

Assessment of Remote Work Done by Undergraduate Students' its Benefits and Contribution to Family Living in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

The study focused on the Assessment of Remote Work Done by Undergraduate Students, its Benefits and Contribution towards Family Living in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study was designed to identify different types of remote work engaged by undergraduate students in University of Uyo, identify the benefits of remote work on undergraduate students engaged in it in University of Uyo and determine its contribution towards family living. Three (3) research questions and one (1) hypothesis guided the study. Literatures were reviewed on concepts related to the topic. Survey research design was employed. The total population was 25,679. Multistage sampling technique was employed to arrive at a sample size of 129 using snowball technique. A structured questionnaire titled, Assessment of Remote Work done by Undergraduate Students its, Benefits and Contribution to Family Living (AUSRWBCFL). Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question and acceptable level was 2.50 and above. The hypothesis was analyzed using t-test at 0.05 significant level. The findings unveiled among others, different types of remote work engaged by students as web designer, social media manager, Graphic designer. The study also revealed the benefits of remote work to students as, save more time, earn more money, flexible schedule, and take care of school bill. There was no significant difference between male and female responses on the benefits of remote work to undergraduate. It was therefore concluded that remote work has positive contributions towards family living. Therefore, it was recommended among others that individuals should acquire skills that will aid them participate in remote work.

Keywords: *Work, Worker, Remote work, Benefits, Contribution, Family, Living*

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Background to the Study

Work can refer to a physical or mental act carried out to achieve a purpose, a place of employment, a job or task that an individual performs (Mardon, 2021). Hagel and Wooll, (2019), came up with opinion that “work is a place or an entity, tasks to be done or output to achieve. Work has to be carried out by a worker. A worker is an individual who works under a contract of service or for labour only, where the worker works directly with the employer (Melanie, 2019). This means the individual performs part or all the work for the employer. Someone employed under a contract for service who works regularly is a worker. Work can be done through remote.

Remote work is a working approach that allows employees to work outside of traditional office environment. It is a work arrangement in which workers do not commute to a central workspace such as an office (Ila,2021). Working remotely has almost been normalized due to the advancements in technology. The nature of some work also makes it possible to have some workers or employees work from locations other than the organization factory or offices. Such other locations include working from home. The recent pandemic that besieged nations of the world also reinforced the need for some workers to work from home rather than come within the organization official place of work (Zamani, 2021). Due to the restrictions and lockdowns, companies and employers of labour kept their factories and workplaces under lock and key except for producers of essential goods and services. It was during the height of the restrictions that made some companies, employers of labour and other organisations to allow some of their staff who can do their jobs remotely to continue to do so while working from home. It is noted thus by Kifor, Savescu and Danut (2022), that companies and employees alike had to adjust quickly to the new form of work organisation, with employees struggling to juggle sometimes competing demands from their families, while trying to remain focused on job tasks and communicate efficiently with their colleagues.

Aczet, et al (2021), observe that working away from the traditional office is increasingly an option in today's world. The phenomenon has been used interchangeably with terms such as “telecommunity, telework, virtual office, remote work, location independent working. Remote work typically covers working from any location other than the dedicated area provided by the employer (Aczet, et al, 2021). Hagel and Wooll (2019), observed that, remote or virtual work means that employees do not need to physically go to corporate headquarters to work, but instead perform their professional jobs through internet connection from car, hotel, satellite office, or other places different from the traditional central office. Fadzilah, et al (2021), wrote extensively on the concept of working from home. They acknowledge that the term can also be used interchangeably with terms such as telecommuting, teleworking and remote work. Similarly, Shareena and Shahid (2020) note that the concept means that workmen are not to be present at their workplace to perform work duties. It allows people to work remotely in their own premises in which one is not tied to stay during working hours with the employer. Also, Samir, (2022), noted that remote working is a practice that allows employees to work in flexible workplaces with the help of technology. There exist different types of remote work.

