

Telecommuting and Organizational Performance: Evidence from County Government of Busia, Kenya

IRENE NAMUKI WAKHUNGU

Department of Business Administration and Management, Kibabii University, Kenya

Abstract- *Telecommuting has emerged as a critical work-life balance strategy with potential to enhance organizational performance, yet its implementation in African public sector organizations remains limited. This study examined the influence of telecommuting on organizational performance in the County Government of Busia, Kenya. A census survey design was employed, targeting 91 senior management employees, with 88 questionnaires returned (96.7% response rate). Data were collected using structured questionnaires with reliability confirmed at Cronbach's Alpha of 0.867. Simple linear regression analysis revealed that telecommuting had a statistically significant positive influence on organizational performance ($\beta=0.457$, $R^2=0.209$, $F(1,86)=22.739$, $p<0.001$). The findings indicate that telecommuting accounted for 20.9% of variations in organizational performance. The study concludes that effective telecommuting implementation enhances organizational performance through improved employee satisfaction, reduced operational costs, and flexible work arrangements. County governments should develop comprehensive telecommuting policies, invest in technological infrastructure, and implement capacity building programs to maximize remote work benefits.*

Keywords: *Telecommuting, Organizational Performance, Work-Life Balance, County Government*

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global workplace has experienced profound transformation driven by technological advancement and evolving employee expectations regarding work-life integration (Allen et al., 2015). Telecommuting, defined as a work arrangement where employees perform duties from locations outside the traditional office using information and communication technologies, has emerged as a significant organizational strategy for enhancing productivity while supporting employee well-being (Golden & Gajendran, 2019). This flexible work arrangement allows employees to work from homes, satellite offices, or other designated locations while maintaining organizational connectivity through digital communication platforms (Bloom et al., 2015).

Globally, telecommuting adoption has accelerated dramatically. Research indicates that approximately 70% of organizations in developed economies have integrated some form of telecommuting into their operational frameworks, recognizing its potential to reduce overhead costs, improve employee retention, and enhance organizational agility (Owl Labs, 2019). Studies consistently demonstrate that well-implemented telecommuting arrangements contribute to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, improved employee satisfaction, and enhanced organizational performance (Bloom et al., 2015; Charalampous et al., 2019).

However, the telecommuting landscape in developing countries, particularly within Africa's public sector, presents contrasting challenges. Infrastructure deficits, technological limitations, organizational culture barriers, and inadequate policy frameworks have constrained adoption and effectiveness of remote work arrangements (Messenger, 2019). The International Labour Organization reports that telecommuting prevalence in developing countries remains below 10%, compared to over 40% in developed nations (ILO, 2020).

The Kenyan context exemplifies these challenges. Despite government initiatives to modernize public service delivery, implementation of flexible work arrangements in the public sector remains nascent (Korir, 2015). County governments, established following Kenya's 2010 constitutional devolution, face unique challenges in service delivery and performance optimization (Lubale, 2012). The County Government of Busia contends with employee stress, high absenteeism, staff turnover, and suboptimal performance levels (KNBS, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic exposed critical gaps in county governments' preparedness for remote work, revealing insufficient technological infrastructure and inadequate telecommuting policies (Ministry of Health Kenya, 2020).

While private sector organizations in Kenya have successfully implemented telecommuting strategies with reported benefits (Kamau et al., 2013), public sector adoption remains limited. Despite growing recognition of telecommuting's potential benefits, empirical evidence examining its influence on organizational performance within Kenya's county governments remains scarce. This study addresses this knowledge gap by investigating the relationship between telecommuting and organizational performance in the County Government of Busia. The specific objective was to determine the influence of telecommuting on organizational performance, providing evidence-based insights for policy development and organizational practice in devolved government systems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Spillover Theory and Social Exchange Theory. Spillover Theory (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) posits that experiences, emotions, and behaviors in one life domain influence experiences in another domain. Telecommuting facilitates positive spillover by reducing commuting stress, enhancing schedule flexibility, and enabling better work-personal life integration, which translates into improved job satisfaction and performance (Allen et al., 2015). Conversely, negative spillover may occur when work-from-home challenges create boundary management difficulties diminishing both personal well-being and work effectiveness (Golden et al., 2006).

Social Exchange Theory (Akerlof, 1984) suggests that employment relationships are governed by reciprocal exchanges where organizational investments in employee well-being generate reciprocal commitments through enhanced effort and performance (Konrad & Mangel, 2000). When organizations provide telecommuting opportunities, employees reciprocate through increased discretionary effort, reduced turnover intentions, and improved performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

2.2 Telecommuting and Organizational Performance

The relationship between telecommuting and organizational performance has received considerable scholarly attention, yielding generally positive findings. Allen et al. (2015) found favorable relationships between telecommuting and perceived

autonomy, work-family conflict reduction, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Bloom et al. (2015) demonstrated that home-working employees exhibited 13% higher performance compared to office-based counterparts, comprising increased productivity (9%) and reduced turnover (4%).

