

EFFECT OF TELECOMMUTING AND FLEXI-TIME ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED TECHNOLOGY FIRMS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

Work environment has shifted notably from traditional office settings to more flexible models like telecommuting and flexi-time, driven by organizational needs, technological advances, and events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The study examined effect of telecommuting and flexi-time work arrangements on employee performance in selected technology companies in South West Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all 2,163 employees of the selected firms, from which a sample size of 381 was drawn to provide the needed primary data for the study through a questionnaire survey. Obtained data were analyzed using Partial Least Square of Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The study revealed that the effect of flexi-time on performance among employees was positive and statistically significant. The effect of telecommuting, although positive, was estimated not to be statistically different from zero at the 5% alpha level. Based on the findings, it was concluded that when employees are allowed to complete their required work within reduced but efficiently structured timeframes, their productivity, engagement, and overall performance will improve. The study recommended that organizations exercise a nuanced approach when adopting telecommuting policies. Efforts should be directed at identifying and strengthening the specific conditions under which telecommuting can become a more effective driver of employee performance. Furthermore, technology firms in South West Nigeria should formally adopt flexi-time policies as a strategic approach to improving employees' performance.

Keywords: *flexible work, telecommuting, flexi-time, employee performance, technology firm.*

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance remains a central concern in organizational research and practice, as it is a critical determinant of productivity, competitiveness, and overall organizational success. Globally, organizations across sectors strive to enhance employee performance through diverse strategies, recognizing that the effectiveness and efficiency of employees significantly influence the attainment of strategic goals (Aguinis, 2019). In high-performance environments, particularly within knowledge-driven industries such as the technology sector, sustained employee output, innovation, and adaptability are paramount. In recent years, there has been a growing consensus that rigid, traditional work structures may hinder employee performance, especially in contexts where creativity, autonomy, and mental well-being are vital. Consequently, flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have gained global traction as a managerial innovation that supports performance enhancement by enabling employees to exert control over their work schedules, thereby aligning organizational demands with personal and professional aspirations (Brough et al., 2020).

Across many parts of Africa, the discourse on employee performance has intensified, particularly in response to the changing nature of work and the increasing influence of globalization and technological diffusion. Although African organizations, especially in urban economic hubs, are beginning to adopt global best practices to enhance workforce performance, the integration of flexible work arrangements remains limited. This is largely due to structural, cultural, and policy constraints, as well as concerns about supervision and accountability (Kassegn & Endris, 2021). Nevertheless, emerging evidence suggests that where such arrangements are thoughtfully implemented, there is a corresponding positive impact on employee morale, job satisfaction, and output quality. In the context of technology firms in Africa, which rely heavily on employee innovation, real-time problem-solving, and technological proficiency, FWAs can serve as a catalyst for improved performance, provided they are supported by clear expectations and effective communication systems (Nnaji-Ihedinmah & Egbunike, 2022).

In Nigeria, the conversation around employee performance is increasingly shaped by the demands of a growing digital economy and the evolving expectations of a younger, technologically savvy workforce. While traditional metrics such as punctuality and hours worked remain entrenched in many organizations, there is a gradual shift toward outcome-based performance evaluation, particularly in sectors like technology companies where flexibility and output are closely linked. However, the adoption of FWAs, including flexi-time and telecommuting, remains inconsistent across organizations, often influenced by managerial attitudes, organizational culture, and infrastructural realities (Adisa et al., 2022). Research suggests that FWAs, when effectively managed, can lead to enhanced employee engagement, reduced burnout, and increased productivity key indicators of performance (Okoye et al., 2023). For technology firms operating in South West Nigeria, a region known for its concentration of tech hubs and innovative enterprises exploring the relationship between FWAs and employee performance is both timely and necessary. As these firms navigate competitive pressures and talent retention challenges, flexible scheduling could offer a strategic advantage by fostering a performance-driven yet human-centered work environment.

