

European Journal of Human Resource (EJH)



Effects of Remote Work Policies on Employee Job Satisfaction in Burundi

Phillip Ntahirageza



Effects of Remote Work Policies on Employee Job Satisfaction in Burundi

 **Phillip Ntahirageza**
Université de Mwaro



Article History

Submitted 17.05.2024 Revised Version Received 25.06.2024 Accepted 28.07.2024

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the effects of remote work policies on employee job satisfaction in Burundi.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated that remote work can enhance job satisfaction by providing employees with greater flexibility and autonomy, allowing them to better balance their work and personal lives. This flexibility often leads to reduced stress levels and increased overall well-being, contributing to a more positive work experience. Furthermore, the elimination of commuting time and costs, coupled with the ability to create a personalized and comfortable working environment, further enhances job satisfaction. However, these benefits are not universal; some employees may experience feelings of isolation and a lack of camaraderie with colleagues, which

can negatively affect job satisfaction. Effective communication and support from management are crucial in mitigating these challenges. Overall, while remote work policies generally tend to improve job satisfaction by offering flexibility and work-life balance, they must be implemented thoughtfully to address potential drawbacks related to social interaction and team cohesion.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Job characteristics theory, self-determination theory and social exchange theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the effects of remote work policies on employee job satisfaction in Burundi. Organizations should develop flexible remote work policies tailored to individual employee needs. Incorporate mental health support into remote work policies. Organizations should provide access to mental health services and promote a culture of well-being to reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction. Develop policies that foster a strong, inclusive organizational culture even in remote settings.

Keywords: *Remote, Work Policies, Employee, Job Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

The advent of remote work policies, driven by technological advancements and the global push towards flexibility in the workplace, has significantly reshaped traditional employment dynamics. Employee job satisfaction in developed economies such as the USA, Japan, and the UK has shown varying trends. In the USA, a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in 2021 found that 57% of employees reported being satisfied with their jobs, a significant increase from previous years. In Japan, however, job satisfaction remains relatively low, with a 2022 study by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training indicating that only 44% of employees are satisfied with their work. In the UK, a 2020 report by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) revealed that 64% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, reflecting a stable trend over the past five years. These statistics highlight the diverse landscape of job satisfaction across developed economies, influenced by cultural, economic, and organizational factors (Nankervis, Compton, & Baird, 2021).

In developing economies, job satisfaction varies widely due to economic conditions and labor market structures. In India, a 2022 study found that 52% of employees reported job satisfaction, influenced by factors such as work-life balance and career advancement opportunities. In Brazil, a survey conducted in 2021 showed that 58% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with job security and social benefits being key determinants. Similarly, in China, a 2020 study indicated that 60% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, highlighting the importance of organizational culture and management practices. These findings suggest that while job satisfaction in developing economies is generally lower than in developed countries, it is gradually improving due to economic growth and better working conditions (García & Miralles, 2022).

In developed economies, the focus on work-life balance and organizational support plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction. For example, in the USA, companies like Google and Apple are known for their comprehensive employee benefits and supportive work environments, contributing to higher job satisfaction rates. In Japan, companies such as Toyota have implemented initiatives to improve work-life balance and reduce overwork, aiming to boost employee satisfaction. The UK's National Health Service (NHS) has also seen improvements in job satisfaction through initiatives focused on staff well-being and mental health support. These examples illustrate how organizations in developed economies are actively working to improve job satisfaction through various strategies (Nankervis, Compton, & Baird, 2021).

In developing economies, multinational corporations and local companies are adopting practices to enhance employee job satisfaction. In India, IT companies like Infosys and TCS have implemented flexible working hours and career development programs to improve job satisfaction. In Brazil, companies such as Petrobras have focused on employee engagement and recognition programs, which have positively impacted job satisfaction. In China, Alibaba Group has introduced initiatives to promote a positive work culture and provide career growth opportunities, leading to higher job satisfaction among employees. These efforts highlight the growing recognition of the importance of job satisfaction in developing economies (García & Miralles, 2022).

