

Influence of Remote Work on Organizational Communication in Selected IT Firms in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of remote work strategies on organizational communication in selected IT firms in Nairobi, Kenya. With the rapid adoption of remote work in the technology sector, the research sought to assess how these arrangements affect the effectiveness of communication within organizations. A mixed-method approach was adopted, using questionnaires and interviews with a random sample of 196 employees drawn from a population of 386. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was examined through thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that organizational communication in remote work settings of selected IT firms remained effective when supported by reliable digital tools such as email, chat platforms, and video conferencing. Adequate technical support and consistent management communication also contributed to positive outcomes. The study concluded that although remote work has been widely adopted, communication is most effective when reinforced by strong infrastructure and supportive leadership. It recommended that IT firms adopt a strategic approach that integrates technology, leadership, and a people-first culture to strengthen communication in remote work settings. Future research should investigate the role of digital literacy, leadership styles, and organizational culture in sustaining effective remote work environments.

Keywords: Remote Work, Organizational Communication, Leadership.

1. Introduction

The emergence and rapid adoption of remote work have fundamentally transformed how organizations operate and communicate. Remote work, defined as the ability for employees to perform their duties outside traditional office settings through the use of digital technologies (Allen et al., 2015), has become a strategic necessity, especially in the IT sector. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated this transition, compelling organizations to adopt remote work models to sustain operations (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Globally, IT firms were among the early adopters due to their technological readiness and flexible work cultures. In the Kenyan context, particularly in Nairobi, Africa's emerging tech hub, the rise of remote work has reshaped internal communication patterns and organizational culture.

Organizational communication, a cornerstone of effective

business operations, encompasses the exchange of information within an organization through formal and informal channels (Clampitt, 2016). In remote work environments, traditional face-to-face interactions are replaced by digital communication platforms such as Zoom, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and email. While these tools facilitate continued collaboration, they also introduce challenges such as reduced non-verbal cues, digital fatigue, and miscommunication (Wang et al., 2021). In the context of Nairobi-based IT firms, where teamwork, innovation, and agile development are critical, the shift to remote work demands an in-depth understanding of how communication dynamics have been affected and what implications this has on employee engagement, productivity, and decision-making.

Despite the global momentum around remote work research, there exists a notable gap in localized studies examining its specific influence on organizational communication in Kenyan IT firms. Most existing literature is concentrated in Western contexts, overlooking the unique technological, cultural, and infrastructural challenges in developing economies (Mutunga & Ojera, 2022). Nairobi's IT sector presents a distinctive case due to its hybrid adoption of Western digital practices alongside local managerial traditions. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this knowledge gap by analyzing how remote work influences the flow, quality, and effectiveness of organizational communication within selected IT firms in Nairobi. Understanding this relationship is vital for developing responsive communication strategies that enhance performance in the digital age.

A. Problem Statement

The adoption of remote work in the IT sector has significantly altered traditional models of organizational communication. While remote work offers flexibility, cost savings, and access to a wider talent pool, it also disrupts informal and synchronous communication patterns that are essential for teamwork, trust-building, and real-time decision-making. In IT firms where innovation, collaboration, and continuous feedback are critical, the shift to virtual communication platforms poses a challenge in maintaining seamless communication flows. Delayed feedback, reduced

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interpersonal interaction, and increased reliance on text-based tools may lead to misunderstandings, disengagement, and reduced team synergy.

In Nairobi, IT firms have embraced remote and hybrid work models at varying levels, driven by digital transformation and external pressures such as the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the extent to which remote work has impacted communication efficiency within these firms remains unclear. While some organizations report improved productivity and flexibility, others cite communication breakdowns, weakened supervision, and difficulty in maintaining organizational culture. The inconsistency in experiences suggests a gap in understanding how remote work shapes communication practices in Kenya's unique technological and cultural context.

Despite a growing body of literature on remote work, most studies are based in developed economies and may not adequately reflect the infrastructural, cultural, and leadership dynamics of Kenyan IT firms. There seems to be a lack of empirical evidence on how remote work specifically affects the clarity, timeliness, and quality of communication within local IT firms in Nairobi. This study sought to address this knowledge gap by examining the influence of remote work on organizational communication, thereby providing actionable insights to enhance communication strategies in digitally enabled work environments.

B. Objective of the Study

To assess the influence of remote work on organizational communication in selected IT firms in Nairobi, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

A. Theoretical Literature Review

The theoretical literature review for this study integrates two theories to provide a comprehensive understanding of how remote work affects employee engagement and organizational communication. The theories utilized were Social Exchange Theory (SET) and The Social Identity Theory (SIT). These theories offer insights into the complex dynamics of remote work environments and communication effectiveness.

1) Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET), postulated by George C. Homans in 1958, explores social interactions as transactions involving costs and rewards. Within this framework, individuals engage in social exchanges, anticipating reciprocal benefits while seeking to maximize gains and minimize costs. In remote work, SET provides valuable insights into how these social transactions unfold among remote workers, colleagues, supervisors, and the organization. Individuals invest their time, skills, and effort in their work, expecting various rewards such as financial compensation, acknowledgment, career advancement opportunities, and job security. SET is a foundational framework for analyzing human behavior within social contexts and understanding the dynamics of remote work environments (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2015).

In remote work environments, the dynamics of social exchanges undergo alterations due to physical distance and heavy reliance on virtual communication channels (Schaufeli &

Bakker, 2004). This altered setting diminishes access to traditional workplace components like direct social support and in-person interactions, impacting the perception of exchange relationships. The absence of face-to-face interactions hinders immediacy and depth of social support networks, altering reciprocal relationships. Challenges in nurturing social connections and trust lead to isolation among remote workers, limiting informal interactions and relationship development. This influences the quality of social exchanges, affecting engagement and organizational communication (Park & Jones, 2017).

Moreover, SET emphasizes the pivotal role of trust in shaping the dynamics of social exchanges within remote work environments. Trust acts as a cornerstone for cultivating effective relationships and fostering cooperative behaviors among remote workers (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Its establishment relies on consistent interactions, reliability, and the perception of fairness consequently, trust-building initiatives within remote work settings necessitate open and transparent communication channels, steadfast commitment to fulfilling promises, and avenues for remote workers to express their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes (Hansen, Dunford, & Boss, 2014).

A study by Golden and Veiga (2005) used SET to examine the relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction. They found that the flexibility and autonomy provided by telecommuting were perceived as rewards, which enhanced job satisfaction. However, the potential isolation from colleagues was seen as a cost. Allen, Golden & Shockley (2015) study applied SET to organizational communication by exploring how social exchanges between employees and supervisors influenced job performance and satisfaction. The study highlighted that supportive communication from supervisors was seen as a reward, leading to positive organizational outcomes.

This theory has been criticized in some research works over the years. The study by Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) criticized this theory, arguing that it reduces complex human relationships to simple economic transactions, ignoring the emotional, social, and moral dimensions that often play crucial roles in human interactions. According to Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005), this reductionism can lead to an oversimplified view of human behavior that fails to account for the richness of social dynamics. In addition, the theory was criticized in the research work by Simon (1955), arguing that SET assumes that individuals are rational actors who seek to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs. However, this assumption does not hold true in all scenarios, as individuals often make decisions based on emotions, heuristics, and biases. Further, the theory has been criticized in the research work by Molm (2003) for its Western-centric perspective, which may not be applicable across different cultural contexts where social exchanges might be governed by different norms and values. Lee & Omari, (2021) argued that the subjective nature of costs and rewards makes them difficult to measure and compare across different studies, as this subjectivity can lead to inconsistencies in research findings and challenges in

operationalizing the constructs.

Nevertheless, Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers insights suggesting that technology-mediated communication can serve as a facilitator for social exchanges among remote workers. Virtual platforms like video conferences, online chat tools, and social networking platforms become pivotal bridges, enabling remote workers to transcend physical distances and sustain meaningful relationships with their peers and supervisors. These digital interactions hold the potential to offer crucial elements of social support, avenues for feedback, and opportunities for recognition, thus augmenting the quality of social exchanges and fostering positive outcomes within remote work settings (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud, 2001). In this study, this theory is relevant as it provides a lens through which to understand the dynamics of remote work environments, highlighting the importance of reciprocal exchanges and the balancing of rewards and costs in shaping organizational communication.

2) *The Social Identity Theory*

The Social Identity Theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s. The theory explains how individuals' self-concepts are shaped by their identification with social groups, impacting their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the current digital age, Social Identity Theory offers a useful framework to understand how individuals interact in online environments. Whether in the form of group affiliation on social media, identity performance, or the development of echo chambers and cyberbullying, SIT reveals the profound impact that group membership has on behavior and identity in the digital world (Pentina & Zhang, 2017). Online platforms have amplified and diversified the ways in which social identity processes occur, often with both positive and negative societal effects.

Within the context of remote work, SIT offers insights into how employees' identification with their organization and remote work teams influences their perceptions, behaviors, and interactions in virtual professional environments, consequently shaping employee engagement and organizational communication.

