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Hybrid Work Models and Employee Productivity in Multinational Companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of hybrid work models on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of office-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya and to establish the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This study was guided by Social Exchange Theory and Self-Determination Theory.

Methodology: This study used a descriptive research design. According to Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest) (2023) there are 226 registered multinational corporations in KenyaThe Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size. Therefore, the study sample size was 144 respondents. This research used a questionnaire to collect primary data. The pilot study was carried out on 14 respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean (measure of dispersion), standard deviation, and percentages were used. Inferential data analysis was conducted by use of Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis. The relationship between the study variables was tested using multivariate regression models.

Findings: The study found that office-first hybrid has a positive and significant influence on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. In addition, the study found that remote-first hybrid has a positive and significant influence on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Based on the findings, the study recommends that multinational companies in Kenya should adopt a structured office-first hybrid model that clearly designates specific in-office days for collaboration-intensive tasks while allowing remote work for individual, focus-driven activities. This approach leverages the strengths of both environments—face-to-face interaction enhances coordination and decision-making, while remote work reduces interruptions and supports deep work.

Key Words: *Hybrid Work Models, Office-First Hybrid, Remote-First Hybrid, Employee Productivity, Multinational Companies*

Background of the Study

Multinational companies (MNCs) are large corporations that operate in multiple countries, conducting business across international borders. These companies often have a centralized head office in their home country, but they manage subsidiaries, branches, or affiliates in various other countries to tap into global markets, access cheaper labor, or take advantage of local resources (Castañeda, Japos & Templonuevo, 2022). These companies play a significant role in the global economy by driving trade, investment, and technological innovation. Their ability to operate across borders allows them to tap into new markets, access resources, and diversify their operations (Rajeswari & Venugopal, 2024). This global presence enables MNCs to achieve economies of scale, increase productivity, and gain a competitive advantage in the international marketplace. By expanding their reach, MNCs contribute to job creation, economic growth, and development in both developed and developing countries (Tran, 2022).

Another key role of MNCs is their influence on technology and knowledge transfer. By operating in diverse regions, MNCs often bring advanced technologies and management practices to local markets, leading to improvements in efficiency, product quality, and innovation (Santillan, *et al*, 2023). In many cases, MNCs invest in research and development (R&D) centers across the globe, facilitating the transfer of cutting-edge technology and helping to bridge the technological gap between countries. This transfer of knowledge not only benefits the companies themselves but can also enhance the capabilities of local businesses and industries, leading to overall economic development in the host countries (Igomu, *et al*, 2023). In terms of market influence, MNCs often dominate entire industries, setting trends and establishing standards that shape the competitive landscape. Their sheer size and resources give them the ability to dictate terms in the marketplace, sometimes at the expense of smaller competitors (Maake, 2023). MNCs' ability to lobby for favorable trade agreements and regulatory policies can further strengthen their position, making it difficult for smaller businesses to compete. This dominance can lead to concerns about market concentration and the potential for monopolistic behavior, particularly when MNCs use their market power to drive smaller companies out of business or push local competitors into niches where they are less able to thrive (Elsafty & Hanafi, 2023).

