

INFLUENCE OF TELEWORKING ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MOUNT KENYA REGION

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7323267>

Published Date: 15-November-2022

Abstract: The study sought to determine the influence of teleworking on employee performance of Public Universities in Mount Kenya region. The target populations of the study were 3,012 employees of public Universities in Mount Kenya region consisting of teaching and non-teaching staff. The sample size was 353 respondents determined by use of Yumane formulae. The study employed descriptive research design. The open-ended questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument. Data analysis and interpretation was based on descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. In addition, a multiple regression model was used to explore the relationship between the variables under study. A pilot test was carried out in a public University outside Mount Kenya region to ensure validity and reliability of the data collection instruments prior to actual collection of data. The data was analyzed using SPSS software version 28. Descriptive statistics were presented in frequency tables, percentages, mean, standard deviations and graphs. Inferential statistics were used in testing null hypotheses. Results showed that teleworking and employee performance of public universities were positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.380$, $p=0.000$). The study found that there was a statistically significant relationship between, teleworking and employee performance of public universities in Mount Kenya region. The study recommends that Managers should improve the use of flextime work arrangement because it enhances employee performance, reduces absenteeism and increases employee satisfaction. Universities should also build flexible work arrangements since they help employees in managing their work load, their personal life and help them to assess their responsibilities.

Keywords: Teleworking, Employee Performance, Public Universities, Mt Kenya Region.

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) are alternate arrangements or schedules from the traditional working day and week to an arrangement where employees can select a different work schedule that meets personal or family needs. The employer can come up with a different schedule so as to meet the customer needs (Armstrong, 2012). Some of the ways that the human resource management is addressing the current concerns is by embracing the flexible working arrangements. Due to the emerging issues in business world and also the current Covid 19 pandemic which has affected the performance of various public universities, employees are expected to balance between personal life and work responsibilities that is if the employee performance is to be achieved. Employee performance is important in this global age as it boosts productivity (UNICEF, 2019).

There are various types of flexible working environment, which are flexi time, job sharing, telecommuting/remote working, compressed workweeks/schedules, annualized hours/banking of hours, gradual retirement, leaves and sabbaticals and reduced hours/part-time schedules. Universities can decide to use methods that suits them well (Bhusan & Sar, 2020). The

organization flexibility is considered a key element in organizational behavior in terms of retaining employees' productivity as well as organizational performance. Organization flexibility is of important in improving organizational performance by increasing job satisfaction among the workers (Saunders & Townsend, 2018).

Employee Performance

Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs or goals and objectives. According to Richard et al. (2009) organizational performance incorporates three specific areas of organization aftermaths: financial performance, product market performance, shareholder return.

The managerial and executive staffs also need to develop a flexible working arrangements system that charts the progress of the company in the 21st century and determine when changes in policy or procedure need to be made. The vision of an organization, is in a perfect world a common way of thinking about the ideal manner by which an association capacity (Reilly 2009). This is known at every level and is translated into individual behavior or performance at work. If the vision of an organization is merely "delegated" by top management to employees or worse, communicated via an ambiguous and generic campaign, the vision will never carry enough weight to motivate employees which will hamper their performance (Rooplal, 2017)

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Flexible working management have been seen to enhance employee performance. Therefore, universities have embraced the flexible working arrangements for the workers, and also encouraging a blended method of learning to ensure students complete their studies as scheduled. However, despite the adoption of flexible working management, most public universities have continued to record declining employee performance. The increase in enrolling students in Kenyan public universities has constrained most institutions to concoct methods of guaranteeing that academic staff has adequate contact hours with the students. This has therefore led to a lot students opting for private institutions instead of public universities. The literature reviewed has revealed the importance of FWA of employees in hospitals (Jane, Simon & Amos, 2015) and commercial banks in Kenya (Waiganjo, Kihoro & Mungania, 2016). From reviewed literature limited studies have been carried out to determine the effect of FWA and organization performance in the public universities in Kenya. Limited research has been carried on flexible work arrangements as a way of improving performance among universities in Kenya (Kamau, Tuwai & Kuria, 2015). Hence there exists a knowledge gap investigation of the effect of flexible work arrangement on performance of public universities in Kenya.

III. OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study was to determine the effect of teleworking on employee performance of Public Universities in Mount Kenya region.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

The findings of this study will help the public university to increase diversity and inclusivity. The findings will also establish the best strategies to manage employees to ensure work is not disrupted. The main purpose of the study is to gather information that will help public universities to develop flexible working arrangements policies aimed at reducing absenteeism and helps employees manage their responsibilities outside work and also lower office overhead costs.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Task Technology Fit (TTF) Theory

TTF theory was proposed by Goodhue and Thompson (1995) and focused on analyzing and explicating effectiveness of information technology. The theory argues that technologies are tools that can be used to carry out various functions by individuals. Therefore, technologies are actions that are taken by persons and help to convert inputs into outputs. The theory further shows the association between TTF and technology utilization as well as the association between TTF and individual performance.

Goodhue and Thompson further indicated that ICT enhances individual performance and performance of an organization if the functions of technology align to the features of the tasks to be done by the consumers within a firm. For technology to benefit a user in undertaking functions, TTF must exist. This theory therefore informs the independent variable which is teleworking. Public universities that have invested in ICT are able to adopt teleworking as a form of flexible work arrangement which enhances employee performance.

Tri-Dimensional Theory

Further research also provides evidence that, employees with higher levels of affective commitment to their work, their job and career exhibit higher levels of continuance and normative commitments (Cohen, 1996). Ayeni and Phopoola (2007) established that Continuance commitment - costs associated with leaving the organization; and normative commitment – perceived obligation to remain with the organization have implications for the continuing participation of the individual in the organization by meeting personal and employment obligations. TDT has been found applicable in the study because it underpins dependent variable, performance in public universities in Kenya and employee commitment in ensuring the organization achieves its objectives.

Empirical Review

A study by Onyemaechi (2018) on “impacts of telecommuting on employees’ performance in Nigeria was done. The study was done using descriptive survey. The study established that arrangement to work at home has positive and weak relationship with better quality of work. This arrangement also enables one to deliver services on time, reduces stress and also it promotes morale. The study was done in Nigeria while the current study was done in Kenya.

Khan (2018) focused on relationship between the impacts of telecommunication engagement and employee performance in oil and gas industry in Malaysia. This study used descriptive research design. The findings of this study shows that telecommunication has a significant relationship with employee performance. The positive experiences by employees into the company helped to increase the level of motivation and maintain the good mental and physical states of employees. Work life balance leads to high performance in an organization. The above study was carried out in Malaysia. Therefore, there was need to undertake a study on FWA on employee performance in public universities in Kenya.