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity by aligning with favorable groups (in-groups) and distinguishing themselves from others (out-groups). In the context of remote work, employees' identification with their organization and remote teams influences their attitudes, engagement, and interactions. Tajfel and Turner (1979) suggest that strong identification fosters commitment, engagement, and collaboration among remote workers. Social categorization leads remote workers to perceive themselves as part of a distinct group, while social comparison processes shape their attitudes and behaviors relative to other groups. This shared identity enhances cohesion, collaboration, and team effectiveness. Conversely, low identification may lead to detachment and reduced willingness to engage, impacting organizational communication.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) has been applied in several studies in the past. Turner et al. (1987) applied SIT to investigate intergroup relations in organizational settings. They

found that employees' social identities influenced their perceptions of in-group and out-group members, affecting cooperation and conflict resolution within teams. Haslam et al. (2003) examined the application of SIT in understanding leadership effectiveness. They found that leaders who fostered a strong sense of shared identity among team members were more successful in motivating and coordinating group efforts. Jetten et al. (2012) applied SIT to explore the dynamics of social change movements. They found that individuals' identification with a social movement group influenced their willingness to engage in collective action and advocate for change. Tajfel and Turner (1979) themselves conducted research applying SIT to intergroup conflict. They found that individuals tend to favor their in-group over out-groups, leading to discrimination and prejudice in intergroup interactions. Ellemers et al. (2002) investigated the role of social identity in organizational commitment and job satisfaction. They found that employees who strongly identified with their organization reported higher levels of commitment and satisfaction.

Critics like Hogg & Terry (2000) have scrutinized Social Identity Theory (SIT) for oversimplifying human behavior, reducing complex social phenomena to simplistic group categorizations and comparisons. They argue that SIT overlooks individual differences and nuances within groups, leading to a limited understanding of social dynamics. Additionally, concerns have been raised about SIT's limited predictive power, as it may struggle to forecast behavior consistently across various contexts and populations (Abrams & Hogg, 2010). Critics also argue that SIT neglects cognitive factors such as beliefs and attitudes, focusing primarily on social categorization and comparison processes (Turner et al., 1987). Furthermore, SIT has been criticized for its limited attention to contextual factors like societal and cultural influences, which are essential for a comprehensive understanding of intergroup dynamics (Van Dijk, 1993).

Social Identity Theory emphasizes the crucial role of organizational leaders and managers in shaping remote workers' social identities and fostering belongingness in virtual environments. Through cultivation of a positive organizational culture that values inclusivity and providing opportunities for remote workers to connect and collaborate, leaders can enhance cohesion among remote teams. Creating virtual spaces for social interactions and implementing recognition programs are effective strategies for facilitating effective communication and strengthening social identity bonds among remote workers (Cropanzano, et al., 2021).

Social Identity Theory has been applied to the current study since it offers valuable insights into how social identity processes influence attitudes and behaviors in virtual settings. Through optimization of communication channels and fostering engagement, organizations can leverage the principles of Social Identity Theory to create a supportive and inclusive virtual work environment that enhances productivity and employee satisfaction. Moreover, Social Identity

Theory offers a useful framework for understanding the impact of remote work on organizational communication in the digital age.

B. Empirical Literature Review

Marlow, Lacerenza, and Salas (2020) conducted an in-depth study on the impact of remote work on team dynamics and communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research highlighted that while remote work offers significant advantages such as increased flexibility and autonomy for employees, it also presents considerable challenges in maintaining team cohesion and effective communication. They found that the absence of face-to-face interactions can lead to misunderstandings and reduced trust among team members, which can hinder collaborative efforts. The study emphasized the importance of clear communication protocols and the strategic use of collaborative technologies to support remote team interactions. It was noted that regular virtual meetings and check-ins could help bridge the communication gap and foster a sense of connection among remote workers (Marlow, Lacerenza and Salas, 2020).

Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2021) explored the effects of remote work on employee engagement and organizational communication in their comprehensive study. They discovered that remote work positively influenced employee engagement by offering greater flexibility, which allowed employees to better balance their work and personal lives. This increased flexibility was found to lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation among remote workers. However, the study also revealed that the effectiveness of remote work largely depends on the technological infrastructure available to employees. The availability of reliable digital tools and platforms was identified as a critical factor in facilitating seamless communication and collaboration. Furthermore, the role of managers was highlighted as pivotal in maintaining effective communication channels. Managers who actively engaged with their remote teams, provided regular feedback, and maintained open lines of communication were found to enhance their team's engagement and productivity (Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker, 2021).

Biron and van Veldhoven (2020) investigated the relationship between remote work and employee well-being, with a particular focus on organizational communication. Their study revealed that frequent and high-quality communication from supervisors and colleagues is crucial in mitigating feelings of isolation commonly experienced by remote workers. They found that remote workers who received regular and meaningful communication from their teams reported higher levels of well-being and job satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of communication was associated with increased stress and feelings of disconnection. The study highlighted that remote work environments need to prioritize effective communication strategies to ensure that employees feel supported and connected. This includes implementing regular virtual meetings, providing opportunities for informal social interactions, and ensuring that communication is transparent and inclusive (Biron and van Veldhoven, 2020).

Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés (2020) examined the impact of remote work on organizational communication and productivity in their detailed study. They found that remote work can lead to significant improvements in productivity and communication efficiency, provided that it is supported by

appropriate digital tools and a strong organizational culture. The study noted that remote work allows employees to work in a more flexible and focused manner, often resulting in higher productivity levels. However, the effectiveness of remote work also depends on the availability of robust digital communication tools that facilitate efficient information sharing and collaboration. The researchers highlighted that organizations need to invest in reliable and user-friendly technology to support their remote teams. Additionally, the study pointed out that a strong organizational culture that values trust, autonomy, and open communication is essential for maximizing the benefits of remote work. Without these elements, remote work can lead to challenges in coordination and information sharing, ultimately impacting productivity negatively (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020).

Yang, Choi, and Lee (2022) conducted an analysis on the influence of remote work on employee collaboration and communication effectiveness. Their study indicated that remote work, when facilitated by digital platforms, can significantly enhance collaboration among employees. They found that digital tools such as video conferencing, instant messaging, and collaborative software enable remote workers to communicate and collaborate effectively, despite physical distances. However, the study also highlighted the importance of training employees in using these digital tools to maximize their potential benefits. Employees who are proficient in using digital communication tools were found to be more effective in their collaborative efforts. The research also emphasized the role of organizational culture in promoting open communication and collaboration. A culture that encourages knowledge-sharing, inclusivity, and transparency was seen to foster a more cohesive and collaborative remote work environment.

3. Research Methodology

A. Research Design

This study adopted descriptive mixed-method design, which is a research approach that aims to describe and understand a phenomenon by combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods (Kothari, 2008). Although there are different kinds of descriptive mixed-method design such as convergent parallel, embedded design and explanatory sequential, this study adopted explanatory sequential approach, in which quantitative data was collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. It is typically used when researchers want to first collect and analyze quantitative data and then follow up with qualitative data to explain or provide a deeper understanding of the initial quantitative results. The explanatory sequential design follows a two-step process. First, researchers conduct the quantitative phase, collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify trends, relationships, or statistical significance. In the second phase, qualitative data is collected and analyzed to explain or expand upon the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For instance, if survey results reveal a correlation between remote work and employee satisfaction, interviews may be conducted to explore the reasons behind this

relationship in greater detail. This design is chosen because it allows researchers to explore unexpected or unexplained trends discovered during the quantitative phase. The qualitative phase offers a deeper understanding by providing context or uncovering underlying causes behind numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

1) Study Site and Population

A population entails all items in a field of research. Mugenda. For the purpose of this study, the population was all employees in the three selected prominent IT companies in Nairobi, Kenya: Trans-Byte Systems, ESLA Technologies, and Africa's Talking. A target population is a set of units that have observable characteristics which was used to generalize the results of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population for the study was all 386 employees in the selected 3 IT companies that work both partially and full time remotely cutting across the operations, IT, Customer care, Finance and Marketing departments. The researcher feels the information being sought to inform the study was best given by the mentioned target respondents. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study population for the three selected prominent IT companies in Nairobi, Kenya namely, Trans-Byte Systems, ESLA Technologies, and Africa's Talking.

Table 1
Distribution of the study population for the three selected IT companies in Nairobi

| IT firm | Respondents |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Trans-Byte Systems | 117 |
| ESLA Technologies | 143 |
| Africa's Talking | 126 |
| Total | 386 |

B. Sample Size and Sampling Design

A sample is a representation of the population. It is also defined as a subset of the population under the study. A sample was selected that represented the population. Study of samples, rather than the population would help to be economical both in terms of money and time (Stringer, 2008). The general rule in research is to use the largest population in order to represent and generalize the whole population of your target (Gall, 1996). But this depends on the type of research and quality of the information available for the study. According to Gay and Peil (2012), there are two types of sampling design; Probability and Non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is based on the concept of random selection which is a procedure that assures that each element of the population is given an equal chance of selection. The authors further note that the non-probability sampling is non-random and hence subjective, in that each member does not have an equal chance of being selected. Chandran (2004), notes that some of the sampling techniques under non-probability sampling include cluster sampling, snow ball sampling and purposive sampling among others. This study employed simple random sampling techniques as well as purposive sampling. In obtaining the sample size from the three selected IT companies in Nairobi, the study used Fischer formula to calculate the sample size of respondents as shown.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n is the sample size, N is the population size and 'e' is the level of precision which was 0.05.

$$n = \frac{386}{1 + 386(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 196 \text{ respondents}$$

The sampled 196 respondents will then be spread proportionately from the 3 selected IT firms in Nairobi County as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Distribution of sample sizes in the three selected IT companies in Nairobi

| IT firm | Respondents | Sample Size |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Trans-Byte Systems | 117 | 59 |
| ESLA Technologies | 143 | 73 |
| Africa's Talking | 126 | 64 |
| Total | 386 | 196 |

In selecting the sample size from each of the selected IT companies, the study used simple random sampling technique to sample the respondents working remotely from different departments in the organization. Simple random sampling is preferred because it eliminates biasness and gives every respondent equal chance of being involved in the study. As for the qualitative data, the study used purposive sampling approach to involve the 30 heads of departments of the three IT firms. All the 30 heads of departments of the three IT firms will be purposively involved in the study through census approach. Purposive sampling allows the researchers to deliberately select specific individuals or units based on their characteristics and relevance to the study.

C. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection instruments according to Cooper and Schindler (2013), are tools used for gathering empirical evidence in order to gain new insight about a situation and answers questions that prompt the undertaken research. The study used primary data sources which was questionnaires and interview schedules, to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. According to Bless, Smith and Kagee (2018) both qualitative and quantitative approaches should be adapted to a study for better results because one gains tremendous insight into a study using both methods.

The questionnaires in this study used both open and closed ended questions and was administered to respondents who was required to duly complete in answering the questions as guided by the study objectives. Chandran (2004), observes that use of self-administered questionnaires is the only way to elicit self-report on people's opinion, attitude, belief, value and questionnaires also allow for confidentiality of the respondents. It also adopted interview guides to source qualitative data, and this was administered to key informants in the IT companies, who was the heads of departments and senior level

management. Therefore, quantitative data was first collected and analysed first, after which the researcher will collect the qualitative data through interviewing of the key informants in the IT companies, who will be the heads of departments and senior level managers. The collected and analysed quantitative data was used to design the qualitative tool to source for qualitative data.

D. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in ensuring the integrity and credibility of the research process. This study adhered to several ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights and well-being of all participants. Prior to the data collection exercise, the researcher sought approval from the relevant authorities such as National Commission Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) as well as from the University. Informed consent was a fundamental aspect, where participants was thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation and their ability to withdraw at any time without consequences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Confidentiality was strictly maintained, ensuring that all data collected remains anonymous and that no identifying information is disclosed, thereby protecting the privacy of the respondents (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Data security was rigorously enforced, with all collected data securely stored to prevent unauthorized access, and used solely for the research purposes outlined, without sharing it with third parties (Kothari, 2004). The study also emphasized respect for participants by upholding their opinions, beliefs, and privacy, and by avoiding any form of bias or discrimination during data collection (Bless, Smith & Kagee, 2018). Finally, transparency and honesty guided the researcher in reporting findings, acknowledging any study limitations, and ensuring that no data is manipulated, thus maintaining the study's integrity (Cooper & Schindler, 2013).

E. Pilot test

The study conducted a pre-test of its questionnaire to ensure its efficiency, clarity, and reliability before actual data collection. Pre-testing helps identify design flaws, test data collection procedures, and serve as training for the research team (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2003). A pilot study involving 10% of the sample size (20 respondents) was carried out in a selected IT firm in Nairobi that was not part of the main study. The responses helped refine the questionnaire by identifying unclear items, modifying response alternatives, and assessing question validity and reliability (Kothari, 2004). Additionally, the appropriateness of responses and the average completion time were evaluated. Revisions were made based on these findings to enhance the final questionnaire.

Interview schedules for qualitative data were also validated by consulting academic experts, mainly university lecturers. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017) highlight that research tools often have flaws such as bias or errors that may

impact validity. To mitigate these, the researcher applied rigorous preparation, arranged questions logically (from simple to complex), and used multiple data sources—including observation, written records, and oral responses—to triangulate information. Expert review helped evaluate the research instruments' ability to measure the intended variables accurately. Moreover, construct validity was enhanced by comparing diverse data sources and involving key informants in reviewing the study report. These processes collectively aimed to ensure that both quantitative and qualitative instruments were valid, reliable, and aligned with the study objectives.

F. Data analysis and Presentation

According to Bless *et al.*, (2008), data analysis is the process of organization, manipulation and consideration of the meaning of data collected. Cooper and Schindler (2003) argue that data analysis involves reducing accumulated data to manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques such as tables, charts, and percentages. As indicated in the research design where the study used explanatory method, quantitative data was collected using questionnaires administered to the 196 respondents and then analyzed first through descriptive statistics, using statistical package for social sciences SPSS v.26 and presented through percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies in graphical and tabular manner. Thereafter, the qualitative data was collected through interviewing of the 30 heads of departments and senior managers, and then analyzed based on the quantitative results. The results for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was integrated in the data presentation.