Hybrid work models refer to a flexible work arrangement that combines both in-office and remote work. In this model, employees have the option to work from the office on certain days and remotely on others, allowing them to balance the benefits of both environments (Khatimah, Mardiana & Reni, 2022). Hybrid work can take many forms, such as specific days set aside for remote work or allowing employees to choose their preferred work location based on tasks or personal preferences. This model aims to provide a flexible and adaptive approach to work, accommodating different work styles, enhancing work-life balance, and helping businesses attract and retain top talent by offering greater flexibility (Shafi, *et al*, 2024). In the office-first hybrid model, the default expectation is that employees work from the office most of the time, with remote work being an option only occasionally or on specific days (Muriithi, 2023). This approach prioritizes in-person collaboration and fosters a strong office culture, but it also offers some flexibility to employees who may need to work remotely due to personal reasons or specific tasks that require focused work (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024). Remote-first hybrid model flips this concept, with the primary expectation being that employees work remotely, and in-office presence is only required for special meetings or collaborative activities that are difficult to carry out remotely. This model appeals to organizations that prioritize flexibility and are eager to attract a broader talent pool, as it allows employees to work from anywhere (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023). This study sought to determine the influence of hybrid work models on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, is a hub for multinational companies (MNCs) in Africa, largely due to its strategic location, skilled workforce, and the government's pro-business policies (Muriithi, 2023). As a growing economic powerhouse, Nairobi serves as a gateway for businesses aiming to expand into the East African market. These companies span various sectors, including finance, telecommunications, technology, manufacturing, and retail. Nairobi’s thriving economy, bolstered by infrastructure development like the Standard Gauge Railway and Nairobi Expressway, has attracted large global players seeking to tap into Kenya’s dynamic market and its access to neighboring countries (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024). In the financial sector, Nairobi is home to regional headquarters for global banks such as Standard Chartered, Barclays (now Absa), and Citibank. These banks benefit from Kenya's position as the financial hub of East Africa and its strong banking regulations (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023). The presence of MNCs in Nairobi has also spurred the growth of other financial services, such as insurance, investment, and microfinance institutions, making the city an important player in the African financial landscape. Nairobi's status as a center for mobile payments, exemplified by platforms like M-Pesa, also attracts multinational technology firms, including Vodafone, which co-owns M-Pesa, and companies in fintech (Nyambego, 2024).

The technology and innovation landscape in Nairobi has experienced tremendous growth, earning it the nickname "Silicon Savannah." Nairobi is home to a vibrant tech ecosystem with international firms such as Microsoft, Google, IBM, and Huawei setting up regional offices (Habiba & Nderi, 2024). This growth is fostered by Kenya's young, tech-savvy population and the presence of several innovation hubs and tech incubators like iHub and Nairobi Garage. These multinational companies contribute to the country's digital transformation by fostering innovation, supporting entrepreneurship, and developing solutions that address local challenges, such as financial inclusion and access to healthcare (Muriithi, 2023). Manufacturing is another key sector with significant multinational presence. Companies like Coca-Cola, Nestlé, and Unilever have long been established in Nairobi, contributing to Kenya's industrialization goals. These MNCs benefit from Nairobi’s well-developed transport network, skilled labor, and the East African Community’s trade agreements, which allow them to distribute goods efficiently across the region (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024). These companies have also invested in local

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production facilities, providing jobs and contributing to the development of local industries. Moreover, Nairobi's growing retail sector is supported by global brands like Carrefour, which operate major outlets in the city (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023).

However, the expansion of MNCs in Nairobi also raises challenges. There are concerns about the impact of multinational operations on local businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which may struggle to compete with the resources and international influence of larger corporations (Nyambego, 2024). Additionally, there are environmental and social challenges associated with large-scale operations, such as waste management, resource use, and employee welfare. To address these issues, the Kenyan government has been working on policies that encourage corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable business practices among multinational companies operating in the country (Habiba & Nderi, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Multinational companies play a vital role in the economic development of Kenya, especially in Nairobi City County, which serves as the country's business hub. These companies contribute significantly to job creation, foreign direct investment, and technological advancements (Muriithi, 2023). By operating in diverse sectors such as finance, manufacturing, information technology, and retail, multinational companies help drive economic growth, increase local employment opportunities, and foster skills development (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024). Moreover, they provide access to global markets, enhance trade relations, and play a key role in the country's integration into the global economy. Their presence also attracts talent, promotes knowledge transfer, and strengthens Kenya's position as a regional economic powerhouse in East Africa (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023).

