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Men and Women are Equally Productive with Working from Home

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Abstract-

Work life has never been the same again after the COVID-19 lockdown. Men and women worked from during the pandemic and a good number continues to work from home. This study examined the productivity of men and women working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic using one sample t-test and structural equation modelling (SEM) multi-group analysis. It sampled a total of 355 respondents in the Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi of Ghana to examine their level of productivity. The findings show that men and women are equally productive with working from home.

Keywords- Lockdown, Pandemic, Productivity

I. INTRODUCTION

Even in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, working from home (WfH) continues to garner more attention. In Ghana, a large number of employees were compelled to work from home, and a sizable portion of those employees still do so. If work could be done from home, the cost of office rent, transportation, and power expenses would be reduced for the company. The COVID-19-induced WfH in Ghana peaked in April 2020, when the government ordered a lockdown in Accra, the nation's capital, and Kumasi, the second-largest city. Research data on the gender productivity of WfH employees in Ghana are generally lacking. Early in 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak altered people's access to information, manner of life, and employment. Despite its expanding significance, there have been a number of difficulties with WfH implementation in emerging nations (Afotey, Sattler, Parsaeifard, Pearson, Chakraborty, & Hada, 2022). The ability to work from home has a wide range of advantages, hence WfH needs to be promoted. In the context of Ghana, this study compares the gender productivity of COVID-19-induced WfH.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 crisis has changed the way we think about and perceive work around the world. The global economy has not entirely recovered from the COVID-19's shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic shocked the world economy and wreaked havoc in numerous industries, including building. Small construction companies are thought to be a growth engine in many developing nations, including Ghana, thus their survival cannot be taken for granted (Amoah, Bamfo-Agyei, & Simpeh, 2021).

2.1 Synthesis / Critique of Previous Research

Productivity is the key factor in determining growth and living standards. Employee productivity is the wise use of available resources inside a firm for an efficient production. Productivity is defined as the efficiency of transforming input into output (Hafat, & Ali, 2022). Labor productivity measurements have served as a benchmark for assessing human capital throughout history (Chebly, Schiano, & Mehra, 2020).. In the recent COVID-19 pandemic context, WfH gained significant importance for a significant portion of the workforce because it remained the only practical option to remain protective and productive (Birimoglu Okuyan, & Begen, 2022); and uncertainty that characterized the duration of the pandemic and future contagion waves led some companies to view WfH as the 'best strategy' (Tardie & Umar, 2022).

2.2 COVID-19 Induced Work From Home And Productivity

Working from home is becoming more and more popular, and Ghana is not an exception. However, because little research has focused on it, figures on the number of the WfH population in Ghana are currently unavailable. Numerous research on the efficiency of remote work have been conducted as a result of COVID. For instance, a two-year study by Great Place to Work of more than 800,000 workers revealed that the move to remote work during the pandemic increased employee productivity by an average of 6% (Turpursky, 2022). In Japan, the effectiveness of working from home (WFH) strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic was examined by Morikawa (2022). According to the findings, the mean WFH productivity was between 60% and 70% of that of working at the typical place of employment, and it was lower for workers and businesses that began implementing WFH practices only after the COVID-19 epidemic had spread. WFH productivity, however, varied widely across both person and firm factors. Employees with high wages and

levels of education tended to show a slight decline in WFH productivity. The findings from the polls of both employers and employees were substantially in agreement.

Turpursky (2022) contends that employees are less productive and further supports Elon Musk's insistence that all Tesla and SpaceX employees be "visible" in the office and work only in-person, including knowledge workers, due to Musk's conviction that remote workers merely "appear to work." The reseachre further peer-reviewed research showing the benefits of remote employment prior to COVID. For nine months, call center workers were randomly allocated to work from home or the office by a NASDAQ-listed corporation. WfH increased performance by 13% as a result of fewer sick days and a more comfortable and quiet working environment. Home-based employees reported higher job satisfaction and a 50% reduced turnover rate. In a more recent study, programmers, marketers, and financial employees were assigned at random. The results showed that hybrid work, like remote work, reduced attrition by 35% and increased the amount of code generated by 8%.

