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How Government Organizations Can Sustain Remote Work Post COVID-19

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Abstract

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MSc, University of Nigeria, 2011

BSc, University of Nigeria, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

Government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Even though COVID-19 seems to be under control, organizations are still struggling with the aftermath of the pandemic and the need to sustain remote work. Challenges include lack of necessary information technology tools, software, technological skills, strategies for remote work, leadership skills, real-time communication; activity planning and program implementation, scheduling meetings, organizing child care, managing caseloads, fostering team work, and effective supervision. A conceptual framework based on organizational adaptation theory was used to guide this qualitative case study. Since the study was to ascertain how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19, semi- structured interviews were used to collect data from 12 government employees in Dallas Texas who worked remotely during COVID-19. Thematic analysis was conducted and the modified van Kaam method was used to 9 themes. Three major themes that morphed from the study included: (a) challenges of remote work; (b) employees' training needs; and (i) strategies for achieving positive social change. Understanding how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19 can contribute to positive social change by teaching managers of government organizations how to strategize remote work, effectively manage organizational change, improve technological skills of employees, and foster employee productivity.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate the completion of my study to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who continues to guide my steps, define my focus, bring peace to my soul, and strengthen my resolve to step out confidently on faith. I acknowledge the support from my wife Kate Nweke, NP; my sons, Kanyi Nweke and Kobi Nweke; my brothers, Chief Chibuzor Nweke, Dr. Osita Nweke, Dr. Emeka Nweke, and Chief Afam Nweke; my sister, Maureen Arum, NP; and my late parents, Chief Leonard Nweke and Chief Mrs. Edna Nweke.

You have all provided me with love, encouragement, faith, and tireless sacrifices in support of the achievement of my personal goals. I love each of you for who you are and what you have so graciously shared with me! You inspire and motivate me to strive for excellence in every endeavor. I also dedicate this work to all my extended family and friends, especially my friend Dr. Emmanuel Agbormbai, whose friendship, love, prayers, and counsel motivated me towards achieving my goals. I feel blessed to have each of you in my life. You are my touchstones!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Businesses rely on employee productivity to succeed, whether those people work collaboratively in a centralized location or independently from numerous remote locations. Remote work has become an important work strategy (Wang et al., 2020).According to Haber (2020), employees can use information technology (IT) to execute their duties from the comfort of their own homes or other locations, removing the need for employees to commute to an office. Several factors,-including globalization of technology, the need for improvement in the balance between work and personal life, a rise in younger generations entering the workforce, and, most recently, social distancing measures necessitated by the novel coronavirus pandemic, have contributed to the rise in remote work in the (IT) industry (Haber, 2020). Remote work allows employees to perform their duties from approved locations that are not the typical business locations (Donati et al., 2021).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people had limited experience working remotely and organizations were unprepared to support remote work, which has recently become the standard in many industries (Wang et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic caused several organizations and governments at different levels to enact policies to limit the spread of the virus, and take preventive measures that led to social separation and remote work (Ingram et al., 2021). According to Truelove et al. (2017), social separation is a scenario in which people are isolated from social groups, causing social interactions to be disrupted. Following the pandemic, many businesses could no longer interact face-

to-face with their business customers, and a lot of businesses were required to alter their operational strategies or shut down their physical locations. Multiple studies have been conducted on the challenges of remote work. For government organizations that could not afford to shut down because of the pandemic, it became necessary for them to look for alternative ways of conducting business; hence, (IT) became a viable option. Mbunge et al. (2020) argued that the prolonged lockdowns, travel bans, and increasing numbers of COVID-19 instances were all good reasons for businesses to embrace technology to work remotely.

The introduction of IT as a means of conducting business in organizations during the pandemic presented numerous challenges to both employees and employers (He et al., 2020). The technological innovation brought about complexities and difficulties in the application of the different technological tools and software (Singh et al., 2022). Also, the feelings of isolation due to the inability to have face-to-face interactions with the organization's stakeholders have been linked to an increase in job discontentment and poor productivity (Aczel et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey and Wolf (2018) pointed out that the inability of organizational leadership to understand how remote work aligns with the organization's vision can bring about lack of opportunities for the organization. The lack of the necessary IT tools, software, technological skills, and strategies for remote work, leadership skills, and real-time communication can be depressing and may negatively affect the organization's ability to sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

Even though COVID-19 seems to be controlled, many organizations are still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic because of the inability of organizational

management and employees to sustain remote work. Scheduling meetings, organizing child care, managing caseloads, fostering team work, and effective supervision are some of the numerous challenges affecting the quality of work done by remote workers post-COVID-19. The specific research problem is that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

This qualitative study was carried out by interviewing employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19. I collected and analyzed non-numerical data to have a better idea of how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. The study's findings may add to the existing literature on procedures and strategies that government organizations can use to sustain remote work post-COVID-19 pandemic. Jacks (2021) argued for broadening the scope and depth of research on remote IT employees. With the aid of a mixed-methods study design, Wang et al. (2020) looked at the difficulties that remote workers encountered during COVID-19 as well as the aspects of remote work and personal traits that affect these difficulties. Ingram et al. (2021) explored COVID-19 prevention and control approaches in industrial settings.

There are multiple studies on remote work during COVID-19; however, there is a dearth of information on how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Many of the challenges faced by organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic are still present, and organizations are struggling with the aftermath of theCOVID-19. The current study may contribute to positive social change by showing how government organizations could strategize work for employees to effectively

manage organizational change. The potential for positive social change may also include improved technological skills, better job engagement, and an increase in employee productivity.

In Chapter 1, I explain the study's background, problem statement, objective of the study, and research question that directs the study; I also cover the nature and significance of the study; study limitations; delimitations; definitions of terminology; and assumptions. The chapter concludes with a basic summary.

Background

Pandemics, such as the COVID-19, have a long history of fear, and this gives both employees and organizations a reason to prepare for any future recurrence (Stohr & Esveld, 2004). The virus, which turned into a pandemic, was said to have originated from a lab in Wuhan China (Cevik et al., 2020). The precise cause of pandemics is unknown, but scientists believe that pandemic breakouts are repeating biological occurrences that cannot be stopped (Morens et al., 2020). According to Potter (2011), pandemics likely occur every 10–50 years due to the emergence of new virus strains.

Following the pandemic, many businesses could no longer interact face-to-face with their business customers, and a lot of businesses were required to alter their operational strategies or shut down their physical locations. For government organizations that could not afford to shut down because of the pandemic, it became necessary for them to look for alternative ways of conducting business, and IT became a viable option. Mbunge et al. (2020) argued that the prolonged lockdowns, travel bans, and increasing numbers of COVID-19 instances were all good reasons for businesses to

embrace technology in order to work remotely. In a qualitative study, Renu (2021) observed that technology played an instrumental role in ensuring and maintaining activities without interruption, such as online shopping, supply deliveries, digital payment systems, and increased need for remote workers, distance learning, facilitation of telehealth and an increase in online entertainment. Hodder (2020) used a retrospective approach and found current studies on COVID-19-era, employment, and innovative technologies.

The remote work method of conducting business in organizations during the pandemic presented numerous challenges to both employees and employers (He et al., 2020). The technological innovation brought about complexities and difficulties in the application of different technological tools and software (Singh et al., 2022). Also, the feeling of isolation due to the inability to have face-to-face interactions with the organization's stakeholders was linked to an increase in job discontentment and poor productivity (Aczel et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey and Wolf (2018) pointed out that the inability of organizations to understand how remote work aligns with an organization's vision brought about the lack of opportunities for organizations. The lack of the necessary IT tools, software, technological skills, and strategies for remote work, leadership skills, and real-time communication can be depressing, and may negatively affect an organization's ability to sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

The specific research problem is that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. There is a need for more research on how organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. This study can fill the gap

identified by Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021). Kniffin et al. (2021) explored COVID-19 in the workplace to learn more about its effects, challenges, and lessons for future studies and actions; their study was based on remote workers of different organizations. Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) investigated the opportunities and challenges of remote workers who worked from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors indicated that there is a need to explore the future of work in America post-pandemic. Although Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) studied remote workers of different organizations; my study will extend their studies by using government remote workers as participants to determine if a government agency can maintain remote work post-COVID-19

Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant life and professional adjustments for many people (Sigahi et al., 2021). Following the onset of the pandemic, many businesses could no longer interact face-to-face with their business customers, and a lot of businesses were required to alter their operational strategies or shut down their physical locations. Government organizations that could not afford to shut down because of the pandemic, sought alternative ways of conducting business, and remote work method became a viable option. Technology helps remote workers to function efficiently (He et al., 2020). However, using technology to work remotely added to challenges faced by remote workers because it brought about complexities and difficulties in the application of different technological tools and software (Singh et al., 2022). Also, feelings of isolation due to the inability to have face-to-face interactions with

organization's stakeholders have been linked to an increase in job discontentment and poor productivity (Aczel et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey and Wolf (2018) pointed out that the inability of organizational leadership to understand how remote work aligns with the organization's vision can bring about a lack of opportunities for the organization.

Working remotely is convenient and comfortable for many individuals, and many employees now prefer to work remotely, even after COVID-19 (Galanti et al., 2021). However, lack of necessary IT tools, software, technological skills, and strategies for remote work, leadership skills, and real-time communication can be depressing and may negatively affect an organization's ability to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. The specific research problem is that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Consequently, I sought to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. The gap identified was based on studies by Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021). Kniffin et al. (2021) studied the effects of COVID-19 in the workplace. Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) also explored the opportunities and challenges of remote workers who carried out their duties from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both authors realized that there is need to explore the future of work in America post pandemic. Even though Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021) already studied remote workers of different organizations, my study extended their studies by studying remote workers of government organizations to determine how they can sustain remote work post Covid-19.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory single-case study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. Targeted training improves remote IT workers' skills, confidence, and proficiency (Bjursell et al., 2021). Having the right technological skills may help remote IT workers outperform their counterparts, improve job engagement, and boost productivity (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020). Low work engagement may lead to lower well-being and performance (Knight et al., 2017). The potential for positive social change includes improved technological skills, better job engagement, and increase in employee productivity. Also, the study can show how organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

Research Question

RQ: How can government organizations sustain remote work post-COVID-19?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study was Chandler's (1962) organizational adaptation theory (OAT).This theory was used to explain how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Many organizations resorted to remote work as a solution to the COVID-19 pandemic because of the need to minimize physical contact and encourage social distancing in the workplace. Although COVID-19 seems under control, but many organizations are still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic, and many employees have adapted to remote work. Consequently, exploring the future of remote work in government organizations is necessary.

Organizational adaptation is essential for organizational sustainability and competitiveness (Ali Hameed et al., 2019). Similarly, Bode et al. (2011) opined that organizational adaptation describes the ability to adjust to a new work environment or system in order to survive and thrive. Slawinski (2012) stated that the proper adaptation will enable organizations implement measures that will increase performance. The key statement inherent in OAT is it is linked to *fit*, *alignment*, *congruence*, and *strategic shift* (Sarta et al., 2020). While researching U.S. organizations, Chandler (1962) discovered that an organization's full performance potential can be realized if its organizational structure properly supports the pursuit of its objectives and if the organization can adapt to the strategy adopted to attain these objectives. Chandler initiated the conceptual idea of organizational adaptation, portraying strategy and structure as outcomes of managerial decisions rather than as givens. Sarta et al. (2020) opined that adaptation occurs when there is fit, alignment, congruence, and strategic shift. According to Aldrich and Ruef (2006) adaptation explains why organizations need to alter their methods of operations in order to remain relevant when there is a change in market dynamics or environmental factors. Adaptation requires a shift in both the target and the means of getting there, typically in response to a modification in the status quo (Vowels et al., 2022).

The current understanding of OAT is based on seminal research, and this study can be used in combination with existing research on the subject to generalize new ideas about the interactions among the studied variables. Sartori et al. (2018) proposed that firms can manage change through educational activities such as training, innovation, and human resources development, all of which can empower employees' competencies.

Astley and Van de Ven (1983) used contingency theory and resource-based theory to explore the impact of environmental circumstances on the change in strategy of organizations in the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets, vis-a-vis the organization's economic strength. Astley and Van de Ven (1983) continued by stating that the four fundamental perspectives of system structural, strategic choice, natural selection, and collective action views of organizations depend on whether one makes deterministic or voluntaristic assumptions about human nature. These perspectives express qualitatively distinct ideas about organizational structure, behavior, transformation, and managerial roles. According to Astley and Van de Ven's (1983) findings, environmental dynamism could be associated with strategic change, and economic autonomy determines the influence of environmental dynamics on strategic change. This means that the dynamic nature of an organization will ultimately determine how it adapts to change.

Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985) argued against the assumption that OAT is a product of the interaction between strategic choice and environmental determinism. The authors argued that choice and determinism might be placed on two different continuums as independent variables to create a typology of organizational adaptability. According to Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985:336), the relationships between these factors give rise to four typologies of adaptation:

> "(1) natural selection, with minimum choice and adaptation or selection; (2) differentiation, with high choice and high environmental determinism and adaptation with restrictions; (3) strategic choice, with optimum choice and

adaptation by design; and (4) undifferentiated choice, with incremental choice and adaptation by chance".

These categories affect organizations' strategic alternatives, decision making, political conduct and conflict, and environmental search. This research will incorporate the core ideas of OAT, including the arguments for and against whether adaptation is a managerially or environmentally driven process, as well as whether adaptation is a process of choice and selection or an absolutely necessary reaction to environmental conditions. The rationale for choosing this theory for my study is because applying OAT will show how government organizations can adapt to the aftermath of COVID-19 and apply strategies that will help organizations sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative, single-case study was used to explore this study's research topic. Alpi et al. (2019) stated that a single- case study describes, explains, or examines research phenomena using the researcher as a tool. The result may help introduce a new organizational policy initiative or service development. A single- case study analyzes a contemporary event in its actual setting, particularly when the study's subject and setting are uncertain (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi-Moghadam, 2018). After COVID-19 has been controlled, it is uncertain if government organizations will have sustainable strategies to sustain remote work.

Case studies are sometimes criticized for lacking academic rigor and viewed as inferior to more rigorous methodologies with clearer standards for gathering and analyzing data (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi-Moghadam, 2018). However, I think that case

studies do not lack academic rigor, rather, they are tailored to gather information and address specific issues and contexts. Alpi et al. (2019) opined that case studies are used to explore a single entity, group, community, or other factors of interest. Lobo et al. (2017) said a single-case study can replace large-group research. Harrison et al. (2021) added that case study research has experienced significant methodological progress, resulting in a pragmatic, flexible research strategy that may provide a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of a variety of challenges across disciplines. Using a single-case study will enable me focus on government organizations, and purposive sampling allowed me to select participants who are employees of government organizations and who worked remotely during COVID-19.

The sources of data for this study include interviews with participants who are employees of government organizations and who worked remotely during COVID-19. Predefined open-ended interview questions were used to explore how government organizations can handle remote work post-COVID-19. The data collection procedure included (a) choosing research participants who met the criteria for inclusion, (b) organizing, conducting, and recording interviews, and (c) interpreting the results in an objective manner. The measures in place to protect the rights of the study participants during the data collection and analysis process included (a) explaining the study's relevance and providing each participant with an informed consent form, (b) remaining impartial during the interviews, and (c) applying the case study process objectively.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this study and are defined for purposes of the research:

COVID-19: This is an unidentified etiology atypical pneumonia that was reported in December 2019 from Wuhan, China, and was later identified as coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and named COVID-19 (Cevik et al., 2020).

Information technology (IT): The creation, processing, storing, protecting, and exchanging of all sorts of electronic data via computers (Alotaibi & Federico, 2017).

Pandemic: A public health emergency that has turned into a global epidemic (Behera et al., 2021; Grennan, 2019).

Remote work: A working arrangement that helps employees carry out their jobs from locations that are not their typical work location, using information and communication technology. This means that employees can work from their home or any other location approved by their organization (Donati et al., 2021).

Social separation: A scenario in which people are isolated from social groups, causing social interactions to be disrupted (Truelove et al., 2017).

Technological advancement: The advent of new technologies that bring about innovations and efficiency in service delivery. Some of these are artificial intelligence, big data, block chain, cloud computing internet of things (IoT), cyber security machine learning, virtual and augmented reality, (Haber, 2020; Khan, 2020).

Assumptions

Assumptions are expectations and beliefs that, while unsubstantiated, are assumed to be true (Grant, 2014). In the current study, I assumed that participants would respond to interview questions with transparency and honesty. The remote workers chosen for the study were assumed to have the knowledge and expertise required to respond to questions about the technical skills needed to work remotely. I also assumed that the documents gathered from the participants would be accurate and representative of their experience as remote workers. I expected the qualitative method used in this study would provide a more comprehensive understanding and insight on how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. The rationale for this is because qualitative research collects the experiences, perceptions, and behaviors of individuals (Tenny et al., 2022). I also assumed the topic was relevant following the need for organizations to sustain remote work post-COVID-19 in order to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries a researcher sets to restrict the focus of a study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations can be reflected in the research objectives, research questions, theoretical background, and study sample. In the current study, I explored how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19, with a view to understanding the strategies in place for sustaining remote work in an organization. The lack of necessary IT tools, software, technological skills, strategies for remote work, leadership skills, and real-time communication are some of the challenges government organizations face while working remotely post- COVID-19 (He et al.,

2021). The conceptual framework of Chandler's (1962) OAT was used for the study. The scope of the study was limited to remote workers of government organizations who adopted remote business methods during the pandemic and hopes to sustain remote work post- COVID-19. The sources of data for the study included semi-structured interviews, observations, and bibliographic documents on the internet. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, and content analysis was used to analyze the data.

In this study, I recruited a sample of reliable employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19. Employees of government organizations who did not work remotely during the COVID-19 and employees of non-government organizations were not included. The research questions were designed to enable me to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19. The intended sample size was between 10 and 15 participants however, saturation was achieved with 12 participants. Saturation is achieved when a researcher no longer collects any new data (Guest et al., 2016).

Limitations

Study limitations are weaknesses within a research design outside the researcher's control and could influence the outcomes and conclusions of the research (Ross et al., 2019). Some of these factors may include the study design, results, and funding constraints, among others (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). My duty was to be aware of the research shortcomings and to present accurate findings. The first limitation of this study was having access to participants. There was restricted participation due to increased workloads resulting in the lack of availability of time for the interview.

To reduce the effects of this challenge, after I received the IRB approval, I began the process of data collection early in the research to give ample time for participants to respond. The second limitation was the possibility of employees being fearful the data collected could be traced back to them, which could lead to negative consequences, making participants hold back valuable data. I tried to clear this doubt by providing participants with an informed consent form, which, according to Kadam (2017), protects the interest of the participants because it discloses the purpose of the research, the role of the participant, how the data collected will be used, and every other key factor needed for the research participant to make an informed decision.

<div align="center">**Significance**</div>

The significance of conducting a research study includes the potential benefits to organizations, policy makers, and general society (Rasmussen, 2014). This study's possible significance included exploring effective techniques to handle remote workers post-COVID-19. The research could advance knowledge and support professional, theoretical, and social change practices by providing organizations and remote workers with strategies that may be beneficial to their organizations while working remotely post-COVID-19.

