



REMOTE WORKING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN KERICHO REFERRAL HOSPITAL, KENYA

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Abstract:

The world's rapid changes have forced organizations to adapt their work arrangements to remain competitive and effective. As traditional systems were disrupted, managers now need to reconsider work structures to boost employee motivation, collaboration and satisfaction. Redesigning workspaces and adopting flexible work arrangements are essential for maintaining productivity and meeting changing employee expectations. Therefore, the study examined the relationship between remote work arrangements and employee performance at Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya. A descriptive research design, stratified sampling, and census sampling were employed to identify departments and select respondents. The population of the study was 152, consisting of staff working in various departments within Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya. Qualitative data were analyzed through content and thematic analysis, while quantitative data were examined using descriptive and inferential statistical using SPSS Version 27. The findings, as reflected by the average mean of 3.65 (SD = 0.66), suggest that telecommuting and technology-supported work practices positively influence the performance of employees. The relatively high mean scores for flexibility, timely task completion, communication, and decision-making demonstrate the potential of telecommuting technologies to enhance employee efficiency and organizational performance. The outcome of the study may be crucial to both National and County Governments in developing the appropriate policies to improve work arrangement practices in the health sector.

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1. Introduction

Work arrangement is a structured way in which tasks and responsibilities are assigned, coordinated, and executed, including remote, hybrid and flexible models, aimed at optimizing productivity and employee satisfaction in dynamic work environments (Choudhury *et al.*, 2021). Wang *et al.* (2021) explain work arrangements as the operational and contractual configurations through which work is organized, including digital enablement, temporal flexibility and decentralization, intended to foster resilience and adaptability in times of uncertainty. On the other hand, Carillo *et al.* (2021) describe work arrangements as a set of organizational strategies and employment terms that define how, where and when employees perform their roles, encompassing aspects such as teleworking, flextime, compressed workweeks and contingent work. These arrangements show how digital integration and deliberate scheduling improve health professionals' well-being, productivity and resilience in high-pressure situations (Chattopadhyay *et al.*, 2022).

Changing economic, technological, social, and environmental conditions have transformed organizational work practices globally. Flexible work arrangements, including remote work, hybrid schedules, compressed workweeks, job sharing, and staggered shifts, have increased due to technological advancement, globalization, public health emergencies, traffic congestion, security concerns, natural disasters, organizational restructuring, and growing demand for work-life balance (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). These arrangements support operational continuity, efficiency, and employee wellbeing but may also create challenges in balancing work and domestic responsibilities, monitoring performance, and maintaining employee engagement (Kazekami, 2020).

Evidence from various contexts shows mixed but generally positive effects. In the United Kingdom, De Menezes and Kelliher (2017) found that informal flexible employment had moderately favourable indirect effects on individual performance, while formal flexibility had moderate negative direct effects. In the UAE, Kurdy *et al.* (2023) found that workload, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and social support significantly influenced employee performance, while job level had no significant effect, supporting Social Exchange Theory. In Nigeria, Ugwuoke (2024) found that job sharing and flexible schedules improved employee satisfaction, engagement, and organizational effectiveness while promoting work-life balance, reducing turnover, retaining talent, and strengthening customer outcomes.

Sasela and Agustian (2022), studying Tugu Jaya Regional General Hospital, found that division of labour and work motivation significantly influenced employee performance ($p = 0.011 < 0.05$), demonstrating the importance of structured work distribution and motivation. In Lagos State public schools, Obisi (2017) found that flexible scheduling significantly improved productivity while reducing commuting stress, health risks, and work pressure ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, Idowu (2020) established that flexible

working hours significantly improved employee performance and retention while reducing work-related stress in Ogun State manufacturing industries. Pearson correlation and regression confirmed significant positive relationships ($p < 0.05$). The study recommended integrating flexible work policies with recruitment, training, rewards, and performance assessment practices