Mutri, (2020), Allanah, 2023 listed types of remote work as developer, translator, writer, career coaching, customer services representation, social media manager, product manager, online marketer, online personal shopper, transcriber, website content uploader, English teacher, and data entry specialist. Research or research assistance work can be done from home (Aczel, et al, 2021). Customer care agent work can also be performed from home. Others include online business of buying and selling, graphic design, editing/ proofreading, copy writing data analysis, social media, market research, digital marketing and remote educator (Preston, 2022; Nehak, 2020). According to Career Guide (2023) and Ryan (2023), the top 10 works from home jobs in Nigeria are, freelance writer, translator, sales representative, virtual assistant, graphic designer, website designer developer, search engine optimization consultant, social media analyst, YouTube Vlogger and affiliate marketing. Adams, (2020), contributed that Information Technology, Marketing and Sales, Finance and Accounting, Education, Writing, and Customer Service Recruiting are remote job opportunities. Remote work can attract some benefits.

The benefits of remote work can be considered from several perspectives like the worker's perspective the employer's perspective, family and the society's perspective (Scott, 2018; Neil, 2020). Writing on the benefits of remote work from the employer's perspective, remote work cut-cost by reducing the number of fixed offices, organizations can better manage mobility and critical business interdependence since their workforce is globally distributed (Licite-Kurbe, and Leonovica, 2021). This may increase both worker interaction with strangers, different places to work and time for reflection. By being remote workers, employee self-regulation and control may increase as a result of the enhancement in their own autonomy, always having to manage their own pace, which ultimately brings productivity and happiness when they onboard for more flexibility from the beginning (Fereia, et al, 2021; Ila, 2021).

Planergy (2020), stated that when managed effectively, remote working has the potential to create substantial giants for teams and organizations. Employee as who have more independence and control over their own work schedules and environments, along with choosing how and when they complete tasks, report higher level of satisfaction with their work and well-being in the workplace. They tend to have higher levels of productivity and are often able to manage their time more effectively. Conversely, the less autonomy and control people are given in the tasks they are willing and capable of completing on their own, the more people tend to become disengaged and demotivated (Milton, 2023). The above analysis shows that the benefit for remote working is not one-sided. It favour the employer and the employees.

Remote work enhances a better work-life balance in the family. Many remote jobs offer a flexible schedule that lets you start and end your workday when you want, as long as your work is complete (Wolfer,2023). A flexible schedule is great if you work better at uncommon times. Some people work best at night while others prefer early mornings. Regardless of whether you are a night owl or early riser, you know how beneficial a

flexible schedule can be for productivity and other activities in the home. Control over your schedule is also invaluable when life comes up. Whether that is dropping kids off at school, doing the laundry, hitting the gym, or simply taking a break, your personal life is easier to manage when working from home (Abi, 2022). However, lines can blur between work and home life if you are not careful, which is why fully remote companies encourage employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Maintaining balance is a learnable skill and one of the essential skills of remote work. If you are bound to a specific work schedule, remote work still allows things that are not possible for traditional office workers, like a quick vacuum during lunch, a powernap, or even controlling the temperature of your office space,

Remote work reduces commuting, thereby enhancing togetherness as a family (Scott, 2018). The average one-way commute time in U.S. is 27.1 minutes, equating to nearly ten days commuting to and from work each year. Extreme commuters face commute times of 90 minutes or more each way and spend over a month commuting each year. Commuting is a time sink and source of stress and anxiety (International Labour Organization, (2021). Work from where you want is another benefit of remote work that contribute to family living.

Fully remote workers with no set location can live wherever they please. Some remote workers, work from home which grant them more opportunity to interact with family members (Milton, 2023). While some have left home altogether and live as digital nomads, traveling and working from new locales. Access to opportunities is one of the most significant benefits of remote working. Remote workers have access to more job opportunities than office workers bound by geographic location. If you like living rural or in a small town, you no longer have to move to a city to get access to well-paid jobs looking at the depth and breadth of remote jobs available (Milton, 2023).