The productivity of COVID-19 induced WfH is a contentious issue. Sometimes it is impossible to achieve a greater WfH productivity because some components of an employee's job could only be carried out in the office (Morikawa, 2020). Employers benefit from increased production as a result of employees' ability to work at different times in a more flexible work environment. According to Faulds and Raju, (2020) salespeople who work from home have a lot more sales interactions with individual salespeople, producing more prospects despite having slightly lower conversion rates. As a result, they are more productive while working from home.

Opportunity is brought about by change, and the more drastic the shift, the better it is for businesses that can adapt rapidly (Setili, 2018). Therefore, industry should take use of every opportunity presented by the epidemic and its aftermath to drive innovation. This study offers fresh insights into the general productivity of WfH under the conditions of COVID-19-induced WfH. Due to the dearth of quantitative data on WfH and its productivity in Ghana, this study adds to the body of knowledge and helps businesses formulate policies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic's effects (Garrote, Gomez, Ozden, Rijkers, Viollaz, & Winkler, 2021).

2.3 Productivity of Males and Females Working from Home

The general productivity of males and females has been mixed. There has been a series of studies on gender and productivity in Ghana. The concept has generated a lot of interest in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic. On th productivity of the genders, according to Ayaaba (2022); compared to male farm managers, female farm managers are more productive. However, a farm with a male majority produces more than one with a female majority in terms of labor hours. This however, is not directly related to WfH but some parallel could be drwan out of it. However, Miriti, Otieno, Chimoita, Bikketi, Njuguna, & Ojiewo (2022) assessed the productivity in sorghum plots maintained by men and women in the Ugandan districts of Lira, Kumi, and Serere. They discovered that male-managed plots produced 850.6 kg/ha more than female-managed plots production of 832.6 kg/ha.

Male and femaleas productivity of working from home has been studied extensively. Deole, Deter, & Huang, (2023); in their study of representative data from UK, fournd that women who work in more WFH-feasible jobs or who have more control over their work schedules tend to be more productive. While the lockout is in effect, male employees who previously had a lengthier travel to work show higher productivity. In a related study of disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the productivity of social science research by males and females, Ruomeng Cui, Hao Ding, Feng Zhu (2021), suggest that although overall research production rose by 35% in the ten weeks following the lockdown in the United States, female academics' productivity fell by 13.2% in comparison to men academics'. They further demonstrate that this widened productivity difference is present in six additional nations and is more severe for assistant professors and academics at elite universities.

Aksoy, Barrero, Bloom, Davis, Dolls, & Zarate (2022) came to the conclusion that the pandemic caused a significant, long-lasting shift to WFH in their cross-country investigation. The researchers conducted a full-time worker survey in 27 nations between the middle of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 to examine this transition. Their cross-country comparisons took the U.S. mean as the reference point and adjust for age, gender, education, and industry. They discovered that WFH varies greatly between nations, with an average of 1.5 days per week in a sample. Secondly, after the epidemic, employers anticipate 0.7 WFH days on average each week, but employees demand 1.7 days.

Fairgoodboss (2022) contends that everyone has undoubtedly had to adjust since the shift to remote employment. However, a recent study found that working from home is far more effective for males than it is for women. In a poll by Qualtrics and the Boardlist of more than 1,000 American adults, 67% of the males stated they had been more productive when working remotely during the epidemic, compared to only 41% of the women. Parents experienced the same thing. Women were less likely than men to claim that they had been more productive while working from home with children.

Furher, Fairgoodboss (2022) also maintains that in fact, in actuality, 41% of males who have children at home reported that there are fewer distractions and disturbances there than at work. Women who had children at home only reported this to 19% of them. The fact that males are more inclined to assume their level of productivity will have a beneficial impact on their jobs is perhaps the most remarkable finding. While only 31% of women agreed, 71% of males thought working from home for an extended period of time would advance their careers. The study discovered that workers' perceived productivity was similarly influenced by race. Compared to Black workers, White workers were 62% more likely to claim that the epidemic had increased their productivity. These differences indicate that it should be a major goal to provide remote workers with equitable employee experiences.