The technology industry's relentless focus on customer satisfaction has necessitated substantial changes in workplace structures, compelling organizations to adapt to evolving market demands, (Gupta & Agrawal, 2021). Within this framework, employees are recognized as the most valuable assets of organizations, playing critical roles in driving performance and sustaining competitive advantage. Many organizations in developing economies, particularly in Nigeria, are lagging in the adoption of flexible work arrangements (FWAs), leading to decreased employee commitment and diminished performance outcomes, (Chiekezie et al., 2024). Existing studies on FWAs have primarily focused on developed economies, with limited attention to developing countries like Nigeria. For instance, (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) found that telecommuting positively impacts employee performance by reducing commuting stress and improving work-life balance. Similarly, (Baltes et al., 1999) demonstrated that work arrangements, such as flexi-time, enhance performance by allowing employees to focus on tasks without frequent interruptions. However, these findings may not be directly applicable to the Nigerian context due to differences in cultural, economic, and infrastructural factors. For example, the Nigerian work culture, which often emphasizes physical presence in the workplace, may limit the adoption and effectiveness of FWAs (Ojo & Olaniyan, 2019). Thus, the present study seeks to assess the effect of flexible work arrangements, specifically, telecommuting and flexi-time on employee performance in selected technology firms in South West Nigeria.

Accordingly, the study aimed to:

- i. determine the effect of telecommuting on employee performance in selected technology firms in South West Nigeria.
- ii. examine the effect of flexi-time on employee performance in selected technology firms in South West Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Performance is the art to complete the task within the defined boundaries, performance of employees is affected by numerous factors at workplace it is defined as the way to perform job task according to the prescribed job description. (Saeed et al., 2013). Motowidlo, (2003), argued that employee's performance is the behavior that the organization expects of the employees when they are doing the job. Employees' performance is how the employees understand the task, the ability to do it and how much they exert effort to complete it, (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Prasetya and Kato, (2011) defined employee performance as the attained outcome of actions with the skills of employees who perform in some situation. Employee performance is the actions or the completion of errands that were done by individuals within specific period of time (Swasto, 1996 as cited in Khan, et al 2012).

Dessler, (2008) viewed employee performance as work-related task that is expected on employees and how well the task was done. The performance can be measured monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or

annually to be able to provide improvement of identified segment in the business. Employee's performance evaluation is a comprehensive analysis of a worker's performance, by observing their work during a certain period of time and examining all the objective manuscripts or documents relevant to how they have performed, so as to establish the extent at which these workers achieve the stipulated goals (USAID, 2009). Increase in commitment level of employees in organization ultimately increases the performance of their employees. Mwebi, and Kadaga, (2015) posited that employee performance refers to how a worker behaves towards his/her job, there are a variety of criteria used to determine how an individual behaves towards their work which vary from task to task. Employees with greater control over work schedules are more likely to show increased engagement, commitment, retention and job satisfaction, (Muchiti & Gachunga, 2015). Yeh and Hong, (2012) asserted that employee's performance appears in the quality and the quantity of the job, which means that the performance of the employees is similar to their productivity. Performance of an organization is directly related to commitment level of employees (Ivancevich, 2010).

Telecommuting

According to Wang et al. (2021), telecommuting refers to a work setup where employees perform their tasks outside the conventional office environment, primarily relying on digital technologies to maintain communication, collaboration, and task execution. In relation to employee performance, this mode of work is seen as a facilitator of productivity, especially when supported by robust technological infrastructure and clear performance expectations. Allen et al. (2021) posit that telecommuting can lead to improved task performance, greater job satisfaction, and reduced work-related stress, provided that employees are granted autonomy and appropriate managerial support. Savić (2020) highlights that telecommuting enhances performance by allowing employees to operate in comfortable and personalized environments, which often fosters greater concentration and efficiency. Nonetheless, scholars also note that the performance outcomes of telecommuting are contingent upon organizational culture, job characteristics, and individual discipline. The conceptualization of telecommuting in relation to employee performance emphasizes its potential as a performance-enhancing practice, while simultaneously calling attention to the contextual variables that mediate its impact.

Molino et al. (2020) links telecommuting to improved employee performance by highlighting its positive effects on concentration, work engagement, and reduced commuting stress, all of which contribute to a more efficient and productive workforce. However, these benefits are not guaranteed; the success of telecommuting in enhancing performance is contingent upon individual differences, organizational policies, and the availability of adequate digital tools and support systems.