1) Collection and Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected from the 30 heads of department and was probed with the help of interview schedules, on various questions related to the impact of remote work on employee engagement and organizational communication post the COVID-19 pandemic in selected IT firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The collected data was analysed through thematic content analysis. Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research (Kombo & Delno, 2009). It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question (Wolverton, 2009). The analysis process involved first transcribing and organizing all the data, secondly giving the codes to the first set of field notes drawn from the interviews, having noted personal reflections and other comments in the margin, the second stage involved sorting and sifting through the materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between the variables, patterns, themes and common sequences. The third stage identified these patterns and processes, commonalities and difference. The fourth process elaborated a small set of generalizations that covered the consistencies discerned in the database. Finally, there was examining those generalizations made in light of a formalized body of

Table 3
Frequency of communication during remote work

| Frequency of Communication | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Multiple times a day | 88 | 44.90% |
| Once a day | 51 | 26.00% |
| A few times a week | 37 | 18.90% |
| Once a week or less | 20 | 10.20% |
| Total | 196 | 100% |

Source: Researcher, 2025.

knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

4. Findings and Discussion

The study objective sought to explore the influence of remote work on organizational communication in selected IT firms in Nairobi, Kenya. Respondents were first asked to indicate how often they do communicate with their colleagues/supervisors during remote work. Table 3 shows the response

The results indicate that a majority of the respondents, seventy-nine percent (70.9%) communicated with their colleagues or supervisors either multiple times a day or once a day, suggesting a relatively high level of organizational communication despite the remote work setting. This supports the notion that remote work, when well-structured, does not necessarily hinder frequent communication among employees.

Employees who reported communicating multiple times a day forty-four-point nine percent (44.9%) represent those who may be in more collaborative roles or who rely heavily on digital communication tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom. These findings are consistent with Richter (2021), who found that frequent virtual check-ins and collaborative platforms improved team connectivity and reduced the sense of isolation during remote work. Meanwhile, eighteen-point nine percent (18.9%) reported communicating only a few times a week, and ten-point two percent (10.2%) once a week or less. These groups may represent employees with more autonomous roles, or firms lacking structured communication protocols. Waizenegger et al. (2020) noted that while some autonomy is beneficial, infrequent communication can lead to misalignment, weakened team cohesion, and feelings of disconnection.

The relatively lower percentage in the latter categories may be a positive indicator that IT firms in Nairobi are adapting well to remote communication tools and practices. This is in line with the findings by Mutisya and Oduor (2023), who observed that Kenyan tech companies had rapidly adopted digital communication systems to enhance organizational communication and employee engagement during remote operations. Furthermore, Staples (2020) emphasized that frequent virtual communication is essential for maintaining productivity, clarity, and team spirit, especially in environments where face-to-face interaction is limited. The data from this study seems to reflect this principle in practice.

A. Clarity of Communication While Working Remotely Compared to On-Site

Respondents were asked to indicate how they would rate the clarity of communication when working remotely compared to on-site. Table 4 shows the response.

The results show that twenty-eight-point six percent (28.6%) of the respondents felt that clarity of communication while

working remotely was “about the same” compared to on-site communication. A combined thirty-three-point six percent (33.6%) indicated that remote communication was either “much clearer” or “somewhat clearer,” suggesting that for a notable proportion of employees, remote work enhanced clarity, possibly due to the structured use of digital tools and written communication channels. However, thirty-seven point eight percent (37.8%) found communication to be “somewhat unclear” or “much unclear,” indicating challenges in understanding, conveying, or interpreting information remotely. This could be attributed to technical disruptions, reduced non-verbal cues, or inconsistent use of communication platforms. These findings are consistent with earlier research by Waizenegger et al. (2020) who also found that while remote work enhanced the use of formal documentation and asynchronous communication tools, it often lacked the richness of face-to-face interaction, affecting clarity in complex or ambiguous conversations. Similarly, Gigauri (2020) noted that employees often appreciated the improved focus and reduced interruptions in remote work, but miscommunication risks increased without real-time feedback and informal check-ins. These results suggest that while remote work can offer clarity through structure and documentation, it also poses challenges that can impair mutual understanding, especially in dynamic or creative team environments. Therefore, the mixed results underscore the importance of hybrid communication strategies. In one of the interviews, here is what one of the heads of department had to say;

Table 4
Clarity of communication while working remotely compared to on-site

| Response Category | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Much clearer | 24 | 12.20% |
| Somewhat clearer | 42 | 21.40% |
| About the same | 56 | 28.60% |
| Somewhat unclear | 48 | 24.50% |
| Much unclear | 26 | 13.30% |
| Total | 196 | 100% |

Source: Researcher, 2025.

Employers in Nairobi's IT sector need to ensure proper digital communication training, encourage use of both synchronous and asynchronous channels, and foster regular team engagement to enhance clarity and reduce ambiguity during remote work (Head of Department, 8).