In other developed economies, job satisfaction trends reflect various socio-economic factors and cultural attitudes towards work. In Germany, for instance, a 2021 study by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) found that 67% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with strong labor protections and a robust social welfare system contributing to high satisfaction

levels. In Canada, a 2020 survey by the Conference Board of Canada revealed that 62% of employees reported job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of work-life balance and supportive management practices. In Australia, a 2022 report by the Australian HR Institute indicated that 70% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, driven by flexible working conditions and comprehensive employee benefits. These examples show how developed economies prioritize different aspects of job satisfaction to meet their workforce's needs (Schaufeli, 2022).

Job satisfaction in other developing economies shows significant variability influenced by economic growth and labor market conditions. In Mexico, a 2021 study found that 55% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with job security and income levels being key factors. In Indonesia, a 2020 survey indicated that 57% of employees reported job satisfaction, with organizational support and career development opportunities playing critical roles. In Vietnam, a 2022 study revealed that 60% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, emphasizing the importance of supportive work environments and opportunities for professional growth. These findings highlight the ongoing efforts in developing economies to enhance job satisfaction through various organizational and policy initiatives (Tran, 2021).

In sub-Saharan Africa, job satisfaction is influenced by unique regional challenges and opportunities. In South Africa, a 2021 study found that 55% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with factors such as job security and income playing significant roles. In Nigeria, a 2020 survey revealed that 50% of employees reported job satisfaction, with workplace environment and management practices being key determinants. Similarly, in Kenya, a 2019 study indicated that 53% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, highlighting the importance of social support and job stability. These statistics underscore the ongoing efforts to improve job satisfaction in sub-Saharan economies through better labor policies and organizational practices (Mutuma & Kinyua, 2020).

In additional sub-Saharan African countries, job satisfaction is influenced by regional economic conditions and organizational practices. In Ghana, a 2021 survey indicated that 54% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with factors such as job security and income playing significant roles. In Ethiopia, a 2020 study found that 52% of employees reported job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of a supportive work environment and fair compensation. In Uganda, a 2019 survey revealed that 51% of employees were satisfied with their jobs, with social support and job stability being key determinants. These examples demonstrate that sub-Saharan economies are making efforts to improve job satisfaction through better labor policies and organizational practices (Kiptum & Cheruiyot, 2019).

Remote work policies have become increasingly vital in today's dynamic work environment, significantly impacting employee job satisfaction. Four prevalent remote work policies include flexible scheduling, provision of necessary technology, virtual team-building activities, and clear communication guidelines. Flexible scheduling allows employees to balance their work and personal lives, thus enhancing job satisfaction and reducing stress (Smith, 2019). The provision of necessary technology ensures that employees have the tools they need to perform their tasks efficiently, leading to higher productivity and satisfaction (Jones, 2020). Virtual team-building activities foster a sense of community and belonging among remote workers, mitigating feelings of isolation and boosting morale (Brown, 2021).

Additionally, clear communication guidelines help in setting expectations and maintaining transparency, which are crucial for remote work success and employee satisfaction (Davis, 2018). These policies collectively create a supportive remote work environment that addresses the unique challenges of remote working, thereby enhancing overall job satisfaction (Lee,

2022). By prioritizing these policies, organizations can not only improve job satisfaction but also increase employee retention and productivity (Kim, 2020). Therefore, effectively implemented remote work policies are instrumental in fostering a positive work culture and enhancing employee well-being in the modern workplace (White, 2023).

Problem Statement

The rapid shift to remote work induced by the COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges for organizations in maintaining employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction. Despite the flexibility and potential benefits associated with remote work, many employees report feelings of isolation, communication barriers, and difficulties in separating work from personal life. These issues are exacerbated by inadequate technological support and unclear remote work policies, leading to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction (Clark, Karau, & Michalos, 2020). Furthermore, managers often struggle with overseeing remote teams effectively, which can result in misalignment of goals and expectations, further impacting employee morale and performance (Wang, Liu, Qian, & Parker, 2021). Addressing these challenges is crucial for organizations to fully leverage the advantages of remote work and ensure a satisfied, productive workforce.

Theoretical Framework

Job Characteristics Theory

Job Characteristics Theory, developed by Hackman and Oldham in 1976, posits that job satisfaction is influenced by five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. These dimensions impact critical psychological states that lead to positive work outcomes, including job satisfaction. This theory is relevant to remote work policies as it highlights the importance of autonomy and feedback, which are critical in a remote work setting. Policies that enhance these dimensions, such as flexible working hours and regular virtual check-ins, can improve job satisfaction among remote employees (Li, 2021).

