THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKING ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID19) PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Many organisations have been thrown into unfamiliar waters by the negative impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. As a result, businesses have derived response mechanisms and aligned themselves to the unpredictable current situation. Organisations have devised both long term and short term strategies to enable them to remain relevant in the business environment. This research study focused on the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. The methodology in the study is aligned to Grant & Booth (2009). Hence secondary data is recognized as a sufficient methodology for data collection. The methodology was restricted to the literature that was reviewed from recent articles that were published in Google scholar between March and July 2020, on the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. The findings of the study revealed that remote working has positively impacted on the performance of employees during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. This research study has therefore contributed to the body of knowledge by establishing a positive relationship between remote working and employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. However, the findings of this research study were restricted to the literature reviewed from Google Scholar. Future research studies should therefore focus on other methodologies in order to avoid subjectivity and encourage objectivity in their findings. In addition, future research studies should consider designing and testing research models with ideas from the literature review. The findings of this study are not therefore conclusive because

the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic period is still ongoing, and is affecting employees and organisations in different ways. Hence upcoming research studies should consider current and updated information regarding the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic period. Moreover, future research studies should focus on employees' performance in specific sectors e.g. education, health, service, transport etc., rather than generalizing the entire workforce.

Keywords: Remote-Working, Employee Performance, Coronavirus (COVID19) Pandemic, Telecommuting, Telework, Social Distancing, New Normal

INTRODUCTION

Many organisations have been thrown into unfamiliar waters by the negative impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. As a result, businesses have derived response mechanisms and aligned themselves to the unpredictable current situation. Organisations have devised both long term and short term strategies to enable them to remain relevant in the business environment. The Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic has forced organisations to exercise resilience and strategise new ways of working, including introduction of remote working into their working systems. Effective implementation of remote working needs to be supported by strong technological systems, which may not be available in some organisations. The fact of the matter is that all organisations have been affected by the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic with varying degrees of severity. Some organisations have emerged stronger whereas others have actually succumbed to the negative effects of the pandemic. Introduction of remote working to organisations at this time of the Coronavirus pandemic may be an indication that employees may continue working from home permanently, even after the pandemic. However effective implementation of remote working is subject to factors such as infrastructure, employee collaboration, data security, policy framework regarding employees' terms and conditions of service, employee well-being, among other factors.

The Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic has changed the working pattern of many organisations if not all of them. The changes that have been implemented in various organisations are expected to provide permanent solutions to the unpredictable working environment caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and other unforeseen circumstances in the future. Remote working has now become the order of the day for employees, many of whom are working remotely for the first time. According to Guyot and Sawhill (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic is among other things, a massive experiment in telecommuting. The outbreak is accelerating the trend toward telecommuting, possibly for the long term. Until now, telecommuting has been slower to take hold than many predicted when remote work technology

first emerged. This inertia probably reflects sticky work cultures as well as a lack of interest from employers in investing in the technology and management practices necessary to operate a tele-workforce. But the pandemic is forcing these investments in industries where telework is possible, with more people learning how to use remote technology. As a result, we may see a more permanent shift toward telecommuting. Many faculty members at universities are scrambling to convert face-to-face classes to an online format and to learn how to use distance-learning platforms (Bolino 2020). On the plus side, workers tend to prefer working from home, it reduces emissions and office costs, and it helps people (especially women) balance work and family roles. It may even make us more productive. Millions of people have been forced to work from home since the Coronavirus outbreak; something that employers were traditionally reluctant to offer their staff has become a necessity. This pandemic has thrust a large proportion of the workforce into an impromptu experiment, testing what life might be like without a physical place of work. Needless to say, increased ergonomic risks, separation from colleagues, and reliance on Zoom (and in people's ability to use it), coupled with the psychological toll of living through a pandemic, is harming the mental and physical health of many. But it's not all bad (Mason 2020).

The surge in remote working coupled with the rapid adoption of communications and collaborative technology means many companies have seen no significant change in employee productivity. Organisations have responded to the rapid disruption caused by the dramatic spread of COVID-19 by finding innovative ways to help their workers cope with the impact of the pandemic, while at the same time preparing for an eventual return to the workplace for many employees. Technology has been a saving grace during this crisis, helping to keep productivity levels up, while organisations with a greater online presence have been able to continue more effectively and in some cases even thrive. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on how work gets done and the longer term implications for employers and employees are far reaching. For employers who have found their employees can be just as productive away from the office, it seems increasingly likely that we will see an accelerated shift towards more agile working, with reverberating effects across the economy (Neil 2020).