Multinational companies operating in Nairobi City County, Kenya, face several challenges that hinder their ability to achieve efficiency and sustain growth. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2020 report, only 25% of Kenyan workers have received formal vocational training, which can lead to inconsistencies in quality standards within businesses (Muriithi, 2023). Additionally, the African Development Bank (AfDB) highlighted that only 30% of Kenyan youth are employed in high-skill jobs, which compounds the problem of a skills mismatch. Multinational companies, therefore, often struggle with the dual challenge of balancing the need to hire locally while also importing skilled labor to meet international standards (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024). Furthermore, the lack of access to high-quality raw materials and infrastructure creates additional challenges, as companies are forced to either compromise on quality or import supplies at higher costs (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023).

According to the World Bank, Nairobi loses over 1.5 billion Kenyan shillings (approximately $13 million) every day due to traffic-related delays. Additionally, a survey by the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) revealed that 70% of manufacturing firms in Nairobi face significant delays in their supply chains because of traffic congestion and inefficiencies at the port of Mombasa (Habiba & Nderi, 2024). Further exacerbating this challenge are bureaucratic delays in acquiring necessary permits, clearances for goods, or even approvals for new projects (Muriithi, 2023). According to the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), electricity prices in Kenya have increased by approximately 30% in the last five years, making energy one of the most expensive inputs for businesses. In addition, high labor costs continue to pressure companies seeking to stay competitive (Nyambego, 2024). A report by the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) indicates that Kenya's minimum wage is among the highest in the region, with a 2021 survey showing that it increased by 12.5% between 2020 and 2021. On the logistics front, Kenya's reliance on imports for raw materials exposes companies to currency fluctuations, increasing operational costs (Habiba & Nderi, 2024). The International Finance Corporation (IFC) found that 60% of businesses in Kenya cited high taxes and duties as significant obstacles to cost reduction, with corporate tax rates reaching up to 30% (Muriithi, 2023). While some multinational companies seek to invest in technology and automation to reduce costs, these investments often require significant upfront capital, which can be a barrier for some companies. These high operational expenses make it difficult for businesses to maintain profitability while trying to remain competitive in both the local and global markets (Muriithi & Ndeto, 2024).

The influence of hybrid work models on employee productivity has gained considerable attention, particularly as companies seek flexible arrangements that cater to the evolving needs of their workforce (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2023). Various studies have been conducted in different parts of the world on hybrid work models on employee productivity. For instance, Muriithi and Ndeto (2024) examined on the influence of hybrid work systems and employee performance in telecommunication firms, Muriithi (2023) investigated on the influence of hybrid working arrangements on employee productivity in the communications authority and Nyambego (2024) researched on the impact of hybrid working systems on employee wellbeing in professional services firms. However, none of these studies focused on office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to determine the influence of hybrid work models (office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid) on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of hybrid work models on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Specific Objectives

i. To determine the influence of office-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

ii. To establish the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed by George Homans (1958) is a sociological and psychological framework that explains social behavior in terms of the exchange processes that occur in interpersonal relationships (Syed, 2021). The theory posits that individuals engage in social interactions with the expectation of receiving rewards that are proportional to the costs incurred. This framework operates on the principle of maximizing benefits while minimizing losses, suggesting that human relationships are formed and maintained based on the perceived balance of these exchanges (Murayire, 2024). At its core, SET is grounded in the idea that people make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis. When entering a relationship, individuals assess the potential rewards—such as emotional support, companionship, and social status—against the costs, which might include time, effort, and emotional vulnerability. This evaluation influences whether they choose to initiate, maintain, or terminate a relationship (Kagwiria, 2020). Consequently, relationships that provide a favorable balance of rewards over costs are more likely to be sustained, while those that do not may lead to dissatisfaction and eventual dissolution. Additionally, SET emphasizes the importance of comparison levels, which are the standards individuals use to evaluate the outcomes of their relationships. These standards are shaped by past experiences, societal norms, and individual expectations (Kihara, Karanja &, Ogolla 2023). If the outcomes of a current relationship meet or exceed these comparison levels, individuals are likely to feel satisfied; if not, they may reconsider their involvement. This aspect of the theory highlights the dynamic nature of relationships, as perceptions of costs and benefits can change over time, influenced by external circumstances and personal growth (Wanza & Nkuraru, 2023). This theory was used to determine the influence of office-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a well-established psychological framework that focuses on understanding human motivation and behavior (Muhammad *et al*, 2022). Developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985), SDT posits that individuals are motivated by a set of innate psychological needs that drive their behavior, growth, and well-being. The theory primarily emphasizes three core needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Emerole *et al*, 2021). Autonomy refers to the desire to make choices and control one's own actions; competence is the need to feel capable and effective in one's activities; and relatedness reflects the desire for meaningful connections with others. SDT suggests that when these needs are met, individuals experience intrinsic motivation—engaging in activities for their inherent satisfaction—while their psychological well-being and performance improve (Muriithi, 2023).