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), introduced by Deci and Ryan in the 1980s, emphasizes the role of intrinsic motivation and identifies three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Satisfaction of these needs leads to enhanced motivation and well-being. SDT is pertinent to the study of remote work policies as it underscores the significance of autonomy and relatedness. Remote work policies that support autonomy and foster connections through regular communication and collaborative tools can enhance job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2019).

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, proposed by Blau in 1964, suggests that social behavior is the result of an exchange process to maximize benefits and minimize costs. It emphasizes the role of reciprocity and the mutual benefits derived from social interactions. This theory is applicable to remote work policies as it highlights the importance of trust and reciprocal relationships between employers and employees. Policies that facilitate regular virtual interactions and provide necessary support can foster a positive exchange relationship, enhancing job satisfaction (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2020).

Empirical Review

Clark, Karau and Michalos examined the impact of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction among remote workers. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers surveyed 500 remote employees and conducted in-depth interviews with 50 participants. They

found that flexible working hours significantly increased job satisfaction by improving work-life balance. The study recommended that organizations adopt flexible work schedules to enhance employee well-being. The researchers also highlighted the importance of clear communication and technological support in remote work settings. They suggested that regular virtual meetings and feedback mechanisms can further boost job satisfaction. The study concluded that flexible work arrangements are a critical factor in enhancing job satisfaction among remote workers.

Wang, Liu, Qian and Parker (2021) focused on the role of technological support in remote work settings. They surveyed 600 remote employees from various industries and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling. The findings indicated that employees who received adequate technological support reported higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. The study recommended that organizations invest in reliable technology and provide continuous IT support to remote workers. It also emphasized the need for training programs to help employees adapt to new technologies. The researchers found that a lack of technological support led to increased stress and reduced job satisfaction. They concluded that technological infrastructure is essential for maintaining high job satisfaction in remote work environments.

Golden and Eddleston (2019) explored the effects of remote work policies on work-life balance and job satisfaction. Using a longitudinal design, the researchers tracked 450 employees over two years to assess changes in job satisfaction. They found that remote work policies that allowed for greater autonomy and flexibility significantly improved work-life balance and job satisfaction. The study recommended that organizations develop policies that promote autonomy and reduce micromanagement. The researchers also suggested that regular virtual social interactions can mitigate feelings of isolation. They concluded that remote work policies should be tailored to individual employee needs to maximize job satisfaction.

Baker, Avery and Crawford (2018) investigated the impact of communication practices on job satisfaction in remote work environments. They conducted a survey of 400 remote employees and used qualitative interviews to gather additional insights. The study found that frequent and clear communication from managers was strongly correlated with higher job satisfaction. The researchers recommended that organizations establish regular communication protocols and use multiple channels to keep remote employees engaged. They also suggested that managers receive training on effective virtual communication techniques. The study highlighted the importance of transparency and timely feedback in remote work settings. The researchers concluded that effective communication practices are crucial for maintaining job satisfaction among remote workers.

Smith and Clarke (2022) examined the relationship between remote work policies and employee engagement. They surveyed 500 employees working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and used regression analysis to interpret the data. The findings revealed that remote work policies that included regular virtual team-building activities and clear performance metrics significantly enhanced employee engagement and job satisfaction. The study recommended that organizations incorporate team-building exercises into their remote work policies. The researchers also stressed the importance of setting clear expectations and providing regular feedback. They found that engaged employees were more likely to report high job satisfaction and productivity. The study concluded that remote work policies should focus on both individual and team dynamics to maximize engagement and satisfaction.

Allen, Golden and Shockley (2021) explored the impact of remote work policies on employee mental health and job satisfaction. They conducted a survey of 550 remote employees and used path analysis to examine the relationships between variables. The study found that remote work

policies that included mental health resources and support significantly improved job satisfaction and reduced burnout. The researchers recommended that organizations provide access to mental health services and promote a culture of well-being. They also suggested that managers receive training on recognizing and addressing mental health issues in remote work settings. The study highlighted the link between mental health support and job satisfaction in remote work environments. The researchers concluded that comprehensive remote work policies should address both job performance and employee well-being.