In Kenya, changing economic conditions and workplace modernization have affected sectors such as agriculture, health, education, tourism, prompting institutions to reconsider traditional work structures. Urban congestion in major cities, digital transformation and the need for cost reduction have further accelerated interest in flexible work models. Studies in Malaysia (Ramakrishnan & Arokiasamy, 2019) and Korea (Choi, 2020) found that flexible work arrangements reduce stress, increase productivity, and improve employee performance. In Kenya, digital platforms and modern work systems have strengthened public service continuity, organizational operations, efficiency, and workplace resilience (Mazzucato & Kattel, 2020).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Globally, organizations have embraced diverse work arrangements as strategies to optimize productivity, safeguard employee performance and maintain service continuity in dynamic environments. Employee performance is critical to organizational success, particularly in healthcare, where service delivery depends on staff efficiency, commitment, and resilience. However, the impact of work arrangements on performance remains inconclusive, with empirical studies reporting both positive and negative outcomes. In developed economies such as the UK, informal flexible work may improve job satisfaction, while formal arrangements can sometimes reduce performance. In emerging economies, including Nigeria and Uganda, flexible work policies have been associated with improved employee motivation, retention, and engagement, although other studies report reduced collaboration, role stress, and poor work-life balance. These inconsistencies indicate that outcomes are context-specific and influenced by organizational culture, sectoral demands, and resource availability.

In Kenya, public hospitals have adopted shift schedules and limited flexible work arrangements to address increasing patient demands, understaffing, and financial constraints. Despite these measures, staff turnover, job satisfaction, and service quality remain suboptimal. Kericho Referral Hospital, the county's largest facility, faces additional challenges, including workforce shortages, high disease burden, and strained infrastructure. The limited localized evidence creates a critical research gap, as management lacks sufficient empirical evidence on whether work arrangements improve or hinder employee performance. Therefore, this study sought to examine the relationship between remote work arrangements and employee performance at Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

Remote working refers to a work arrangement in which employees perform their duties from locations outside the traditional office (Sokolić, 2022). Its relationship with employee performance has been examined in different sectors and countries, producing generally positive but mixed findings. Ferrara *et al.* (2022) conducted a systematic review in Italy on remote work, employee performance, and well-being in private hospitals, analyzing 20 peer-reviewed studies from 2010–2021 using PRISMA guidelines. Findings showed mixed effects on productivity and satisfaction. Remote work improved autonomy, reduced burnout, and influenced work-life balance and health, but also created work-home conflict. However, the study was limited to Italy, relied on secondary data, lacked primary observations, and did not adequately examine hybrid work, creating geographical, methodological, contextual, and conceptual gaps for Kenya.

Kurdy *et al.* (2023) examined remote-work performance in UAE rural hospitals during COVID-19 using 110 respondents selected through snowball sampling. Structural Equation Modeling using SmartPLS showed that workload, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and social support positively influenced productivity, while job level had no significant effect, supporting Social Exchange Theory. However, its UAE setting, non-probability sampling, small sample size, pandemic context, and limited examination of work flexibility restrict generalizability to Kericho Referral Hospital.

Yusuf (2021) investigated remote work and employee performance in Nigeria's FinTech sector through a quantitative cross-sectional survey of 123 randomly selected employees from three firms. Remote work strongly improved problem-solving, work quality, time management, and productivity, benefiting women with family responsibilities and people with physical challenges. Nevertheless, the study was Nigeria-specific, pandemic-related, did not sufficiently examine job sharing and flexibility, and lacked correlation analysis.

Peter *et al.* (2022) studied remote work in Rivers State, Nigeria's oil and gas sector, using Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Their literature-based study found that autonomy, social support, and monitoring improved performance and recommended greater remote-work adoption and virtual collaboration. However, it lacked primary empirical data and was restricted to one state and industry, limiting relevance to healthcare.

Anakpo *et al.* (2023) reviewed work-from-home arrangements in South Africa, selecting 26 of 112 studies using PRISMA-P. Most studies reported positive productivity outcomes influenced by job characteristics, organizational factors, and home environments. IT training and capacity-building were important. However, reliance on secondary data and the South African context created methodological and geographical gaps.