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At the heart of SDT is the idea that there are two main types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic (Cherono & Wanyoike, 2022). Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity because it is inherently enjoyable or interesting, while extrinsic motivation involves doing something to attain an external reward or avoid a punishment. SDT posits that people are more likely to thrive when they are intrinsically motivated, as this leads to greater creativity, persistence, and psychological well-being. However, extrinsic rewards, when they undermine an individual's autonomy or when they are perceived as controlling, can diminish intrinsic motivation and lead to negative outcomes, such as lower satisfaction and disengagement (Gufu, Rintari & Kanyaru, 2024). SDT emphasizes that the social environment plays a crucial role in supporting or hindering the satisfaction of the three basic needs, influencing whether individuals experience intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Muhammad *et al*, 2022). This theory was used to establish the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**

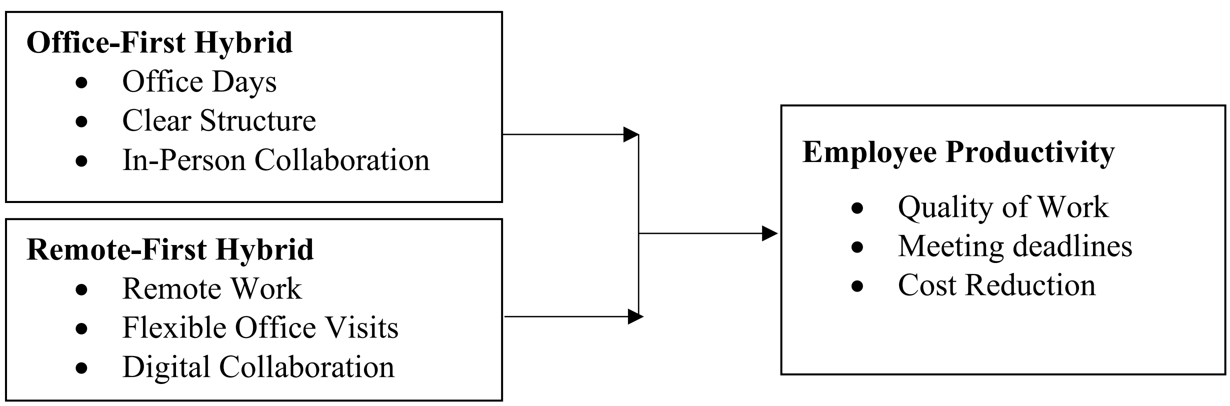

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Office-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

Syed (2021) examined the impact of office days on employee productivity: an empirical investigation from the Banking Sector of Pakistan. This study is explanatory in nature, based on the philosophy of post-positivism. It is a quantitative study for which inductive approach was used. To verify if people, at large, feel the importance of work-life balance practices, a critical factor in driving employee performance, a survey in the form of a structured questionnaire was distributed among the bankers who typically work 9-10 hours a day. The data was then tested through SPSS statistical tools to assess if work life balance practices have any relationship with the way employees perform at work or not. Study reveals that, work-life balance practices, when connected appropriately, would impact employee performance positively. The study also revealed that there is a positive relationship between work life balance and employee productivity. The study concluded that work life balance has great association with employee productivity.