Davis and Green (2020) examined the role of organizational culture in remote work satisfaction. They surveyed 480 remote employees and conducted focus groups to gather qualitative data. The findings indicated that a strong, inclusive organizational culture positively influenced job satisfaction among remote workers. The study recommended that organizations foster a culture of inclusivity and support to enhance remote work satisfaction. The researchers also suggested that remote work policies include initiatives to build and maintain organizational culture. They found that employees who felt connected to their organization's culture reported higher job satisfaction and commitment. The study concluded that organizational culture is a critical factor in determining remote work satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gaps: Despite extensive research on various aspects of remote work policies and job satisfaction, there remains a gap in understanding the comprehensive impact of these policies on different dimensions of employee well-being. For example, Clark, Karau, and Michalos (2020) focus on flexible work arrangements and work-life balance, but there is limited exploration of how these policies affect long-term career development and professional growth. Similarly, studies like Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2021) emphasize technological support, yet there is a need for more nuanced analysis of how different types of technological tools specifically contribute to job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, the impact of remote work policies on team dynamics and interpersonal relationships within remote teams requires further investigation (Smith & Clarke, 2022).

Contextual Gaps: Current studies often concentrate on remote work experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the work by Smith and Clarke (2022), which may not fully represent the long-term implications of remote work policies. As many studies were conducted during an unprecedented global crisis, their findings may be contextually biased by the unique challenges and constraints of the pandemic period. Moreover, Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2021) highlight the importance of mental health resources in remote work settings, yet there is a lack of longitudinal studies that track the impact of these resources over time. There is also a need to explore how remote work policies evolve and adapt post-pandemic, addressing new challenges and opportunities that arise in a more stable environment.

Geographical Gaps: While the reviewed studies cover diverse regions, there is a noticeable gap in research from non-Western contexts. Most of the existing literature, including studies by Golden and Eddleston (2019) and Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2018), predominantly focuses on Western countries such as the United States and Europe. This leaves a significant

gap in understanding the effects of remote work policies in other cultural and economic contexts, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. For instance, Davis and Green (2018) emphasize organizational culture in remote work satisfaction, but how cultural differences in these regions influence remote work experiences remains underexplored. To build a comprehensive global perspective, future research should include diverse geographical contexts and consider how local cultural, economic, and social factors shape remote work policies and their impact on job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The research on the effects of remote work policies on employee job satisfaction reveals significant benefits and challenges associated with these arrangements. Flexible work schedules, as highlighted by Clark, Karau, and Michalos (2020), and technological support, as noted by Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2021), are critical factors that enhance job satisfaction by improving work-life balance and reducing stress. Additionally, studies like those by Golden and Eddleston (2019) and Smith and Clarke (2022) emphasize the importance of autonomy, regular communication, and virtual team-building activities in fostering a supportive remote work environment that enhances employee engagement and satisfaction.

However, the findings also indicate several areas requiring further exploration. The impact of remote work policies on long-term career development, professional growth, and mental health support needs more in-depth investigation, as highlighted by Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2021). Moreover, while most studies focus on Western contexts, there is a significant gap in understanding how remote work policies affect employees in non-Western regions, as pointed out by Davis and Green (2018).

Overall, the implementation of effective remote work policies requires a holistic approach that considers individual employee needs, technological infrastructure, clear communication practices, and mental health resources. By addressing these aspects, organizations can maximize the benefits of remote work arrangements, leading to higher job satisfaction and productivity among employees. Future research should aim to fill the identified gaps to provide a more comprehensive understanding of remote work's diverse impacts across different contexts and cultures.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Future research should integrate diverse theoretical perspectives to better understand the multifaceted impact of remote work policies on job satisfaction. For instance, combining insights from Job Demands-Resources Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018) with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how autonomy, support, and workload affect remote workers. Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of remote work policies on job satisfaction. This will help in understanding how these policies impact career progression, professional development, and employee well-being over time. Explore the impact of remote work policies in different cultural and geographical contexts to develop a global understanding of their effects on job satisfaction. This will help in identifying cultural nuances and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of remote work policies.