Remote work embraces improved inclusivity, diversity, and exposure to different cultures

Removing the requirement to live within commuting distance of an office means remote companies often have more diverse and inclusive teams. In line with this Naia (2023) stated that remote work removes geographical barriers creating room for companies to access a global talent, making it possible for a tech company in USA hire a software engineer from another country and a marketing manager from UK. The author went further to state that the global team brings together a wide range of skills, experiences, and perspective that might not have been possible if the company only hired locally. Remote work gives people who may have a hard time getting a job at a traditional company more opportunities. People with disability ies, caregivers who need a flexible schedule, or stay-at-home parents need to balance work and family (Naia,2023; Jorcus, 2023; William, 2022). Examples of companies that have incorporated remote work benefiting from increased diversity inclusion are Zapier, Buffer, and InVision (Jorcus, 2023). Not to mention that everyone wants to or can offer to live in cities, so remote work tends to expose workers to people from different socioeconomic, geographic, and

cultural backgrounds who can provide different perspectives (Wolfer,2023, Samir, 2022). This helps family members to be abreast with diversified culture.

Remote work makes it easier to avoid paying expensive rent or a large mortgage. In the past, getting a high-paying job required you to move to a city with a high cost of living. Now you can earn an excellent salary without living in a metropolitan area, which means you can save a lot of money. The money you save could be put to financial independence and retiring early, holidays, taking care of your family, or enjoying yourself (Taylor, 2022).

Research from PayScale that controlled for job title and location found employees who work remotely make 1.9% more than their equivalent office workers. Overall remote workers earn 23.7% more than non-remote employees when excluding job title and other compensable factors. Remote workers earn salaries from different establishments which aid them in taking care of family needs (Milton, 2023). Working from home involves creating an office space that works for you. If you want a more ergonomic chair, music playing at a particular volume, or a hotter or cooler temperature, it is within the workers control to make their home office into whatever they want and at same time considering the comfort of the family (Choudhury, 2019).

Remote work improves productivity and performance. Works are more done when working remotely. The worker controls the environment and do not have to worry about co-workers asking you a quick question, obligatory socializing when you grab a coffee, or offending someone by putting your headphones on to escape an open-plan office (Milton, 2023). Conventional wisdom states that open offices promote collaboration and save money, but open-plan offices are penny-wise and pound-foolish. Saykat, (2023) and Crisan, and Balaci (2023) spelt out ways family can benefit from remote work as work-life balance, work family interaction, flexible work hours, support for partner, more time and less stress.

Economic situations of the country coupled with pandemic and unemployment have created much interest on individuals searching out for opportunities to work from their convenience and still engage in other activities of their interest. In Nigeria and Uyo in particular, the situation of universities going on strike due to government negligence on the value of education has spun both male and female to acquire some digital skills that will enable them to participate in remote work/work from home. Hence the researcher was moved to assess the type of remote work done by undergraduate students, its Benefits and Contribution to Family Living in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was Assessment of Remote Work done by Undergraduate Students, its Benefits and Contribution to Family Living in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify different types of remote work engaged by undergraduate Students in University of Uyo.
2. Determine the benefit of remote work to undergraduate Students in University of Uyo.
3. Determine the contribution of remote work towards family living.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the different types of remote work engaged by undergraduate Students in University of Uyo?
2. What the benefit of remote work to undergraduate Students in University in University of Uyo?
3. What are the contributions of remote work towards family living?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided the study:

Ho: There is no significant difference in the contributions of remote work towards family living between male and female students in Uyo Metropolis.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted survey design. Survey design is a design conducted to gather information that reflects population attitude, behavior, opinions and beliefs that cannot be observed directly (Arevik, 2014). It was appropriate because the researchers used questionnaire to collect data from the respondent regarding their opinions towards remote work.