Flexi-Time

Flex-time allows employees to choose their own start and end times within a certain range, as long as they complete their required hours. This flexibility helps employees balance work and personal responsibilities more effectively (Golden & Veiga, 2005). Flexi-time involves working core hours when all employees must be present, with flexible hours before or after these core times. For example, core hours might be from 10 AM to 4 PM, with employees choosing their start and end times around these hours, (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Flexi-time is designed to improve work-life balance by giving employees more control over their schedules. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Flexi-time can vary significantly across different organizations. Some companies offer full flexibility, while others may limit the range of start and end times or require approval for schedule changes (Katz, 2013). From an employer's perspective, flexi-time can enhance productivity and employee morale. By allowing employees to work during their most productive hours, companies can see improvements in overall performance (Golden & Raghuram, 2010).

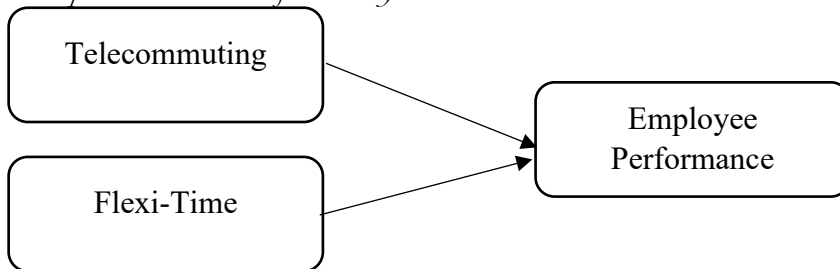
Flexi-time can positively impact employee well-being by reducing commuting time, improving work-life balance, and allowing for better management of personal responsibilities (Hill et al., 2010). Employers can benefit from Flexi-time through reduced absenteeism, improved morale, and enhanced recruitment and retention capabilities. Flexi-time can also contribute to a more diverse and inclusive workplace

culture (Kossek et al., 2012). For this study, flexi-time is defined as a work schedule that enhance employee performance by allowing them to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to better work quality and efficiency (Golden & Raghuram, 2010).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Note. Researcher's Compilation

Empirical Review

Telecommuting and Employee Performance

Okeke and Nwankwo (2022) applied regression analysis to survey data collected from a sample of 150 employees from five major banks in Nigeria. Findings showed positive and significant effect of telecommuting on performance among employees in the study area. In a similar study, Eze and Nwankwo (2023) examined telecommuting among employees of ICT firms and analysed primary data obtained from 200 employees using PLS-SEM. Findings were in support of a positive effect of telecommuting on performance among employees.

In the study Adesina and Oluwaseun (2021), the telecommuting-performance relationship was empirically investigated among 250 employees across various industries in Nigeria. The descriptive design adopted involved the use of tables and simple percentages for data analysis. The findings revealed that telecommuting leads to higher performance levels, attributed to reduced distractions and increased autonomy.

Ibekwe and Okwudili (2022) carried out a study involving 180 public servants in Nigeria using an exploratory design. The qualitative responses obtained from the study were analyzed using thematic analysis. It was found from obtained results that the effect of telecommuting on performance was positive. One critique is the limited scope of public sector representation, which may not reflect broader employee experiences in the private sector.

Akpan and Udo (2023) assessed the relationship between telecommuting and job performance in Nigerian educational institutions. The study utilized a sample size of 220 educators and applied correlation analysis to examine the data. Results indicated that telecommuting positively impacts job performance by providing educators with greater flexibility and control over their work environments. The authors encouraged educational institutions to formalize telecommuting policies.

Flexi-time and Employee Performance

Nwekpa et al. (2020) studied work schedule flexibility and performance among employees in Nigerian Breweries, Ama, Enugu. Using a correlational approach, 283 sets of responses were analysed, the results of which showed that flexi-time arrangements enhanced employee performance in the study area. However, the study's focus on a single organization may limit the applicability of the findings to the broader industry.

Idowu (2020) examined the role of flexible working hours on employee job performance and in manufacturing industries located in Agbara, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research design, with survey data collected from a purposive sample of 227 respondents. Correlation analysis applied to

the data collected showed that flexi-time arrangements was positively associated with performance levels among employees.

Okolie (2023) conducted a study to explore the impact of flexi-time on organizational outcomes in selected commercial banks in Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. The research employed a causal design involving the regression analysis of primary data obtained from a random sample of 69 participants. Results showed that the effect of flexi-time on performance was positive and statistically significant. However, the relatively small sample size and focus on a specific sector may limit the broader applicability of the results.

Ugwuoke and Onwuchekwa, (2024) looked into the role of flexi-time in enhancing performance within media firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. Primary data obtained from a census of 211 employees were analyzed using the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between flexi-time and employee performance.