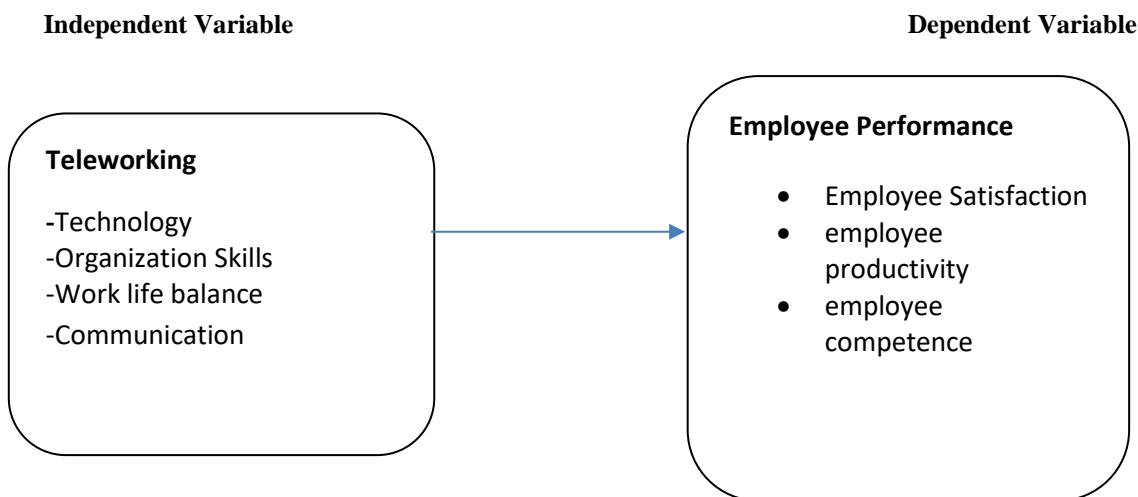


Fig 1. Conceptual framework

Telework is an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform some portion of their regular work at a site other than the main office, using Information Communication Technology (ICT) to communicate with people inside and outside the organization (Stiles & Smart, 2021). Managers have a duty to support communication using accessible communication technology for all team members. Employees are required to have a quick line of connections to ask any queries or communicate with other team members if there is need arises. Karamanis and Gogos (2020) established that teleworking helps to reduce absenteeism, to improve employee’s morale and also to increase productivity, quality of work is seen traffic congestion is eased and better work life for the employees.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive research design. This research design was adopted because of its power to determine the relationship between study variables. In this study, the independent variable was teleworking whereas the dependent variable was performance of the organization. The locale of the study was of public universities in Mount Kenya regions consisting of teaching and non-teaching staff. The target population for this study was 3,012 employees in various departments in universities identified for the study. Questionnaires were main data collection tool. Questionnaire were selected because of the size of geographical coverage and large sample size (353), time and diversity of the regions

Employees who were identified through simple random sampling was issued with the questionnaires through various departmental heads. The researcher tested the research instrument on a small sample of 50 respondents in public universities outside the target population. Multiple linear regression was also used to analyze the data in order to establish the relationship between the variables under study. Statistical Package for Social Science version- 28 (SPSS-28) was used to analyze the data.

VII. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Test of Linearity Results

The linear relationship flanked by the independent variables and the dependent variable was tested using Pearson’s correlation co-efficient between the employee performance and each of the hypothesized independent variables as suggested by Gujarati and Porter (2009).

TABLE 1: Correlation Results

		Employee Performance
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Teleworking	Pearson Correlation	.773**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

The results showed that job sharing had a strong positive linear association with employee performance ($r = 0.721$, $p = 0.000$). The study further showed that teleworking had a strong positive linear association with employee performance ($r = 0.773$, $p = 0.000$). Further results teleworking had a strong positive linear association with employee performance ($r = 0.765$, $p = 0.000$).

TABLE 2: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.111	0.128		-0.867	0.387
Teleworking	0.380	0.037	0.393	10.228	0.000

Results also showed that teleworking and employee performance of public universities were positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.380$, $p=0.000$). This implied that an improvement in teleworking by one unit would lead to improvement in employee performance of public universities by 0.380 units. The study findings agreed with Onyemaechi (2018) who indicated that telecommuting had a positive effect on employees’ performance in Nigeria.

Summary of findings

The objective was to establish the influence of teleworking on performance of Public Universities in Mount Kenya region. The study findings indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that university had introduced teleworking to balance family work and organization's long work hours. Further results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that university had introduced teleworking time which had helped them reduce work stress. In addition, results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that they had managed their work and family responsibility due to teleworking. Further results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that they feel comfortable with the implementation of teleworking compared to the normal working schedule.

In addition, results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that they attend to their work timely. Results also revealed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that workers feel free to voice innovative suggestions to top management in their University. In addition, results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that teleworking improved work environment. Results also revealed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that telecommuting had influence on employee performance. In addition, results showed that most of the respondents agreed with the statement that teleworking improved employee performance.

Regression results showed that teleworking and employee performance of public universities were positively and significantly related. Hypothesis results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between teleworking and employee performance of public universities in Mount Kenya region.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between teleworking and employee performance of public universities in Mount Kenya region. In addition, teleworking in public universities helped to balance family work and organization's long work hours. The study also concluded that teleworking helped the workers to reduce work stress as well as it helped to improve their work productivity. In addition, implementation of teleworking in public universities was better than the normal working schedule. In addition, teleworking improved work environment.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

Since the study found that teleworking had a positive and significant effect on employee performance of public universities and was positively and significantly related, Therefore public universities should fully adopt teleworking practices since they enhance employee satisfaction and performance

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