Area of Study

The research was carried out in Uyo metropolis of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria it is the geopolitical headquarters of Akwa Ibom State as well as Uyo Local Government Area. The town become the capital of the state on September 23,1987, following the creation of Akwa Ibom State from Cross River State. Uyo was first created as a province in 1959 by the colonial master with the aim of splitting the Ibibio tribe into smaller administrative units for affective governance. Uyo is a growing city as the city has shown massive infrastructural growth in the past nine years. The local government is endowed with abundant mineral and forest resources among which are gravels, silica, clay, and timbers. Agricultural produce includes, cassava, yam, vegetables, palm oil, e.t.c. Uyo is a big commercial centre in Akwa Ibom State flood in there for business transaction. The researcher chooses this area for the study because so many youths are engaged in remote work. In Uyo, there are many unemployed youth and students taking care of their bills in the university.

Population of the Study

The population for the study was all undergraduate students in University of Uyo. The total number of the population was twenty- five thousand, six hundred and seventy- nine (25,679) thousand undergraduate students in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size was one hundred and twenty- nine (129) using snowball sampling technique as there was no documented fact of students engaged in remote work. Snowball is a non-probability technique that allows the researcher to discover variables with rare characteristics (Temitope,2023). It is a sampling technique, in which existing subject provide referrals to recruit samples required for a research study.

Instrument of Data Collection

The research instrument for data collection was Assessment of Remote work done by Undergraduate Students in Uyo Metropolis, its Benefits and Contribution to Family Living. The instrument (AUSRWBCFL) was divided into section A and B. Section A had information on demographic while Section B contained information on contained on different types of remote work, benefit of remote work, and it's contributions toward family living. The mode of response was four points rating scale response of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were expected to tick (√) in the column appropriate.

Method of Data Collection

One hundred twenty- nine copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents with the help of two research assistants and were retrieved on completion.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions acceptable level was 2.50 and above. The hypothesis was analysed using t-test at 0.5 significant level of acceptance.

Result and Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the different types of remote work engaged by University in Uyo Metropolis?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Different Types of Remote Engaged by Undergraduate Students in Uyo Metropolis?

N1 = 69, n2 = 60

S/N	Types of Remote Work/Work from Home	Male		Decision	Female		Decision
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
1	Students engage in web designing as a remote work	3.16	.678	A	3.33	.681	A
2	Students are social media manager as a remote work	2.71	.644	A	3.20	.732	A
3	Students are customer service representative as a remote work.	2.75	.812	A	2.65	.481	A
4	Students are marketing manager in remote work	1.22	.416	R	1.75	.437	R
5	Students are copy editor as a remote work.	2.46	.502	R	2.55	.502	R
6	Students are virtual assistants as a remote work	1.55	1.04	R	1.80	1.26	R
7	Accountant is a remote work engaged by students.	2.86	.733	A	3.47	.747	A
8	Online marketer is a remote work engaged by students	2.93	.524	A	3.07	.733	A
9	Transcribing is a remote work engaged by students	3.64	.484	A	3.38	.490	A
10	Graphic designing is a remote work engaged by students	3.51	.532	A	3.28	.454	A
11	Online teacher is a remote work engaged by students	1.59	.671	R	1.77	.465	R
12	Data entry clerk is a remote work for students	3.32	.469	A	2.77	.427	A
13	Proof reader is a remote work engaged by students	3.25	.497	A	3.33	.475	A
14	freelancing is a remote work engaged by students.	3.33	.475	A	3.07	.548	A
15	Copy writer is a remote work engaged by students	1.20	.405	R	1.47	.503	R
16	Medical coder is a remote work engaged by students	1.91	.284	R	1.87	.343	R
17	Translator is a remote work engaged by students	3.12	.322	A	3.20	.403	A
18	Recruiter is a remote work engaged by students	2.43	.499	R	2.63	.486	R
19	Editor of academic easy work is a remote work engaged by students.	2.19	.394	R	2.15	.360	R
20	You Tube blogger is a remote work engaged by students	2.90	.972	A	2.75	.816	A
Cluster Mean		2.60	.568	A	2.67	.567	A

A = Accepted, R = Reject.

Table 1 showed the responses of respondents on the different types of remote work engaged by undergraduate students in University of Uyo. Some of the items have their mean above the cut-off mark of 2.50, while others had their mean below the cut-off mark. Therefore, they accepted some and rejected few as different types of remote work engaged by students.