Significance to the Advancement of Knowledge

This study can advance knowledge by filling a gap identified by Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021). Kniffin et al. (2021) studied COVID-19 in the place of work to learn its effects, challenges, and lessons for future studies and actions; and their study was based on remote workers of different organizations. Similarly, Al-

Habaibeh et al. (2021) examined the opportunities and challenges of remote workers who performed their job from remote locations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors identified a need to study the future of work in America post- COVID-19. This study's findings can be a guide for researchers hoping to learn how to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. The study may also provide insights on effective strategies for carrying out remote work.

Significance to Practice

This study may create an understanding of management strategies that could be implemented by government organizations to keep up with productivity during pandemics or situations requiring employees to perform their duties remotely. Problems faced by remote workers during the pandemic were multi-faceted. Some of the difficulties encountered included the unavailability of the IT tools and software necessary to meet work targets, employees' inability to use even the most fundamental of the technology tools offered by their employer, lack of strategies for remote work, poor leadership skills, and lack of real-time communication (Saura et al., 2022). This research can yield new facts that could help government organizations and other organizations better understand strategies that will enable them to sustain remote work effectively. The management of various government organizations may potentially benefit from the study's findings by gaining insight into potential new strategies for bolstering operations after COVID-19. The research also provided insights on the importance of organizational collaboration and the different ways organizations can encourage collaboration because remote work requires collaboration (Yang et al., 2021).

Significance to Theory

This study provided an important theoretical advancement for government organizations' remote workers. Employees are instrumental to the advancement and success of any organization (Choi et al., 2020). The COVID-19 disrupted business activities (Park et al., 2021), however, the aftermath of the pandemic is still being felt by organizations (Barnes & Sax, 2020). With the increase in demands for remote workers, many organizations need strategies that could help them remain in business (Belbin et al., 2012). Findings from this study may provide better understanding of how to boost organizational productivity and improve employee IT skills in the face of challenging scenarios in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, I looked at suggestions for how organizational managers can sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

Significance to Social Change

The application of the findings of this study could bring about positive social change in the management strategies of government organizations and nongovernment organizations. The findings of this research may also aid organizational management and staff in developing and implementing strategies that will enhance employee job satisfaction. The study may also lead to positive social change by helping employees understand how their technological skills impact their productivity. Sahni (2021) believed that technological skills and job engagement are key workplace factors for organizational success and positive social change. The joy in fostering positive social change lies in the potential to make people's lives better and the world a better place for everyone to live (Brimhall & Saastamoinen, 2020).

Summary and Transition

Chapter 1 included an introduction to the topic, which is how government organizations can handle remote work post- COVID-19. It is important to understand how employees can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. A background of research materials pertinent to the study's focus and a knowledge gap in the field were presented.

The study could help in filling the gap identified by Kniffin et al. (2021) and Al-Habaibeh et al. (2021). My study extended these studies by using government remote workers as participants to determine how government organizations can maintain remote work post-COVID- 19. The research could support professional practice by providing organizations and remote workers with practical strategies that may be used to handle remote work in government organizations. Also, the findings of the research could lead to positive social change by improving the technological skills of remote workers.

Chapter 2 includes the literature review that explains the key concepts of the study, such as the traditional work environment, remote employment, weaknesses of remote work, strategies for managing remote work, training needs of remote workers, and other concepts. Chapter 2 also covers articles that pertain to the theories and examples of research studies related to the workplace and post- COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The specific research problem is that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Working remotely has become a common practice in organizations after the COVID-19 pandemic. Personal and professional routines were changed for many because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Sigahi et al., 2021). Many businesses had to rearrange their operations or even shut down after the pandemic because they could no longer meet their clients face-to-face for fear of spreading the disease. For government organizations that could not afford to shut down because of the pandemic, it became necessary for them to look for alternative ways of conducting business, and IT became a viable option. Mbunge et al. (2020) argued that the prolonged lockdowns, travel bans, and increasing numbers of COVID-19 instances are all good reasons for businesses to embrace technology to work remotely.

The introduction of IT as a means of conducting business in organizations during the pandemic presented numerous challenges to both employees and employers (He et al., 2020). The technological innovation brought about complexities and difficulties in the application of the different technological tools and software (Singh et al., 2022). The feelings of isolation due to the inability to have face-to-face interactions with theorganization's stakeholders caused job discontentment and poor productivity (Aczel et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey and Wolf (2018) pointed out that the inability of organizations to understand how remote work aligns with an organization's vision created a lack of opportunities for organizations. Working remotely is convenient and

comfortable for many individuals, but the lack of the necessary IT tools, software, technological skills, and real-time communication can be depressing and may negatively affect an organization's ability to sustain remote work post- COVID-19.

Consequently, the purpose of this study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Sustaining remote work is important because many employees now prefer to work remotely (Galanti et al., 2021). Chapter 2 includes the literature review on key concepts of the study, such as traditional work environment, remote employment, weaknesses of remote work, strategies for managing remote work, training needs of remote workers, strategies for managing change in an organization, employee productivity and technology, technology and job engagement, organization change models, enhancing organizational leadership skills, and importance of employee collaboration in a remote work environment.

Literature Search Strategy

In conducting the literature review for this study, I systematically searched for articles, including peer-reviewed and scholarly journals, published in English between 2017 and 2022. The Walden University Library was the main database source, and this literature review was primarily compiled using Academic Search Premier, Journal of Business Communication, Thoreau Multi Database Search, Sage, Business Source Complete, Google, and Dissertations and Theses at Walden University. To keep myself informed about articles that matched a certain set of search terms, I also used Google Scholar's alert service. The list of search terms used included *remote IT users, organizational challenges of COVID-19, effects of COVID-19, challenges of teleworking,*

telecommuting, working from home, impact of the lack of technological skills, and *advantages of remote working*. I reviewed over 150 articles on pandemics, working from home, and remote IT users. As the literature grew, I expanded my reviews to include *organizational management* and *training*. Training employees is a big part of how well government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19 (Agnes, 2022; Philpot & Gavrilova Aguilar, 2021; Wib, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is Chandler's (1962) (OAT). Studies have revealed that adaptation requires a shift in both the target and the means of getting there, typically in response to a modification in the status quo (Vowels et al., 2022). This means that firms modify their procedures and strategies when faced with an unexpected event that disrupts business as usual and the results anticipated. The goal of adaptation in is to deliberately reduce the disparity between an entity and its administrative and economic environment settings (Sarta et al., 2021). OAT is an important theory in the management sciences. The theory is used frequently in management research because of its ability to address the key concerns about organizational change, performance, and survival and behavior (Sarta et al., 2021). Chandler (1962) opined "Structure follows strategy." While researching U.S. organizations, Chandler discovered that an organization's full performance potential can be realized only if its organizational structure properly supports the pursuit of its objectives and can adapt to the strategy adopted to attain these objectives. Chandler proposed the theory of organizational adaptation, portraying strategy and structure as outcomes of managerial decisions rather than as givens.

According to Aldrich and Ruef (2006), adaptation explains why organizations need to alter their methods of operations in order to remain relevant when there is a change in market dynamics or environmental factors. OAT has evolved over time, and Astley and Van de Ven (1983) asserted in their study in China that the external environment influences organization's strategic change. The authors used contingency theory and resource-based theory to check how environmental circumstances influence the change strategies of organizations in the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets, vis-à-vis the organization's economic strength. Helfat and Peteraf (2009) hypothesized that (a) compared to inertia and selection, adaptation is evaluated in terms of survival, growth, or performance; and (b) the characteristics that exemplify the idea of adaptability do not entirely represent either organizational success or survival. Similarly, Durand (2009) hypothesized that organizational adaptation is predicated on decision making that is intentional, relational, conditioned, and convergent. Intentional decision making means that decision- makers are conscious of their environment, relational decision making indicates that organizations and environments have an impact on one another, conditioned decision making means that environmental features evolved as a result of other organizations' actions, and convergent decision making means that organizations try to get nearer to a certain set of environmental features.

The rationale for choosing OAT for my study was because applying this theory would help show the need for government organizations to adapt to the aftermath of COVID-19 and apply strategies to help them sustain remote work post- COVID-19. Kahn and Rouse (2021) stated that employees can adapt to their workplace; they are better able

to overcome, avoid, or mitigate the effects of obstacles and long-standing practices that prevent them from realizing their full potential. According to Lengnick-Hall et al. (2020), adaptation in the workplace is best understood as a process of putting into action the strategies and measures in place to make the most efficient use of limited resources to advance an organization's stated mission.

The research question for the current study sought to know how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. This research question relates to OAT because the theory will form the bases for the exploration of how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. Working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic was a reactionary measure to the pandemic that government organizations had to take.

Conceptual Framework

Chandler's (1962) (OAT) was used to explain how government organizations may sustain remote work after COVID-19. To limit physical contact and promote social distance in the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic, several firms turned to remote work. Although COVID-19 appears to be under control, numerous organizations are still grappling with the pandemic's after effects, and many employees still prefer to work from home (WFH). As a result, learning how to sustain remote work has become necessary. For an organization to be sustainable and successful, organizational adaptation is crucial (Ali Hameed et al., 2019). According to Bode et al. (2011), organizational adaptation is the capacity to adapt to a new work environment or system in order to

flourish. According to Slawinski (2012), adaptability will let businesses put policies in place to thwart poor performance.

Chandler (1962) studied U.S. organizations and found that an organization can reach its full performance potential if its organizational structure helps it reach its goals and if it can adapt to the strategy it uses to reach these goals. The author introduced the concept of organizational adaptation by depicting strategy and structure as the results of managerial decisions rather than as predetermined elements. Adaptation, according to Aldrich and Ruef (2006), explains why organizations must modify their operational methods in response to a change in market trends or external influences to remain useful. A change in the status quo usually prompts adaptation, which calls for a change in both the aim and the methods of getting there (Vowels et al., 2022).

OAT is based on seminal research and can be used with other research on the subject to come up with new ideas about how studied factors interact with each other. According to Sartori et al. (2018), businesses can manage change by engaging in educational activities that can strengthen employee competences, such as training, creative thinking and growth in human resources. Astley and Van de Ven (1983) used the concept of contingency and resource-centered theory to look into how environmental dynamics may affect a change in strategy of organizations in the Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets, as well as how corporate economic adaptability impacts how environmental dynamics and strategy change interact.

The four primary perspectives namely, system-structural, strategic choice, natural selection, and shared opinions of organizations, according to Astley and Van de Ven

(1983), rely on whether one applies deterministic or voluntaristic assumptions about human nature. These four viewpoints present qualitatively different concepts on managerial responsibilities, organizational structure, behavior, and change. According to the results of the study conducted by Astley and Van de Ven in 1983, environmental dynamism has a favorable relationship with environmental dynamics have a positive control over the likelihood that a manufacturing firm will execute a strategic change, and economic adaptability has a positive influence on environmental dynamics and strategic change.

According to Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), OAT is not a result of the connection between strategic choice and environmental determinism. The authors proposed that to develop a typology of organizational adaptation, choice and determinism could be positioned on two different continuums as independent variables. According to Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), these variables interact to produce four fundamental types: (a) natural selection with low levels of adaptation or selection; (b) differentiation, high levels of environmental determinism, high levels of choice, and little adaptation; (c) strategic choice, with high levels of choice and design-driven adaptation; and (d) undifferentiated choice, with progressing choice and chance-driven adaptation. These groups have an impact on an organization's tactical choices, placing importance on means or goals in decision making, political conduct and contradiction, and environmental search.

This study integrated the major assumptions of OAT, which covers the debate on whether adaptation is managerially or environmentally derived; or whether adaptation is a process of choice and selection versus one in which it is an essential reaction to

environmental forces. The rationale for choosing this theory for my study was because applying OAT will show how government organizations can adapt to the aftermath of COVID-19 and how to apply strategies that will help an organization sustain remote work post- COVID-19.

Literature Review

Traditional Work Environment Pre-COVID 19

The workplace is the setting for all employee's actions that lead to the creation of products and services. According to Useche et al. (2018), the definition of *work environment* includes any setting in which the daily operations of an organization take place. The term *work environment* refers to both the internal and external conditions in which workers interact and thrive while on the job (Daniel et al., 2017). Organizational requirements, technological progress, and pandemic like COVID-19 all have a role in the ever-evolving nature of today's workplaces (Scully-Russ & Torraco, 2020). Taheri et al. (2020) argued that a pleasant work environment is necessary for any business that intends to keep its employees around, improve its operations, and boost its output. Naz et al. (2020) shared the view that productive employees tend to stay put when they are provided with positive incentives and encouragement at work. Foss (2020) is concerned that COVID-19 will forever alter the structure of organizations because of the many ways in which it alters daily operations.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the majority of organizational activities took place in the traditional work setting. In a broad sense, the term "traditional work environment" refers to any designated workplace that is physically located in a building,

has offices, and is furnished with standard office equipment (Colenberg et al., 2021).

Based on the research of Opperman (2002), the traditional workplace is a combination of

three distinct environments which are the technical environment, the human environment,

and the organizational environment. The technical environment, in his view, consists of

things like computers, networks, and other technical infrastructure. The technological

environment fosters conditions in which workers can carry out their tasks, whereas the

human environment encompasses the social and political climate of the workplace, as

well as the quality of management and supervision provided to workers. Before COVID-

19, many firms followed the traditional work pattern, which required employees to drive

to a specific work place to complete their jobs. Workplaces are built in a way that

promotes casual contact between workers so that they can more easily learn from one

another and collaborate on projects. According to Muhammed and Zaim (2020),

knowledge sharing and management in enterprises can boost performance and

productivity.

Many experts in the field of organizational management believe that by

encouraging knowledge sharing, businesses can boost their efficiency and productivity

while also providing their staff with the benefits of a greater pool of information. Both

Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) and Park (2017) suggested that a well-designed

workplace may engage workers and invigorate them to raise output. The health of both

the company and its workers could benefit from paying more attention to the space in

which they operate. When the COVID-19 pandemic unexpectedly broke out, many

businesses were forced to close (Sigahi et al., 2021). Many businesses were obligated to

send their employees home due to COVID-19 since the typical work atmosphere, with all the benefits that come with it, had to be avoided in order to prevent the spread of the virus (Galanti et al., 2021). Traditional office practices that necessitated close proximity to others were discouraged. There was an urgent need, recognized by business executives and political figures around the world, to design a fresh office setting that would make workers feel valued, secure, and motivated to do their best (Park et al., 2021). However, it appeared COVID-19 is under control, and organizations have to decide if they have what it takes to sustain remote work or return to the traditional work environment.

Remote Employment

Businesses and organizational life have undergone significant transformation as a global response to the outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the workplace. Working from remote locations has become the norm, and technology has enabled the digitization of interactions between businesses and their clients as well as between businesses and their employees. If one were to believe Graves and Karabayeya (2020), the world has systematically shifted from less technologically sophisticated ways of doing organizational activities and doing business to more advanced ways. As a result of efforts to lessen the impact of the aftermath of COVID-19, businesses have retained remote work as a good method of managing their operations and directing their employees toward the achievement of their organizational goals (Cho et al., 2021). Remote work will enable workers to coordinate management meetings, seminars, and conferences, talk with and meet with organizational clients and business customers without the typical interface. In order to keep operations running during the pandemic

spike, firms around the world expanded their reliance on remote workers, as reported by Beer and Mulder (2020). According to Cho et al.'s (2021) research, remote work systems were already in place in many countries before the pandemic, but the development of COVID-19 has significantly increased the rate of compliance and mandatory implementation and utilization in many businesses and nations. They went on to say that remote work has become increasingly common as a short-term solution to keep some degree of production and services going despite setbacks and as a way to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Wang et al. (2021) found that remote work had many benefits, including increased independence, less time spent commuting, higher levels of job satisfaction, and lower operating costs. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2021) noted that remote work has other benefits, such as lowering stress levels and encouraging workers to become proficient in the use of tools that improve efficiency. Due to the flexibility that comes with working remotely, employees may better manage their time at the office and outside of it. This is attributable to the fact that they can develop abilities that will allow them to juggle work and personal responsibilities more effectively. According to Cho et al. (2021), two things account for the increased likelihood of a secure workplace made possible by initiatives like remote work. First, we have metrics of technological and organizational productivity. It has been pointed out that people are no longer physically tied to their places of employment thanks to technological advancements.

Most companies were utilizing antiquated technology before the pandemic, but the new system of working from home necessitated cutting-edge gadgets and rapid,

dependable internet connections to facilitate communication with colleagues and clients outside the home. Zoom's widespread adoption has made it easier to hold meetings visually, which has cut down on the time and money formerly spent locating and decorating meeting spaces, setting up tables and chairs, and handling similar logistical headaches. According to Chiu et al. (2020), the adoption of social distancing and restrictions on most crowded and choking working settings is now a new organizational behavior or culture at all levels of the workplace, and it has helped employees live healthier and more sanitary lives. Now more than ever, it is important for businesses and their staff to take precautions against the spread of disease in the workplace. Although remote work is anticipated to continue post-pandemic age, the level of its acceptance is likely to differ depending on the labor laws of every country and the unique working circumstances of remote employees.

Weaknesses of Remote Work

Despite its many advantages, remote employment may also have a number of drawbacks. Possible ergonomic issues (such as musculoskeletal problems, eye fatigue, boredom, etc.) stemming from inadequate office equipment and furnishings add to the risks of social isolation and disconnection from coworkers and the business as a whole (Ferarri et al., 2021). This fits with what Gelanti et al. (2021) opined about remote workers being isolated from their coworkers and distracted by family at home, which would make them less focused and maybe not work as many hours.

Employees may need to put in extra time at work in an environment where productivity is used as a performance indicator. Yang et al. (2022) reported a drop in

observed real-time interaction, including scheduled meetings and audio/video conversations, when a company shifted to remote work for all employees. The alternative, non-real-time interaction, was left as an option for many staff members. When working in a non-real-time setting, employees may have to wait for responses that are critical to their jobs. Also, Lustgarten (2020) stated that clients may be more likely to have their privacy broken by accident when employees WFH.

Strategies for managing change in an organizations

The ability of employees to successfully manage change in the workplace is an important factor in determining whether an organization will be able to endure and thrive in the face of ongoing shifts in the environment in which it operates. Alterations made to an organization's culture, as well as its structures, tactics, or procedures, are examples of organizational change (Quattrone & Hopper, 2001). Similarly, Sartori et al. (2018) defined change as both the process by which something changes and the product of that process. Organizational change takes place when there is a shift in the work process, the structure, or the goals of the organization. Change is possible in the context of a dynamic and complex business environment for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: improved performances, poor performances, larger work force, extra or modified company objectives, and unforeseen occurrences. In light of this, change management has become an important part of business success that companies have to look into.

Change management is difficult since it is fraught with peril (Jacob et al., 2013); hence many businesses struggle to adjust to it (Rick, 2012). Change management describes the activities, processes, and instruments a company uses to address vital new

work situations (Sartori et al., 2018). According to Saddiqui (2017), change management is an ongoing process that may be facilitated by having a distinct plan of action, a vision, and application of the appropriate skills, effective management of time and resources, as well as motivation and a conscious effort to bring about change. Saddiqui (2017) expanded on this idea by noting that change management should be implemented throughout all departments in an organization, including logistics, production, finance, and customer support. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2015) claimed that the best change management processes include a clear vision, involvement from top management, a change management strategy, consideration of stakeholder input, open lines of communication at all levels, a receptive organizational environment, and a way to track progress. Parry et al. (2014) said that organizational change models could help or lead change initiatives by pointing out the right way to do things or by showing the many things that cause change.

