

## **WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee productivity of telecommunication firms in Rivers state. The survey designed used for the study was a correlational survey design. The target population for this study was four (4) telecommunication firms domiciled in Rivers State such as MTN, GLOBACOM, 9MOBILE and ETISALAT, with 250 respondents drawn from the employees of the sampled firms. The study adopted the census population. A self-administered structured questionnaire titled "Workplace Flexibility and Employee Productivity (WFEPQ)" was used to elicit data from respondents. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.77 was ascertained. PPMC (person product moment correlation) was used to test hypotheses on SPSS version 25. There is a significant relationship between the dimensions of workplace flexibility (flex time, remote jobs and job sharing) and measures of employee productivity (goal attainment, timeliness and resource utilization) of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study recommended that telecommunication firms should formalize flexible working hour policies that allow employees to work during their peak productivity periods which lead to more efficient use of human resources.

### **Background of the Study**

In today's rapidly evolving work environment, organisations are in constant flux to ensuring optimal workplace productivity to ensure organisational survival without compromising the wellbeing of employees and workplace flexibility has become a pivotal strategy for enhancing employee engagement and productivity. The traditional model of rigid, on-site work schedules is gradually being replaced with more adaptive approaches such as remote work, flexi time, and job sharing. These flexible arrangements allow employees to better balance their personal and professional responsibilities, which is believed to lead to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and ultimately, improved productivity (Allen et al., 2013).

Employee productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees perform their tasks and contribute to organizational goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). It is often measured by the output generated relative to the input of time, effort, and resources invested. In today's knowledge-driven economy, enhancing employee productivity is essential for maintaining competitiveness and achieving sustainable growth. As the workforce becomes younger, more digitally savvy, and increasingly value-driven, organizations that fail to implement flexible workplace practices risk lower employee morale, high turnover, and reduced productivity. Conversely, organizations that adopt proactive and inclusive flexibility strategies can enhance job satisfaction, reduce absenteeism, and foster a performance-driven culture.

The telecommunication industry, known for its fast-paced and technology-driven operations, is at the forefront of adopting flexible work models. In Rivers State, Nigeria, the sector plays a critical role in economic development and connectivity. However, despite its importance, many firms still face challenges related to employee performance, retention, and organizational effectiveness. As the global shift toward flexible work continues, it is imperative to assess how such practices affect employee productivity within the local context of Rivers State's telecom sector.

### Statement of the Problem

In today's fast-paced and competitive business environment, especially within the telecommunication sector in Rivers workplace flexibility is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool for enhancing employee productivity State. However, despite growing awareness, many firms continue to face persistent challenges in effectively implementing flexible work arrangements that translate into measurable productivity gains.

Employees are often unable to complete tasks within set deadlines due to poor time management, rigid schedules, unclear task priorities, or lack of flexibility in work arrangements. Delays in task execution not only affect individual performance but also disrupt team coordination, service delivery, and overall organizational efficiency.

Another persistent challenge is the inefficient utilization of resources, which includes both human and material inputs. In many organizations, employees are not effectively matched with tasks that align with their skills and expertise, leading to wasted potential and underperformance. Inadequate access to tools, technology, and support systems further exacerbates the problem, limiting employees' ability to work efficiently. In flexible or hybrid work environments, poor resource allocation and lack of real-time oversight often result in reduced accountability and suboptimal use of time and tools.

Furthermore, goal attainment remains elusive in many workplace settings where employee productivity is not adequately supported. When performance expectations are unclear or when feedback and monitoring systems are weak, employees may struggle to align their efforts with organizational objectives. This misalignment leads to diminished output, low motivation, and a gap between strategic goals and actual results. In the face of these challenges, it becomes critical for organizations to identify and address the underlying factors affecting employee productivity particularly those related to timeliness, resource utilization, and the ability to meet defined goals in order to maintain competitiveness and drive sustainable growth. It is against this pitfall that the study examined workplace flexibility and employee productivity of telecommunication firms in Rivers state.