Research Question 2

What are the benefits of remote work to University Students in Uyo Metropolis?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on Benefits of Remote Work to Undergraduate in Uyo Metropolis?

S/N	Benefits of remote work	N1 = 69, n2 =60				Decision
		Male		Female		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Remote work helps me to have a flexible schedule	1.74	.130	1.95	1.37	A
2	Remote work helps me to be focus without distraction while working.	3.39	.521	3.30	.619	A
3	Remote work has exposed me to different socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds	1.38	.769	1.62	.101	R
4	Remote work has granted me a happier and healthy work-life.	2.79	1.30	3.13	.873	A
5	Remote work environment decreases stress.	3.19	.576	3.77	.564	A
6	Remote work has helped me in taking care of my school bills.	3.29	.750	3.63	.736	A
	Cluster Mean	2.63	0.65	2.90	0.69	A

A = Accepted, and R = Reject.

Table 2 shows the responses of respondents on the benefits of remote work to students in Uyo Metropolis. Both male and female accepted items 1, 2, 4,5 and 6 as the benefits of remote work to students in Uyo Metropolis but rejected item 3 as benefit.

Research Question 3

What are the contributions of remote work toward family living in Uyo Metropolis?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Contributions of Remote Work to Family Living in Uyo Metropolis?

S/N	Contributions of remote work toward family	Male		Decision	Female		Decision
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
1	Remote work result in saving transportation money which can be to support family needs.	3.71	.457	A	3.80	.443	A
2	Remote work saves more time which are put into use in communicating with family members.	3.57	.528	A	3.50	.651	A
3	Remote work helps one to customize his schedule according to family plans	2.83	.419	A	3.08	.787	A
4	Remote work results in less travel stress, good mood and better health.	2.83	.419	A	2.87	1.19	A
5	Remote work affords one various means of income to take care of personal and family needs.	3.33	.657	A	3.77	.564	A
6	Remote work has no interruption at work	3.06	.639	A	3.50	1.03	A
7	Remote work increases family leisure time	3.51	.760	A	3.50	.724	A
8	Remote work results in having more time for working out and eating healthy meals	3.13	.540	A	3.22	.715	A
9	Remote work create support for partners in the family.	3.55	.501	A	3.55	.501	A
10	Remote work is an access to more opportunity for meeting up with family needs.	2.01	1.29	R	2.63	2.71	A
11	Remote work improves inclusivity diversity and exposure to different culture.	1.59	.671	R	1.77	.465	R
12	Remote work has lowered my participation home chores.	2.99	1.18	A	2.63	2.71	A
13	Remote work encourages better work-life balance for family to have more satisfying lifestyle.	3.25	.497	A	3.70	.462	A
14	Remote work grant family member with health issues to work from home and support family needs.	3.52	.503	A	3.32	.676	A
15	Remote work has helped students in assisting parents take care their school bills.	2.83	1.26	A	2.92	1.11	A
		3.06	.752	A	3.18	.983	A

A = Accepted, and R = Reject.

Table 3 shows the responses of respondents on contributions of remote work towards family living in Uyo Metropolis. Both male and female students accepted 14 items as contributions of remote work towards family living in Uyo Metropolis but rejected items 11 as contributions towards family living.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significance difference in the responses of male and female students on the benefits of remote work in Uyo Metropolis.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Mean ratings of Male and Female Undergraduate Students on the Benefits of Remote Work to Students in Uyo Metropolis.

S/N	Benefits of remote work	Male Mean SD	Female Mean SD	P-value	Decision
1	Remote work helps me to have a flexible schedule	1.74 .130	1.95 1.37	.145	A
2	Remote work helps me to be focus without distraction while working.	3.39 .521	3.30 .619	.302	A
3	Remote work has exposed me to different socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds	1.38 .769	1.62 .101	.001	R
4	Remote work has granted me a happier and healthy work-life.	2.79 1.30	3.13 .873	.000	A
5	Work place environment can affect individual performance	3.19 .576	3.77 .564	.389	A
6	Remote work has helped me in taking care of my school bills.	3.29 .750	3.63 .736	.653	A
	Cluster Mean	2.63 0.65	2.90 0.69	.946	A

The result presented in table 4 showed that the calculated the p-value of .946 is greater than the alpha level of .05 level with the degree of freedom of 127. With this result the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance difference in the responses of male and female students on the benefits remote work in Uyo Metropolis is therefore retained.