Several strategies exist that businesses might use to strengthen their workforce post COVID-19. For instance, one effective method of enhancing organizational efficiency is to develop a clear and well-defined strategy for communication (Reddy & Gupta, 2020). Since remote workers are often separated by great distances, effective method of communication becomes crucial to their productivity. Using digital solutions to facilitate successful communication and maintaining social distance in response to the aftermath of COVID-19 is important (Lee & Li, 2021).

To work remotely, businesses may have to use software like Team App, Zoom, WebEx, and Hangouts to keep remote workers as connected as possible and let them

complete their work as efficiently as if they were in the same room (Sah et al., 2020).

Many businesses now rely on these forms of communication to carry out their regular

operations, from answering customer inquiries to scheduling staff meetings.

Organizations need the competitiveness of their employees when they work remotely and

as such, Pervaiz (2020) focused on the need for organizations to become learning

organizations so that adaptability to remote work will not be a problem. As noted by

Dash and Kuddus (2020), data showed that Microsoft Teams had roughly 32 million

users in March of 2020. This may mean that both businesses and employees are starting

to value open lines of communication between team members as a way to improve the

skills of each person and the efficiency of the whole business.

Setting attainable goals is another strategy that can help a business to succeed. A

number of businesses have had to make adjustments to their management structures as a

solution to COVID-19 pandemic (Newman & Ford, 2021). Setting unrealistic goals and

the necessity to meet some specified targets that may be unattainable due to the

organization's current methods of operation, are characteristics of businesses that have

not yet fully adapted to the remote work technique of carrying out their operations.

Strubbia et al. (2020) hypothesized that technology in organizations could facilitate goal

setting by providing a platform where remote IT workers can share their perspectives

about their they want to achieve; providing an avenue through which remote IT workers

can provide their thoughts about their goals; decreasing or controlling difficulties in goal

setting; giving employees a platform for training and teamwork in goal setting; and

piqueing their interest in goal setting through attractive design and user-friendly

technological features. McGloin et al. (2020) noted that some technology tools and programs may perform better than others at doing particular tasks. As a result, businesses should invest more time and energy into ensuring that their employees receive consistent training through the use of useful digital technologies in order to maximize productivity.

Promoting learning within the organization is another good strategy that should be explored. Basten and Haamann (2018) said that organizational learning makes it possible for organizations to share knowledge within the organization by giving newcomers and employees with less experience a way to learn from employees with longer work histories. According to Castaneda et al. (2021), companies that prioritize organizational learning see significant gains in areas like competitiveness, strategy, and crucial variables like technology transfer, alliance development, and innovation. As a management strategy, organizational learning's end goal is to provide workers with the theoretical and practical expertise that will allow them to effectively contribute to the organization's expansion (Mohamed & Otman, 2021). Organizational learning is essential in dealing with the aftermath of COVID-19. How learning is approached is crucial, since poor learning procedures can lead to unfavorable results (Basten & Haaman, 2008). Employees can learn from one another, even if they aren't physically in the same room because when dealing with the aftermath of pandemic, employees can continue their work using IT tools and software to gain knowledge and experience from one another through virtual learning. Chick et al. (2020) said that virtual classrooms, Webcasts, and videoconferencing software are real tools that can help with education and business growth.

Organizational Change Models

A wide variety of change models and hypotheses have been discussed (Gail, 2018; Harrison et al., 2021). Parry et al. (2014) distinguished between the processual change model and descriptive models. A processual change model, according to the authors, is a complicated, dominant, and uncertain scenario in which the politics, substance, and settings all intertwine and conflict. It is also a scenario in which our perception of current circumstances and our aspirations for the future can influence our understanding of past incidents, which may modify our impression of change (Dawson, 2005). Therefore, while the processual framework is primarily a method to analyze ambiguous, muddled, and unexpected change involving multiple interested parties both within and beyond the institutions under study, its complexity and richness, particularly in incorporating political processes, provides a more detailed understanding of situated organizational change processes across time (Dawson, 2012). Lewin's (1947) three-step model for managing planned change says: "Managing change requires creating the need for something new and taking steps to achieve it; transitioning through the change; and adapting to the change."

Kotter's (1995) eight-step model for leading change states: "To lead change, there should be an attitude of seriousness on the desire for change; an unwavering alliance; and a concise plan of action for achieving change; a proper communication channel; and broad support from the organization. Numerous studies have weighed in on the descriptive model, which offers an explanation for the results of organizational change models and has received a lot of attention (Errida, 2021). Burke and Litwin (1992) looked

at the relationship between 12 important factors for organizational change: outer environment, management, the purpose and plan of action, the culture of the organization, architecture, systems (policies and procedures), workplace conditions, desire to succeed, job demands, individual talents and capabilities, individual needs and principles, and the success of individuals and organizations are all factors to consider.

Nadler and Tushman (1980) offered their congruence model for exploring how congruence and fit between the four aspects of an organization's restructuring procedure (work and duties, people, formal organizational layouts, and informal organization) have an impact on organizational behaviors, which in turn effect transformation and efficiency. This model was developed to study how the congruence and fit of these elements influence and lead to organizational behavior. In a similar vein, Beckhard and Harris (1977) utilized their change model to suggest that being dissatisfied with the status quo, seeing what needs to change, and taking the initial move towards effecting change are all crucial to bringing about change in an organization. In order to manage organizational change well, it is important to understand the culture and politics of the organization and have the skills and knowledge to handle transitions to change (Carnall, 2007).

Training Needs of Remote Workers

Training is an organizational investment that brings about innovation (Sung & Choi, 2014). According to Tahir et al. (2014) training is part of an organization's operational strategies, undertaken to boost employee productivity and to enable the organization to achieve its goals. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations realized that in order to remain in business, they had to provide the

employees with the necessary skills needed to work remotely. During COVID-19, many organizations had to transition from in-person to remote method of conducting business. By switching to remote method of operation, organizations saw a dire need to retrain their workforce in the use of the relevant IT tools and software that will enable them to perform their duties (Byrd-Williams et al., 2021).

Now, the pandemic seemed to have been controlled, but organizations wishing to sustain remote work must continue to train and retrain employees so that they can keep up with the spate of technological advancement. Sendawula et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study to ascertain if training and employee engagement has any impact on employee productivity. The study proved that training and employee engagement are very instrumental to employee productivity. Similarly, Amin et al. (2013) while studying the education sector of Pakistan realized that training of employee can lead to an increase in their productivity and quality of performance. There is need for comprehensive and efficient training programs for employees, with the aim of achieving a more productive and sustainable business strategy that could also be used to handle the aftermath of the pandemic. Hence, Henderson et al. (2020) believed that in order to lessen the devastating impacts of COVID-19, there needs to be adequate provisions made for education and training of workers or employees so that they can work remotely.

Technological Skills and Job Engagement

For remote workers to be successful in their line of work, they must possess the necessary technological competences. Remote workers need to embrace the digital revolution which has inspired a dimension of focus towards boosting employees'

technology abilities and participation therein (Fuller & Unwin, 2005). To deal with the aftermath of COVID-19, employees who are technically savvy may be in a better position to contribute to the needs of their organizations (Wang et al., 2021). According to Hussein (2020), numerous businesses found innovative solutions of working remotely, especially after COVID-19. The research by Supriyanto et al. (2020), opined that a lot of companies have not only set up ways to ensure security and privacy, as well as added support people who will help keep the technology infrastructure running, but they have also put in place software that will make working remotely easier.

The use of artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly popular in contemporary businesses as a result of the inherent benefits it offers to businesses (Tang et al., 2020). For instance, the use of software like WebEX call, Teams, or Zoom call to hold meetings between individuals or government parastatals and corporate makes it feasible for organizations to efficiently communicate without a dire need for a physical contact (Supriyanto et al., 2020). According to Reddy and Gupta's (2020) opinion, the necessity for communication technology is very crucial and absolutely cannot be ignored, especially as organizations are still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic. This was why Mohanty and Mishra (2020) maintained that organizations should continue reshaping or retraining their workers so that they can keep up with technology.

Technology and Improved Productivity

The application of technology has emerged as the pivotal driver of increased productivity in many different businesses and organizations (Beer & Mulder, 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses were not driven by technology, and

employees were required to report in person to their duty posts (Ng et al., 2020). Due to

the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, many businesses were compelled to incorporate

technological solutions into their daily operations in order to maintain their level of

output. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Johnson et al. (2020) suggested

that automation and other forms of modern technology have been instrumental in the

manner in which organizational operations have been managed. Frank et al. (2019) stated

that there has been a substantial expansion in the use of machine intelligence, automation,

and robotics. Even though, prior to COVID-19 pandemic many organizations relied on

technology, the pandemic provided a dire need for many organizations to adopt the use of

technology in order to remain in business (Makridas, 2017).

　　　　While some studies have discussed the disadvantages of applying technology in

organizations, many others have looked at the benefits of technology in increasing

productivity. For instance, Brougham and Haar (2018) held the belief that the use of

artificial intelligence raises the level of risk associated with one's job security. In a

similar vein, Yang et al. (2017) noted that constantly using technology to do one's job

could be connected with an increase in screen time as well as a more sedentary work life.

A sedentary lifestyle that is prevalent in the workplace is linked to negative health

consequences such as depression, anxiety, diabetes, obesity, and heart and cardiovascular

disease (Machav et al., 2017; Duncan et al., 2012). Although some academics were

skeptical of the benefits of technology in the workplace before the COVID-19 outbreak,

many now see it as an absolute necessity because, during the pandemic, the utilization of

a variety of technological software programs led to an increase in productivity across a

variety of industries, and those software programs are still being used post COVID-19 to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic. According to Lakhwani et al. (2020), developments in technology have fundamentally rebuilt firms by making their business operations more impactful and run more efficiently than ever before. With the help of technology, today's workforce may access an unprecedented trove of digital knowledge, speed through mundane mental chores (with tools like data analysis software), provide face-to-face or virtual services (like distance learning), and engage in dynamic cross-continental collaborations (Johnson et al., 2020). In many non-complex businesses, the coordination of business activities and the subsequent boost in productivity are accomplished using straightforward video conferencing software such as Zoom, Teams, and Skype. On the other hand, many complex organizations, especially in the health care field, may use more and more advanced technologies.

Asadzadeh et al. (2022), provided a group of technological tools that complex organizations may use while working remotely, and they include: (a) Preventive medicine (mobile health, search engine queries, e-medicine, automation, IoT, artificial inteligence, big data, augmented realities (AR), and social media); (b) diagnosis (includes mobile health, drones, telehealth treatments, Web, machine learning, decision-making systems (DMS), and digital health records (DHR); (c) care (mobile health, remote medical care, artificial intelligence, automation, augmented reality, and IT);(d) telehealth, M-health, IoT, and blockchain monitoring; and (e) the management team and planning (GIS, M-health, IoT, and blockchain).

Technology has the potential to improve the overall efficacy of project management by enhancing members of a team's ability to communicate with one another and work together (Leonard, 2022). According to Whitelaw et al. (2020), using digital health technology in the healthcare industry can improve surveillance, testing, and screening for infection, clinical management, medicinal supplies, and contact tracing. In addition, tracking influenza-like disease in a community via tracking online search engines to ascertain health seeking behavior in the form of online search engines can help encourage the immediacy of vaccine production and alternative measures (Saher & Anjum, 2021). When it comes to event planning, the application of technology has emerged as a viable substitute for the use of traditional paper calendars. Employers and employees may now organize events that will boost the productivity of the firm from the comfort of their own homes with the help of electronic calendars, which make the planning process simpler and more convenient. During the pandemic, the use of instant messaging software applications like Zoom and Skype has made it simpler for employers and employees to exchange messages and get instant responses soon after the message is sent, provided that the receiver is accessible at the other end of the conversation. Software applications that include instant messaging tools have made it easier for members of a team to collaborate with one another, which have ultimately led to an increase in the amount of work that has been completed.

Enhancing Organizational Leadership Skills

Change management is impossible without effective leadership, yet change strategy is important in a competitive market environment (Hao et al., 2015). This means

that it is the job of organizational leadership to motivate and encourage employees to change so that an organization can survive and adapt to the changing business environment in which it operates (Hao et al., 2015). In reality, since the spread of COVID-19, individuals, groups, and stakeholders have been looking for ways to improve their leadership abilities so that their organizations can better deal with the aftermath of COVID-19. Qi et al. (2019) suggested that inclusive leadership is a competency that enables employees to generate innovative behavior because it promotes knowledge sharing.

Organizational leaders can use their abilities and knowledge to promote their organization, remove employee anxieties, and create a welcoming work environment for all employees. Eight fundamental characteristics of effective leadership were highlighted by Kaul et al. (2020), and they are as follows: having the right communication channel; having a realistic assessment of the situation; focusing on the organizational goal and organizational values; making wise decisions in the face of uncertainty; being able to make both long-term and immediate plans; acting with intent and humbleness; flattening the leadership design; and having the desire to see beyond oneself. It is essential for the leaders of an organization to share a central ideology as well as a similar vision in order to improve their leadership abilities. Clarity demands an investigation into the most pressing requirements, priorities, and long-term vision of a business if there is to be any hope of improving leadership skills and displaying managerial aptitude (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Improving communication between a company and its various stakeholder groups is one other way to ensure that excellent leadership is exercised inside that

organization. Musheke and Phiri (2021) stated that communication is a vital aspect of an organization since it facilitates performance, decision-making, and collaboration in the workplace. Greater productivity is shown in the workplace when employees collaborate (Rahmadani et al., 2020).

Importance of Employee Collaboration in a Remote Work Environment

Collaboration among workers performing their jobs in a remote setting is a very useful management strategy that businesses need to implement in order to achieve high levels of efficiency. Edwards (2011) emphasized the importance of collaboration in increasing common knowledge. This is consistent with the opinion of Hellman et al. (2016), which stated that fostering collaboration in a company enables employees to build shared fundamental principles and a united view of all jobs and responsibilities done inside the organization. According to Lewis (2016), collaboration increases both the effectiveness of employees and their dedication to the aims of the firm. In a recent study, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2019) concluded that collaboration within a company will help groom people, endowing them with the abilities and experiences that will enable the employees to rise into leadership positions as opposed to sourcing leaders from outside the business. Lacerenza (2017) stated that employees will not advance to positions of leadership without some level of knowledge transfer and the ability to demonstrate trained behavior. Many organizations have recognized that encouraging cooperation amongst employees can help increase performance and productivity (Aldulaimi, 2018). There is a wealth of studies that discussed the prerequisites that must be met in order for collaboration to take place within an organization. The act of

collaborating can be beneficial to organizations in many ways. According to the opinions of Bennett and Gadlin (2012), in a collaborative organization, the collaborators may build shared objectives; common agendas of activities aimed at attaining the objectives of the organization and improve resource management abilities. The partnership will make it easier for people in the company to trust each other and talk to each other (Bennett & Gadlin, 2012).

As a result of increased communication and cooperation inside an organization, morale and output on all fronts are boosted (Assbeihat, 2016). The act of collaboration never takes place in a void. According to Roberts et al. (2016), the five most important preconditions for successful collaboration are (a) having a shared goal; (b) mutual benefit; (c) an enabling environment; (d) trust; and (e) certain personal traits. In a similar vein, Hall et al. (2019) enumerated ten aspects of a collaboration plan that needs to be taken into consideration. These are: (a) the way the team works; (b) the size and make-up of the team; (c) the team's ability to work together; (d) the impact of technology; (e) how the team works; (f) communication and coordination; (g) the style of leadership or management; (h) the way conflicts are avoided and handled; (i) training strategies; and (j) the budget.

Strategies for Managing Remote Workers

It is very crucial to have a solid understanding of management tactics for remote workers. Garro-Abarca et al. (2021) defined remote workers as a team of individuals or partners that work together on a common goal from many different locations and maybe different time zones and use technologies such as computers and phones for collaborative

purposes. The widespread adoption of the internet has all been significantly helped by the widespread adoption of physical barriers, the creation of flexible organizational structures, and the ability for teams to operate from multiple locations. A variety of human resources that will promote cross-boundary collaboration and the creation of teams that can meet location-specific demands can be provided by organizations using remote workers, which in many situations help in delivering these resources (Ford et al., 2017). Remote work has grown to the point where online collaboration is a highly sought-after skill by both national firms and, of course, international or regional firms (Garro-Abarca, et al., 2021).

The remote team provides opportunities for cooperation across time, geography, and organizational barriers and has become a crucial factor to take into account in the management of an organization as it enables businesses to handle the growing market variety. Information and communication technologies have undergone rapid growth and extensive application in recent years (Bhat et al., 2017). In addition, Garro-Abarca et al. (2021) provided a list of some strategies that could be utilized to manage virtual workers. These strategies include making inputs like technical, design, cultural, and training inputs; task processes like proper interaction, organization, and task-technology-structure fit; and outcomes such as goal attainment and performance management.

Morley et al. (2015) provided a list of factors that needs to be in place in order for virtual teams to be successful. These conditions include the following:

Structure of the organization: The structure of the organization includes having established rules and procedures to enable the activities of the organization, as well as a

support system, reward and punishment mechanism, staff training, and a welcoming company culture.

Team procedures and the remote environment- comprise making available to employees the kinds of contact that can stand in for those in a typical team setting; giving team members insight into the whereabouts and activity levels of their colleagues; accommodating a variety of work styles; and functioning as an integrated service, since it supports many people performing essential tasks.

People: remote teams' most important resources are their members. It is essential for the members of the team to communicate with one another in order for the team to be successful. When working from a variety of locations across space and time, it is necessary to have trust and faith in the workers that they will do their work in a conscientious manner. Working in remote teams requires trust because employees have access to sensitive work materials and information that, if handled carelessly, could hurt the reputation of an organization.

Because workers are exposed to sensitive work materials and information that, if handled carelessly, could drag an organization's reputation into shame, trust is an essential component of working in remote teams. Remote teams are typically located in a variety of different geographical areas and experience varying time zones. By leveraging modern communication tools, the team can operate in either a synchronous or asynchronous fashion to get their work done. The facilitation of work done by remote teams is a challenging endeavor that almost certainly involves interactions at a wide variety of technical and administrative levels and calls for high degrees of contact among

people who are physically separated from one another (Kimble, 2011). Empathy and adaptability were found to be among the most significant elements in a virtual team's success, followed by trustworthiness and how well the team's communication technology worked and how much it could do (Clark et al., 2019). Morley et al. (2015) added that members of remote teams should have excellent team-participation skills, be able to use technology to communicate, maintain flexibility, be patient, and behave in a consistent and predictable manner. Self-discipline, self-accountability, openness to technological changes, and excellent team-participation skills were also recommended.

Following these characteristics, organizational managers who wish to construct an effective virtual team should guarantee that all workers have equal access to information; urge team members to communicate frequently; utilize performance feedback from the team leader; establish standards governing the usage of communication technologies, to aid in knowledge transmission; and develop specific rules of behavior, as well as accessibility and recognition criteria for a job well done (Morley et al., 2015). The curiosity of many researchers has been piqued by the question of how remote worker can sustain remote work (Kitagwa et al., 2021). The synthesis of this study included the exploration of multiple related concepts, and the concepts that were evidenced in my study were employee productivity and technology, as well as technology and job engagement.