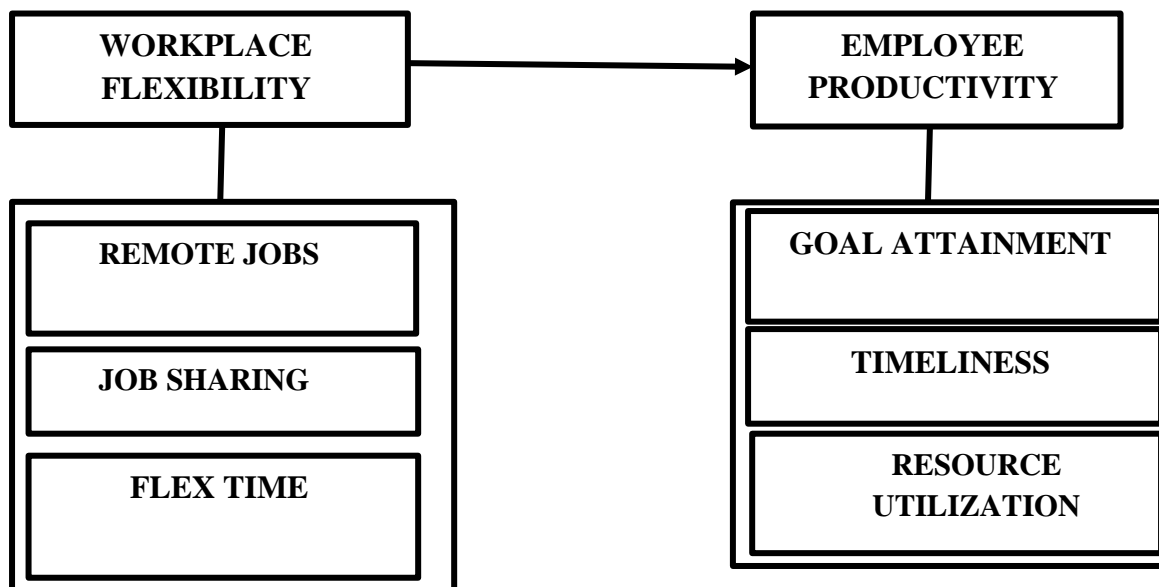


Figure 1: Conceptual framework on Workplace Flexibility and Employee Productivity of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers state.

**Source:** Conceptualize by Desk Researcher (2025) Dimensions of flexible workplace Adapted from Oludayo et al., (2015). Measures of employee productivity Adapted from Bakker and Demerouti, (2007).

### **Aims & Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee productivity of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
2. To determine the relationship between jobs sharing and timeliness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
3. To determine the relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- 1) What is the relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- 2) What is the relationship between job sharing and timeliness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- 3) What is the relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State?

### **Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and was tested at a significant level of 0.05.

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section reviews extant literatures under the headings of conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Workplace Flexibility**

Jeffrey Hill et al. (2008) defined workplace flexibility as a process in which an organisation permits employees to select work-related activities. Hill et al. (2018) define workplace flexibility as the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks. Workplace flexibility refers to the extent to which organizations allow employees discretion over how, when, and where they perform their job tasks. Workplace flexibility practices are designed to help employees balance work and personal responsibilities, reduce stress, and enhance job satisfaction all of which can positively influence organizational outcomes.

Despite its numerous benefits, workplace flexibility presents several challenges that can hinder its effectiveness if not properly managed. One key issue is the potential for reduced communication and collaboration, especially in remote or hybrid settings where physical separation may lead to isolation and weakened team cohesion (Allen et al., 2013). Without clear policies, technological infrastructure, and trust-based cultures, workplace flexibility may inadvertently reduce productivity and increase organizational inefficiencies.

### **Dimensions of Workplace Flexibility**

#### **Remote Jobs**

Remote Jobs refer to employment arrangements that allow employees to perform their job responsibilities outside of a traditional office setting, often from home or other remote locations.

Allen, Golden, & Shockley (2015) describe remote work as an alternative work arrangement in which employees work at home or another location away from the traditional workplace, on a full- or part-time basis. This dimension of workplace flexibility has become increasingly relevant, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the global shift to remote work.

Remote jobs offer several advantages such as reduced commuting time, improved work-life balance, and access to a wider talent pool. However, they also present challenges including communication barriers, potential feelings of isolation, and the need for self-discipline. Wang et al. (2021) emphasizes that successful remote work depends on well-designed job structures, technological support, and proactive leadership to maintain engagement and productivity. To optimize the benefits of remote jobs, organizations must adopt structured remote work policies and invest in employee training and digital collaboration tools.