Discussion of Finding

Findings of the study revealed that university students engage in remote work such as web design, social media manager, accountant, online marketer, transcribing, graphic design, data entry clerk, proof reader, translator and you tube blogger. In line with this findings Mutri, 2020; Adams, 2020; also confirmed that the above-mentioned virtual work engaged by students are remote works that can be done from home or anywhere without commute through the use of ICT. Still supporting the findings, Allanah, 2023; Adams, 2020; Career Guide 2023; and Ryan, 2023 included the types of remote work engage by university students in Akwa Ibom State as among the best remote work to pursue in 2023. With this finding it is glaring that University students are involved in different types of remote work.

The findings of the study also revealed that University students benefit from remote work. The findings unfolded that remote work has helped the students to have flexible schedule, enjoy better focus without distraction while working, enjoy happier and healthy work-life. Students also unveiled that remote work decreases stress when compared with commuting, and the virtual work has helped them to take care of their school bills. This finding is also supported by the statements of Neil, 2020; Samir, 2022; Urwin, 2022 that the benefits of remote work are flexible schedule, no office distraction, save money decrease stress, no commute, more autonomy, happier and healthier work-life.

The Finding of the study on the contributions of remote work towards family living depicted that remote work engaged by the university students have some contributions towards family living. The findings of the study revealed that students engaged in remote work have a customized schedule according to family plan, remote work open for them multiple source of income for the family needs, save transport fare which is used to support family needs, encourages family members who are sick to work from their comfortable zone, increase family leisure, students assist their parents in taking care of school bills and other family needs. Students also unveiled that remote work has helped them in maintaining work family interaction, support their partner, do not have to participate effectively in-home chores. This finding is in affirmation with the statement that remote work save transport fare, give room for work- family interaction, improve work-life balance for the family, give room school functions and homework, easier to avoid paying expensive rent or a large mortgage, allow support for the partner, encourage more saving, less travel, good family life style, happier life, costume schedule according to one plan with the family (Neil, 2020; Abi, 2022; Taylor, 2022; Saykat, 2023). From the contribution of other authors plus the findings of the study, it is glaring that remote work has some contributions towards family living. The study also revealed that there was no significant different in the mean response of male and female undergraduate students on the benefits of remote work in Uyo Metropolis.

Conclusion

The study identified different types of remote work engaged by undergraduate Students in University of Uyo. Determined how the students benefit from remote work and its contribution to family living. Study revealed that university students engage in remote work such as web design, social media manager, accountant, online marketer, transcribing, graphic design, data entry clerk, proof reader, translator and you tube blogger. The findings also unfolded that remote work has helped the students to have flexible schedule, enjoy better focus without distraction while working, enjoy happier and healthy work-life. Students also unveiled that remote work decreases stress when compared with commuting, and the virtual work has helped them to take care of their school bills. The findings of the study revealed that students who engaged in remote work have a customized schedule according to family plan, have multiple sources of income for the family needs, save transport fare which is used to support family needs, encourages family members who are sick to work from their comfortable zone, increase family leisure, students assist their parents in taking care of school bills and other family needs. It is therefore concluded that undergraduate students engage in remote work which has positive contribution towards family living. Considering the benefits of remote work, students should explore more opportunities open for remote.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of their study the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should improve on the supply of electricity to encourage those engage in remote work/work from home.
2. There should be free internet access in the universities to help students engage in remote work have good access to internet.

3. There should be a good and functioning ICT center around home where individuals can have access to network.
4. There should be adequate provision for security agents to protect the equipment used by students for remote work.

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