The study conducted by Adebayo and Ibrahim (2023) focused on investigating the effect of flexible working arrangements on performance in the hospitality industry in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria. A mixed methods design was adopted by the study where questionnaire survey data obtained from a cross-section of 216 hotel employees and analysed using PLS-SEM, while qualitative interview data was collected from 10 hotel staff and analysed using thematic analysis. From the results, it was found that flexi-time positively and significantly influenced employee performance.

Anyia et al. (2021) explored the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee engagement within an Asian-owned company in Lagos State, Nigeria. The qualitative study involved 19 top-level managers from KRS Investment Limited, utilizing focus group discussions for data collection. Data were analyzed using inter-rater reliability and content analysis. Findings indicated that flexible work arrangements, including flexi-time and telecommuting, enhanced employee engagement by promoting job satisfaction, motivation, and work-life balance. The study recommended that organizations adopt flexible work policies to boost employee morale and productivity. Nonetheless, the study's qualitative nature and focus on a single organization may affect the broader applicability of its conclusions.

Anekwe, (2019) investigated the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study targeted a population of 348 bank employees, employing Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for data analysis. Results demonstrated that the relationship between flexi-time work arrangements and performance was positive and significant.

Psychological Job Demand-Control Theory

The study was guided by the Job Demand-Control (JDC) theory developed by Robert Karasek in 1979. The JDC is a foundational psychological theory that explains how characteristics of the work environment, specifically job demands and job control (decision latitude) interact to influence employee stress, well-being, motivation, and performance. Researchers, Karasek, and Theorell (1990) have pointed to the importance of having high perceptions of job control and support for individual well-being. Njiru et al., (2015) stated that the psychological job control theory posits positive relationships between worker job demands and the ability to control how and when one performs a job, such as when and how they carry out tasks. It is assumed that a job with high demands and low control will lead to stress; however, if an individual in the same high demand job perceives high control, she/he will experience lower strain (Gronlund, (2007)). Employees' use of Flexi-time and compressed work weeks allow workers to have increased control in order to integrate personal role demands with work role demands. Using flex-time as an example, by being able to control work schedules time of the start/stop, an employee can (re)structure working hours at each end of the day to deal with non-work demands, such as baby sitting. Psychological Job Control Theory posits that employees who perceive greater control over their work tasks, schedules, and environments are more likely to exhibit higher levels of motivation, engagement,

and performance. In the context of the technology industry in South West Nigeria, where employees often face demanding workloads, dynamic project requirements, and tight deadlines, the application of this theory becomes particularly relevant. Flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting and flexible scheduling can enhance employees' sense of autonomy and control, thereby reducing stress and promoting better focus on high-value tasks. This, in turn, fosters improved job performance, which are critical for the competitive and rapidly evolving nature of the technology sector.

Furthermore, the technology industry thrives on skilled professionals who can adapt to technological changes and meet the needs of clients in a high-pressure environment. Psychological JDC Theory suggests that when employees are empowered with autonomy and decision-making authority, they are more likely to take ownership of their responsibilities and deliver superior outcomes. In South West Nigeria, where economic challenges and infrastructural limitations can exacerbate workplace stress, granting employees control over how and where they work can improve their well-being and resilience. This not only enhances individual productivity but also contributes to organizational success by fostering a culture of trust, empowerment, and adaptability in the face of industry demands.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an explanatory research design in estimating the cause-and-effect relationship among specified model constructs. The population of the study comprised all 2,163 employees of Interswitch Limited in Lagos, Innovation Hub in Ibadan, Opolo Innovation hub Osogbo and Techpoint Africa in Abeokuta. In light of research constraints, however, the study relied on the use of representative sample, determined by the Yamane (1967) sample determination formula for a finite population. Consequently, a necessary sample size of 366 was computed for the study. However, this was increased by 10%, as recommended by Singh and Masuku (2014) to allow for attrition, bringing this number to 403.

In the selection of respondents, the purposive sampling technique. Primary data was collected for this study through a structured questionnaire administered, via the pick-up/drop off technique, with the help of three research assistants. Measures of validity, using both content; involving experience researchers; and face, involving pilot study participants, forms; as well as internal consistency reliability, with the use of the Cronbach's Alpha statistics, were employed to ensure measurement effectiveness of the instrument. Measurement scales, based on pretest results, were confirmed to be reliable based on satisfactory alpha values (≥ 0.7).