Organizational performance benefits include cost reductions through decreased real estate requirements, enhanced employee retention through improved work-life balance, access to geographically dispersed talent pools, increased productivity due to reduced workplace distractions, and improved employee well-being (Golden & Gajendran, 2019; Global Workplace Analytics, 2020). However, benefits depend significantly on implementation quality, organizational culture, job characteristics, and support systems (Golden, 2012). Challenges include employee isolation, communication difficulties, blurred work-home boundaries, supervisory concerns, and technology barriers (Charalampous et al., 2019).

2.3 Empirical Evidence

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 46 studies, finding telecommuting positively related to perceived autonomy and negatively related to work-family conflict, with favorable effects on job satisfaction and performance. Charalampous et al. (2019) identified that telecommuting's positive outcomes include increased productivity and improved work-life balance, while potential negatives include professional isolation and career concerns.

In Africa, Mello (2019) examined telecommuting adoption in South African organizations, identifying infrastructure limitations, management resistance, and inadequate policy frameworks as primary challenges. Messenger (2019) found that telecommuting offers potential benefits but requires careful implementation to avoid work intensification.

In Kenya, Kamau et al. (2013) found that organizations implementing flexible arrangements reported improved employee performance and retention. Musasa (2014) identified benefits including enhanced team performance but also technology barriers and cultural resistance. However, these studies focused on private sector organizations,

leaving public sector applicability questions unanswered.

2.4 Knowledge Gaps and Conceptual Framework

Despite substantial international research, gaps persist regarding public sector applications in developing African contexts. Most studies focus on private sector organizations in developed economies (Allen et al., 2015). Minimal research has examined telecommuting within Kenya's county governments despite their critical roles in devolved governance. Previous studies emphasized employee-level outcomes with insufficient attention to organizational-level performance metrics (Golden & Gajendran, 2019).

This study's conceptual framework posits a direct positive relationship between telecommuting (independent variable) and organizational performance (dependent variable). Telecommuting is operationalized through work location flexibility, home-based work arrangements, technological infrastructure, and employee preferences. Organizational performance is measured via service delivery quality, customer satisfaction, and complaint frequency. The framework suggests that effective telecommuting implementation positively influences organizational performance through enhanced employee satisfaction, reduced costs, increased productivity, and improved retention.

Hypothesis: H_0 : Telecommuting has no statistically significant influence on organizational performance in the County Government of Busia, Kenya.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Study Area

This study employed a descriptive survey research design appropriate for investigating characteristics of populations and establishing variable relationships (Kothari, 2003). The research was conducted in Busia County, one of Kenya's 47 devolved governmental units in Western Kenya, spanning 1,695 square kilometers with a population of 743,946 people (KNBS, 2009).

3.2 Population, Sampling, and Data Collection

The target population comprised 91 senior management employees: County Chief of Staff (1), County Executive Members (15), Deputy Executive Members (15), Chief Officers (15), Deputy Chief

Officers (15), County Directors (15), and Deputy County Directors (15). A census survey approach was used, targeting all 91 employees, eliminating sampling error and ensuring comprehensive representation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaires with two sections. Section A captured demographics (gender, marital status, age, education, job category, work experience). Section B contained Likert-scale statements (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) measuring telecommuting (11 items) and organizational performance (3 items). Telecommuting items assessed organizational use, alternative arrangements, home-based work, location flexibility, expense changes, performance perceptions, facility adequacy, preferences, flexible hours, stress impacts, and satisfaction. Performance was measured through service delivery quality, customer satisfaction, and complaint frequency.

3.3 Validity, Reliability, and Data Analysis

Content validity was established through expert review by three Human Resource Management faculty members and pilot-testing with 10 employees from a neighboring county. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The telecommuting construct achieved $\alpha=0.867$, exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Santos, 1999), confirming acceptable internal consistency.

Following ethical approval from Kibabii University and authorization from Busia County Government, 88 of 91 questionnaires were returned (96.7% response rate). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) summarized demographics and variable distributions. Inferential statistics employed Pearson correlation and simple linear regression. The regression model was: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$, where Y =Organizational Performance, X_1 =Telecommuting, β_0 =Constant, β_1 =Regression coefficient, ε =Error term. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha=0.05$ level.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The study achieved 96.7% response rate with 88 returned questionnaires. Gender analysis revealed

77.3% male and 22.7% female respondents, indicating significant gender imbalance. Marital status showed 59.1% married, 27.3% single, and 13.6% divorced. Educational qualifications indicated 76.1% held undergraduate degrees, 20.5% master's degrees, and 3.4% PhDs. Age distribution showed

62.5% aged 35-44 years, 23.9% aged 45-54 years, 5.7% aged 25-34 years, and 7.9% aged 55+ years. Work experience varied: 37.5% worked 1-5 years, 33.0% worked 6-10 years, 19.3% less than one year, and 10.2% worked 10+ years.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Telecommuting (N=88)