Kitagwa et al. (2021) explored the impact of (WFH) on performance in manufacturing enterprises using a quantitative method. Kitagwa et al. (2021) utilized diversities of workers in the same the organization to explore the influence of WFH on

efficiency and profession according to the number of days employees worked from home. The authors were able to remove the influence of variables such as productivity inequalities, labor-management relationships, and corporate backing for remote work across different types of organizations by confining their focus to individual businesses. In line with the findings of their investigation, employees who worked remotely saw a decrease in productivity when compared to their counterparts who did not. Secondly, because their first surveys had a wealth of information, the authors were able to evaluate the potential components that influenced decreases in production caused by remote work. Kitagwa et al. (2021) concluded that the most significant factors contributing to productivity losses were ineffective remote work arrangements and challenges in communication. In addition, they discovered that the primary factors that have the greatest impact on an occupation's level of production are not uniform. The authors also looked at how remote work affects mental health. They realized that the mental health of remote workers is much better than that of their counterparts who do not from home. This shows that their first findings were correct.

In a comparable quantitative study, Galanti et al. (2021) researched the influence conflict between work and family life, social isolation, distracting surroundings, workplace independence, and self-management have on staff efficiency, commitment to work, and feelings of stress while performing WFH. A cross-sectional study was employed by the authors to conduct an analysis of the data obtained from an online questionnaire that was filled out by 209 employees who performed their job remotely throughout the pandemic. The hypotheses were examined using hierarchical linear

regression, and research questions were raised to guide the study. The influence of family-work conflicts, social isolation, and distracting workplace surroundings were some of the aspects of a demanding job that were investigated. Self-leadership was considered a personal resource, whereas job autonomy was examined as a potential job resource. Gelanti et al. (2021) also found that while social isolation and conflict between work and family negatively connected with WFH work efficiency and involvement, but self-leadership and autonomy positively correlated with both. Additionally, conflicts between family and work and social isolation were associated to WFH stress, whereas autonomy and self-leadership had no effect.

Fana et al. (2022) sought to comprehend how the transition to telework affected employees' careers and lives. The authors explained how the shift affected elements of tasks and organizational structure, collaborative effort, routine, staff independence, and the type and extent of supervisory oversight, among others. The subjective and objective components of professionalism, such as work-related fulfillment, incentive, adaptability to working hours and pay, worries about one's physical and mental well-being, as well as challenges between work and personal life, were examined. The research was carried out in France, Italy, and Spain throughout the months of April and May in the year 2020. During the lockdown in the spring of 2020, interviews were conducted with 25 remote workers from each of the selected countries. These remote workers came from a variety of job profiles, family configurations, and individual characteristics. Employees who had to work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic were interviewed; those interviewed may or may not have had prior experience with remote work. However, remote workers

who already had a permanent arrangement to WFH before the COVID-19 crisis were not allowed to take part in this study.

The authors looked for variability in terms of socio-demographic factors (such as gender, age, and household makeup) and occupational features (such as personal ability, and employment) to create an accurate depiction of workers' experiences with remote work. The authors discovered that working from home improved job satisfaction and productivity for some workers and made it easier for them to balance work and family responsibilities. However, several workers believed that the shift to remote work and the accompanying digital platforms hampered their ability to get genuine feedback and share ideas with their colleagues and superiors. The fact that schools were forced to close and there was a national lockdown made the already unpleasant impact even worse for workers who had children of school age. However, the majority of those surveyed stated that teleworking has benefits, and they would be content to continue working remotely in the future, at least sometimes despite the multiple challenges of adjusting to obligated and demanding telework.

In their study, Wang et al. (2021) employed a mixed methods approach to investigate the difficulties that are faced by remote workers, as well as the factors, such as individual differences and characteristics of virtual labor, that influence these difficulties. The research was carried out in two sections, the first of which focused on gathering quantitative data and the second on gathering qualitative information. The quantitative study made use of semi-structured interviews with Chinese telecommuting IT professionals who did their work during the early COVID-19 pandemic. The authors

cited delayed action, inefficient interaction, work-home disruption and isolation as the four main challenges of working remotely. They also identified four aspects of remote work, assistance, independence on the job, monitoring, and workload as factors that impacted how these challenges were felt. Finally, they determined that workers' self-discipline was the main individual difference factor.

Summary and Conclusions

Remote work has been identified as an effective method of carrying out organizational duties. A plethora of studies exists to show that remote work was very helpful to organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic and could still be used to sustain organization's activities post COVID-19. This chapter included the traditional work environment; remote employment; weaknesses of remote; strategies for managing remote work, etc. The strategies for managing change in an organization were discussed, and emphasis was placed on the survival and growth of organizations using change initiatives.

It is known that remote work enabled organizations to function safely during COVID-19. It is also known that remote work requires the use of technological skills, good leadership, and proper implementation of remote strategies. However, while reviewing the literature, there were some unknowns about the topic identified by the researcher. It is unknown if employees are more productive while working remotely than when they work in the traditional work environment (Aczel et al., 2021). Another unknown is if the communication exchanges of remote workers are safe, and can foster better collaboration (Wang et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is unknown what the future of

remote work will be, considering how uncertain the end of the COVID-19 pandemic was and how it still hurts businesses (Kniffin et al., 2021). A review of the current literature revealed the need for the present study to fill the research gap about remote workers particularly those in government organizations to qualitatively explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19. Chapter 3 will include an explanation of the choice of the qualitative methodology and research approach for the study, as well as an identification of the research design, research sampling, method of data collection, method of data analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. Advancement in IT has enabled many organizations and employees to function effectively from remote locations. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant life and professional adjustments for many people (Sigahi et al., 2021). Currently, COVID-19 appears to have been controlled, but many organizations still require remote work because of the aftermath of the pandemic. The specific research problem was that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post- COVID-19.

Multiple studies conducted on the challenges of remote work have pointed out that the introduction of IT as a means of conducting business in organizations during the pandemic presented numerous challenges to both employees and employers (He et al., 2020). The technological innovation brought about complexities and difficulties in the application of different technological tools and software (Singh et al., 2022). Also, the feelings of isolation due to the inability to have face-to-face interactions with organization stakeholders have been linked to an increase in job discontentment and poor productivity (Aczel et al., 2021). Furthermore, Coffey and Wolf (2018) pointed out that the inability of organizations to understand how remote work aligns with an organization's vision can bring about lack of opportunities for the organization. Further research into this subject was conducted to fill a gap in the research literature and provide an advanced understanding of how government organizations can sustain remote work

post-COVID-19. The provision of goods and services are the primary reasons for the existence of organizations (Van Ingen et al., 2021). In order to provide goods and services, managers and employees must implement a variety of techniques that have the potential of making them more productive and efficient.

A discussion of the research problem and the purpose of the study can be found in this chapter. This chapter provides an explanation of the researcher's role, the rationale for adopting the qualitative technique rather than the quantitative method or the mixed method, the interview process, and the research instrument. At the end of the chapter is a discussion on data collection and evaluation, as well as a plan for making sure the study is credible, reliable, transferable, and confirmable.

Research Design and Rationale

The specific research problem was that government organizations are unprepared to sustain remote work post- COVID-19. This study was a qualitative single case study that applied OAT propounded by Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), as the conceptual framework that guided and supported the research. Organizational adaptation, according to Sarta et al. (2020), is thoughtful choice making by organizational stakeholders in line with business reality, leading to visible activities that aim to close the gap between an organization and its administrative and economic environments. In other words, adaptation is the process of bringing an organization closer to its environment. This theory provides empirical support for how remote workers might adapt to organizational changes in times of unforeseen crises. In order to comprehend and make sense of human behavior, qualitative research is typically utilized (Babchuk, 2017). In the same vein,

Tenny et al. (2022) believed that qualitative research collects the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of participants and asks unquantifiable open-ended questions. The single-case study method is most useful in situations in which the lines separating the topic of study and its context are clear (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi-Moghadam, 2018). According to Alpi et al. (2019), the purpose of a single case study is to describe, explain, or analyze phenomena of research interest, with a researcher acting as a tool in the investigation process. According to Lobo et al. (2017), a single case study may be a more practical option when studying a particular phenomenon.

Case study is just one of the many qualitative research approaches that are available. Other research designs include phenomenological methods, ethnographic methods, and grounded theory. The ethnographic study entails conducting an in-depth qualitative analysis of a group that possesses a shared culture (Dharamsi & Charles, 2011). Grounded theory entails finding or creating a theory from evidence that has been methodically acquired and examined using comparative analysis (Tie et al., 2019). The phenomenological method entails understanding how other people live their lives (Neubauer et al., 2019). In the current study, I wanted to obtain the opinions of the participants and not just their lived experiences. The primary objective of using a single case study in this research was to focus the research on a particular government organization. The following is the research question served as the basis for this study:(RQ) How can government organizations sustain remote work post- COVID-19?

Role of the Researcher

When describing the significance of the naturalistic inquiry process, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the concept of a researcher's role as the human instrument. A researcher collects data by attempting to find out the opinions and feelings of the research participants. Because the researcher's role may require the participants to provide information that may be personal to them, Sanjari et al. (2014) saw the role of the researcher in qualitative research as a difficult task. Remembering old memories can be difficult sometimes, but there are other instances when a person is able to effortlessly recall the experiences being studied. Sutton and Austin (2015) added that it is the primary duty of the researcher to safeguard participants and the data they provide. In this study, I collected data through interviews, observations, recordings from the interviews, organizational policy documents, and reflexivity field notes.

A researcher's capacity for reflexivity contributes to the realization of a better understanding of the significance of the phenomena being explored (Berger, 2015; Palaganas et al., 2017). When data are being collected, the procedures for safeguarding data should be clearly explained to the participants, and this procedure has to be approved by an authorized review board before research can begin. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who are employees of government organizations and had worked remotely during COVID-19. Suen et al. (2015) stated that purposeful sampling enables a researcher to choose participants who could help achieve the objective of a study.

To avoid bias, I set aside my personal knowledge or preconceived notions of the research topic to learn from the participants. My prior understanding of the topic and

interpretation of it was not stated in order to avoid having any influence on the viewpoints and interpretations of the participants. Maintaining researcher objectivity with regard to the opinions and stances held by participants is necessary for a study to be considered valid (Sutton & Austin, 2013). For example, rather than focusing on my own experiences when analyzing data, I paid close attention to the information provided in the interviews to explore the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. Although the research was conducted at an organization I work for, the participants of the study were individuals I have no influence over and who belong to different units within the organization. I made it a point to interact with participants in writing to obtain their consent, disclose any conflict or bias relating to the topic, and inform participants of how the data would be used. I planned to use pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of the participants and follow the guidelines from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Atukpa, 2021).

Methodology

A research study is a methodical procedure that involves gathering and evaluating data information to gain a deeper knowledge of a topic that a researcher is interested in or worried about (Phillipi & Lauderdale, 2018). According to Otani (2017), research is the process of collecting and analyzing information to expand a researcher's understanding of a subject or issue being explored. Scientific research methods add to the body of knowledge, which in turn helps to improve the practice, research methods, tool instruments, and gadgets uilised in the information sciences and IT. This qualitative case

study involved exploring how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19.

Participant Selection Logic

The population of the study comprised of employees of government organizations. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for the study. Purposeful sampling allows the a researcher to select participants who can advance the course of their research, which strengthens the validity of the research and the trustworthiness of the findings (Campbell et al., 2020). According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling is a nonprobability sampling strategy that takes into consideration the characteristics of the research population in addition to the objective of the study being conducted. To gather data for my study, the criteria for participation was employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19.

Participant screening was done over the phone and via email in order to ascertain the willing participants. I also gave the people who passed the screening requirements a copy of the informed consent form. To facilitate the interview process, it is suggested to establish a relationship with participants to make them trust the process (Olsen et al., 2016). To establish a relationship of trust, it is necessary to be transparent and display candor (Oye et al., 2016). As part of the informed consent procedure, I walked the interview subjects through what they may expect from the interview.

Understanding the importance of the information participants can provide, maintaining a relationship of trust throughout the interview, and letting the participant know they have the option of withdrawing from the study at any time are all benefits of

explaining the informed consent in the research process to participants. The ideal

sampling size was between 10 and 15 participants however, only 12 participants were

used. The participants were contacted through word of mouth, email or over the phone,

and subsequently, a follow-up email was sent to them. The study's purpose was

explained to participants, and they were asked to decide which interviewing method

would work best for them.

To begin the research, I obtained approval from the IRB, and invitation letters to

take part in the study were emailed to potential participants. Afterwards, an informed

consent form was emailed to each participant to ensure they were aware of their rights as

participants and how the data would be used. After the interview was completed, I

thanked them for their participation in the research and gave them my phone number and

email address so they could contact me if they had any further questions.

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the term *instrumentation* refers to the strategies and

procedures used to gather data (Saldana, 2016). Instrumentation involves the process of

how various instruments will be built and utilized to collect data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Typically, the first step in conducting an interview is to introduce oneself, followed by a

brief synopsis of the purpose of the interview, the primary focus of the research, the

anticipated length of the interview, what would be done with the information gleaned

from the interview, concerns regarding ethics and confidentiality, the recording of the

interview, and a query as to whether or not the interviewee has any questions before the

interview proper begins (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). When conducting a qualitative case

study, it is important to collect data from a variety of sources because these sources can complement one another and assist in establishing the trustworthiness of the material (Yin, 2017). A researcher must ensure that the participants feel comfortable during the interview (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The data for this study were derived from semistructured interviews, observations, organizational policy documents, and my reflective field notes. The interviews were guided by an appropriate interview guide that I developed. I served as the primary instrument for data collection because, as stated by Pezella et al. (2012), the research participant is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. I used open ended questions because they enabled me to ask follow-up questions, and participants were able to provide as much information as possible. The interview responses from the participants were recorded using Zoom's in application recorder. I also used the Zoom transcription service to transcribe the recorded data from text to speech. The Zoom software records everything said in the web browser while the participant are speaking and transcribes in real time. During the data collection process for the open-ended and semi-structured questions, I made use of my home internet device, even though I also had my shared hotspot from my phone as back up. Recording the interview just in line with the thoughts of Rubin and Rubin (2012) enabled me retrieve the transcript and thoroughly analyze it without missing any important information. As suggested by Coyne (2016), I also used a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to record and analyze data.

Procedures for Recruiting, Participation, and Data Collection

The data needed for the study was gathered with a purposive sampling technique, and in order to be eligible to take part in the study, participants would need to be employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19. The recruitment of potential research participants was established through social media. I posted a flyer on my Facebook and LinkedIn, and the setting was made public so that anyone on any of these social media platforms can see it. The flyer gave a brief insight of what the study was about, and it contained a phone number and email for volunteers to contact me. The next step was to email the consent form to the individuals who have indicated interest in learning more about the research. I gave the participants ample time to review the study information and ask questions before consenting. After obtaining the consent form from participants who have indicated interest in participating in the research, I scheduled and conducted the interview. The interview was conducted using Zoom.

The informed consent included a formal introduction and the purpose of the study, the eligibility requirement for the study, possible risks to participants, the rights of the research participants, estimated duration of the interview, consent form, and the importance of the study to others. I also made them aware that they have the option of discontinuing their involvement at any point in the research process. The estimated time for the interview was 45 minutes, however, all the interviews ended in less than 45 minutes. I recorded the interviews with the participant's permission. In line with Elo et al. (2014) I reviewed the results of each interview with the participants to make sure that the data was accurate.

I could have opted to use questionnaire, but according to Rowley (2014), there are positives and negatives associated with the use of questionnaires for the purpose of data collection. One of the positives of using a questionnaire is that it enables participants to respond to questions without the researcher being able to influence their responses in any way. However, a major downside of using questionnaire is that it lacks flexibility due to its structured design, which prevents the respondents from providing their own opinions. Using questionnaire can also lead to delayed responses by both the interviewer and the interviewee. Using semi- structured pre- determined open-ended questions enabled me to ask follow-up questions and gave the participants the opportunity to provide detailed information regarding their experiences and thoughts as remote workers. The accuracy of the data obtained was ensured through the use of note taking and member-checking procedures. According to Birt et al. (2016), the importance of member checking lies in the fact that it helps to increase research credibility. As part of the member checking process, the people who participated in the research were asked to read over the transcribed interview and verify that it accurately reflected their ideas. I saved the data on a computer that requires a password, and I deleted any personal identifiers from the study document so as to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. After the interview was completed, I thanked them for their participation in the research and gave them my phone number and email address so they could contact me if they have further questions.

Data Analysis Plan

I used Excel spreadsheet to organize the data for easy analysis. According to the opinions of Malone and Coyne (2016), the choice of a software data analysis tool for a researcher can be impacted by the research question being asked, the sort of study being conducted, and the availability of the software tool. The collected information was coded automatically using the thematic software, and also analyzed using excel spreadsheet. Using the codes, categories, and themes made my analysis and conclusions better as a whole. Data analysis, according to Raskind (2019), involves the transformation of considerable fieldwork and illustrative data into substantive and actionable conclusions. My code groups were organized to form categories, and these categories were used to form the themes, which were further analyzed and interpreted. For data analysis that involves words, qualitative coding is required (Childs & Demers, 2018). Bradley et al. (2007) opined that coding gives the investigator a clear framework for organizing the data, finding and capturing new linkages both inside and between the concepts and experiences presented in the data.

Data Collection and Analysis Steps

In the context of this inquiry, data analysis consisted of coding the information utilizing the thematic method. The thematic method helps to identify patterns, which are subsequently reported as researcher-generated themes (Nicholson, et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). The more frequently a code appears in a set of data, the more likely it is that the analyst will use that code to build a theme (Lochmiller, 2021). The Thematic software was used to code the data collected. The following were the success factors involved in

the data collection and analysis: (a) determination of the population of study, (b) finding people who are willing to take part in the study, (c) obtaining the IRB approval to conduct the study, (d) obtaining the participants' consent after they have been fully informed, (e) thinking about any ethical issues that might come up during the process of gathering data, (f) specifying the procedures for the acquisition of data and the analysis of this data, (g) going through the data collection process (conducting the interview, record, transcribe, and code), (h) data analysis, and (i) member checking.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are the four essential components that make up the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Johnson et al., 2020). According to Ang et al. (2016), trustworthiness does not depend on whether the reader agrees with the researcher; rather, it depends on whether or not the reader understands how the researcher arrived at the conclusions. Research trustworthiness helps to explain the integrity of the research findings and clears the doubts about researcher bias (Connelly, 2016). Research trustworthiness is important because a researcher uses it to show the quality of a study.

Credibility

There are many different aspects that can play a role in guaranteeing the credibility of research. According to Cypress (2017), research credibility is a practice that is used to express confidence in the truthfulness of the findings of research. Due to the fundamental nature of qualitative research, it is sometimes argued that it lacks rigor and is susceptible to researcher bias (Hadi & José Closs, 2016; Morse, 2015). Some

credibility strategies that I used included member checking, and reflexivity. Member

checking gives the participants the opportunity to review the interpretation of the data

collected in order to ascertain if it accurately captures their thoughts (Birt et al., 2016;

Hadi and Jose Closs, 2016). With member checking in mind, I asked the participants

check the accuracy of the interpreted data to ensure that it conveys their thoughts.