In the past, Companies that have considered remote-working initiative have reaped its benefits. Implementation of remote-working enables companies to save on time and financial costs. It is also attractive to employees because it allows flexibility that enables them to enjoy work-life balance, and also save on commuting costs. In addition, employees have an opportunity to practice self-discipline especially working with minimum supervision. However, as organizations are forced to design and implement the remote-working policies, the biggest challenge has been on poor technology infrastructure. In addition, remote-working requires one

to have access to internet, unfortunately, not all employees have access to internet while at home. Another concern regarding remote-working, is the working environment which is not conducive, thus negatively impacting on employee productivity. In addition, employers have complained about the poor quality of work produced by employees while at home as a result of lack of supervision. Some employers have argued that there are some jobs that cannot be performed at home and can only be performed at work premises, for example, manufacturing jobs, the service industry etc.

While implementing remote-working policies, employers should be aware of the various employee personalities. Some employees are extroverts, while others are introverts. Extroverts are very social people who enjoy working while socializing with their work mates and prefer to work in open plan offices. Introverts are the opposite, they are very reserved and prefer to interact with a very small number of people in closed offices. Whereas introverts may be comfortable with the implementation of remote-working, extroverts may not welcome the idea simply because they will experience loneliness due to lack of social interaction with work mates, hence the environment may not be conducive for them to be productive. Effective implementation of remote-working policies requires that appropriate communication channels amongst employees are developed. In addition employers need to trust their employees to work from home

Previously, the world has suffered a number of epidemics including SARS, MERS Swine flu, Anthrax, HIV Aids, Ebola etc. Employers implemented various strategies to protect their employees against these epidemics. As for the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic, the focus has been on preventing infection by ensuring employees do not go to work in order to maintain social distancing. Remote working has become the option for many employers who want to remain in business. However, most companies are still holding onto a rigid work culture whereby all employees are required to work within the company premises. They are yet to invest in the necessary technology and remote working policies. Research to empirically illustrate the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID19) is still on-going. Hence there is very little literature to establish the effect of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID19). This study has therefore made an effort to establish the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This paper examines the Impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus pandemic. Section one discusses the background to the study. Section two reviews the literature, section three provides the research methodology, Section four discusses

the analysis and findings of the research study. Section five gives conclusions and lastly section six discusses the recommendations and suggestions for further research studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Moss (2020), a study into the attitudes of employees who are usually not allowed to work remotely, or who only did so rarely prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, showed that 77% feel employers have done a good job handling the remote work transition. Three quarters said they believe their manager trusts them to be productive from home, although 31% relayed that their employer had enforced new processes to check on people's output. Only 9% said their employer has handled rolling out remote working poorly, an impressive show from companies who had previously resisted flexible work. Sixty-eight per cent feel they are either more productive or equally productive from home, which is particularly significant given the unique challenges many workers face with handling childcare and home-schooling. While 31% said their work-life balance had become easier since social distancing began, workers were not confident the experience will convince their employer to change their flexible work policies long-term. Almost half (47%) said their employer would ditch widespread remote working once the Covid-19 pandemic is over, instead reverting to their previous policies. But 28% said they don't think their employer would go back to inflexible working.

Parungao (2020) predicts that the move towards work from home will be a more permanent change rather than a temporary one. This will result to reduction in production costs and increase in financial gains by employees. In addition, efficiency will be enhanced in organisations due to continuous use of technology. Companies will also be implored to introduce proper remote working policies to ensure a strong workplace culture and efficient operations.

According to Kovar (2020), Gartner released results from a March 30 survey of 317 CFOs and business finance leaders that found 74 percent of those surveyed expect at least 5 percent of their workforce who previously worked in company offices will become permanent work-from-home employees after the pandemic ends.