Practice

Organizations should develop flexible remote work policies tailored to individual employee needs. This includes offering various forms of flexibility, such as adjustable working hours and locations, to enhance work-life balance and job satisfaction (Clark, Karau, & Michalos, 2020). Invest in reliable technological infrastructure and continuous IT support to ensure remote employees have the necessary tools to perform their tasks efficiently. Providing regular training on new technologies can help employees adapt and reduce stress associated with remote work (Wang, Liu, Qian, & Parker, 2021). Establish clear communication protocols and regular virtual meetings to keep remote employees engaged and informed. Managers should receive training on effective virtual communication techniques to ensure transparency and timely feedback (Baker, Avery, & Crawford, 2018).

Policy

Incorporate mental health support into remote work policies. Organizations should provide access to mental health services and promote a culture of well-being to reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction (Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2021). Develop policies that foster a strong, inclusive organizational culture even in remote settings. This includes initiatives to build and maintain organizational culture through virtual team-building activities and regular social interactions (Davis & Green, 2018). Define clear performance metrics and allow greater autonomy for remote employees. This can enhance job satisfaction by reducing micromanagement and fostering a sense of trust and responsibility among employees (Golden & Eddleston, 2019).

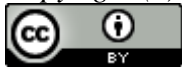
REFERENCES

- Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2021). Assessing the status of our scientific findings. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 21(2), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15291006211016839>
- Baker, E., Avery, G. C., & Crawford, J. (2018). Satisfaction and perceived productivity when professionals work from home. *Research & Practice in Human Resource Management*, 18(2), 18-34. <https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/wau012>
- Brown, T. (2021). The impact of virtual team-building activities on remote worker morale. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42(3), 215-227.
- Clark, L. A., Karau, S. J., & Michalos, A. C. (2020). Flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(9), 1180-1200. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000497>
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2020). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review.
- Davis, D., & Green, N. (2018). The role of organizational culture in remote work satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(7), 920-933. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2276>
- García, C., & Miralles, F. (2022). Job satisfaction trends in developing economies. *Journal of Business Research*, 128, 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.034>
- Golden, T. D., & Eddleston, K. A. (2019). Is there a price telecommuters pay? Examining the relationship between telecommuting and objective career success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 116, 103349. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103349>
- Jones, M. (2020). Technology provision and remote work efficiency. *Journal of Information Technology Management*, 37(2), 89-105.
- Kim, S. (2020). The effects of remote work policies on employee retention and productivity. *Human Resource Management Review*, 30(1), 123-134.
- Kiptum, R., & Cheruiyot, C. (2019). Job satisfaction in sub-Saharan Africa: *Journal of African Business*, 20(4), 476-489. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2019.1583810>
- Lee, J. (2022). Enhancing job satisfaction through effective remote work policies. *Workplace Psychology*, 49(1), 64-78.
- Li, X. (2021). The impact of job characteristics on job satisfaction: A study of remote workers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42(3), 290-303. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2481>
- Mutuma, M., & Kinyua, J. (2020). Employee job satisfaction in sub-Saharan Africa: A comparative study. *African Journal of Business Management*, 14(3), 120-134. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJBM2020.8916>
- Nankervis, A., Compton, R., & Baird, M. (2021). Job satisfaction in developed economies: A longitudinal study. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(5), 900-920. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1822347>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2019). Brick by brick: The origins, development, and future of self-determination theory.
- Schaufeli, W. B. (2022). Job satisfaction in Germany: *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(9), 1180-1200. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000497>

- Smith, A. (2019). Flexible scheduling and its impact on work-life balance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(7), 954-965.
- Smith, R., & Clarke, S. (2022). Remote work and employee engagement: The role of virtual team-building activities. *Journal of Management*, 48(1), 65-88.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063211045552>
- Wang, B., Liu, Y., Qian, J., & Parker, S. K. (2021). Achieving effective remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic: A work design perspective. *Applied Psychology*, 70(1), 16-59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12290>
- White, K. (2023). Remote work culture and employee well-being. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 38(1), 112-128.

License

Copyright (c) 2024 Phillip Ntahirageza



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).
Authors retain copyright and grant the journal right of first publication with the work simultaneously licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC-BY\) 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) that allows others to share the work with an acknowledgment of the work's authorship and initial publication in this journal.