Elshaiekh *et al.* (2018) reviewed remote working in Sudanese health facilities and found positive effects on job satisfaction, performance, and role clarity through autonomy, communication, and clear deliverables. Negative outcomes included time-management difficulties, financial stress, isolation, inadequate support, emotional

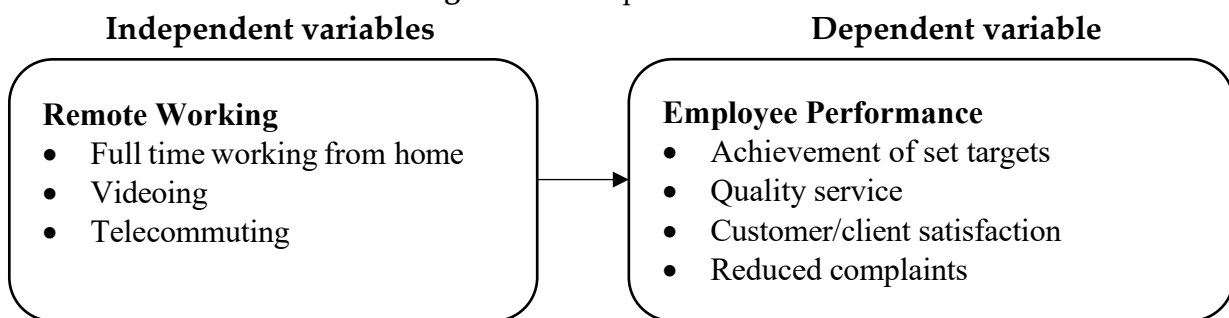
disconnection, and poor work-life separation. The review lacked primary data and was geographically limited to Sudan.

Kimondo (2022) examined remote working at Absa Bank Plc in Kenya using a case-study design and stratified random sampling. Remote work improved productivity, work-life balance, and domestic responsibilities while reducing commuting time and operational costs, although social interaction and team cohesion weakened. The study focused on one banking organization, excluding healthcare.

Agnes and Mercy (2022) studied teleworking in Mount Kenya public universities, surveying 353 of 3,012 staff. Results showed significant improvements in productivity, absenteeism, and job satisfaction. However, self-reported data and a descriptive design limited validity and causal inference.

Overall, studies generally associate remote working with improved performance, productivity, satisfaction, and work-life balance, but geographical, methodological, contextual, population, and conceptual gaps remain. These gaps justify examining remote working and employee performance at Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3. Research Design

Positivism Research Philosophy was suitable for this study because the study sought to objectively measure and analyze the relationship between work arrangements and employee performance using quantifiable data (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). A correlational research design was employed to describe variables and analyze the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance at Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya. The approach enabled hypothesis testing, supported reliability and validity, and generated evidence-based insights for healthcare decision-making (Bell *et al.*, 2022). The design was preferred because it facilitated exploration, comparison, data analysis, summarization, presentation, evaluation, and interpretation (Selviana *et al.*, 2024).

The study was conducted in Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya. The study examined flexible work arrangements and employee performance, measuring work arrangements through remote working as the independent variable and employee performance as the dependent variable.

According to Willie (2024) target population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. Thus, the target population

defines those units for which the findings of the survey are meant to generalize. The target population was 152 staff members working at the Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya, from selected departments offering essential services. These included Public Health, Pharmaceutical, Human Resource, Laboratory Services, Finance and Procurement, Dental Services, Imaging Services, Physiotherapy Services and Nutrition Services. This is because they were the group the researcher believed they were departments which were affected by work arrangement.

4. Findings and Discussions

The study sought to establish the relationship between remote working and employee performance in Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements relating to remote working. Their responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. For interpretation purposes, a mean score of 1.0–2.5 indicated disagreement with the statements, while a mean score of 2.6–5.0 indicated agreement. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Remote Working Descriptive Findings

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
On all days of the week, employees work full-time from home	134	1.00	5.00	3.1940	0.95364
Full-time working from home has been implemented in our facility	134	1.00	5.00	3.3657	0.90563
Videointing has been used in our facility to enhance efficiently and decision-making	134	2.00	5.00	3.7090	0.65837
Videointing enhances efficiency in communications	134	1.00	5.00	3.7537	0.61847
Through videointing, our facility has been able to boost the effectiveness of decision-making in our facility	134	1.00	5.00	3.7761	0.60873
Telecommuting allows me to complete my tasks more efficiently and on time.	134	2.00	5.00	3.8731	0.46569
The flexibility provided by telecommuting has positively impacted my overall job performance.	134	2.00	5.00	3.9104	0.37722
Average	134			3.6546	0.65539