Murayire (2024) researched on the effect of clear structure on employee performance in Rwanda Revenue Authority. The target population in this study was 1248 who are staff at Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA). The researcher used purposive sampling. The sample size of the study was 269 Rwanda Revenue Authority staff selected from the known population of 1248 staff. Simply, in this study data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher distributed 269 questionnaires to the respondents. it was observed that majority of respondents agreed that leadership affects employee performance in Rwanda Revenue Authority at 76.7%. It was also observed that clear structures are good determinants of employee performance at Rwanda Revenue Authority. The factors that determines employee performance are Leadership Personality, Leadership styles, Leadership Competency and Leadership Commitment. It was also perceived that clear structure helps to be more creative at work and leaders at Rwanda Revenue Authority apply autocratic to make employees meet deadlines and to achieve the goals. The study concluded that clear structure has a positive significant influence on organizational performance.

Kagwiria (2020) determined the influence of clear structures on employee productivity at KCB bank Kenya ltd, Nairobi region branches. To achieve the objective of the study, the study used a descriptive survey research design determine the influence of leadership on employee productivity. The target population of the study included all the managers and employees of KCB Bank Kenya Ltd. A sample size of 225 was selected from a population of 450 managers and employees. The study used primary data which was collected by a semi-structured questionnaire. The data was collected from managers and employees of commercial bank using a drop and pick- later method. The study found that a unit increase in clear structures leads to increase in employee productivity. It further established that employees at KCB bank act in a ways that build each other display a sense of power and confidence and they go beyond self-interest for the good of the group. The study also established that employees do not fail to interfere until problems become serious and they do not wait for things to go wrong before taking action. It also revealed that employees direct their attention toward failures to meet standards; they keep track of all mistakes and focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards. The study concluded that increase in clear structures leads to increase in employee productivity.

Kihara, Karanja and Ogolla (2023) assessed the influence of office days on Performance of Large Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. The study adopted a mixed research design of cross-sectional research design and descriptive survey design and the research philosophy was positivism. The study population study was 499 large scale manufacturing companies with a sample size of 217 managers from each of the 217 companies. Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires to the relevant managers. The study findings revealed that organization structure has a significant effect on performance of large manufacturing firms in Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the companies had office days which workers were expected to appear at work. Further results indicated that the nature of the span of control in majority of companies is high. On the relationship between Organizational structure and Return on Equity, the study findings revealed that departmentalization, degree of centralization and degree of specialization were positively and significantly related to ROE. Departmentalization was further found to be positively and significantly related to Profit before tax while degree of centralization and degree of specialization were found to be positively and significantly related to ROA. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that office days influences performance.

Wanza and Nkuraru (2023) examined the influence of clear structures on employee performance: A Case of University of Eldoret, Kenya. The study adopted a case study research design. The target population was 403 employees. A sample size of 121 employees was selected using simple random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presented using graphs and tables. The study found that clear structures and organizational leadership influenced university employees' performance positively. The study further revealed that technological changes have a great impact on employees' performance due to the rapid technological changes that the world is rapidly adjusting that eases employee's work load and to increase efficiency and effectiveness at work place. A strong organizational culture creates synergy and momentum that encourages teamwork and enhances employee performance. The study concluded that clear structures, leadership, technology and organizational culture influence the performance of employees positively

Remote-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

Muhammad *et al* (2022) conducted a case study on the effect of digital collaboration on organizational performance. The objectives are achieved via quantitative research design. The researchers emailed the online survey questionnaire to 1160 manufacturing companies listed in the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) directory via stratified sampling technique and received 63 responses. This research established that digital collaboration positively affect the mediating variable of supply chain performance. the study concluded that most Malaysian manufacturing industries now realize the positive potential of adopting digital elements in their supply chain.