Respondents were asked to indicate by a tick (✓) on the appropriate box of their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement related to how rework influence organization communication, where; 5 implies Strongly Agree; 4 implies Agree; 3 implies Neutral; 2 implies Disagree and 1 implies Strongly Disagree. Table 5 shows the response.

Table 5
Influence of remote work on organizational communication

| Item | SA (5) | A (4) | N (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | M | SD |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------|------|
| Remote work has improved overall communication | 68 (34.7%) | 76 (38.8%) | 28 (14.3%) | 16 (8.2%) | 8 (4.1%) | 3.91 | 1.06 |
| Understand colleagues' tasks/responsibilities | 50 (25.5%) | 84 (42.9%) | 34 (17.3%) | 18 (9.2%) | 10 (5.1%) | 3.74 | 1.06 |
| Consistent communication from management | 45 (23.0%) | 79 (40.3%) | 36 (18.4%) | 22 (11.2%) | 14 (7.1%) | 3.61 | 1.13 |
| Collaboration has become easier | 56 (28.6%) | 69 (35.2%) | 31 (15.8%) | 24 (12.2%) | 16 (8.2%) | 3.64 | 1.17 |
| Satisfied with team collaboration | 49 (25.0%) | 71 (36.2%) | 33 (16.8%) | 25 (12.8%) | 18 (9.2%) | 3.55 | 1.18 |
| Tools enhance teamwork (e.g., Slack) | 74 (37.8%) | 80 (40.8%) | 20 (10.2%) | 13 (6.6%) | 9 (4.6%) | 4.01 | 1.01 |
| Tech enables smooth communication | 63 (32.1%) | 83 (42.3%) | 27 (13.8%) | 13 (6.6%) | 10 (5.1%) | 3.90 | 1.06 |
| Adequate communication tools provided | 60 (30.6%) | 78 (39.8%) | 30 (15.3%) | 18 (9.2%) | 10 (5.1%) | 3.82 | 1.08 |
| Minimal technical difficulties | 58 (29.6%) | 66 (33.7%) | 28 (14.3%) | 25 (12.8%) | 19 (9.7%) | 3.61 | 1.23 |

Source: Researcher, 2025

Most respondents at seventy-three-point five percent (73.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that remote work has improved overall communication in their firms, fourteen-point three percent (14.3%) were undecided, while twelve-point three percent (12.3%) disagreed with the statement. With a mean response of mean 3.91, (SD 1.06), it indicates that remote work has positively influenced organizational communication. This aligns with findings by Wang et al. (2021), who reported improved communication through digital platforms during remote work. On whether there was understanding of colleagues' tasks in the organization, majority of the respondents at sixty-eight-point four percent (68.4%) agreed that they could understand their colleagues' tasks or responsibilities, while fourteen-point three percent (14.3%) indicated otherwise as seventeen-point three percent (17.3%) remained neutral. The mean of 3.74 and SD of 1.06 signifies that most of the respondents could understand their colleagues' tasks, suggesting moderate role clarity in remote settings. This contrasts slightly with Allen et al. (2021), who noted confusion in remote task coordination in larger teams.

On consistency of communication from management, the study established that majority of the respondents at sixty-three-point three percent (63.3%) confirmed consistent communication from management, while eighteen-point four percent (18.4%) were undecided as eighteen-point three percent (18.3%) were in disapproval of the statement. With a mean of 3.61, (SD 1.13) shows that consistent communication from management was highly witnessed in the selected IT firms, hence communication from leadership is perceived as fairly consistent. Similar findings by Purvanova (2014) revealed that managerial communication is a key success factor in virtual teams. In one of the interviews with the heads of departments, one of them said;

Remote work has also fostered a culture of written documentation, which can enhance clarity and accountability. Meetings are more likely to be scheduled with clear agendas, and follow-ups are often shared in written formats, reducing misunderstandings and promoting transparency. Additionally, with fewer in-person interactions, leaders are increasingly intentional about communication, adopting proactive strategies to ensure that employees stay informed and engaged. (Head of Department, 2)

Participants moderately agreed that collaboration was easier remotely as shown by sixty-three-point eight percent (63.8%) of the respondents, while fifteen-point eight percent (15.8%)

remained neutral as twenty-point four percent (20.4%) disagreed with the statement. Overall, there was a fairly easier collaboration among the employees as indicated by mean response of 3.64, (SD 1.17). Similarly, in their study, Larson et al. (2020) found that collaboration was initially difficult but improved with time and familiarity with tools.