Mason (2020) conducted a survey of the wellbeing of homeworkers under lockdown and found out that working from home had a positive effect on both work and lifestyle of some people. Over a third of respondents felt that working from home was very motivational. The three best things about working from home were: the dearth of the daily commute, increased autonomy, and being in an environment which enhances productivity.   44 per cent of individuals do not have difficulty managing the boundary between work and home and almost half of the respondents (49%) are satisfied with their current work-life balance. 62 per cent of respondents

stated that they loved the autonomy of working from home. In addition recent research by the CIPD upported these finding that flexible working can improve productivity, as well as retention, satisfaction and wellbeing. Many respondents reported increased productivity as one of the top three benefits of working from home. Just under half of homeworkers felt it gave them the opportunity to develop new and better ways of doing their job (49%). Some felt the reduction in meetings and more efficient communications using technology helped their effectiveness. Improved productivity was also commonly linked with people finding that there were fewer distractions at home, or enjoying a more peaceful environment compared to the office, particularly for the more introverted workforce. There is plenty of evidence that a well-designed working environment is key to minimizing the detrimental effects of work space on health and wellbeing. However, as well as its contribution to productivity, many respondents said their homeworking environment was a benefit because of the comforts it afforded them, such as having access to a garden or even just a window, a good cup of coffee, home-cooked lunches, lack of dress code, or listening to music while working. We also know that, for many individuals, remote working can be detrimental to their health, well-being, motivation and ability to work productively. However, for others, the benefits in reclaimed time, productivity, and flexibility are positively impacting their health, relationships, and their opportunities to do the things that interest them.

The percentage of employees working from home has doubled, from 31% to 62%. Some jobs were already set up to work from home, others were configured to work from remote environments part of the time, and still others had to transition quickly and completely from 0% to 100% remote. Even as work and life have become completely blended for many people, more than half of at-home workers say they would prefer to continue working remotely as much as possible once restrictions on businesses and school closures are lifted. It's worth noting, however, that this percentage has dropped from 62% to 53% as employees have had the daily experience of working from home. Gallup research finds the percentages that prefer continuing to work from home are highest in technology, insurance, arts, entertainment, media, finance and professional services. Those with lower preference to work from home in the future include education, retail, transportation and construction. Many managers, too, appear to have learned that working from home can work for the people they manage. About six in 10 managers currently report that the people they manage are allowed to work from home. Among those six in 10, 55% say that once government restrictions are lifted and kids are back in school, the experience of COVID-19 will change their remote work policy. Few managers (7%) say the experience will result in them allowing their employees to work remotely less often, while a slight majority (52%) say they will allow their employees to work remotely more often as a result of this

experience. Greater remote work could become the "next normal." Those employees with some remote work *options* have the highest employee engagement, while those with no remote option and those who work remotely 100% of the time have somewhat lower employee engagement (Harter 2020).

According to O'Halloran (2020). A Gartner survey of 229 human resources (HR) managers on 2 April has revealed that while 30% of their employees worked remotely at least part of the time before the Coronavirus pandemic, 81% or more are currently working remotely and 41% are likely to do so at least some of the time once a return to normal working is permitted. It also found that 15% of those surveyed said 61-80% of their employees are now working remotely. Although it stressed that remote workers are highly productive, Gartner warned that turnover risk is much higher with remote working. It cited a first-quarter 2020 survey of more than 5,000 employees that found 48% of fully remote employees exhibit high discretionary effort, compared with 35% of staff who never work remotely. Given that the Covid-19 pandemic has seen many employees planning to work in a way that they had not previously considered, Gartner has developed a guide to help organisations manage remote talent in the new working environment. Its NEAR model involves four steps: normalize self-direction, enable new relationships, accentuate the positive and revamp team expectations. Gartner found that two-fifths of remote employees want more self-directed work and it appealed to managers to trust their employees and move away from directing their work to coaching them to success. It advised management to focus on employees' work product and outputs, rather than processes.

Coronavirus has been declared by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic. Which means it is now a global emergency. Scientists have explained that they do not yet have a clear understanding of the virus's behavior, transmission rate, and the full extent of contagion. This means there is still a lot to learn about the virus. The good news is that scientists all over the world have been working day and night to find both a cure and a vaccine for the virus (Kamulegeya, 2020).

According to Smith-Bingham and Hariharan (2020), the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which has been declared a global pandemic, emerged in a Chinese seafood and poultry market in Wuhan city. The city is a densely populated manufacturing and transport hub in central China. The disease presents symptoms similar to pneumonia and currently has no borders. It has since spread to many countries all over the world including Uganda.

COVID-19 struck fast and hard when the whole world was unprepared for it. From social distancing, working from home (WFH) and panic buying, life took a sudden turn for the worse. New studies are popping up to show the benefits and concerns of social distancing and remote working (Robinson 2020).