Emerole *et al* (2021) researched on digital collaboration platform and employees' performance in MTN Southeast, Nigeria The study made use of survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all MTN employees in Southeast Nigeria. Primary data were elicited through well-structured questionnaire entitled "Digital Collaboration Platform and Employees' Performance Questionnaire." Content validity and face validity was used to validate the research instrument. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used in testing the reliability of the study instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained from the field. The study revealed that digital collaboration platform had a positive and significant effect on employee's performance in MTN Southeast, Nigeria. This inference drawn is in tandem with tenets of Technology Acceptance Model which anchored the study. The study concluded that digital collaboration platform had a positive and significant effect on employee's performance in MTN Southeast, Nigeria.

Muriithi (2023) assessed the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in the Communications Authority of Kenya. The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and utilized the descriptive and correlative research design. It used stratified sampling technique to select 153 respondents from a population of 248 CA employees across 20 departments. The data were collected through online and offline questionnaires. The results revealed that remote-first hybrid had positive and significant relationships with employee productivity. The study concluded that remote-first hybrid could enhance employee productivity if supported by effective human resource planning, ICT adoption, work-life balance, and work design.

Cherono and Wanyoike (2022) examined the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee performance in selected county governments in Kenya. This independent research paper was conducted through an empirical review of the literature. The review of the literature was conducted in line with the selected themes which included; human resource planning, adoption of technology, job design, work life balance, and hybrid work culture and employee performance. The samples were journal articles that were selected purposively. The literature was searched and sorted in line with the selected themes which included; human resource planning, adoption of technology, job design, work life balance, and hybrid work culture and employee performance. The literature review was sorted and tracked on a peer-reviewed journal basis. The literature search was done as per each theme to ensure all important papers were collected. Thematically, the collected empirical research was grouped according to the paper's themes. Employees who work from home have more freedom to handle job-related choices on their own and without supervision. This flexibility demonstrated effectiveness in managing oneself while working from home and juggling family obligations, which in turn increased worker performance. Employee performance is highly impacted by work design. Independent decision-making and flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid models, have a good effect on employee performance. The study concluded that remote-first hybrid has a positive influence on employee performance.

Gufu, Rintari and Kanyaru (2024) examined the effect of flexible office visits on employee performance of Isiolo County Government, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design whereby quantitative data was collected using close-ended questionnaires. Therefore, the target population included 1,662 employees of Isiolo County government in various departments. These employees were further sampled using a simple random method to obtain 43 directors, 48 managers, and 309 operational staff as the sample size. The study found that flexible office visits had a positive effect on the performance of employees. It was established that there was a hybrid working method that included in-office and remote operations. That notwithstanding, the choice of hybrid options was based on an informal agreement between first-line supervisor and an employee. This brought about unprofessional favors and an unbalanced allocation of tasks to the staff. Consequently, the long-term effect was poor completion of tasks, late submission of assignments, and lack of adequate supervision leading to unsatisfactory work. The study concluded that there should be a formal policy structure formulation by the management that allows equality and fairness in allocation of tasks and the choice of either working in an office or remotely.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design. This study targeted human resource management employees hence the total target population was 226 respondents. The Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size as follows;

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

Where n is the sample size, and N is the population size, e- acceptable sampling error (0.05)

$$= \frac{226}{1+226(0.05^2)}$$

$$= \frac{226}{1.565} = 144$$

$n \approx 144$

Therefore, the study sample size was 144 respondents.

This research used a questionnaire to collect primary data. According to Patton *et. al* (2019), a questionnaire is appropriate in gathering data and measuring it against a particular point of view. It provides a standardized tool for data collection. The researcher obtained research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) required for data collection**.** Structured and open questions were used to collect primary data from the field. The questionnaires were pilot tested to ascertain the extent to which the instrument is correct and to eliminate ambiguous questions, and improve on validity and reliability Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean (measure of dispersion), standard deviation, and percentages were used. Inferential data analysis was conducted by use of Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis.