On satisfaction with the Team collaboration, majority of the respondents at seventy-one-point two percent (71.2%) confirmed that they were contented with the team collaboration in their firms. Only sixteen-point eight percent (16.8%) were undecided on whether they were satisfied while only twenty two percent (22.0%) disagreed with the statement. The mean of 3.55, (SD 1.18) shows moderate satisfaction, indicating room for improvement and aligning with Gartner's (2020) finding that remote environments require continuous team engagement strategies. Majority of the respondents at seventy-eight-point six percent (78.6%) confirmed that tools such as slack enhance team and with the high mean response of mean 4.01, (SD 1.01) it shows that tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams are pivotal in enhancing team collaboration, consistent with research by Spataro (2020), who highlighted how these platforms reduced communication silos. Majority of the respondents at seventy-four-point four percent (74.4%) supported the statement that technology enables smooth communication among them in their firms, thirteen-point eight percent (13.8%) were undecided on the statement while eleven-point seven percent (11.7%) disagreed with the statement. The study realized a mean response of mean 3.90, (SD=1.06), signifying that technology is facilitating smooth communication, which is comparable to findings by Oliveira and Barros (2021), who found that robust tech infrastructures reduce miscommunication in virtual settings. Similarly, during the interview session with the senior management officials of the selected IT firms, here is what one had to say;

The shift to remote work has significantly transformed organizational communication, bringing both opportunities and challenges. One of the most notable influences is the increased reliance on digital communication tools such as email, video conferencing, instant messaging, and project management platforms. These tools have enabled organizations to maintain seamless interactions across various teams, regardless of physical location. As a result, communication has become more flexible and accessible, allowing employees to collaborate in real time and asynchronously based on time zones and individual schedules. (Senior Management official, 6)

The study also found that seventy-point four percent (70.4%) of the respondents confirmed the adequacy of communication tools provided by their firms, while fourteen-point three percent (14.3%) indicated that the instruments were not adequate. With a mean response of mean 3.82, (SD 1.08), it shows that the selected IT firms seem to provide adequate tools. This supports the view by Bailey & Kurland (2020) that access to effective digital tools is essential for productivity and communication. Majority of the respondents at sixty-point three percent (60.3%) revealed that there were minimal technical communication difficulties in their firms. With the mean of 3.61, (SD 1.23) shows that while some challenges exist, most respondents rarely experience major technical issues. This is in line with Bick et al. (2020), who noted reduced IT-related disruptions over time as firms optimized remote infrastructure.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

A. Conclusion

The study revealed that remote work has largely supported effective organizational communication within selected IT firms in Nairobi County. A significant number of employees, seventy-point nine percent (70.9%), indicated that they interact frequently with colleagues and supervisors, often multiple times per day. This suggests that physical separation has not hindered communication; in fact, it may have led to more intentional virtual check-ins and virtual meetings. Although thirty-seven point eight percent (37.8 %) of employees noted a decline in communication clarity compared to working on-site, the majority reported no change or even improvements. This may be attributed to intentional adoption of digital tools and platforms such as email, project management platforms, and messaging applications, which may promote more organized and thoughtful exchanges. respondents also stated that they had a clear understanding of their coworkers' tasks, indicating that transparency around roles and responsibilities had been preserved despite working remotely. Additionally, management communication was critical in helping employees remain aligned with organizational goals and updates. The research further showed that team collaboration has remained robust, with most employees satisfied with remote teamwork. Platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams, and video conferencing tools were commended for keeping teams connected, facilitating decision-making, and enabling productive work. Respondents felt their organizations had equipped them with appropriate communication tools, and few reported technical difficulties. While a minority experienced some issues with remote collaboration or occasional communication gaps, the overall findings indicate that with proper tools and practices, remote work can sustain, and even enhance, communication and collaboration in Selected IT firms.

B. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The study found that while remote work facilitates asynchronous and digital communication, it has also introduced challenges such as delayed responses, message misinterpretations, and reduced face-to-face interactions. To

mitigate these issues, organizations should establish clear digital communication guidelines that define the appropriate use of channels based on urgency and formality. Promoting regular video meetings, team check-ins, and virtual town halls may help recreate the connected atmosphere of in-person workplaces. In addition, offering training for both employees and managers on effective virtual communication may enhance clarity, empathy, and overall communication quality in online interactions.

To strengthen organizational communication in remote work settings, IT companies need to take a strategic approach that blends technology, supportive leadership, and a people-first culture. Adopting performance management systems that prioritize outcomes over hours worked can cultivate trust and accountability, while also granting employees the autonomy they need to stay productive and engaged. Creating virtual social spaces, such as online team-building events, recognition platforms, and mental wellness initiatives, can make the digital workplace feel more personal and supportive. The study recommends that organizational leadership maintains an active presence on digital platforms to ensure transparency and reinforce trust.

Consistent updates from senior management about organizational objectives, achievements, and employee contributions may foster a shared sense of purpose and direction. Managers are encouraged to hold regular one-on-one meetings with their team members to offer individualized support, feedback, and growth opportunities. These personalized interactions are essential in making remote employees feel acknowledged, understood, and appreciated.

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