Reflexivity directs the research by reducing the researcher's inherent bias as well as the

study's inherent subjectivity. The participants were asked open-ended questions that

enabled them provide enough information in their own words (Darawsheh, 2014).

Transferability

According to Connelly (2016), the primary concern with regard to the

transferability of qualitative research is the manner in which the findings of the study can

be applied in various other contexts. When referring to qualitative research,

transferability is synonymous with the term *external validity* (Morse, 2015).

Transferability can be accomplished by utilizing a variety of data kinds, including

participant interviews, artifacts, analysis of personal space, and field observations,

amongst others. By collecting data verbatim before sending it via transcription, I was able

to reduce the chances of obtaining errors during the initial stages of analysis. In addition,

I made certain that the participants could review the data and confirm that the information

I transcribed is specific and correct. Morse (2015) stated, the researcher must provide

data details for others interested in transferring the findings to other individuals or

different contexts. Hence, I believe that using purposeful sampling and member checking

helped in ensuring that the outcome of the case study could be replicated in other government organizations hoping to sustain remote work post COVID-19.

Dependability

Dependability in research is particularly significant since it compels researchers to carry out exhaustive studies with the knowledge that their work will be evaluated in some way, and the reader can trust the findings of the research. According to Connelly (2016), dependability is defined as the degree to which the outcomes of a study remain stable regardless of the number of times it is replicated. Cuthbert and Moules (2014) stated that dependability in qualitative research serves a function comparable to that of reliability in quantitative research. Also, it is very vital to have a solid audit trail and reflexive journaling in place (Bush & Amaechi, 2019). According to de Kleijn (2018), researchers should not only plan for reliable audit trails, which require the safekeeping of any documentation, changes in interview questions, and selection of participant details, but they should also state the choice of an auditor, the relationship between auditee and auditor, and the function of the audit. In addition, researchers should plan for audit trails that can be relied upon. Ravitch and Carl (2015) added that triangulation of other data sources is a good method of achieving dependability. For this study, I triangulated the data with observation, reflexive notes, and semi-structured interviews.

Confirmability

In a similar vein, Morse (2015) noted that confirmability in qualitative research occurs when the researcher can demonstrate credibility, dependability, and transferability. This implies the extent to which the outcome of the study is not influenced by the

researcher's opinion (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Confirmability implies that the researcher bases their conclusions on the evidence rather than any personal prejudices (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). For this study, I used member checking, triangulation, and reflexive journaling to achieve confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

In accordance with Walden University's IRB requirement, a standard application was submitted to the IRB for approval to conduct research. The IRB ensures the protection of the participants' ethical rights. In order to ensure proper protection for those who participate in a research project, the protocols established by the IRB will be rigorously adhered to. Grady (2015) noted that the IRB's ethical protections include treating people anonymously by not disclosing their identities in the study; treating each individual equitably by not exposing them to harm on purpose; and outlining the risks and benefits of the study.

I identified and evaluated the necessary actions to secure the participants' confidentiality and adherence to ethical standards. I assured them that no intentional harm will be done as a result of their participation in the study. Participants were not mandated to participate in the study, and they told that they could withdraw from the research at any time. Participants received complete transparency regarding the objectives and nature of the study. The data collection and analysis were handled under strict conditions of privacy, and no personal identifiable information was stored.

A coding system was implemented to further protect the privacy of the participants. The participant's contact information and any direct identifiers that could

lead back to them was not included in the coding system in any way, shape, or form. I explained the coding procedure to the participants and assured them that no one else will have access to or knowledge of their personal identifying information. A temporary duplicate of the participant data was stored on a personal laptop until the data collection was completed. After completing the analysis, encryption, and storage of the participant data, the data was saved on a personal network drive so that it may be studied. The maximum period of time qualitative researchers are permitted to hold participant data is five years after the publication of the study. This time frame includes all contact information, transcripts, and email correspondence. I will erase all participant information within five years.

Summary

In Chapter 3, there was a discussion of why the design, methodology, research problem, and purpose of this study were chosen. There was also a discussion about my responsibilities and functions as a researcher who also doubles as the human tool that was used to gather and explore data. Chapter 3 was about the people who participated in the study, the size of the sample, the target population, and the criteria for participation. It also discussed the interview method and the research questions that guided the study. Furthermore, a discussion of the ethical protection protocol design and implementation included the rights and welfare of the study participants; a description of the data collection and analysis procedure; and measures used to assure the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In Chapter 4, there will be a report of the study's results based on how the research method described in Chapter 3 was used.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. I targeted employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19. This research has the potential of bridging a knowledge gap on how to better prepare government institutions for pandemics through training and use of remote IT workers. The study can also provide suggestions on strategies that could be adopted by organizations to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. This chapter contains a description of the setting, demographics of the participants, data collection method, and data analysis. Semistructured interview questions were developed to help answer the research question. Semistructured open-ended interviews, observations, and my own reflective notes were used to triangulate the data. This chapter concludes with thematic analysis of the results of the questions answered by participants and the summary.

The study explored the following research question: How can government organizations sustain remote work post COVID-19? The research question was the foundation for the interviews conducted within a qualitative paradigm. I wanted to know the strategies that government organizations can use for employees to conduct their duties remotely post- COVID-19 because it was possible for some government organization employees to work remotely during COVID-19. The study participants provided information-rich data in response to questions relating to how organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19.

Setting

I conducted the interviews in a natural environment that was safe and convenient for the participants. The interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom conferencing application at a convenient time scheduled with the participants, and the participants had the opportunity of choosing a safe and convenient location for themselves. I used my home office which is semidetached from the main building and is only used by me. As the researcher, I used the interview questions shown in Appendix A. All interview questions were guided by the underpinning research topic and theoretical and conceptual foundations of the study. The interviews went as planned. No contextual factors, either individual or institutional, were apparent to me as potentially shaping participants' experiences during the study or their perception of the results.

Demographics

In line with Campbell et al. (2020), I used purposive sampling to select 12 participants who met the inclusion criteria. All the participants selected were interviewed to reach data saturation for this study and demography was based on job categories and length of time on the job. The demographic composition of the 12 participants I interviewed is presented in Table 1. I observed that some of the participants belonged to the same job category and have worked remotely for a similar length of time. All 12 participants met the study inclusion criteria of being remote employees of government organizations in the United States. The different job categories and length of time as remote workers did not affect the study as they all experienced similar challenges during COVID-19. The interviews with the participants were conducted in the order in which

participants returned their consent forms; each participant was assigned a pseudonym from P01 to P12. The pseudonyms were provided to conceal participants' identities and to maintain their confidentiality. There was no vulnerable participant as indicated by Walden University IRB.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participants	Job category	Length of time as a remote worker
P01	Database administration	2 years and 1 month
P02	Social work	1 year and 3 months
P03	Social work	1 and 3 months
P04	Customer care	2 years and 5months
P05	Healthcare	1 year and 8 months
P06	Healthcare	1 year and 4 months
P07	Social work	1 and 2 months
P08	Social work	1 and 8 months
P09	Healthcare	1 year and 2 months
P10	Social worker	1 year and 8 months
P11	Healthcare	2 and 2 months
P12	Administrative assistance	1 year and 4 months

Data Collection

The data collection methods for the qualitative case study included semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, who were remote employees for government agencies, for the data gathering process. The process for data collection began after I had obtained approval from Walden University's IRB (approval number is 02-09-23-1028228). I recruited research participants through social media. I posted a flyer on my Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and the settings were made public so anyone on any of these social media platforms could see the posting. The flyer

gave a brief insight of what the study was about and contained a phone number and email address for volunteers to contact me.

Within 2 days of posting my flyer, I received eight volunteers from Facebook and six volunteers from LinkedIn, making a total of 14 volunteers. However, two of the volunteers did not meet the criteria for the study because they were not employees of a government organization even though they worked remotely. After I had identified 12 potential participants who met the criteria for inclusion and indicated their interest in learning more about the study, I obtained the email address of the individual participants, and I emailed the informed consent form to them. The first participant consented on the informed consent form within 24 hours of receiving the form, and the majority of the participants consented within 3 days. The last participant consented on the 6th day after receiving the consent form. I gave the participants adequate time to review the study information and ask questions before consenting. I did not call or follow up with the participants before they consented to participate in the study. Prior to the interview process, I explained to individual participants the purpose of the study clearly and informed them that the interview would be recorded. I assured each of the participants that their names would not be disclosed, and I assigned a code number to each participant according to the order in which I interviewed them. I read to each participants the informed consent that clearly explained their rights and responsibilities based on the IRB guidelines and regulations. I made them aware that they were at liberty to discontinue their involvement at any point in the research process.

After obtaining the consent form from individual participants who have indicated interest in participating in the research, I asked for their individual preferences in terms of date and time for the interview and scheduled a time to conduct the interview. Data collection was done via Zoom. The estimated time for each interview was 60 minutes, but some of the interviews ended within 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded with each participant's permission. During the interviews, I sometimes repeated participants' responses to ensure the data were accurate, as suggested by Elo et al., (2014).

I collected qualitative data using in-depth semi-structured questions that were administered virtually over a period of 3 weeks. All 12 interviews were conducted within 3 weeks, with the first interview starting on March 11, 2023, and the last interview being on March 31, 2023. On average, I conducted four interviews per week, and all 12 participants were interviewed using the interview guide (see Appendix A). The interviews lasted for a maximum period of 60 minutes and in certain cases, I used probes and follow-up questions to elicit further discussion on the issues. I assigned each participant with a pseudonym from P01 to P12 in the order the interviews were conducted. The method used yielded a lot of data, and I obtained digital records from Zoom, transcribed them quickly using the Zoom digital software, imported them into Microsoft Word, and saved them on a password protected personal computer. The documents will be kept for a period of 5 years and will then be destroyed as required by the IRB guidelines and regulations. Additionally, the virtual interviews provided the option for the use of video, which allowed for face-to-face interaction using voice over internet protocol. Therefore, I observed participants' body language during the interviews

and recorded observations as reflexive notes in my journal and used them to help interpret the data. Per the interview protocols and interview guide, I asked the participants the interview questions and probes (see Appendix A).

I began the interview by thanking the participant, giving a brief description of the study's purpose, reviewing the risks associated with their participation in the study, and confirming their agreement to proceed. All participants agreed to video and audio recordings of the interview. I was able to establish a good rapport with each participant, who shared the stories openly and yielded high quality and quantity data. The digital recordings were transcribed after each interview and compared to the digital recordings for accuracy.

I achieved data saturation after 10 interviews. However, I conducted two more interviews as I had already scheduled those and wanted to ensure sufficient data saturation. According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), saturation is achieved when a researcher is not able to collect any new data. By the time I completed the 10th interview, I noted repeating codes with little new data emerging. Nonetheless, I proceeded to conduct two more interviews hoping that this would be a measure to test data saturation. However, no new codes emerged, confirming that data saturation was achieved.

In line with the interview transcript review protocol outlined in Appendix B, I emailed the interview participants the transcribed audio recording for their review. I forwarded the transcripts via email for member checking. In that email, I indicated a deadline of 2 weeks for the participants to submit a response, which meant that I could

continue with the data analysis thereafter. I then proceeded to analyze the data and used it to answer the research question.

I used reflective field notes to record my reflections based on my observations of participants' reactions and expressions of nonverbal cues during the interviews. My notes were useful in documenting certain salient statements and participants' behaviors and reactions relevant to the study. I observed participants' passion in expressing their knowledge and perceptions of how government organizations could sustain remote work post- COVID-19.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the review of various data collected and coded to provide interpretation to the data (Popenoe et al., 2021). The essence of qualitative data analysis is to bring out tacit meanings that people attach to their actions by determining the themes, patterns, relationships, and assumptions that inform the participants' views of the issue under investigation (Ravindran, 2019). In this study, data analysis was conducted in line with Yin's (2017) five phases of analysis: assemble, collect, interpret, disassemble, and conclude. The interviews were the primary data collection method in this study, and Zoom digital software was used to collect and transcribe the digital data.

Transcription/Coding

Transcribing the responses of the study participants and then offering interpretation to give the data significance were the first steps in the data analysis process. I requested that interviewees check the transcripts for accuracy. Interview participants sent emails confirming the accuracy of the transcript or correcting it if

needed. I then divided each transcript into 12 different paragraphs of summary. Answers to each of the 12 interview questions were given in a paragraph. I requested corrections or assurance that my summaries were accurate by having interview participants review summaries. I uploaded the member- checked forms to NVivo 12 for coding and analysis by clicking on data from the horizontal panel across the top of the screen. By clicking sources and data from the navigation menu, I was able to upload documents into the program. The next step I took was to import the data from the source to start categorizing, coding, and analyzing it using word frequency tests and word search queries. In the detail page, I began to code by right clicking on the highlighted content, which permitted me to attach a theme. In creating a new code, I clicked on code and repeated this process until there were no new codes. (Table 2 shows the codes, categories, and themes). Once the source was selected, I reassembled the data by grouping the codes to form themes. While on the source page I clicked on the *open* button, which enabled me to name my source file for easy identification. I named the participants according to the order in which they were interviewed.

It took the researcher 2 weeks to complete the transcribing of the recorded interview. I reread the transcribed texts and reflexive notes several times to ensure accuracy. As a result of the extensive review, the researcher was able to identify themes from the interview text. It should be noted that the researcher addressed the study questions adequately. The raw data was coded and categorized into themes based on the research questions and the responses from the participants. The researcher began with selective reading approach which entailed highlighting statements from the transcribed

texts that revealed the main themes, and the meaning of the participants' responses was utilized.

I used the Zoom transcription service to automatically transcribe the data derived from the 12 participants coded as P01 to P 12 consecutively, after which I reviewed it for accuracy before sending it to the participants for member checking, and no amended transcript was received from any of them. The central research question and conceptual frameworks served as the foundation for the analysis of the interview responses. Using codes, categories, and themes, I was able to interpret each individual's perceptions using content analysis when I was analyzing the data. Content analysis was used because Erlingssom and Brysiewicz (2017) opined that content analysis can be utilized in ether an inductive or a deductive manner, and inductive method or approach involves open coding, creating categories, and themes, whereby all the data are reviewed for content and coded for correspondence to identify categories and themes. The inductive approach was also employed because, according to Saunders et al. (2018), it can be utilized in research to develop or add to existing theories by letting themes emerge from the transcribed data. Inductive analysis entails coding the data without the researcher having any prior assumptions (Thomas, 2006).

I was able to examine the data and spot recurring sentences and phrases from the participants' responses by using inductive coding. The themes were developed to answer the research question and provide understanding of how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19.

Table 2

Codes, Categories and Themes

No.	Code	Category	Theme
1	COVID-19	Impact of COVID-19	Participants' views on the impact of COVID-19 on their organization
2	Adaptation	Adapting to COVID-19	How organizations have adapted to remote work since COVID-19 started
3	Organizational leadership	Leadership styles	Participants' views of their organizational leadership
4	Challenges	Work challenges	Challenges of remote work
5	Improvement strategy	The pathway to progress	Strategies for managing change and improving remote work experience
6	Technological skills	Ability to use technology	How participants' technological skill is comparable to their work productivity
7	Organizational support	Positive social change initiative	Strategies for supporting workers with less proficient abilities
8	Importance of training	Positive social change initiative	Employees' training needs
9	Positive social change	Positive social change initiative	Strategies for achieving positive social change

Impact of COVID-19

The participants voiced their views on how COVID-19 affected their organization. While some believed that the impact of COVID-19 was minimal, others believed that was devastating. Participant P12 opined that COVID-19 changed the way organizations function, and necessitated employees to increase their technological expertise in order to adapt to the changing work environment.

All the participants believed that even though COVID-19 came with a lot challenges, their organization was able to adapt to the changing work environment. The

participants while citing the strategies adopted by their organization in order to adapt to COVID-19, mentioned training, mentorship, working with the right technological tools, and encouraging team work.

Organizational Leadership

The participants believed that organizational leadership plays a huge role in the success of the successes recorded in their organization. Some of the points raised are that if the leadership of their organization encourages learning and training within the organization, the employees become better equipped with the requisite skills needed to perform their job.

Challenges

The participants experienced multiple challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the challenges they faced were technological factors. Prior to COVID-19 many of the employees were working onsite and did not have need for certain types of technological tools which were later provided by their organization to help sustain the organization. Consequently, many employees did not know how to use some of the technological tools provided by their organization. Some of the participants also believed that setting of unrealistic targets for employees to meet.

Improvement Strategy

When asked about the strategy that can improve employee experience, all the participants in their individual meetings mentioned training and having access to the right tools. The participants believed that if their organization provides them with the right tools and training, they would perform well and increase productivity. Participant P01

added that mentorship program should be encouraged in organization because it helps to build team.

Technological Skills

All the research participants talked about technology and its applicability in their respective organizations. They opined that their technological skill is commensurate to the work that they do. Participant P06 mentioned that he is technologically inclined, and that he even serves a mentor to other less technologically inclined employees.

Organizational Support

The participants mentioned that the organizational support they received while working remotely during COVID-19 increased their productivity. The participants received support ranging from receiving training on technology to having mentors to guide them through the work process. Participant P01 stated that mentorship is a good way of providing organizational support to less proficient employees. Participant P09 added that training of was a good way to support and equip employees with the skills needed to perform their job.

Importance of Training

All the participants viewed training as an important aspect of organizational growth and development. They opined that training helps to endow the employees with the skills that the need to perform their job. Also, participants P07 believed that training will improve employee engagement, because employees are more likely to stay long on a job if they are able to perform their tasks with the required expertise.

Positive Social Change

The participants feel that they contributed to positive social change in many ways. Some of the individual contributions to positive social change mentioned include performing their job with utmost professionalism, providing mentorship services for their organization, facilitating team training, and organizing wellness programs.

Discrepant Cases

I evaluated outlying responses as during the data collection and analysis, but the outlying responses were minimal and not consistent. As such, these discrepant responses did not warrant coding as no clear theme presented itself.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are the four essential components that make up the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Johnson et al., 2020; Nyirenda et al., 2020). According to Rose and Johnson (2020) trustworthiness does not depend on whether the reader agrees with the researcher; rather, it depends on whether the reader understands the rigorous process used by the researcher to arrive at the conclusions. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation by paying attention to conformity of the outcome of the data analysis. Accuracy of the data collected was checked during and after the interview was conducted. The researcher performed a follow up interview the participants to ensure accuracy of the data collected.

Credibility

According to Cypress (2017), the role of credibility in ensuring trustworthiness is that research credibility is a practice that is used to express confidence in the truthfulness

of the findings of research. The researcher established credibility by demonstrating

honesty, integrity, and transparency in the data collection process. As the researcher, I

tried to gain the trust of the participants by ensuring that there is full disclosure and clear

communication between me and the participants. Also, I used triangulation, member

checking, and peer-debriefing to establish credibility. Data collected primarily from

interviews, and the researcher's reflective notes formed part of the triangulation. The

participants for the study were selected through a rigorous process of purposeful

sampling. Ensuring that only participants, who met the inclusion criteria were selected,

helped to strengthen the credibility of the study. Interviews were conducted virtually at a

scheduled time with the individual participants. The transcripts from the interviews were

reviewed and corrected by participants to validate and establish their authenticity.