The data gathered for the study was analyzed using Partial Least Square of Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), carried out through the SmartPLS statistical Software (version 3).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 403 distributed questionnaire copies, 393 were returned, out of which 381 were retained after being subjected to screening, giving a response rate of 94.5%. Subsequently, all further analyses were done using 381 sets of responses as the final sample size.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
FLEX	3.07	2.01	1.00	5.00	0.97
TELEC	3.70	2.04	1.00	5.00	0.96
PERF	4.10	3.00	1.00	5.00	0.89

Note. SmartPLS Output.

Data on the study variables are described in Table 1 in terms of the mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation values. Flexi-Time had minimum and maximum values of 1 and 5 respectively however, it showed an average of 3.07 along with a standard deviation of 0.97. data collected for Telecommuting (TELEC), on the other hand, revealed an average value of 3.7 with a standard deviation value of 0.96. However, the minimum and maximum values stood at 1 and 5 respectively. Furthermore,

performance (PERF) showed a minimum value of 1 and a maximum value of 5 with an average value of 4.10 accompanied with a standard deviation value of 0.89.

The PLS-SEM analysis carried out commenced with the assessment of the measurement model. This involved reliability and validity tests to determine the measurement strength of the model constructs as well as ensure the quality of the collected data. Table 2 provides factor loading values, as well as internal consistency reliability and convergent validity statistics.

Table 2

Reliability of Study Scale

		Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Flexi Time (FLEX)	FLEX3	0.845	0.897	0.928	0.764
	FLEX4	0.891			
	FLEX5	0.900			
	FLEX6	0.859			
Telecommuting (TELEC)	TELEC1	0.819	0.843	0.888	0.615
	TELEC2	0.798			
	TELEC3	0.784			
	TELEC4	0.702			
	TELEC5	0.811			
Performance (PERF)	PERF2	0.804	0.896	0.924	0.712
	PERF3	0.710			
	PERF4	0.917			
	PERF5	0.908			
	PERF6	0.861			

Note. SmartPLS Output.

As a rule, loadings above 0.708 are recommended, as they indicate that the construct explains more than 50% of the variance of the underlying construct, thus providing acceptable item reliability (Hair et al., 2019). All retained indicators met this criterion; those with low and non-significant values (FLEX1, FLEX2, PERF1) were deleted.

In terms of internal consistency, Composite Reliability (CR) and Alpha values of greater than 0.7, obtained for all constructs, confirmed reliability based on the threshold provided by Hair et al. (2019). Furthermore, convergent validity was determined with the use of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. For convergent validity, AVE are recommended to be greater than 0.50, indicating that the constructs explain at least 50% of the variance of its items. AVE values in all cases were determined to be above this threshold, confirming convergent validity.

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios were used to test divergent validity for constructs based on the conservative 0.85 threshold. Attained HTMT values of less than 0.85 for all constructs confirmed divergent validity in all cases as prescribed by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 3