The findings in Table 1 indicate that respondents generally agreed that remote working is practiced at Kericho Referral Hospital, as evidenced by all the mean scores being above the mean of 2.6. The findings suggest that various aspects of remote working, including telecommuting and technology-supported communication, are perceived to contribute positively to work efficiency, decision-making, and employee performance. Regarding whether employees work full-time from home on all days of the week, the statement recorded a mean score of 3.1940 (SD = 0.9536). This was the lowest mean score among the

statements, indicating general agreement. The relatively higher standard deviation suggests greater variation in respondents' views regarding the extent to which employees work fully from home throughout the week.

On whether full-time working from home has been implemented in the facility, the mean score was 3.3657 (SD = 0.9056). The finding indicates that respondents generally agreed that full-time working from home has been implemented at the hospital, although the relatively high standard deviation suggests that perceptions varied among respondents. This variation may reflect differences in the extent to which different departments or categories of employees are able to work remotely.

The findings further show that the use of videoing in the facility to enhance efficiency and decision-making recorded a mean score of 3.7090 (SD = 0.6584). This indicates a relatively strong level of agreement that videoing is being used as part of remote working practices to support efficiency and decision-making. The relatively low standard deviation indicates that respondents' views were comparatively consistent on this aspect.

Similarly, the statement that videoing enhances efficiency in communications recorded a mean score of 3.7537 (SD = 0.6185). The result indicates that respondents generally perceived videoing as an effective means of improving communication within the facility. The relatively low standard deviation further suggests a considerable degree of consistency in respondents' perceptions regarding the contribution of videoing to communication efficiency.

The statement that through videoing the facility has been able to boost the effectiveness of decision-making recorded a mean score of 3.7761 (SD = 0.6087). This indicates that respondents generally agreed that videoing supports effective decision-making. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that respondents had fairly similar views on the contribution of videoing to decision-making within the hospital.

The findings also indicate that telecommuting allows employees to complete their tasks more efficiently and on time, as shown by a mean score of 3.8731 (SD = 0.4657). The relatively high mean score demonstrates strong agreement with the statement and suggests that respondents perceived telecommuting as contributing to timely and efficient completion of work-related tasks. The low standard deviation indicates that responses were relatively consistent among the respondents.

The statement that the flexibility provided by telecommuting has positively impacted overall job performance recorded the highest mean score of 3.9104 (SD = 0.3772). This finding demonstrates the strongest level of agreement among all the remote working statements and suggests that respondents perceived the flexibility associated with telecommuting as having a positive influence on employee performance. The low standard deviation indicates a high level of consistency in respondents' views.

The findings are consistent with Yusuf (2021), Kimondo (2022), and Agnes and Mercy (2022), who reported positive relationships between remote working or teleworking and employee performance, particularly through improved productivity, work-life balance, task efficiency, and job satisfaction. Similarly, Kurdy *et al.* (2023) and Peter *et al.* (2022) found that autonomy, social support, and work-life balance enhance

productivity. These findings support the current results, where respondents reported positive effects of telecommuting on task efficiency and overall performance. However, the findings also align with Ferrara *et al.* (2022), Elshaiekh *et al.* (2018), and Kimondo (2022), who identified mixed outcomes, including work-home conflict, social isolation, weakened team cohesion, and time-management challenges. The comparatively lower mean scores for full-time working from home in the current study may reflect such concerns. Overall, the literature supports remote working as beneficial, but its effectiveness depends on organizational and employee-related conditions.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that remote working has a very weak positive but statistically insignificant relationship with employee performance in Kericho Referral Hospital. Although respondents generally agreed that remote working, telecommuting, and technology-supported communication were practiced and could improve efficiency, communication, decision-making, and task completion, the inferential findings did not provide sufficient statistical evidence that remote working significantly influences employee performance.

The study recommends that Kericho Referral Hospital, Kenya, should adopt remote working selectively rather than as a general arrangement for all employees. Management should identify duties that can effectively be performed remotely without compromising patient care and operational requirements. Where remote working is applicable, the hospital should strengthen technology-supported communication, virtual meetings, task monitoring, and performance-based reporting to ensure that employees remain productive and connected to their teams.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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