established that different forms of remote working arrangements can work in any consulting company.
- ▶ The study has also established that the management of employees' performance is not affected by the remote working arrangements.
- ▶ Effective management of employees in remote work can be done through the use of effective communication, provision of equipment such as laptops, phones, data, wifi and other equipment they need for effective performance, online meetings, setting work tasks and ensuring targets and deadlines are met.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ The study recommends that while implementing remote-working policies, management should be aware of the various employee personalities.
- ▶ Some employees are extroverts, while others are introverts and this should be taken into consideration in the implementation of work activities assigned to remote teams and the management of remote work for the employees.

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THE END

- ▶ Thanks everyone for your attention