Men and women approach remote work differently, and these differences are influenced by a variety of circumstances, including the dynamics of the family (Georgievska, 2022). The results of recent research by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) on 1,500 female and 1,363 male remote employees regarding the issue of whether or not professional achievement is influenced by gender, ethnicity, or industry are rather intriguing (Gurchiek, 2021). Even while working from home has been a benefit for parents who are raising their children well, the researcher found that there is still

a gender gap in the division of household, familial, and caregiving responsibilities once the paid employment is done. According to research, women typically labor an additional 4-6 hours around the house after finishing their workday. This is known as the "second shift." Because of this, women's experiences working from home have been significantly impacted because they are more prone than men to feel "worn out."

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design And Respondents Demography

This statistical study aims to investigate the phenomena of WfH production among Ghanaian men and women. Qualitative data from an online survey was used in this investigation. Workers in Ghana's Greater Accra and Ashanti regions who worked from home during the COVID-19 lockdown provided the study's data. 355 COVID-19 induced WfH individuals were sampled using a semi-structured questionnaire and a nonprobability snowball sampling technique. Data was gathered from January 22 through February 22 of 2021. An online survey in which participants were provided questionnaires served as the method of data collection for this study.

Responses from 216 men and 139 women on the respondents' demographics were evaluated. The respondents were mostly in the 30 to 39 age group, which made up 47.61 percent of the total. Regarding their physical location, the bulk of respondents—60.85%—were based in Ghana's capital, Accra. The worst-hit city by the COVID-19 outbreak was Accra. With 31% of the total responses, the general services work category was in the lead, followed by education with 17%. Regarding employment role, managers made up the majority of the respondents. The respondents had an average of 11 to 15 years of work experience in their current position. The majority of the responders had thus been at their jobs long enough to accumulate sufficient experience, giving them a better chance of being effective with WfH.

3.2 Research Questions And Hypotheses

The study's research question was: Is there a difference in productivity between male and female WfH employees? From the research questions, a null and alternative hypothesis was formulated to guide the researchers to address the key critical questions that relates to WfH productivity.

HO^1*:* There is no significant difference between males and females (gender differences) productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices.

HO^2*:* There is a significant difference between males and females (gender differences) productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Statistics

The target sample for this survey was people in Ghana who worked from home during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, those could still be working from home full time, or work from home occasionally. A total of 422 respondents completed an online survey questionnaire, of which 374 were initially validated indicating an 88.63% overall valid rate. The initial validation process included screening to remove responses from respondents who had never worked from home, and those whose locations were outside the geographic area of greater Accra and greater Kumasi that is covered by this study. A final validation process included screening to exclude observations whose Mahalanobis distance exceeded the critical value of 94.46 (Stevens, 2009). This resulted in a final sample of 355 for the final data analysis. The demographic summary and descriptive statistics of the valid response is as shown (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Total	355	100
Gender		
Male	216	60.85
Female	139	39.15
Age		
20 – 29 years	68	19.15
30 – 39 years	169	47.61
40 – 49 years	94	26.48
50 – 59 years	23	6.48
60 – 69 years	1	.28
Location		

Accra	216	60.85
Tema	38	10.70
Kumasi	75	21.13
Other	26	7.32
Work Category		
Agro-processing	6	1.70
Consultancy	45	12.70
Diplomatic Mission	16	4.50
Education	63	17.70
Financial Service	36	10.10
General Services	110	31.00
Health	26	7.30
Humanitarian	8	2.30
Insurance	10	2.80
Telecommunication	26	7.30

4.2 Statistical Analysis

A one-sample t-test was used to test null hypotheses. Subjective productivity reporting was used due to the difficulties of obtaining objective measurements. The questionnaire for the productivity experience variable (POE2) was adopted from Public Health England's 2015 study of measuring employee productivity in relation to WfH productivity. The question was "Suppose your productivity in the workplace is 100, how do you evaluate your work productivity at home? Please answer this question considering all your tasks." However, it should be noted that an employee's productivity under WfH conditions was measured relative to his or her own productivity at the corporate office, not in contrast to his or her peers. Therefore, the figure is unaffected by reporting biases such as the degree of overconfidence or under confidence. Since this productivity metric is subjective, there was bound to be some calculation error in the true productivity (Pells, 2018). Respondents reported their quantitative subjective productivity figures; preferably from 0% to 200%. The reporting was, however, based on the assumption that their office productivity was 100% to provide the respondents a useful baseline for comparison (PHE, 2015).