Remote-working also referred to as telecommuting or working from home, is an initiative that has been with us for a while. However, many organizations are yet to design and implement policies on remote-working. Recently, remote-working initiative has become a game changer, after the Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic threatened to negatively impact on the productivity of many organizations. This has necessitated all organizations that are focused on remaining relevant in the business environment to modify their policies in order to accommodate remote-working. It has however been very challenging for a number of organizations to adjust to the work from home arrangement, which is the new normal.

Most employers do not have clear and consistent policies on working from home. As a result of the Coronavirus, organizations will move away from arbitrary discretion and toward companywide, objective policies on which jobs can be done remotely, and under what circumstances. He argues that working from home mainly suits white collar jobs, and even then, not all such jobs. It also can't be done indefinitely, since at some point most employees will need resources from their peers or at their offices (Capppelli 2020).

Facebook, Google, Twitter and Amazon have since implemented remote working policies for many or all of their employees around the globe. These companies have began encouraging employees in Seattle to work from home as the Coronavirus outbreak, also called COVID-19, spread in Washington State. The Coronavirus pandemic has forced many schools and universities to transition to online classes. Important events like the Olympic games, International conferences, political rallies, graduation ceremonies, concerts and many other events have either been cancelled or postponed (Pasantino et al. 2020).

With the COVID-19 virus forcing people to stay at home, many enterprises suddenly have to support an entirely remote workforce. Many organizations think they have the tools needed to allow employees to work from home seamlessly. But now that work from home has become a mandate for many, cracks in the foundation are showing. From a lack of collaboration tools to a lack of interpersonal training on how employees should navigate remote work situations, organizations are scrambling to meet the demands of remote workers. Organizations can now tackle their remote work policy head-on, get the right tools in place, and avoid a similar situation in the future (Brown 2020).

The human dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic reach far beyond the critical health response. All aspects of our future will be affected – economic, social and developmental. This pandemic has mercilessly exposed the deep faultiness in our labour markets. Enterprises of all sizes have already stopped operations, cut working hours and laid off staff. Many are teetering on the brink of collapse as shops and restaurants close, flights and hotel bookings are cancelled, and businesses shift to remote working. Teleworking offers new opportunities for

workers to keep working, and employers to continue their businesses through the crisis. However, workers must be able to negotiate these arrangements so that they retain balance with other responsibilities, such as caring for children, the sick or the elderly, and of course themselves (Ryder 2020).

According to Guyot & Sawhill (2020) managing a telecommuting staff can be difficult. Professional isolation can have negative effects on well-being and career development, and the effects on productivity over the long run and in a scaled-up system are uncertain. Some research has also found that switching to remote work improves retention, consistent with other evidence that people who work from home have higher job satisfaction on average. COVID-19 may permanently change the way many of us work. At present, shifting as many people as possible to home-based telework is a necessary response to a terrible crisis. In the post-pandemic world, it may stay with us as a popular practice that, if done well, can improve job satisfaction, raise productivity, reduce emissions, and spread work to more remote regions.

According to Afshar (2020), a report from research firm Valoir found that Remote work has had only a small negative impact on productivity - an average reduction of 1 percent. Those working from home with children reported a slightly larger decrease in productivity of 2 percent. The largest decrease in productivity was reported by those working alone (without other adults or children in the home), who saw an average decrease in productivity of 3 percent. The average work day is 9.75 hours, with an average start time of 8:15 am and an average end time of 6 pm. Most people are working during normal work hours, with fewer than 10 percent starting before 7 am or extending their workday beyond 7 pm. The biggest distraction from working at home is social media. Nearly one third of respondents - even many of those with children - reported social media was their biggest distraction, devoting nearly two hours to it. Most people believe their company is doing a good job supporting remote work. Four out of five workers gave their company a grade of A or B, and fewer than 5 percent gave their company a failing grade. Job security is the number one worry. More than one-third of workers say concerns about their company's viability or their job security is their primary concern -- far ahead of illness of themselves, a family member, or loved one.

A total of 996 employers based in Great Britain and Western Europe, 472 from the UK, took part in the 2020 COVID-19 Pulse Survey, which was conducted during April 2020. Key findings from the survey indicated that two-thirds of companies (67 percent) surveyed say over 75 percent of their organisation are working remotely, which is a dramatic increase from 56 percent that had less than 10 percent working remotely prior to COVID-19. In addition, productivity for those working remotely does not seem to have been impacted with only 15 percent of companies saying it has had a material negative impact, 22 percent reporting a small