Statement	Mean	SD
Telecommuting provides flexible working hours	4.80	0.68
Arrangements for home-based work exist	4.44	1.26
Work at agreed location allowed	4.30	1.66
Favor telecommuting arrangement	4.18	1.51
More satisfied working remotely	4.14	1.87
Use of telecommuting by employees	3.94	1.46
Alternative work arrangement offered	3.90	1.72
Work expenses decreased	3.70	1.80
Better performance away from workplace	3.67	1.06
Adequate telecommuting facilities	3.66	0.99
Job stress reduced	3.39	1.40

Mean scores ranged from 3.39 to 4.80, indicating generally positive perceptions. The highest mean ($M=4.80$) for "flexible working hours" indicates strong recognition of flexibility benefits. The lowest mean ($M=3.39$) for "stress reduced" suggests stress reduction is not universally experienced, possibly reflecting implementation challenges.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Performance (N=88)

Statement	Mean	SD
Minimum customer complaints	3.68	1.20
Customer satisfaction commendable	3.58	1.15
Service delivery is good	3.19	1.29

Moderate performance scores (3.19-3.68) suggest room for improvement in organizational effectiveness.

4.3 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
0.457	0.209	0.200	0.754	22.739	0.000

Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.719	0.627	-	1.148	0.254
Telecommuting	0.729	0.153	0.457	4.769	0.000

The correlation coefficient ($R=0.457$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between telecommuting and organizational performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.209$) shows telecommuting explains 20.9% of performance variance. The regression model was statistically

significant ($F(1,86)=22.739$, $p<0.001$), confirming telecommuting significantly predicts organizational performance. The regression coefficient ($B=0.729$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in telecommuting, organizational performance increases by 0.729 units. The t-statistic ($t=4.769$,

$p < 0.001$) supports rejection of the null hypothesis. Regression equation: $Y = 0.719 + 0.729X_1$

4.4 Discussion

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory and Spillover Theory. The positive relationship supports Social Exchange Theory's proposition that organizational investments in employee well-being generate reciprocal performance benefits (Akerlof, 1984). Spillover Theory explains how positive telecommuting experiences spillover into improved workplace attitudes and performance (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

These findings corroborate previous research. Morganson et al. (2010) found home-based workers reported higher work-life balance support. Miebaka et al. (2018) established positive relationships between telecommuting and organizational performance in Nigerian telecommunications. Bloom et al. (2015) demonstrated 13% higher performance among home-workers.

However, this study's R^2 value (0.209) is lower than some previous research, possibly reflecting county government-specific challenges including infrastructural limitations, bureaucratic rigidities, and cultural resistance (Korir, 2015). The moderate organizational performance scores suggest that while telecommuting positively influences performance, overall effectiveness remains suboptimal, underscoring the importance of complementary interventions including technological infrastructure enhancement, policy development, and capacity building.

The high mean for "flexible working hours" (4.80) contrasted with lower mean for "stress reduction" (3.39) suggests that while telecommuting offers scheduling flexibility, stress reduction requires supportive management practices and boundary management training (Allen et al., 2015).

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on empirical findings, this study concludes that compressed work weeks have a statistically significant strong positive influence on organizational performance in Busia County Government ($\beta = 0.636$, $R^2 = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$), representing the strongest work-life balance predictor examined and accounting for 40.5% of organizational

performance variance, which indicates substantial predictive power and practical significance for enhancing organizational effectiveness. Despite this robust relationship, implementation gaps exist as evidenced by moderate awareness levels and mixed perceptions (mean scores ranging from 3.34 to 3.92), suggesting that systematic implementation frameworks remain underdeveloped despite strong potential benefits. The primary benefits of compressed work weeks include enhanced work quality through extended uninterrupted work periods, improved work-life balance through additional days off providing employees extended personal time for recuperation and personal responsibilities, and resource conservation enabling sustained employee engagement and commitment. However, successful implementation requires addressing concerns about extended daily hours' potential impacts on employee fatigue and work-family conflict during work days through supportive policies, flexible configuration options, and comprehensive monitoring systems. This study demonstrates compressed work weeks' viability and effectiveness in African public sector contexts, challenging assumptions that alternative work arrangements are exclusively suitable for private sector or developed country organizations, and confirming that when appropriately implemented, compressed work weeks can serve as powerful strategic tools for enhancing organizational effectiveness while simultaneously supporting employee well-being in resource-constrained devolved government systems.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policy Development: Develop comprehensive telecommuting policies addressing eligibility, performance measurement, technological support, communication protocols, and accountability through participatory processes.
2. Infrastructure Investment: Invest significantly in ICT infrastructure including laptops, internet connectivity, collaborative platforms, and cybersecurity tools, potentially through public-private partnerships.
3. Capacity Building: Implement training programs for managers and employees covering remote work practices, virtual supervision, time management, and technology utilization.
4. Performance Systems: Develop results-oriented measurement systems emphasizing output

quality with clear indicators, regular feedback, and objective evaluation.

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