One sample of t-test of the measured variable POE2 was conducted in SPSS. The test assumed a relative productivity of 100% for working from office. The crux of the test was to determine if the subjectivity and self-reported productivity of WfH by male and female respondents was significantly different. The relationship between the WfH productivity of males and females was evaluated. The null hypotheses HO^1 state that "there is no significant difference between males and females (gender differences) productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices". The demographic variables included the gender of the respondents. The response from the gender variable was code one (1) for males and two(2) for females. This coding was then used in SPSS to represent males and females.

The test for homogeneity of variance and the independent sample t-test for the equality of means for males and females' productivity is shown in Table 2 and 3 respectively. The Levene's test for equality of variance test the null hypotheses that the variances of the different groups (males and females) are equal (Derrick, Ruck, Toher, & White, 2018).

Table 2

Homogeneity of Variance Test

Variable	Test Type	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
POE2	Based on Mean	.115	1	353	.735
	Based on Median	.025	1	353	.875
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.025	1	352.983	.875
	Based on trimmed mean	.086	1	353	.769

Hypotheses *HO[1]* state that there is no significant difference between males and females' productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices. From Table 2, the p-value for the Levene's test based on the mean is greater than .05 *(p = .735)* which is insignificant. Thus, the variances of the subjective productivity of males and females is not significantly different, and further, the assumptions of the homogeneity of variance have been met. The results of the hypotheses test is a strong indication that at 99% confidence interval for the large sample size; we fail to reject the null hypotheses *HO[1]*. The Levene's statistic based on the mean is summarized as follows:

F(1,353) = .115, p = .735.

Table 3

Independent Samples Test of Male and Females WfH Productivity

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.115	.735	-2.037	353	.042	-6.069	2.979	-13.785	1.647
Equal variances not assumed			-2.040	296.135	.042	-6.069	2.974	-13.780	1.642

Table 3 also shows that the independent sample t-test proves that equal variance is assumed at 99% confidence interval as the insignificant p-value *(p = .735)* is shown on the first row (Equal variances assumed).

Further, a multi-group analysis in AMOS for male and females yielded a model comparison significant value of *.468* for structural covariance (*p = .468)*; (see Table 4). The p-value is not significant.

Table 4

Structural Covariance of the Male and Female Nested Model Comparison

Model	DF	CMIN	P	NFI Delta-1	IFI Delta-2	RFI rho-1	TLI rho2
Structural residuals	3	2.538	.468	.003	.004	-.004	-.004

Table 4 indicates that at an insignificant p-value *(p = .468)*; there is no significant difference in the overall model for males and females (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Thus, females were as productive as males for the COVID-19 induced WfH in Ghana.