### **Job Sharing**

Job Sharing is a flexible work arrangement where two employees share the responsibilities of a single full-time position, each working part-time hours. An employment arrangement in which two people are employed on a part-time basis to jointly fulfill the duties of one full-time position (Dick & Hyde, 2020). A form of part-time work in which two employees voluntarily share the responsibilities, hours, and remuneration of one full-time position. This model allows for greater work-life balance and is particularly beneficial for individuals needing reduced hours due to caregiving, education, or personal commitments. Job sharing can increase productivity and creativity, as two individuals contribute ideas and collaborate on shared goals.

However, it requires clear communication, strong coordination, and mutual trust between the sharers to avoid workflow disruptions. According to a study by De Menezes and Kelliher (2017), job sharing enhances employee satisfaction and retention but is underutilized due to managerial concerns about continuity and accountability.

### **Flex Time**

Golden and Eddleston (2020) define flex time as a flexible work schedule that allows employees to choose their starting and ending work times, within limits set by the employer. This emphasizes the employee's autonomy over scheduling. Flex time is defined as a formal work arrangement that permits variations in work start and end times around core hours, helping employees balance personal and professional demands (Leslie et al., 2012).

Flex Time enables employees to choose their working hours within agreed-upon limits, rather than adhering to a rigid 9-to-5 schedule. This dimension of flexibility allows workers to align their work time with personal and family responsibilities, thereby reducing stress and increasing engagement. Flex time is linked to higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism, as employees feel a greater sense of control over their time. Nevertheless, it can pose challenges in coordinating team activities and ensuring consistent availability. Allen et al. (2023) found that when implemented with proper guidelines, flex time can significantly improve both individual and organizational outcomes by fostering autonomy, trust, and performance.

### **Concept of Employee Productivity**

Kantor and Streitfeld (2022) define employee productivity as the quantitative and qualitative measure of an employee's efficiency in completing tasks and achieving set goals within a specific timeframe. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) describe employee productivity as the effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core, either directly or indirectly.

High employee productivity offers significant advantages to both organizations and individuals. For organizations, it leads to greater operational efficiency, reduced costs, and increased profitability, which are crucial for sustaining competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Palo & Padhi, 2022). For employees, higher productivity can result in greater job satisfaction, career advancement

opportunities, and recognition, contributing to higher motivation and engagement. Furthermore, productive employees contribute to a positive organizational culture, where innovation, teamwork, and goal attainment are prioritized (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Organizational factors such as poor leadership, unclear expectations, or lack of feedback negatively affect productivity, underscoring the need for comprehensive HR and managerial strategies.

## **Measures of Employee Productivity**

### **Goal Attainment**

Goal attainment refers to the extent to which individuals or organizations successfully achieve their stated objectives. In the workplace, it reflects how well an employee or team completes assigned tasks in alignment with organizational strategies and expectations. According to Locke and Latham (2019), clearly defined and challenging goals enhance performance by directing attention, mobilizing effort, increasing persistence, and motivating strategy development. Goal attainment is therefore a central indicator of both individual and organizational effectiveness.

Organizations that prioritize measurable and realistic goal setting are more likely to witness increased employee engagement and productivity. When employees understand the goals and perceive them as achievable and meaningful, their motivation to perform improves significantly (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Despite its benefits, goal attainment can be hindered by vague objectives, inconsistent feedback, or misaligned individual and organizational priorities. It is important for managers to communicate expectations clearly and support goal achievement through training, feedback, and performance monitoring. Failure to attain goals not only affects productivity but also employee morale and retention (Albrecht et al., 2021). Therefore, a structured goal management system plays a vital role in driving sustainable performance outcomes.

### **Timeliness**

Timeliness in the workplace refers to the ability to complete tasks or deliver services within set deadlines. It is a critical dimension of productivity, particularly in fast-paced and competitive environments. Timeliness ensures that organizational processes remain efficient and customer expectations are met. According to Campbell and Wiernik (2015), timeliness is one of the core behaviors evaluated when assessing task performance in modern work settings.

Employees who consistently meet deadlines contribute to overall organizational reliability and efficiency. In sectors such as telecommunications, finance, and logistics, delays can lead to customer dissatisfaction, reputational damage, and financial loss. Moreover, timeliness supports sequential task dependencies, where the output of one employee becomes the input for another (LePine et al., 2018). Thus, timely completion of assignments is essential for seamless workflow and project coordination.