The relationship between the study variables was tested using multivariate regression models.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby;

Y = Employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi city county, Kenya

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2,$ = Coefficients of determination

X_1 = Office-First Hybrid

X_2 = Remote-First Hybrid

ε = Error term

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The sample size of this study was 144 respondents and it comprised of human resource management employees. The researcher distributed 144 questionnaires to the respondents during data collection process and 124 were fully filled and returned to the researcher thus making a response rate of 86.1%. Kothari (2019) argues that a response rate which is more than 50% is considered adequate while excellent response rate is usually above 70%. This implies that the response rate in this research is good for making conclusions as well as recommendations.

Descriptive Statistics

Office-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

The first specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of office-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to office-first hybrid and employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that having designated office days promotes better team connection and productivity (M= 3.881, SD= 0.662). In addition, the respondents agreed that the set office days provide a clear structure and help maintain work-life balance (M=3.870, SD=0.752). Further, the respondents agreed that clear guidelines are in place for when to work from the office and when to work remotely (M=3.858, SD=0.851). From the results, the respondents agreed that the expectations for office attendance and remote work are communicated clearly by management (M=3.824, SD= 0.782). In addition, the respondents agreed that in-person collaboration fosters stronger relationships and enhances teamwork

(M=3.818, SD=0.581). Further, the respondents agreed that face-to-face interactions during office days lead to more productive discussions and problem-solving (M=3.801, SD=0.892).

Table 1: Office-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having designated office days promotes better team connection and productivity.	3.881	0.662
The set office days provide a clear structure and help maintain work-life balance.	3.870	0.752
Clear guidelines are in place for when to work from the office and when to work remotely.	3.858	0.851
The expectations for office attendance and remote work are communicated clearly by management.	3.824	0.782
In-person collaboration fosters stronger relationships and enhances teamwork.	3.818	0.581
Face-to-face interactions during office days lead to more productive discussions and problem-solving.	3.801	0.892
Aggregate	**3.842**	**0.753**

Remote-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

The second specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to remote-first hybrid and employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that remote work allows for greater flexibility and improved work-life balance (M=3.852, SD=0.564). In addition, the respondents agreed that working remotely provides an environment conducive to focused and uninterrupted work (M=3.845, SD=0.789). Further, the respondents agreed that flexible office visits enable spontaneous collaboration while maintaining the benefits of remote work (M=3.838, SD=0.572).

From the results, the respondents agreed that the ability to choose when to visit the office enhances job satisfaction and work flexibility (M=3.783, SD=0.608). In addition, the respondents agreed that digital tools and platforms facilitate seamless collaboration across remote teams (M=3.775, SD=0.905). Further, the respondents agreed that virtual meetings and communication tools allow for effective teamwork despite being geographically dispersed (M=3.751, SD=0. 0.828).

Table 2: Remote-First Hybrid and Employee Productivity

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remote work allows for greater flexibility and improved work-life balance.	3.852	0.564
Working remotely provides an environment conducive to focused and uninterrupted work.	3.845	0.789
Flexible office visits enable spontaneous collaboration while maintaining the benefits of remote work.	3.838	0.572
The ability to choose when to visit the office enhances job satisfaction and work flexibility.	3.783	0.608
Digital tools and platforms facilitate seamless collaboration across remote teams.	3.775	0.905
Virtual meetings and communication tools allow for effective teamwork despite being geographically dispersed.	3.751	0.828
Aggregate	**3.807**	**0.711**

Employee Productivity

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that attention to detail is maintained to ensure that work is error-free and of high quality (M=3.852, SD=0.720). In addition, the respondents agreed that the quality of work contributes positively to the overall success of the organization (M=3.815, SD=0.781). Further, the respondents agreed that deadlines for tasks and projects are consistently met (M=3.800, SD=0.698).