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

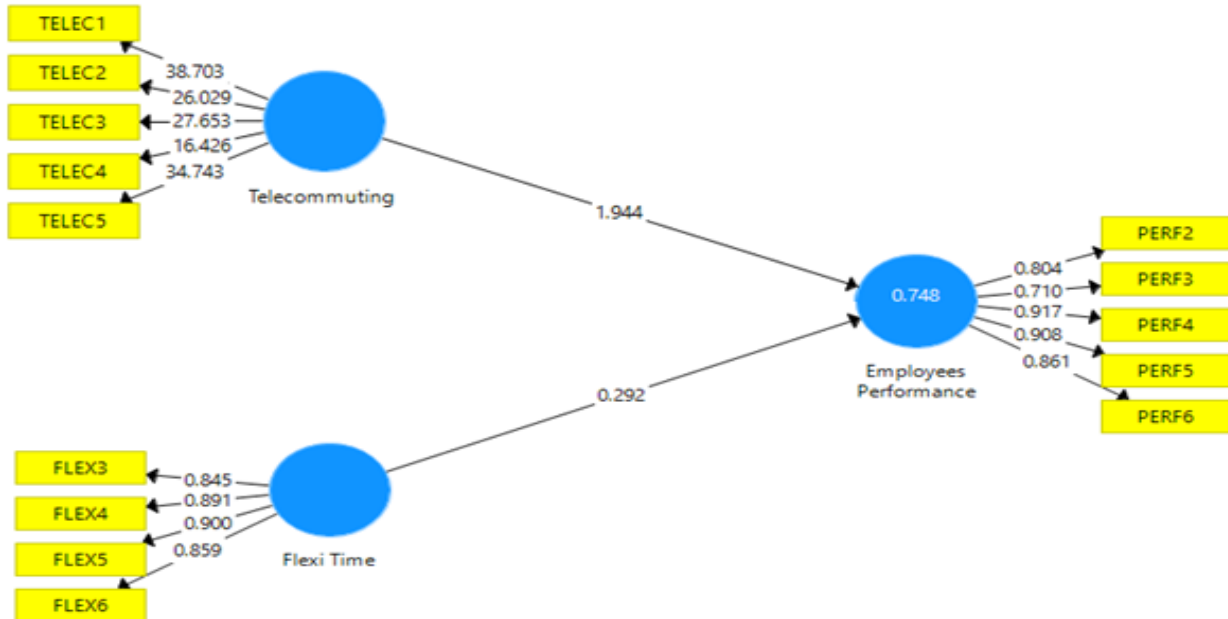
	Telecommuting	Flexi-Time
Flexi Time	0.455	
Performance	0.781	0.587

Note. SmartPLS Output.

At the confirmation of measurement model accuracy, the structural model was estimated via a bootstrapping process involving 5,000 subsamples. This was crucial in providing path coefficients, as well as statistical indices required to test significance at the 5% alpha level. Figure 2 depicts the estimated path model for the study

Figure 2

Path Coefficients of the Regression Model.



Note. SmartPLS Output.

In determining the in-sample predictive power of the estimated path model, the Coefficient of Multiple Determination (R-square) was utilized (see Table 4). The adjusted R-square value was estimated at 0.747, indicating that 75% of the variation in the endogenous construct (Employee Performance) was attributed to the exogenous constructs of Telecommuting and Flexi-time. The remaining 25% is explained by other factors not included in the study. Based on Hair, et al., (2019), the R-square value is considered substantial.

Table 4

In-Sample Predictive Power of Estimated Path Model

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Performance	0.748	0.747

Note. SmartPLS Output.

Estimated path coefficients are contained in Table 5. The results from the analysis indicated that telecommuting has positive and insignificant effect on employee performance (0.127, $t = 1.925$, $p < 0.05$). This implied that while telecommuting may be associated with improved performance outcomes in the observed sample, the evidence is not strong enough to generalize this effect to the broader population with a high level of confidence. This finding agreed with the study of Okeke and Nwankwo (2022) who made similar findings about telecommuting and employee performance.

Table 5

Path Coefficients

Path Relationship	β	t	p-value	HO Decision
Telecommuting -> Employees' Performance	0.127	1.925	0.054	Accepted
Flexi Time -> Employees' Performance	0.607	10.275	0.000	Rejected

Note. SmartPLS Output.

Furthermore, Flexi-Time was estimated to have positive and significant effect (0.607, $t = 10.275$, $p < 0.05$) on employee performance among technology firms in South West Nigeria. This indicated that flexible scheduling serves as a catalyst for improving employee job performance. This finding was in agreement with that of Okolie (2023), and Ugwuoke and Onwuchekwa (2024), whose studies were in support of a positive and significant effect of Flexi-Time on employee performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from the study showed that while telecommuting may enhance employee outcomes, the lack of statistical significance indicates that this effect is not strong or consistent enough to draw conclusive generalizations across the broader population. Furthermore, when employees are granted the autonomy to choose their work hours within an agreed time framework, their overall job performance tend to improve. The positive influence of flexi-time may be attributed to enhanced work-life balance, reduced stress, and the ability of employees to align their most productive hours with their work schedules.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that technology firms in South West Nigeria consciously direct efforts towards identifying and strengthening the specific conditions under which telecommuting can become a more effective driver of employee performance. This may involve enhancing managerial support, ensuring adequate technological infrastructure, and fostering clear performance expectations. Additionally, technological firms in the region, should formally adopt flexi-time policies as a strategic approach to improving employees' performance. Organizations should design clear and transparent guidelines that define core working hours, communication expectations, and deliverable timelines to ensure that organizational goals are not compromised.

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