Furthermore, the study was submitted to my committee chairs for critical review, and to

ensure that the study is credible.

Transferability

Transferability is primarily concerned with the strategies that will show that the

findings of the research have applicability in other contexts (Connelly, 2016). The

researcher documented and explained in sufficient depth the experiences and ideas of the

participants during the data collection, analysis, and result. In this study, I provided a

detailed description of remote work, the context and settings for remote work. Therefore,

it is safe to say that the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the phenomenon

under investigation including the context, settings, the research method and design that

may help other researchers to replicate the study within different contexts. This is in line

with Morse (2015), which opined that transferability entails the provision of enough details on the phenomenon of study to enhance truthfulness of the data when compared with other similar studies.

Dependability

Dependability is defined as the degree to which the outcomes of a study remain stable regardless of the number of times it is replicated (Connelly, 2016). Cuthbert and Moules (2014) stated that dependability in qualitative research serves as a function comparable to that of reliability in quantitative research. The findings of a research should demonstrate consistency to enable other researchers to carry out similar studies (Bush & Amaechi, 2019). The process of dependability entails the reduction of errors and biases through the use of audit inquiry and other techniques to reaffirm the research outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Conducting an audit inquiry requires the engagement of an external expert to review the study process and outcomes and provide justification to the findings (Bush & Amaechi, 2019). Dependability was established in this study through member checking with the same participants in a similar context. The member checks responses prove to be consistent with the responses the same participants provided in their previous interview. I documented a detailed process for data collection and analysis which makes it easier for the replication of the study. I also conducted the data analysis of the current study using coding techniques as relevant to the conduct of qualitative research. Also, the data of the study was scrutinized by my chair committee and the IRB to ensure dependability and conformability.

Confirmability

Confirmability implies the extent to which the findings are shaped by the participants and not the researcher's bias or interest (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018) confirmability ensures that the research outcome is not a reflection of the researcher's biases or knowledge but the exact representation of the participants' views on the subject of research. To achieve confirmability, the researcher demonstrated during the analysis that the findings of the study were derived from the data collected. The researcher used Zoom transcription service to transcribe the words of the participants in during the interview, and they were subsequently analyzed through de-contextualization and re-contextualization. The findings of the study were supported by the analyzed data to prove integrity and competence. As part of confirmability, the normal rights of the participants were considered. Grady (2015) noted that the IRB's ethical protections include treating participants with respect and maintaining confidentiality by not disclosing their identities in the study; treating each individual equitably by not exposing them to harm on purpose; and outlining the risks and benefits of the study.

Results

The section on study results was organized using the themes that emerged during data analysis. The themes were created by an analysis of participant replies that are relevant to providing answers to the primary research question. There were no significant data inconsistencies that would have affected the study's findings. The information was gathered using thirteen of the semi-structured interview procedure questions listed in

Appendix A. The participants' responses to the questions had an impact on the development of themes and the comprehension of their meanings. I paid close attention to the participant's thoughts, feelings, and expressions, and the data analysis produced nine themes about how government organizations might continue remote work post COVID-19.

Research Question: How can government organizations sustain remote work post COVID-19?

The research question acted as a guide for the data collection, transcription, coding, and categorization of data into themes. The table below shows summary of the themes that were developed from the data.

Table

Themes

Theme 1	Participants' views on the impact of COVID-19 on their organization
Theme 2	How organization has adapted to remote work since COVID-19 started
Theme 3	Participants' views of their organizational leadership
Theme 4	Challenges of remote work
Theme 5	Strategies for managing change and improving remote work experience
Theme 6	How participants' technological skill is comparable to their work productivity
Theme 7	Strategies for supporting remote workers with less proficient abilities
Theme 8	Employees' training needs
Theme 9	Strategies for achieving positive social change

Theme 1: Participants' Views on the Impact of COVID-19 on Their Organization

The purpose of the research questions was to determine how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19. The participants I spoke with were government employees who worked remotely during COVID-19, and they were

able to share their perspectives on how the pandemic affected their organization. The participants described the effects of COVID-19 on their company. For instance, every interviewee in a separate interview stated that COVID-19 caused a staff shortage because, prior to being able to work remotely, many employees had to quit their jobs in order to spend time with their children and other family members who were unable to attend school or work and required adult supervision.

Many individuals were unable to perform at their best levels even after their company fully adopted remote work because they did not have the skills and resources required to work remotely. The participants added that COVID-19 caused job losses, low productivity, poor employee-organization communication, and a lack of adequate oversight. Participants P01, P02, P04, P05, P06, P07, P08, P09, P10, P11, and P12 explained that the low productivity in their organization was mostly caused by the lack of teamwork and communication brought on by the necessity of working remotely in order to stop the pandemic's spread. Participant P03 said that many employees' illnesses and their inability to work contributed to the low production and job losses.

Participant P07 claimed that during the pandemic, productivity decreased in her company because many employees who worked remotely were diverted by personal obligations. She used herself as an example, noting that because schools were closed, her kids spent the majority of the time at home, and she had to juggle multiple responsibilities, including working as an employee and navigating the newly introduced technology, being a mother, and teaching her children. Since they were new to remote work, the participants in separate interviews highlighted their arduous learning process as

they tried to comprehend the application of the different technologies and resources that their company had supplied to help them operate remotely.

The participant did, however, indicate satisfaction because COVID-19 forced their company to reassess organizational methods in order to elevate efficiency. In order to maintain business operations, several of the businesses implemented both synchronous and asynchronous ways of service delivery. P12 made a point of highlighting the necessity for governmental institutions to devote more funds to technological intervention and to encourage staff members to become tech-savvy.

Theme 2: How Organization Has Adapted to Remote Work Since COVID-19 Started

From the viewpoint of the participants, organizations adapted differently during COVID-19. While some organizations have easily adapted to the remote work experience, many others have not fully adapted. Participants P01, P04, P11, and P12 stated that their organization has adapted well because employees were trained on how to work remotely and working remotely has helped their organization save costs. Additionally, P01 stated that her organization encouraged teamwork so as to carry everyone along. Participant P11 stated that his organization saved money on infrastructure and office space because they had to shut down some physical office spaces and provide the employees with the tools needed for them to work remotely. Participant P11 went on to say that working remotely also increased cyber risk because many employees had to work from unsecured internet spaces; hence, his organization had to invest heavily in cyber security to provide internet security for remote workers.

Participant P02 said that their organization adapted by engaging employees, increasing wages, and promoting employee healthcare programs. These participants stated that in the heat of the pandemic, many employees became ill as a result of contracting the deadly COVID-19 virus; some other employees who did not directly contract the virus may have dealt with family members who had contracted the virus. As a result of the many health-related challenges faced by participants, it became difficult for them to perform at maximum capacity; hence, their organizations had to provide wellness programs that would cater for the mental health and general wellbeing of employees.

Participants P03, P07, P09, and P12 suggested that working remotely during COVID-19 helped their organization reduce the rate of transmission of diseases because people were not required to work in a clustered environment at work. Also, they received training that helped them perform their duties. Participants P05, P10, P08, and 12 stated that their organizations adapted because they provided an enabling environment for employees to thrive. Also, their organizations provided training and resources for their employees to work with. Participant P06 stated that his organization provided training on how to use the various technological tools needed to perform their job; however, employee supervision has remained a challenge in his organization.

Worthy of mention is the fact that all the participants believed that their organization was able to adapt to a remote work environment because they were provided with the necessary tools to perform their duties. Also, they were trained on how to use the various tools at their disposal. The participants believe that constant training and retraining will help to make their adaptation process easier.

Theme 3: Participants' Views of Their Organizational Leadership

The participants were asked about their views of their organizational leadership, and they all projected various views. Participants P01, P02, and P06 stated that their organization is very engaging. Their organization is sensitive to the plight of the employees. They keep up with the employees and make efforts to be involved in their activities. Participant P03 said that his organization is very understanding and empathetic to the challenges of the employees. Participant P04 stated that his organization believes in full compliance. They sometimes try to micromanage employees in order to ensure that they are in compliance with the organization's policies and rules.

Also, participant P04 stated that his organization cares about staff welfare, and this is evident in the welfare activities that are undertaken by his organization. He went on to say that they have good healthcare benefits, sporting events, and periodic wellness education. Participant P05 indicated that her organization runs a flexible, transparent, and democratic management style. In her organization, decisions are made in a democratic manner, and there is mutual respect between the employer and the employees. The participant went further to say that her organization listens to the employees and considers their opinions when making managerial decisions. Participant P07 stated in his interview that his organization is disruptive. His organization is adaptive to change and was able to adapt easily during the pandemic. His organization was able to switch to remote work by learning how to use the various technological tools needed to sustain remote work.

Participants P08 and P10 viewed their organization as a learning organization, where opportunities are presented to employees to learn on the job through peer mentorship and team building. They also believe that their organization is supportive of the employees' wellbeing. Participant P09 opined that his organization is proactive and manages the challenges of the employees effectively. Participants P11 and P12 viewed her organization as one that encourages an open-door policy, collaboration, and teamwork. Employees are welcome to air their opinions and develop bonds within the organization that will help them perform their duties. They also stated that their organization promotes a learning culture and encourages teamwork and collaboration. Overall, all the participants believed that their organizational leadership was responsive and considerate of the strengths and weaknesses of the employees.

Theme 4: Challenges of Remote Work

The participants expressed their opinions on the challenges of remote work in their various organizations. Participants P01 and P02 believed that the lack of communication, slow information processing time, and lack of teamwork were the major challenges faced by their individual organizations. Participants P03 and P04 mentioned that the team collaboration that existed prior to COVID-19 was seized once their organizations embraced the remote work pattern. P03 added that the lack of the necessary technological tools to work remotely, as well as the delays in service delivery orchestrated by the inability of the employees to master the use of the technological tools at their disposal, posed a great challenge to his organization. P04 stated that poor internet connectivity added to the challenges his organization faced.

Some remote workers did not have strong internet connectivity at their residence; hence, it became difficult for them to perform their duties efficiently. For some employees, unfavorable home and living situations such as unstable electricity and poor internet connectivity were among the challenges that affected their organization because they could not perform their duties at maximum capacity in those circumstances. Participants P05, P06, P07, and P11 opined that a lack of teamwork, a lack of mentorship, and poor organizational communication affected their various organizations. Participant P08 pointed out that when his organization first began working remotely, the employees lacked the applicable IT skills needed to perform their job remotely. For instance, employees had to learn how to use Teams and Zoom to perform their jobs. Prior to COVID-19, most reports written by employees were in hard copies. However, since employees had to work remotely, it became necessary for them to learn how to use some computer applications that would enable them to write and submit soft copies of their reports. Participant P09 attributed the challenges faced by his organization to the effects of bureaucratic bottlenecks. According to P09, employees were reluctant to adapt to change, and many wanted to continue doing things the old way. Some employees did not want to be trained on how to use the necessary IT tools, and many employees were hesitant about picking up their laptop, scanner, printer, and other work equipment meant to facilitate remote work. Participants P11 and P12 stated that mass resignations as a result of employee burnout, coupled with the lack of discipline of many employees, contributed to the challenges faced by their organization.

Theme 5: Strategies for Managing Change and Improving Remote Work Experience

The researcher asked the participants to talk about the strategies that could be implemented to improve the remote work experience of employees. The participant P01 suggested that if employees maintain good mental health, it might help to improve their remote work experience. Additionally, P01 stated that if organizations provide support for the employees and involve the employees when making decisions that affect their wellbeing, it might help improve their remote work experience. Participant P02 opined that developing communal orientation, setting measurable goals, providing simple steps for employees to follow, and fostering proper communication and conscientiousness within an organization will help improve the remote work experience of employees. The communal experience, according to P02, will encourage communication between the employees and between the employees and their organizational leadership. Participants P03, P04, P05, and P06 stated that employees' remote work experiences could be improved if they were provided with the right working tools and if their organizations encouraged teamwork. Participant P03 added that being transparent when dealing with employees and maintaining a positive attitude towards work are important.

Participant P05 also stated that employees should be provided with mentorship and training on efficient time management. Participants P07 and P08 believed that providing a conducive work environment and the opportunity to operate a flexible schedule would improve the remote work experience of employees. This is so because employees will be able to work at their own pace. Participant P09 highlighted the

importance of training in addition to providing the necessary tools needed for remote work. When employees are well trained to utilize the technological tools at their disposal, they are better placed to perform their duties. Participant P10 believed that using a calendar to schedule work activities and improve communication in an organization would improve the remote experience of employees. Participants P11 and P12 mentioned that continuous training, team collaboration, and empathy are factors that can improve the remote work experience.

Theme 6: Participants Technological Skills in Comparison With Their Work Productivity

All the participants claimed to have good technological skills. Participant P01 opined that through her technological skills, she was able to provide training to the less technologically savvy employees. P02 stated that he has the technological skills needed to perform his job. For instance, P02 stated that he is able to use search engines and work in real time using Zoom and Teams. This software allows employees to do presentations in real time because of its video conferencing features. P02 stated that he holds meetings regularly with his team members and does every other thing that he would have done if he were in the traditional office. P03 stated that he is able to perform his job well because of his technological application skills. Participant P04 opined that his technological skill was average prior to COVID-19; however, he has improved a lot since he started working remotely because he had to learn and adapt quickly in order to perform his job. P04 went ahead to say that he has learned how to use tools such as Excel and Zoom to perform his duties. Prior to working remotely, he had little knowledge of how to use Excel sheets to

turn in his reports, as most reports were submitted in hard copies to the organization's secretary, who in turn re-produced the soft copies of the reports.

Participants P05, P06, P07, and P08 all claimed to have great technological skills. Participant P07 stated that he has good hands-on abilities and can comfortably use his technological application skills to perform his duties as needed by his organization. Participant P08 stated that even though he has good technological skills, he thinks that there is still room for a lot of improvement. In separate interviews, participants P09, P10, and P11 all believed that their technological application skills were top-notch. Participant P09 stated that he does not only have good technological skills, but he also has the ability to adapt to changes. Participant P10 opined that she is very proficient in the use of most information technological tools and even supports other employees at her organization. Participant P11 stated that her technological skills enable her to perform configurations at her job using sophisticated software. Similarly, participant P12 believed that COVID-19 provided her with the opportunity to improve her technological skills, at least to the extent that she is able to perform her required duties. She went on to say that she is able to achieve more progress while working remotely than when she worked in person in a traditional office setting.

Theme 7: How Organizations Can Support Remote Workers With Less Proficient Abilities

The participants were asked to explain how government organizations can support remote workers with less proficient abilities. Participants in P01 responded by saying that organizational leaders should make efforts to identify employee weaknesses in order to

understand their training needs. Once the training needs of employees are identified, organizations must provide training and constantly retrain employees until they become tenured. Participant P01 further added that organizational training should be holistic, touching all aspects of the job tasks. Participants P02 and P03 identified team building, proper intra- and inter-organizational communication, and mentorship programs as important support factors for remote workers with less proficient abilities.

Participants P04, P05, and P06 believed that training should be flexible and focused on employee needs. Apart from training, employees should be provided with the right tools to work remotely. Expatiating on that, they opined that organizations should make investments in information technological tools such as virtual conferencing tools, laptops, and internet equipment. Participants P07, P08, and P12 opined that employee motivation, the provision of incentives, and proper delegation of duties could be used to improve employee engagement and productivity. Participant P12 added that organizations should conduct regular workshops and seminars. Participant P09 believed that providing training for employees is a good step towards supporting employees with less proficient abilities, but it is also important to boost employee morale and maximize the potential of the employees. Participant P09 went on to say that employee morale is linked to employee engagement and retention, their job satisfaction, and their overall productivity. Participant 10 opined that learning organizations are better placed to support remote workers with less proficient abilities because employees have the opportunity to learn from their tenured colleagues.

The participant went on to say that organizational leadership should ensure that employees have access to the right tools and more experienced workers, whose wealth of experience is usually invaluable to the organization. Participant 11 believed that organizations should not be rigid. She went on to say that creativity should be encouraged and that the workplace should be a no-judgment zone so that employees feel free to use their discretion when necessary.

Theme 8: Employees' Training Needs

The participants were asked to talk about the training needs of employees of government organizations that hope to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. Participant P01 opined that the employees should be provided adequate training on time management, organizational skills, and good customer relations skills. She went on to say that a lot of government employees lack good customer service skills, and they do not show as much commitment to their job as they would have done if they worked in the private sector. Being a government remote employee, she thinks that she does not show enough commitment because she gets paid at the end of the month regardless of her input. Participants P02, P05, P06, P07, P08, P09, P11, and P12 all advocated for training on the use of technological tools. P02 argued that organizations can train employees on the use of sophisticated computer devices with high speeds and software that will enable them to perform their jobs efficiently.

Participant P05 also added that it would be nice for government organizations to train employees on how to use the different video conferencing tools available so that employees can have real-time communication with their colleagues and do their weekly

PowerPoint presentations and meetings. In the view of participant P06, adequate training on the different information technological tools, such as programming software, virtual presentation tools, and data analysis software, will transform remote employees into valuable organizational assets whose contributions would greatly increase organizational productivity. Participant P07, while responding, stated that proper knowledge of the basic technological tools used in an organization will reduce the turnaround time for tasks performed and increase their accuracy. This can be achieved if employees receive the right training.

Participant P03 believed that remote employees of government organizations should be trained on effective communication skills and team collaboration. He went on to say that when there is effective communication in an organization, employees develop a better understanding of the task to be performed. Team collaboration helps the employees learn more efficient ways of carrying out their duties because team members can learn from one another. Participant P10 believed that employees should be provided more training on interviewing techniques so that they learn how to probe their customers and ascertain better ways to assist them.

Theme 9: Strategies for Achieving Positive Social Change

When asked the same questions about how they contributed to positive social change, participant PO1 stated that she contributed to positive social change in so many ways. She stated that she makes herself available to her colleagues who are less proficient in the use of the technological tools in her company. Additionally, she serves as a mentor to new employees. Participant P01 views herself as the go-to person who other

employees run to when they encounter difficulties at work. Participant P02 believed that he has contributed to positive social change in so many ways in his organization, especially in the area of advocacy. Participant P02 stated that he constantly advocates for workplace equality, gender inclusiveness in leadership roles, a staff healthcare program, and a weekly staff support group. The weekly staff support group is constituted weekly from the various teams in the organization to provide on-going support to employees with less proficient abilities. Participant P03 also admitted to being a contributor to positive social change in his organization by always helping to facilitate trainings, providing feedback on the quality of work done by remote workers, and serving as a mentor to new hires.

Participant P04, while responding, stated that he contributed to positive social change by sharing ideas with other employees and serving as a mentor who grooms new employees. Similarly, participant P05 stated that he encouraged learning within the organization and supported the drive to achieve the vision and mission of his organization through improved communication and team building. Participants P06 and P07 said that they contributed to positive social change by training employees on the use of ICT. Additionally, participant P07 also added that he promoted positive social change by promoting team building. Participants P08, P09, and P10 stated that in addition to offering training to employees, he helps them access user-friendly tools. Participants P11 and P12 admitted to helping out during trainings and mentoring other employees so that everyone worked towards achieving a common goal.