However, several factors can affect timeliness, including poor time management, excessive workload, unclear instructions, or lack of prioritization. Training programs focused on time management and deadline tracking can help employees improve their timeliness (Claessens et al., 2022). Leaders must also create realistic timelines and provide adequate support to ensure tasks are not only completed quickly but also with high quality.

### **Resource Utilization**

Resource utilization refers to the effective and efficient use of organizational resources such as time, money, labor, materials, and technology to achieve strategic goals. High resource utilization indicates that a company is maximizing its assets without unnecessary waste or redundancy. According to Pulakos et al. (2019), optimal resource management is a hallmark of organizational agility and is closely linked to operational and financial performance.

Proper resource utilization contributes to cost reduction, innovation, and competitiveness. For example, employees who are well-trained and equipped with the right tools are more productive and deliver higher-quality outputs. Organizations that align their resource planning with demand

forecasts and performance goals can reduce inefficiencies and ensure sustainable growth (Al Nahyan et al., 2020). This also includes managing human capital effectively by assigning tasks based on skillsets and availability. Ultimately, strong resource utilization enhances not only productivity but also long-term organizational sustainability (Jabbour et al., 2021).

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory**

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory was originally propounded by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in the early 2000s (specifically in 2001). The theory posits that all job characteristics can be categorized into two broad dimensions: job demands (e.g., workload, emotional stress) and job resources (e.g., autonomy, support, flexibility), which interact to influence employee well-being and performance. In the telecommunication sector, where employees face high cognitive and emotional demands, workplace flexibility acts as a critical resource that enhances motivation and reduces burnout. Flexible work options like remote work, flextime, and compressed hours give employees more control, which improves energy and focus, ultimately boosting productivity.

In the context of telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, the JD-R theory is particularly relevant because it provides a useful lens for understanding how workplace flexibility can serve as a key job resource to buffer the adverse effects of high job demands. Given the fast-paced, target-driven, and often high-pressure environment of telecom operations, employees frequently experience intense workloads and time pressures. Introducing flexible work arrangements such as remote work, flextime, and hybrid schedules can reduce stress and enhance job control, leading to improved employee productivity, reduced burnout, and greater job satisfaction. By aligning job demands with adequate resources like flexibility, telecom firms in Rivers State can optimize employee output and sustain competitive performance

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Rosemary (2023) examined workplace flexibility and organisational effectiveness of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Krejcie and Morgan sample size was used to obtain a sample size of eighty-six (86) from a population of one hundred and seventeen (117) managers of six (6) telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. After validation by the supervisors and other experts, cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument. Out of one hundred and seven (117) copies of the questionnaire administered, a total of eighty (80) copies (representing 93%) were retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis; Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for the bivariate analysis, while the multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses one to nine, while partial correlation was adopted in testing hypothesis ten formulated for the study, at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between remote working and organisational effectiveness in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study concluded that managers of telecommunication companies should give attention to employees' flexibility so as remote working hours so as to maximize the potential and energy of employees. The researcher therefore recommended amongst others that remote working should be enabled and put into place in a way that both the company and the employees may get the most from them, organization should engage in the act of job rotation in other to discover the skills and talents of their workforce. Ikwor and Chikwe, John Emenike (2024) examined the correlation between workplace flexibility and employee performance in oil and gas companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study utilised a cross-sectional research approach, concentrating on 237 employees from five prominent oil and gas companies. Data were gathered via a standardised questionnaire and analysed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The study's findings indicated a substantial

favourable correlation between telework, flexible hours, and employee performance metrics, including teamwork and adaptability. The findings indicate that the use of flexible work arrangements can improve employee performance and organisational efficacy. The research holds considerable ramifications for oil and gas companies in Rivers State. Implementing flexible work methods enables organisations to enhance employee satisfaction, diminish absenteeism, and recruit and retain premier talent.