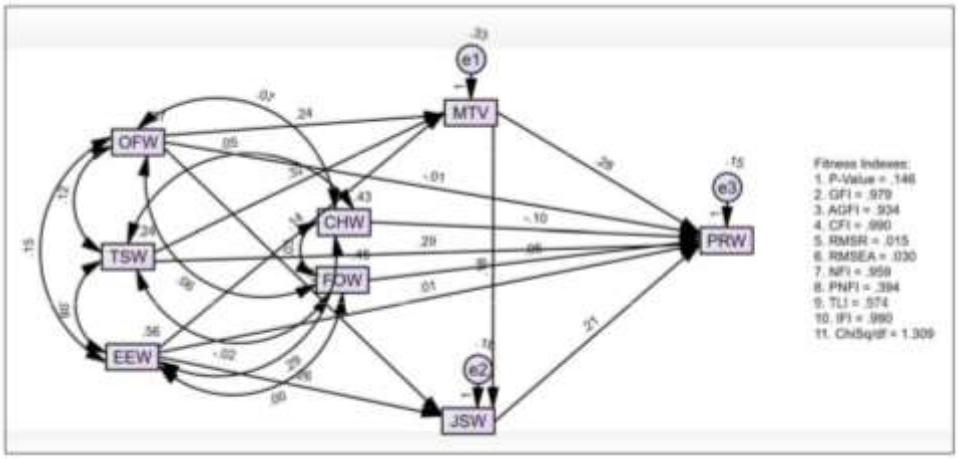

Figure 1: Males Productivity Model

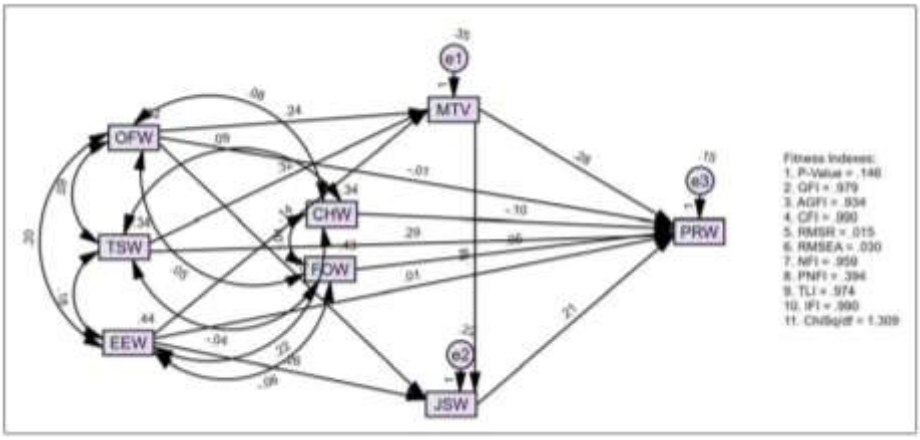

Figure 2: Females Productivity Model

Figure 1 and 2 was produced by carrying out a multi-group analysis by using the code one (1) for males and two (2) for females in IBM AMOS version 26. Both models yielded an insignificant p-value *(p = .146).*

Equal male and female productivity prove Guy (1995) productivity and gender gap theory. However, Astegiano, Sebastián-González, and Castanho (2019) projected a gender disparity in men and women's production favoring men. The findings from this study backs Quisumbing's (1995) prediction that male and female productions are equally efficient. Ghanaian working females are making positive strides on WfH productivity. Employers in Ghana are better off creating an enabling equal productive platform for males and females. The days of gender balance in employee productivity might be closer than we think.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the Productivity and Gender (PR-G) theory of Guy (1995) and Gui-Diby, Pasali, and Rodriguez-Wong (2017); we hypothesized in hypotheses HO^1 that there is no significant difference between males and females' productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices. The productivity of WfH was captured with a subjective measure. The results of the WfH productivity and productivity of males and females supports the hypotheses. Thus, the females were equally productive as males supporting hypotheses HO^1. This finding is in line with previous research on the productivity and gender gap theory of Guy (1995). The findings also support the work of Quisumbing (1995) predicting equal efficiency for male and female production.

Saltson and Nsiah (2015) in their study of the mediating relationship of motivation with perceived organizational support and work performance concluded that male and female respondents in the survey reported no differences in performance; similarly, they found no significant differences in performance based on the employees' ages and tenure. As a result, this finding adds to existing research on gender productivity and organizational adaptation theory by validating this relationship among WfH staff in the Ghanaian context.

In summary, the results of this research suggest that hypotheses HO^1; that "there is no significant difference between males and females (gender differences) productivity of WfH and working from the corporate offices" is strongly supported; validating equal productivity of males and females for WfH and that both men and women are adapting to the new WfH environment. When both men and women are locked up at home, men may tend to assist with taking care of young ones and assisting with household chores. This may free up more time for women to be productive at office works. Things have changed; most businesses can now be run totally from the comfort of homes while being productive. Employers must fully embrace this initiative of WfH to remain competitive and save on exorbitant rent, utilities, and transportation costs for their employees.

Employers can save money when workers work from home, and employees can be more relaxed. However, since the majority of productivity indicators are totally subjective, performance-oriented, and reliant on hitting goals, managing employees from a distance will be a challenging task for line managers. Employees must be resourced and trained to complete their allocated work from home in order to benefit the most from the WfH experience. To remain competitive, employers must fully utilize this program and cut costs on exorbitant rent, utilities, and employee transportation.

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