Summary

In chapter 4 the researcher provided a concise explanation of the purpose of the study supported by the key research question. The demographics of the research participants were clearly articulated with detail description of the settings, data collection, and data analysis. The researcher analyzed the data collected in a manner that enable him to extract the themes based on the responses of the participants. The research study used a total of 12 research participants, even though the researcher believed that saturation was attained by the 10th interview. The participant's responses were based on their own perceptions and understanding of how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19. Furthermore, the results of the study are based on a Zoom virtual interview with the participants who met the requirement for participation. The researcher applied the IRB guidelines to ensure trustworthiness of the research study.

Based on the responses of the participants, I inferred that although there are numerous strategies that could be used by government organizations to sustain remote work post COVID, training is one good way of ensuring that employees are independent enough to perform their duties while working remotely. Chapter 5 will focus on the introduction, interpretation of the finding the limitation of the study, recommendations, implication for social change and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory single- case study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. The aim was to gain an understanding of the strategies that government organizations can implement to continue operating remotely and not having employees return to the office. The interpretation of the findings is based on the research question, which sought to understand how government organizations can sustain remote work post- COVID-19. I purposefully sampled employees of government organizations, and I used semi-structured interviews to capture data from participants as shown in Appendix A. The semi-structured questions were designed to answer the central research questions.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of the study show significant impact regarding participants' views and experiences of COVID-19 in their organization, how their organization has adapted to remote work, the role of their organizational leadership during the pandemic, the challenges they encountered while working remotely, strategies they believe will help their organization improve, assessment of their individual technological skills, organizational support systems available to employees, perceptions of training as a strategy for improvement, and how they have contribute to positive social change. COVID-19 brought about a lot of adjustments in organizations, necessitating organizations to devise means for employees performing duties from remote locations (Cho et al., 2021). Factors, such as training of employees, understanding change models,

and ascertaining how the technological skills of employees contribute to job engagement helped to provide a better strategy on how to operate remotely. Nine themes emerged from analysis of the participants' responses. Below is the interpretation of the findings based on the nine themes identified.

Finding 1: Participants' Views on the Impact of COVID-19 on Their Organization

I began by asking participants how COVID-19 impacted their organization. All the participants indicated that COVID-19 had impacted their organization both negatively and positively. The 12 selected participants I interviewed were employees of government organizations who worked remotely during COVID-19 and were able to express their opinions on the impact of COVID-19 on their organization. In attempt to stem the pandemic's spread, P01, P02, P03, P04, P05, P06, P07, P08, P09, P10, P11, and P12 revealed that their organizations adopted synchronous and asynchronous methods of performing their jobs, and they attributed the low productivity in their individual firms to the lack of cooperation and poor communication brought on by the necessity of working remotely. P03 stated that several employees were sick and their inability to work resulted in low productivity and job losses. All the participants admitted that COVID-19 brought about a shortage of staff because, prior to working remotely, many employees had to quit their jobs to spend time with their children and family members who could not go to school or work and needed to be supervised.

P03, P04, P07, P09, P10, P11, and P12 explained that the low productivity in their organization was mainly caused by a lack of requisite technological application skills among employees. P01, P02, and P05 stated that low productivity and job losses were a

result of many employees being sick or distracted while working remotely and not being able to perform their duties. P06, P08, P12, and P11 added that poor communication and lack of team collaboration were among the major challenges faced in their respective organizations. P01 used herself as an example, saying that her kids were home for most of the pandemic period because schools were closed, and she had to assume multiple roles being an employee and struggling with the technology that had just been introduced, being a mother, and being her kid's teacher.

The conclusions drawn from the participants' responses was that COVID-19 changed the way organizations operated originally. However, participants expressed happiness that COVID-19 made their organizations reevaluate their organizational practices regarding efficiency. Some of the organizations had adopted both synchronous and asynchronous methods of service delivery to sustain business activities.

Finding 2: How Organizations Have Adapted to Remote Work Since COVID-19 Started

I asked the participants to discuss how their organizations have adapted to remote work since COVID-19 started. From the perspectives of the participants, while some organizations have easily adapted to the remote work experience, many others have not fully adapted. Adaptation is essential for organizational sustainability and competitive advantage (Ali Hameed et al., 2019). P01, P04, P11, and P12 indicated that their organization had adapted well because employees were trained on how to work remotely. P01 stated that her organization encouraged teamwork to carry everyone along. P02 said

that their organization adapted by engaging employees, increasing wages, and promoting employee healthcare programs.

Working remotely during COVID-19, according to P03, P07, P09, and P12, helped their organization lower the rate of illness transmission because employees were not forced to carry out their job in a crowded workspace. P03, P07, P09, and P12 also received instruction that assisted them in carrying out their tasks remotely. P06 said that his company gave employees training on how to use the different technology tools they needed to do their jobs, even though employee supervision has remained difficult in his company. P05, P10, P08, and 12 said their companies adapted because they created an environment where people could thrive. P11 stated that his organization saved money on infrastructure and office space because they had to shut down some physical office spaces and provide employees with the tools needed for them to work remotely and working remotely helped their organization save money. All the Participants said that organizations provided training on how to use the various technological tools needed to perform their job and supervised their progress and adaptation to their new work environment. These participants agreed that understanding the applicability of the various software and resources provided to them by their organization entails a tedious learning process.

The conclusions drawn from the responses of the participants is that organizational adaptation could be achieved differently, but in line with Xiao et al. (2021), which include knowledge learning, teamwork, and the capacity for independent creativity. These crucial skills allow an environment or system to survive and flourish.

All the participants indicated that constant training and retraining will make their adaptation process easier. Participants stated that government organizations should allocate more resources to technological intervention and encourage employees to become more technologically savvy.

Finding 3: Participant's View of Their Organizational Leadership

The success of leadership depends on inclusiveness, social accountability, rules of conduct, and management, which can inspire eager teamwork and a desire to fully become involved (Bhatti et al., 2023). Effective organizational leadership, therefore, entails having the ability to influence and guide others' actions to achieve organizational goals (Dabke, 2016). In this light, an effective leader is one who inspires others to carry out their professional responsibilities in a way that advances the objectives of the company and fulfills both individual and group expectations (Bican & Bren, 2020).

The participants, while projecting their views of their organizational leadership, presented a variety of views. Participants generally agreed that the leadership of their organization makes efforts to be engaging, even though leadership could do better. Participants stated that their organization is sensitive to the plight of the employees and keep up with employees and make efforts to be involved in their activities. Participants also admitted that their organization is understanding and empathetic to employee challenges. P01, P02, P04, and P06 said that even though their organization is engaging, their leadership pattern is somewhat autocratic and leaves little room for mistakes or for employees to apply their own discretion when making certain decisions. P01, P02, P04, and P06 argued that it is worrisome to work under leadership that believes in full

compliance and even tries to micromanage employees in order to ensure they are in compliance with the organization's policies and rules. Nonetheless, P03 said that his organization is understanding and empathetic to employee challenges. P04 added that their organization cares about staff welfare, and this is evident in the welfare activities the organization undertakes. P04 went on to say that they have good healthcare benefits, sporting events, and periodic wellness education.

P07, P08, and P10 said they see their company as a learning organization where employees are given chances to learn on the job through peer mentoring and team building. Additionally, P07, P08, and P10 said that their company promotes the welfare of its workers. According to P09, his company is proactive and successfully handles issues faced by employees. P07, P11, and P12 stated that their organizations promote collaboration, teamwork, and an open-door policy. P07 stated that his organization is disruptive and adaptive to change and was able to adapt easily during the pandemic. P07 said that employees are encouraged to express their thoughts and build connections inside the company that will aid them in carrying out their jobs.

Participants' responses support the arguments advanced by Yukl et al. (2002), which grouped a range of leadership traits into three main categories: (a) task-driven leadership (that discusses tasks and obligations, plans, and prioritizes activities); (b) relationship-driven leadership (to manage individual support and recognition of achievements); and (c) change-driven leadership (to expand the goal of what is achievable and to demonstrate why changes are required). This sort of categorization provides a framework for envisioning leadership structures.

Finding 4: Challenges of Remote Work

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically increased the demand for internet remote working from home in 2020–2021. This unanticipated event has necessitated people and businesses to swiftly train workers so that they can adjust to the use of online working methods in a bid to sustain comparable level of productivity as working in a traditional workplace. However, organizations were faced with multi-level challenges. The participants expressed their opinions on the challenges of remote work in their various organizations. P01, P02, P05, P06, P07, and P11 thought that the biggest problems their respective organizations were facing were a lack of communication, a poor rate of information processing, and a lack of teamwork. P03 and P04 said that once their organizations adopted the remote work pattern, the team collaboration that had existed before to COVID-19 was lost. According to P03, his firm faced a number of difficulties, including the incapacity of the personnel to grasp the use of the technological resources at their disposal, the unavailability of the equipment required to operate remotely, and the delays in service delivery.

P04 claimed that his firm encountered additional difficulties as a result of its inadequate internet access. P08 made the observation that when his company initially started working remotely, the staff lacked the necessary IT abilities to carry out their duties remotely. Employees, for instance, had to learn how to use Zoom and Teams in order to do their duties. The majority of employee reports were written in hard copies before COVID-19. Employees had to learn how to utilize specific computer software in order to produce and submit soft copies of their reports, though, because they had to work

remotely. The consequences of bureaucratic bottlenecks were cited by P09 as the major cause of the problems his organization was experiencing. Employees, according to P09, were resistant to change and many preferred to carry on with the status quo. Many employees were reluctant to utilize their laptop, scanner, printer, and other pieces of work equipment designed to support remote work, and some employees refused to receive training on how to use the necessary IT tools. P10 and P12 claimed that the difficulties their organization faced were caused by a combination of large resignations brought on by employee burnout and a general lack of discipline among many employees.

Generally, all the participants mentioned how the lack of mentorship and poor organizational communication affected their various organizations. The participants also pointed out that even when their organization provided the necessary tools to get the job done remotely, the employees still lacked the skills to use the technological tools provided by their organization. For instance, employees had to learn how to use Teams and Zoom to perform their jobs. Prior to COVID-19, most reports written by employees were in hard copies. However, since employees had to work remotely, it became necessary for them to learn how to use some computer applications that would enable them to write and submit soft copies of their reports.

Finding 5: Strategies for Managing Change and Improving Remote Work Experience

The research participants showed that there are numerous strategies that could be used to manage change and improve the remote work experience of employees. The participants mentioned that employee training and having access to the right tools needed

to execute their job can help improve employee experiences. Demerouti (2023) opined that understanding and enhancing the effects of remote work requires assisting people in their efforts to balance their professional, family, and personal needs, demands, and resources. According to Nyberg et al. (2021), to achieve a successful remote work strategy, organizational communication practices should be genuine, ongoing, and two-way. Communication is an important and fundamental factor in every company; it is needed for fostering collaboration within the workplace and impacts organizational performance and decision-making (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). It has been demonstrated that social cohesiveness and trust have a significant impact on team productivity (Gillespie, 2016).

P01 mentioned that maintaining a good work-life balance and good mental health will improve the remote work experience of employees. The participant also advocated for the involvement of employees in matters that concern their wellbeing in the organization. Similarly, the P02 believed that building a communal orientation, defining measurable goals, offering clear procedures for employees to follow, and cultivating effective communication and conscientiousness within an organization can improve employees' remote work experiences. According to P02, the community experience would increase communication among employees as well as between employees and their organizational leadership. P03, P04, P05, and P06 stated that providing employees with the necessary working equipment and encouraging teamwork could improve their remote work experiences. P03 noted that it is critical to be truthful when dealing with employees and to maintain a positive attitude toward work.

P05 added that training and mentoring on effective time management should be made available to employees. P07 and P08 agreed that offering a pleasant work atmosphere and the ability to work on a flexible schedule would improve employees' remote work experiences. This is due to the fact that employees would be allowed to work at their pace. P09 emphasized the necessity of training in addition to providing the essential tools for remote work. Employees are better positioned to accomplish their responsibilities when they are effectively prepared to use the technical tools at their disposal. P10 believed that using a calendar to schedule work tasks and improve communication in a business would improve employees' remote experience. P11 and P12 indicated that characteristics such as constant training, team collaboration, and empathy can improve the remote work experience.

All the participants mentioned that employees should be provided with mentors to guide less tenured workers, training on efficient time management, a conducive work environment, and the opportunity to operate a flexible schedule. The importance of training, in addition to providing the necessary tools for remote work, cannot be overemphasized because the participants argued that employees' remote work experiences could be improved if they are provided with the right working tools and trained to use them. Salas et al. (2023) stated that for organizations to remain competitive, they must continually train their employees to learn and grow.

Finding 6: How Participants' Technological Skill Is Comparable to Their Productivity

COVID-19 brought about a lot of changes in the work environment, such that technology has become a part of our daily lives (Rasool et al., 2022). More than ever, more people are beginning to work remotely following the aftermath of the pandemic. To work remotely, employees must have the skill set needed to utilize the technological tools. Ra et al. (2019) opined that there is a need to prepare the workforce for learnability so that they can assume new roles, unlearn, and relearn in order to bolster their skill set. The research participants were asked to talk about how their technological skills compare to their productivity. All the participants claimed to have good technological skills. The majority of the participants stated that they have enough technological skills to perform their job. They argued that they are able to use search engines, work in real time using Zoom and Teams, which allows them to hold meetings regularly with their team members, and do every other thing that they would have done if they were in the traditional office.

P01 stated that she was able to provide training to less technologically knowledgeable staff because of her technology expertise. P02 indicated that he possesses the technological skills required for his profession. P02, for example, indicated that he can use search engines and work in real time with Zoom and Teams. The video conferencing features of this program enable staff to conduct presentations in real time. P02 mentioned that he attends regular meetings with his team members and does everything else that he would do in a traditional office. P03 remarked that his

technological application skills allow him to do a good job. Prior to COVID-19, P04 thought his technological skills were mediocre; nevertheless, he has grown significantly since starting to work remotely because he had to learn and adapt quickly in order to execute his job. P04 went on to claim that he has learned how to use programs like Excel and Zoom to carry out his responsibilities. Prior to working remotely, he had limited expertise on how to use Excel sheets to turn in his reports, as most were submitted in hard copies to the organization's secretary, who re-produced the soft copies. P05, P06, P07, and P08 all claimed to have exceptional technological abilities. P07 indicated that he has good hands-on talents and that he can readily use his technical application skills to complete his job as required by his firm.

P08 remarked that, while having outstanding technological abilities, he believes there is still much space for improvement. P09, P10, and P11 all stated in separate interviews that their technology application skills were excellent. P09 remarked that he not only possesses outstanding technological skills, but also the ability to adapt to changes. P10 stated that she is quite knowledgeable about most information technology products and even assists other employees at her firm. P11 claimed that her technological skills enable her to configure complex software at her job. Similarly, P12 stated that COVID-19 gave her the opportunity to develop her technological abilities, at least to the point where she could do her needed obligations. She went on to claim that working remotely allows her to make more progress than working in-person in a regular office setting.

Finding 7: Strategies for Supporting Workers With Less Proficient Abilities

In an organization, all employees do not have the same capabilities or skill set needed to carry out their job. While some may be tenured, others may just be struggling to get their job done. The participants were asked to explain how government organizations can support remote workers with less proficient abilities. The majority of the participants argued that organizational leaders should make efforts to identify employee weaknesses in order to understand their training needs. Once the training needs of employees are identified, organizations must provide training and constantly retrain employees until they become tenured. According to Armstrong (2020), one of an organization's fundamental responsibilities is to provide employees with the knowledge and skills they need to do their jobs effectively. One of the best methods for improving employee performance and efficiently achieving business goals and objectives is training (Afroz, 2018). Training will help organizations improve both quantity and quality of production, leading to the overall wellbeing of the organization (Garavan et al., 2020).

P01 agreed that organizational leaders should make attempts to uncover employee deficiencies in order to understand their training requirements. Once employees' training needs are discovered, firms must give training and regularly retrain personnel until they are tenured. P01 went on to say that organizational training should be comprehensive, including all areas of work duties. Team building, adequate intra- and inter-organizational communication, and mentorship programs were highlighted as significant support aspects for remote workers with less proficient abilities by P02 and P03. P04, P05, and P06 believed that training should be adaptable and tailored to the needs of the

employees. Apart from training, staff should be given the necessary equipment to operate remotely. They went on to say that firms should invest in information technology resources including virtual conferencing tools, laptops, and internet equipment.

Employee motivation, the availability of incentives, and proper distribution of work, according to P07, P08, and P12, could be used to promote employee engagement and productivity. P12 noted that organizations should hold workshops and seminars on a regular basis. Employee training, according to P09, is a positive start toward aiding employees with less proficient talents, but it is also necessary to increase employee morale and optimize employee potential. Employee morale, according to P09, is linked to employee engagement and retention, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. P10 believes that learning firms are better positioned to accommodate remote workers with less skilled talents because employees can learn from their tenured colleagues. According to the participant, organizational leadership should ensure that employees have access to the appropriate tools and more experienced personnel, whose depth of experience is usually useful to the firm. Organizations, according to P11, should not be inflexible. She went on to suggest that innovation should be fostered and that the workplace should be a no-judgment zone where individuals can use their discretion as needed.

All the participants agreed that providing training for employees is a good step towards supporting employees with less proficient abilities, but it is also important to boost employee morale and maximize the potential of the employees. They also believed that organizational leadership should ensure that employees have access to the right tools and more experienced workers, whose wealth of experience is usually invaluable to the

organization. According to Kumari and Yelkar (2022), the elements that could improve employee engagement are transparency in approach, ongoing feedback, developing engaging activities, recognizing employee successes, employee connect, encouraging teamwork and collaboration, focusing on the everyday employee experience, and lastly, strengthening the trusting environment.

Finding 8: Employees' Training Needs

The participants were asked to talk about the training needs of employees of government organizations that hope to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. According to P01, the staff should receive sufficient training on time management, organizational abilities, and strong customer relations. She went on to explain that many government personnel lack good customer service skills and do not show as much dedication to their jobs as they would in the private sector. She believes she does not demonstrate enough devotion as a government remote job because she is paid at the end of the month regardless of her input. P02, P05, P06, P07, P08, P09, P11, and P12 all advocated for technical tool training. P02 contended that firms can train people on how to use advanced computer equipment with high speeds and software that will allow them to do their tasks more efficiently. P05 also stated that it would be beneficial for government companies to train employees on how to use the various video conferencing tools available so that employees may communicate with their colleagues in real time while simultaneously completing their weekly PowerPoint presentations and meetings. According to P06, adequate training on various information technological tools, such as programming software, virtual presentation tools, and data analysis software, will transform remote

employees into valuable organizational assets whose contributions will significantly increase organizational productivity. Respondent P07 indicated that appropriate knowledge of the basic technology tools utilized in an organization will reduce work turnaround time and boost task accuracy. This is possible provided personnel obtain the appropriate training. P03 thought that distant personnel of government organizations should be taught in excellent communication skills and team collaboration. He went on to remark that when a business has efficient communication, employees gain a greater knowledge of the task at hand. Because team members can learn from one another, team cooperation helps employees develop more efficient ways to carry out their jobs. P10 felt that personnel should be given greater training in interviewing tactics so that they may probe their clients and find better ways to assist them.