negative impact, 22 percent claiming no impact or a positive impact and one third not sure of the impact. 85 percent of employers surveyed say their employees working from home have the technology, tools and resources needed to work productively for an extended period of time. Additional findings from the survey demonstrate how companies are focusing on communication and employee wellbeing to support engagement and productivity. Almost nine out of ten employers (87 percent) say they have put in place measures to ensure that people feel supported, from their manager or fellow team members, during the Coronavirus outbreak. In addition, almost all (98 percent) of employers are conducting regular communication to keep all employees updated and engaged and 85 percent have implemented a virtual or social engagement initiative. Three quarters (83 percent) of companies said they have no end date planned for flexible working arrangements. By being flexible in their approach to work arrangements, companies can help their employees adjust to their new situation. Businesses, in turn, will benefit from more productive and engaged workers where they allow individuals to juggle the challenges that Covid-19 brings to them, both inside and outside of work. The employers that take strong action to put people first will be the best positioned to enhance employee wellbeing and engagement, restore stability and achieve future business success (Neil 2020).

According to Alyssa (2020) the Coronavirus pandemic has ignited a monumental rise in the number of employees working remotely. The number of people working from home in the United States doubled in the first three weeks of social distancing requirements, and 63 percent of US employees reported working from home during the pandemic. Countless organizations struggled to rapidly shift to a remote work setting forced by the pandemic, but many ultimately found it to be an easier evolution than anticipated. While this pandemic will eventually become a memory, the increase in employees working remotely may remain. Over half of the employees who have shifted to remote work during the pandemic indicated a preference to keep working remotely as much as possible after restrictions are no longer in place and 55 percent of managers say that their employees will work from home more than they did before the pandemic. The benefits organizations have begun to realize through increased remote work will likely inform policies and practices moving forward. Historically, work from home arrangements were requested by employees and employers sometimes agreed or made some sort of compromise, realizing that it had a positive impact on employee morale and work-life balance. The pandemic necessitated a rapid and substantial move to a remote work model for many employees, and many employers have realized some benefits. Even before the pandemic, numerous studies noted the benefits of remote workers, including:- Higher productivity: A Stanford University study in 2018 found "astonishing" increases in productivity when people

work from home. Higher levels of engagement: The 2018 ADP Research Institute Global Study on Engagement shows virtual workers are nearly two times more engaged than traditional office employees.   Higher levels of employee retention: The same Stanford study showed a 50 percent decrease in attrition for employees who work from home. Lower cost: Up to $10,000 in savings per employee from reduced office space and overhead for the company and $7,000 for the employee through savings on childcare, commuting, and work clothes. Less stressed and healthier employees: An OWLLabs study showed a 24 percent increase in feeling happier when working from home. Less environmental impact: Due to less commuting. Interestingly, Gallup's research on the specifics of remote work arrangements during the pandemic found that despite rising levels of stress and worry, there has actually been a notable increase in employee engagement, which may likely be tied to the increase in remote work. As of early May, the national engagement rate was 38 percent, up from 34 percent in 2018, and the highest it has been in 20 years. Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, engaged employees have reported lower levels of stress and worry and are more likely to report thriving overall lives than their less-engaged colleagues. And, employees who work remotely 60 percent to 80 percent of the time are most likely to be engaged.

A new survey of 500 IT professionals at companies of at least 1,000 employees in the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Ireland and the UK, revealed that the transition to widespread remote work presented myriad business challenges and security risks for the employees on the front lines of IT security. The 2020 Work-From-Home IT Impact Study by Sectigo and Wakefield Research survey was conducted across industries and includes additional insights on IT professionals in U.S. banking to capture challenges in their field. While many IT professionals saw an increase in employee productivity at their company, they also saw new and dangerous risks emerge, and despite the clear and present danger, many companies remain at-risk as proven long-term IT security strategies have not been fully implemented.   86 percent of IT professionals report challenges in managing the digital identity of users, devices, and processes at their companies. In the U.S. banking industry, the rise of risk is even more dire: 93 percent report challenges to managing digital identity of users, devices, and processes at their companies. Nearly half (49 percent) of IT professionals feel employee productivity at their company has increased since the start of widespread remote work, while another 35 percent feel it's stayed consistent. Only 16 percent say productivity decreased. As they adjusted to this new work model, companies bottom lines were affected: 38 percent of IT professionals say their company delayed revenue-generating initiatives for 4+ weeks as a result of adjusting to widespread remote work. Despite risks, nearly 3 in 5 IT professionals (59 percent) expect the number of remote workers to increase after offices reopen. This includes 17

percent who expect it to increase *significantly*. IT professionals working in U.S. banking are even more optimistic: 72 percent expect an increase in remote work. Nearly 2 in 5 companies put revenue-generating projects on hold during the first month of the lockdown, instead reallocating those resources to ensure that their remote work systems were operational with minimal downtime. 44 percent of companies delayed cyber security initiatives for one month or more while they focused on remote work setup (Sectigo 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Grant & Booth (2009), secondary data is sufficient as a methodology for data collection. In this particular research study, the literature that was reviewed was obtained from recent articles published in Google scholar on the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. The relevant articles that were reviewed in this research study were published between March and July 2020.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following analysis and findings are drawn from the literature review:-