### METHODOLOGY

Correlational survey design was adopted for this study. The target population for this study was four (4) telecommunication firms domiciled in Rivers State such as MTN, GLOBACOM, 9MOBILE and ETISALAT, with 250 respondents drawn from the employees of the sampled firms. The study adopted the census population. A self-administered structured questionnaire titled "Workplace Flexibility and Employee Productivity (WFEPQ)" was independently subjected to content and construct validity by Lecturers in the Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The corrections and suggestions of the validators were affected on the finale copy of the instrument which was used to collect primary data and the data obtained were accordingly analyzed. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient below the 0.75 was used ascertained.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.77	3

Source: Researcher Computation via SPSS Version 25

The result of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test indicates .77 which is above .70 which implies that the items are reliable. PPMC (person product moment correlation) was used to test hypotheses on SPSS version 25.

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlations on Remote Jobs and Goal Attainment

		Remote Jobs	Goal Attainment
<b>Remote Jobs</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.732**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
<b>Goal Attainment</b>	Pearson Correlation	.732**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: Correlations on remote jobs and goal attainment of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State revealed that there is a significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State (where P. 732 = sig, .000) thus leading to acceptance of

alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlations on Job Sharing and Timeliness

		Job Sharing	Timeliness
<b>Job Sharing</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.859**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
<b>Timeliness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.859**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlations on job sharing and timeliness of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State revealed that there is a significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State (where  $P .859 = \text{sig} .000$ ) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Table 4: Correlations on Flex Time and Resource Utilization

		Flex Time	Resource Utilization
<b>Flex Time</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
<b>Resource Utilization</b>	Pearson Correlation	.825**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Correlations on flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State revealed that there is a significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State (where  $P .825 = \text{sig} .000$ ) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

With respect to research question one; the correlations on remote jobs and goal attainment revealed that there is a significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of telecommunication firms in Rivers State (where  $P .732 = \text{sig} .000$ ) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between remote jobs and goal attainment of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. This result is in line with the findings of Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2021) who undertake a study on employees in a U.S. technology firm found

out that those allowed to work remotely experienced a 4.4% increase in output, driven by fewer distractions, greater schedule control, and improved focus. These conditions helped employees better prioritize tasks and align daily efforts with key performance objectives ultimately improving goal attainment.

With respect to research question and hypothesis two; correlations on job sharing and timeliness revealed that there is a significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State (where  $P = .859 = \text{sig}, .000$ ) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between job sharing and timeliness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. This result is supported by the study of Meyers and Woerkom (2020), who asserted that job sharing among healthcare professionals led to improved time management and prompt task completion. The findings revealed that job sharers were more likely to meet deadlines and handle time-sensitive assignments effectively because they could focus on their specialized areas during shorter working hours. Furthermore, the reduced workload intensity per individual decreased fatigue and increased punctuality in task delivery

With respect to research question and hypotheses 3; Correlations on flex time and resource utilization in telecommunication firms in Rivers State revealed that there is a significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization in telecommunication firms in Rivers State (where  $P = .825 = \text{sig}, .000$ ) thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between flex time and resource utilization in telecommunication firms in Rivers State. This finding is in line with Bloom et al. (2015) demonstrated that introducing flex time policies led to significant improvement in employee efficiency and resource utilization in a Chinese travel company. The randomized control trial involved call center workers allowed to choose their own work schedules. The findings showed that employees who utilized flexible scheduling were 13% more productive than those with fixed schedules, largely due to reduced commute fatigue, fewer unscheduled breaks, and more personalized peak-performance hours. This enabled the company to use time, energy, and digital infrastructure more effectively.

## CONCLUSION

Workplace flexibility through remote jobs, flex time, and job sharing has become a strategic tool for enhancing employee productivity in telecommunication firms in Rivers State. These flexible work arrangements empower employees to work in ways that align with their strengths and schedules, thereby improving goal attainment, promoting timeliness, and enabling more efficient resource utilization. By reducing burnout, minimizing commute-related stress, and fostering a results-oriented culture, workplace flexibility supports higher performance outcomes. For telecommunication firms operating in the competitive and fast-evolving Rivers State market, adopting and effectively managing flexible work practices is essential for sustaining productivity, optimizing talent, and achieving organizational goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Telecommunication firms should invest in robust digital infrastructure, secure virtual collaboration tools, and performance monitoring systems to enhance the productivity and goal attainment of remote employees.
2. Telecommunication firms should develop structured job-sharing frameworks with clearly defined roles, timelines, and accountability protocol.
3. Telecommunication firms should formalize flexible working hour policies that allow employees to work during their peak productivity periods which lead to more efficient use of human resources.

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