All the participants believed that training remote workers was instrumental to the general productivity of the organization. Several studies and research findings demonstrate that training improves business outcomes through higher productivity, better leadership abilities, cheaper production expenses, simpler ways to earn profits, and a bigger market (Kessy & Temu, 2010). To ensure that employees actually benefit from training provided by their organization, Mathis and Jackson (2016) opined that organizations should identify the training needs of employees, design training, deliver training in an effective style, and evaluate training. Team collaboration helps the employees learn more efficient ways of carrying out their duties because team members can learn from one another. Communication and team collaboration are necessary components of success in all organizations (Pouragha et al., 2020).

Finding 9: Strategies for Achieving Positive Social Change

Positive social change is necessary for organizational development. This is because positive social change entails a cause of action that brings about an improvement on the status quo. There are several ways employees could contribute to positive social change in their organization. Stephan et al. (2023) viewed positive social change as a unique blend of change processes facilitated and promoted by procedures within organizations. According to Phillips and Klein (2023), a change agent must propose strategies that will lessen barriers and increase benefits in order to influence social change. As change agents in their organizations, participants were asked about how they contributed to positive social change. All the participants believed that they contributed to positive social change in their organization in one way or another.

When asked how they contributed to constructive social change in the same manner, PO1 answered that she contributed in a variety of ways. She added that she makes herself available to her coworkers who are less skilled in the usage of her company's technology equipment. She also works as a mentor to new staff. P01 sees herself as the go-to person for other employees who are having problems at work. Participant P02 considered that he had made a significant contribution to positive social change in his organization, particularly in the area of advocacy. P02 claimed that he is an outspoken supporter for workplace equality, gender equality in leadership roles, a staff healthcare program, and a weekly staff support group. The weekly staff support group is formed on a weekly basis from diverse teams around the firm to provide ongoing assistance to employees with less skilled abilities.

P03 also admitted to being a positive social change agent in his firm by always assisting in the facilitation of trainings, offering comments on the quality of work done by remote workers, and serving as a mentor to new hires. Respondent P04 indicated that he contributed to positive social change through exchanging ideas with other employees and serving as a mentor to new employees. Mentoring is a crucial aspect of bringing about positive social change because it is a teaching and learning process in which the mentor teaches the mentee and the mentee learns and implements what the mentor has taught them in their professional and personal lives (Hill et al., 2022). Similarly, P05 claimed that he fostered organizational learning and supported the drive to fulfill his organization's vision and purpose through increased communication and team building. P06 and P07 stated that they helped to create positive social change by teaching employees how to use ICT.

Furthermore, P07 stated that he created positive societal change by encouraging team development. P08, P09, and P10 noted that in addition to providing training, he assists staff in gaining access to user-friendly tools. P11 and P12 admitted to assisting during trainings and coaching other employees so that everyone worked together to achieve a shared goal. One interesting thing about the responses of the participants is that they all understand the concept of social change and have all been involved in positive social change activities in their organization. The following paragraph addresses the study's limitations.

Limitations of the Study

The focus of the study was to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. The overarching researching question was "how can government organizations continue to use remote work after COVID-19?" While conducting the study, three limitations were observed. First, the study was biased because the emphasis was on government organizations. There was no consideration of non-government organizations while studying how organizations can sustain remote work post-COVID-19. By studying only government organizations, the scope was minimized. However, it did not affect the outcome of the study because the researcher was able to collect plenty of data that could also be applied to non-government organizations.

Environmental factors contributed to the second limitation. The study was conducted virtually using Zoom. The participants had to log into Zoom using the meeting link sent to them, and the interview was conducted at a convenient time for both parties. The majority of the participants preferred their interview at night, after they had returned home from work. There were times that the researcher experienced noise from kids playing in the home. This was a situational factor that the researcher could not control. The researcher had to suspend the interview for a while and proceed when the noise decreased. However, this condition did not influence participants' responses.

Challenges with technology were the third limitation. There were times during the interview with the participants that their computer froze for a couple of seconds. The participants attributed it to their poor internet connection and slow laptop speeds in some cases. I had to wait for a couple of seconds for their internet to pick up. This was a

situational factor that I had no control over. Gladly, the technological challenges were manageable and did not affect the responses of the research participants. The study adds to the body of research by offering suggestions that organizations can use as a manual for continuing remote work after COVID-19. The findings also left potential for future research.

Recommendations

The recommendations put forward by the researchers includes recommendation for further research, recommendation for strategies for sustaining remote work, and recommendation for social change.

Recommendations for Further Research

In the study, the researcher examined the thoughts and experiences of government employees who worked remotely during COVID, to know how government organizations can sustain remote work post COVID-19. Based on their responses and the limitation of the study in terms of the scope, the result of the study may not apply to all remote workers of government organizations. This is because only 12 participants were selected to represent remote workers of government organizations. However, the researcher's decision to limit the sample participants to 12 is because other researchers have previously used smaller samples to conduct qualitative research. The researcher is recommending that a larger population size of 30 to 50 participants be utilized by future researchers to ensure that the study is more accommodating.

Furthermore, the researcher had the privilege to interview only the remote workers of government organizations. However, the researcher did not have the

opportunity of interviewing those who are remote workers of religious organizations. It is for this reason that the researcher is recommending future researchers to conduct research on remote workers of religious organizations because in my opinion, this will create more insights on how organizations can sustain remote post COVID-19.

Recommendations for Strategies for Sustaining Remote Work

The study offers a number of suggestions for sustaining remote work. One of the recommendations is to make sure that any government organization with remote staff develops mentorship programs to enable people to learn from more experienced workers. Mentoring is a crucial strategy for improving employee performance and organizational development (Xu et al., 2021). Mentorship, according to Higgins and Kram (2001), argues that the mentoring connection, which kicks off the social exchange process, might offer protégés two basic types of advantages. The main benefit for a protégé is career-related support, which aids in professional advancement through the unique mentor support techniques such as funding, guidance, safety, publicity, and visibility. Psychosocial support is another benefit of mentorship. It offers protégés a sense of social support and typically aids in making them feel more capable and efficient. In other words, mentors are more seasoned workers within an organization who use their wealth of experience to coach and develop less seasoned workers.

Training is the second recommendation for this study. Training has a significant impact on employee performance and organizational objectives because it fosters learning (Sung & Choi, 2014). In order to produce results that have an influence on the business and motivate employers to up their game, employees need to be trained to

become more knowledgeable, more skilled, and more critical thinkers (Sultan et al. 2020). According to Abdulla et al. (2017), employees can boost their productivity if they are provided with the right social, intellectual, and mental training. If workers are properly trained, they acquire the necessary abilities to carry out job duties that they would not have done so effectively otherwise. It is impossible to overstate the value of training because it will assist staff in comprehending the function and use of the technical instruments necessary for work performance. For instance, staff members will be taught how to give reports and engage in other team activities using Teams or other video conferencing software. Shkoler and Kimura (2020), citing the significance of training, claimed that because modern businesses are characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, only continuous training can give them a competitive advantage.

Employee motivation is the third guideline for this study. The goal of employee motivation is to create a supportive workplace where workers are encouraged to work with enthusiasm, responsibility, and dedication. An individual feels motivated when they believe that particular activities will result in the achievement of a particular objective, according to Zoellner and Sulikova (2022). Similarly, Baumeister (2016) believes that the primary objective of motivation is to facilitate behavioral change by energizing and leading processes that influence the choice and efficacy of implementing tasks. Employees who are properly motivated will be eager to go above and beyond to complete their tasks. Numerous things can motivate workers. For instance, while some workers might find motivation in higher pay, others might find inspiration in a flexible schedule.

The leadership of an organization has a responsibility to comprehend the ideal methods for inspiring employees in order to get the most out of them.

Setting attainable goals for staff is the fourth piece of advice for businesses. Employees who work remotely benefit from flexible work schedules. Certain workers are able to take care of certain personal concerns between shifts before returning to finish their work. They are continuously under pressure to defend their input, which may not have been the case if they were working from their regular office locations, but this is because they operate remotely. Employees may have to put in many hours over their regular work hours to justify their contribution to the company. Many remote workers have admitted to putting in longer hours to prove their dedication to their employer (Song & Gao, 2020; Dockery & Bawa, 2020). This is due to the corporate leadership's constant focus on exceeding goals in order to maintain employee engagement (Rau & Hyland, 2002). Although some employees may struggle with technological equipment or have trouble accessing the internet, organizational leadership occasionally fails to set realistic expectations for the staff. The workers wind up putting in more time than they are compensated for in order to defend what they have accomplished.

Team collaboration is the study's fifth suggestion. Teamwork and collaboration are terms that are frequently used interchangeably. In a business setting, collaborative effort comprises interaction between employees with the aim of advancing organizational objectives. According to Sanyal (2018), a team is a group of individuals working together to achieve shared goals while offering excellent services. Team collaboration empowers employees to maximize their potential and explore effective means to accomplish tasks

on time. When a task requires a greater diversity of expertise, discernment, and opinion, teamwork produces superior results compared to individual effort. Teams significantly affect employee performance, which helps foster employee growth and enhance productivity within an organization (Oseiboakye, 2015). It's crucial for businesses to foster good team collaboration in order to sustain remote work post-COVID-19. This will enable workers to reach their full potential and teach them better ways to carry out their responsibilities. The lack of team collaboration has an impact on organizational performance and productivity (Sanyal, 2018).

Recommendation for Social Change

Government organizations looking to sustain remote work should also take mentoring into account. Many of the participants confirmed the value of having mentors guide the less experienced staff, as was highlighted during the data collection. By observing their more experienced coworkers, less experienced and less tenured employees have the chance to advance through mentoring. In the case of new employees, it is frequently challenging for them to comprehend organizational expectations or to know what to do in specific situations; however, with the assistance of the mentors, work processes are more streamlined and expectations are more easily understood.

In the researcher's opinion, successful change management practices could help organizations grow more broadly, more productively, more efficiently, and with better teamwork inside the organization. A safer workplace, lower employee turnover, and higher performance and sustainability may be experienced by organizations that are able to adopt the change initiatives described. When change is implemented, the organization

understands and accepts the reasons behind it, which leads to increased productivity, improved teamwork, and lower staff turnover.

Implications

The social change, methodological, theoretical and the empirical implications of the study are elaborated on the paragraphs below.

Social Change Implication

Social change is a crucial undertaking that fosters the optimization of organizational processes in order to improve an organization's well-being (Wang, 2015). The objective of positive social change management is to optimize the benefits of the change while reducing the likelihood of failure during its delivery. Analysis of potential organizational strategies is crucial if firms are to remain viable. According to the data gathered, enhancing collaboration inside organizations, offering staff the appropriate training and developing mentorship programs were at the top of the list of tactics that government organizations may use to maintain remote work post-COVID-19 and bring about positive social change.

Employees will be able to comprehend work expectations through team collaboration, which will also improve communication and camaraderie. When teams work together, information is shared more quickly, and individuals are able to learn from both their peers and the leadership of their company. Employees are more likely to stay on the job longer because they appreciate their work environment when they collaborate as a team and establish friendships, which make the workplace fascinating to them.

Similarly, training will assist a firm in maintaining a workforce that is knowledgeable about current business trends and who is able to effectively use the numerous software programs and technology tools available. In addition to instruction in the use of technological equipment and software, it is crucial for employees who work remotely to receive training on information security issues so that they are aware of their responsibilities in protecting critical company data. For instance, training in ethics, time management, effective communication, and worker wellbeing should be available to employees. Employees need to be retrained in order to fill new roles and avoid becoming obsolete.

Giving workers the tools they need to do their jobs can significantly affect their output. The proper technological equipment and software must be given to the employees if the firm wants to continue remote work after COVID-19. Employees should, for instance, have access to the internet and PCs or laptops with fast memory and processor speeds. Employees should be able to connect with their colleagues in real-time using software like Teams or Zoom. Employees should also have access to powerful anti-virus software so they can prevent important company information from falling into the wrong hands. Organizations have a wide range of resources at their disposal, and these resources may be influenced by the nature of the organization's operations.

Methodological Implications

Regarding my academic interest, the available literature that I researched suggested that researchers focused more on the value of remote work in businesses. They did not, however, pay attention to how government organizations can sustain remote

work post-COVID-19. So it was worthwhile to look into my research topic. The researcher developed significant policy recommendations based on the study's findings that organizational policymakers might use to change how remote work is carried out in government organizations. Additionally, the research later revealed that choosing participants for the study was a difficult process given the nature of the study. This is due to the lack of remote employment in the government. The 12 individuals chosen from those who worked remotely during COVID-19, however, served as the study's primary subjects. The researcher was able to identify the study's limitations and offer suggestions for additional research on remote work post-COVID-19.

Theoretical Implications

A theoretical framework, as defined by Benet (2013), describes the theory, clarifies the presence of an issue, and serves as the foundation for data collection, analysis, and conclusion. The phenomenon being examined and the underlying presumptions must be considered in order to identify a theoretical framework (Luft et al., 2022). The OAT (Chandler, 1962) serves as the theoretical foundation for the current study. In reaction to a change in the status of things in an organization, the OAT theory was created (Vowels et al., 2022). When faced with an unforeseen incident that interferes with normal operations and the expected outcomes, corporate organizations adapt their procedures and strategies. According to Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), the theory's underlying premise is that environmental determinism and strategic choice interact to produce OAT. In connection with this study, the researcher used OAT to demonstrate how government entities might decide strategically to continue remote work beyond

COVID-19, even in the face of pandemics or other environmental determinants. Participants in the interview described how their companies adapted to remote work during COVID-19 and went on to make suggestions for how their company might be able to continue with remote work beyond COVID-19. This condition is consistent with the viewpoint of Sarta et al. (2021), who claimed that the goal of adaptation is to deliberately reduce the gap between an organization and its institutional and economic contexts in the face of uncertainty.

To sustain remote work post-COVID-19, government organizations must be able to adapt to the changing business environment, which has necessitated increased reliance on the use of information technology tools for remote work and reduced reliance on face-to-face contacts with business clients. Furthermore, participants identified strategies that they believe could help remote workers adapt to change and function successfully and efficiently. Some of the measures suggested by the participants were the provision of mentorship programs, the training of staff, and the availability of the appropriate technology tools. After COVID-19, government organizations' productivity may suffer if they are unable to adjust to the changing business climate.

Empirical Implications

The target population's assistance in the study helped provide answers to the main research questions. A case study methodology was employed in the investigation. The empirical implications of the study seek to establish a relationship between OAT and the requirement for government organizations to put into place methods that will allow them to adapt to and sustain remote work after COVID-19. The OAT, which was determined to

be consistent with the elements that help organizations adapt, provides leadership in

government organizations with information on the need to create policies and procedures

that will enable their organization to continue using remote workers after COVID-19.

The researcher went into great detail to describe the tactics that will make it possible for

the laws created to yield positive social change.

Conclusion

The goal of the study was to explore how government organizations can sustain

remote work post COVID-19. The research designed was a qualitative approach based on

a case study approach to answer the research question. The study was guided by

semistructured interview protocol questions attached in appendix A. The findings of the

study are in line with previous study conducted on the importance of remote work.

However, the previous studies failed to focus on the experiences and thought of

government remote workers.

Conclusions drawn from the research showed that COVID-19 affected

organizations in both positive and negative ways. Despite the fact that workers

appreciated the freedom of working from home, COVID-19 resulted in job losses, low

productivity, poor employee-organization communication, and a lack of adequate

monitoring. Many workers were forced to leave their employment in order to spend time

with their children and other family members who were unable to attend school and

required adult supervision. I also understood that workers may adjust to unique work

situations with the support of ongoing training and retraining. I discovered that

organizational training needs to be comprehensive, focused, adaptable to employee demands, and covering every facet of the work assignment.

My message to employers and employees is that COVID-19 can happen again, and they should make sure that the advancements made by working remotely during COVID-19 are improved upon. Employees should receive updated training on how to use the fundamental technology resources required for remote work. The current study has shown that the importance of remote work cannot be overemphasized. Collaboration, realistic goal-setting, equipping employees with the proper tools, establishing mentorship programs, and employee motivation are very instrumental to the success of remote work in government organizations. Furthermore, the theoretical foundation and theoretical assumptions of Chandler's OAT were examined in order to comprehend the controversy over whether adaptation is managerially or environmentally determined, and whether adaptation is a process that involves choice and selection versus one in which it is an essential a response to environmental pressures.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

My name is Chikwendu Nweke, I am a doctoral student with Walden University studying human resource management.

Opening statement

I appreciate you for making yourself available and to participate in this study interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore the views of remote workers of your organization on how government organizations can sustain remote work post Covid-19. Hopefully, this interview will not last for more than 1 hour. I will like to record our discussion to enable me remember the things that will be discussed while I also take note on key points that will be mentioned. As stated in the invitation letter and consent form I sent to you earlier, this interview considers as very important your privacy and confidentiality and I hope to maintain that. The information that you provide for this study will remain anonymous. Please, while the interview is in progress, and you would like to ask any question, do let me know. Do you have any question before we begin?

The purpose of this research

The purpose of the research is to explore how government organizations can sustain remote work post Covid-19. I hope that the results of the study will offer recommendations that will help government organizations understand the strategies that they can use to sustain remote work post COVID-19. Would you like to participate in this interview?

Interview Questions

The following open-ended questions will be used as interview questions for the study;

1. How has Covid-19 impacted your organization?

2. In what ways has your organization adapted to remote work environment since the pandemic?

3. What can you tell me about the leadership of your organization?

4. What are some of the organizational practices that militate against the smooth remote work experience of employees in your organization?

5. How can the leadership of your organization improve the remote work experience of the employees?

6. Since COVID-19 brought about changes in the ways organization and employees function, can you share your strategies for managing change?

7. How is your technological skill comparable to your work productivity?

8. How can your organization support remote workers with less proficient abilities?

9. What organizational support systems are in place to support remote workers in your organization?

10. What aspects of your job do you think that getting more training could boost your productivity?

11. In what ways have you contributed to positive social change in your organization since working remotely?

12. What are the strategies that might improve productivity and employee engagement if applied in your organization?

13. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Closing statement

We have come to the end of the interview, and I want to thank you for participating in this research. The recorded data would be transcribed, and you may request for a copy if you so desire. Also, I will be glad to share the final study with you, once my dissertation has been approved and produced. Thank you once again.

Appendix B: Interviewee Transcript Review Protocol Form

Interviewee Transcript Review Protocol

 1. Prepare summary derived from the emerging themes of the interview and observation.

 2. Verify with research participants that they are still able to meet their commitment to

check their responses.

3. Electronically deliver the summarized.

4. Collect responses and added data

5. Integrate new findings and adjust for any new emerging themes.

Appendix C: Member Checking Protocol

Member Checking Protocol

1. Interview participant taking notes and recording interviews

2. Transcribe recording

3. Critically analyze transcript and interview notes

4. Synthesize interpretation for participant answer by question

5. Member check interpretation by sharing an electronic version of the question and synthesis

6. Note and record any additional in-depth data from the participant

7. For further interviews repeat 2 through 6 if needed for more in-depth data collection