Table 1: Summary of the Analysis and findings based on the literature review

No.	Author	Discussions
1	Afshar 2020	• remote work has had only a small negative impact on productivity.
2	Alyssa 2020	• the Coronavirus pandemic has ignited a monumental rise in the number of employees working remotely. • engaged employees have reported lower levels of stress and worry and are more likely to report thriving overall lives than their less-engaged colleagues.
3	Brown 2020	• organizations can now tackle their remote work policy head-on, and get the right tools in place.
4	Capppelli 2020	• most employers do not have clear and consistent policies on working from home.
5	Guyot & Sawhill 2020	• in the post-pandemic world, home-based telework may stay with us as a popular practice that, if done well, can improve job satisfaction, raise productivity, reduce emissions, and spread work to more remote regions.
6	Harter 2020	• greater remote work could become the "next normal." • those employees with some remote work *options* have the highest employee engagement, while those with no remote option and those who work remotely 100% of the time have somewhat lower employee engagement.

7	Kamulegeya 2020	• scientists all over the world have been working day and night to find both a cure and a vaccine for the virus
8	Kovar 2020	• 5 percent of workforce who previously worked in company offices will become permanent work-from-home employees after the pandemic ends.
9	Mason 2020	• remote working can be detrimental to employees health, well-being, motivation and ability to work productively. • however, for others, the benefits in reclaimed time, productivity, and flexibility are positively impacting their health, relationships, and their opportunities to do the things that interest them.
10	Moss 2020	• despite many workers saying they feel trusted and that employers have done well in implementing working from home over the past month, almost half of workers expect a return to limited flexible working policies once the Coronavirus lockdown ends.
11	Neil 2020	• the employers that take strong action to put people first will be the best positioned to enhance employee wellbeing and engagement, restore stability and achieve future business success.
12	O'Halloran 2020	• remote workers are highly productive. • turnover risk is much higher with remote working. • managers should trust their employees and move away from directing their work to coaching them to success. • management should focus on employees' work product and outputs, rather than processes.
13	Parungao 2020	• the move towards work from home will be a more permanent change rather than a temporary one.
14	Pasantino et al. 2020	• the Coronavirus pandemic has forced many schools and universities to transition to online classes.
15	Robinson 2020	• new studies are popping up to show the benefits and concerns of social distancing and remote working.
16	Ryder 2020	• this pandemic has mercilessly exposed the deep faultiness in our labour markets.
17	Sectigo 2020	• the transition to widespread remote work presented myriad business challenges and security risks for the employees on the front lines of IT security.
18	Smith-Bingham & Hariharan 2020	• the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) presents symptoms similar to pneumonia and currently has no borders.

CONCLUSIONS

This research study therefore concludes that remote working has positively impacted on the performance of employees during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of remote workers as a result of the pandemic. However, most employers do not have clear and consistent policies regarding remote working, hence the inability to design and implement them. Lastly, the study concludes that remote working is here to stay, and is a permanent change that is referred to as the 'new normal'. This research study has therefore contributed to the body of knowledge by establishing a positive relationship between remote working and employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study focused on the impact of remote working on employee performance during the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic. Like any other research study, this study had some limitations that should be considered when conducting future research studies on a similar topic. The findings of this research study were restricted to the literature reviewed from Google Scholar. This is because the research methodology was restricted to secondary data. Future research studies should therefore focus on other methodologies in order to avoid subjectivity and encourage objectivity in their findings. In addition, future research studies should consider designing and testing research models with ideas from the literature review. The findings of this study are not therefore conclusive because the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic period is still ongoing, and is affecting employees and organisations in different ways. Hence upcoming research studies should consider current and updated information regarding the Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic period. Moreover, future research studies should focus on employees' performance in specific sectors e.g. education, health, service, transport etc., rather than generalizing the entire workforce.

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