From the results, the respondents agreed that time is effectively managed to ensure work is delivered within the required timeframe (M=3.748, SD=0.675). In addition, the respondent agreed that efforts are made to actively seek ways to reduce costs while maintaining the quality of work (M=3.716, SD=0.552). Further, the respondents agreed that resources are used efficiently to minimize waste and contribute to cost-saving initiatives (M=3.671, SD=0.842).

Table 3: Employee Productivity

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attention to detail is maintained to ensure that work is error-free and of high quality.	3.852	0.720
The quality of work contributes positively to the overall success of the organization.	3.815	0.781
Deadlines for tasks and projects are consistently met.	3.800	0.698
Time is effectively managed to ensure work is delivered within the required timeframe.	3.748	0.675
Efforts are made to actively seek ways to reduce costs while maintaining the quality of work.	3.716	0.552
Resources are used efficiently to minimize waste and contribute to cost-saving initiatives.	3.671	0.842
Aggregate	**3.767**	**0.711**

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

This research adopted Pearson correlation analysis determine how the dependent variable (employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya) relates with the independent variables (office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid).

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Employee Productivity	Office-First Hybrid	Remote-First Hybrid
Employee Productivity	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	124		
Office-First Hybrid	Pearson Correlation	.870**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	124	124	
Remote-First Hybrid	Pearson Correlation	.845**	.227	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.073	
	N	124	124	124

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between office-first hybrid and employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi County, Kenya ($r = 0.870$, p value =0.000). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level).

The findings are in line with the findings of Syed (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between office-first hybrid and employee productivity.

Moreover, there was a very strong relationship between remote-first hybrid and employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya (r = 0.845, p value =0.001). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.001 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Emerole *et al* (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between remote-first hybrid and employee productivity.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid) and the dependent variable (employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi County, Kenya).

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.796[a]	.633	.632	.10381

a. Predictors: (Constant), office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.633. This implied that 63.3% of the variation in the dependent variable (employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid).

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	72.587	2	36.294	104.293	.002[b]
	Residual	42.115	121	.348		
	Total	114.702	123			

a. Dependent Variable: employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya
b. Predictors: (Constant), office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 104.293 while the F critical was 3.071. The p value was 0.002. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.002 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of office-first hybrid and remote-first hybrid on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.294	0.075		3.920	0.000
office-first hybrid	0.365	0.095	0.364	3.842	0.000
remote-first hybrid	0.340	0.089	0.341	3.820	0.001

a Dependent Variable: employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The regression model was as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = 0.294+0.365X_1 +0.340X_2 +\varepsilon}$$

According to the results, office-first hybrid has a significant effect on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β_1=0.365, p value= 0.000). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.000 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Syed (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between office-first hybrid and employee productivity.

The results also revealed that remote-first hybrid has a significant effect on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya (β1=0.340, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Emerole *et al* (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between remote-first hybrid and employee productivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that office-first hybrid has a positive and significant influence on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that office days, clear structure and in-person collaboration influences employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. In addition, the study concludes that remote-first hybrid has a positive and significant influence on employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that remote work, flexible office visits and digital collaboration influences employee productivity in multinational companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that multinational companies in Kenya should adopt a structured office-first hybrid model that clearly designates specific in-office days for collaboration-intensive tasks while allowing remote work for individual, focus-driven activities. This approach leverages the strengths of both environments face-to-face interaction enhances coordination and decision-making, while remote work reduces interruptions and supports deep work. In addition, the study recommends that multinational companies in Kenya should implement a remote-first hybrid model supported by strong digital infrastructure and clear performance management systems. By focusing on results rather than physical presence, employees gain flexibility to work in environments that enhance concentration and efficiency, leading to higher productivity.

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