

Research Article

Remote Working Trends and Their Impact on Employee Performance and Organizational Productivity in Uganda

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Abstract

This article explores the effects of remote working on employee performance and organizational productivity. After the COVID-19 pandemic, some organizations integrated remote working into their organizational structures, systems, and processes, making the practices an integral part of service delivery. Uganda had one of the longest COVID-19 closures, and this stimulated the adoption of remote working in various organizations across sectors. Despite the adoption of remoting working in Uganda, there is limited understanding of its impact on employees' performance and overall organizational productivity. The purpose of this study was to establish the state of remote working in Uganda, establish policy and regulatory gaps, and examine the impact of remote working practices on employee performance and overall organizational productivity. A mixed methods of data collection and analysis was used. Primary data was mainly collected using Survey Questionnaires (SQ) and Key Informant Interviews (KII), while secondary data was collected through an explorative Desk Review. A total of 314 employees responded to the study, of which 47.1% (148) were Female and 52.9% (166) Male. A significant number of respondents, 37.9% (119 individuals), were from the Trade and Business sector, followed by 26.4% (83) from Tourism, 24.8% (78) from ICT, and 12.1% from Education. The results showed that the majority of employees, 82.2% (258), across all sectors have experienced the shift to remote work due to COVID-19, of which over 60% indicated working remotely at least 1-3 days a week. The Information Communication Technology (ICT) leads in transition to remote work, with 29 out of 84 respondents indicating a complete transition to remote work. This is followed by Education and Finance with (12/84) and (5/84) indicating a complete shift. The main reasons for organizations to shift to remote work arrangements include COVID-19 (47.2%), Employee desire (42.5%), and cost savings (36.2%). The majority of employees (82.4%) indicated that remote work is effective in improving their productivity. The main tools used are video conferencing platforms (85.6%), collaboration technologies (49.4%), and cloud storage (48.7%). The majority of respondents (77.1%) were not aware of remote working policies in their organization, and over 65% of employees were satisfied with the remote work arrangement, with more females (41%) highlighting greater satisfaction. Generally, employees struggle with work-life balance due to remote work, given the blurred boundaries between office and private time. Only a significant number of employees in the private sector reported having achieved a work-life balance as a result of remote work, where 75/210 of the respondents. The majority of respondents from the private sector indicated that remote work has improved organizational productivity. Generally, organizations need to define clear policies and guidelines for remote work to promote work-life balance to minimize employee burnout, and address mental health challenges.

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Keywords

Remote Work, Employee Performance, Motivation, Legal and Regulatory Management, Life Balance

1. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to establish remote working trends in Uganda and the extent to which this practice is influencing employee performance, quality of life and overall organizational productivity. The specific objectives were to establish;

- 1) Remote working trends in various sectors of the economy and the associated technology tools being used.
- 2) Legal and regulatory gaps as far as management of remote working phenomena is concerned in corporate Uganda.
- 3) The effects of remote working on the performance of employees, organizational productivity, and quality of life of workers and their families

2. Review of Literature

The advent of Information and Communication Technologies especially the Internet, Social Media and collaborative tools such as Voice of IP technologies have revolutionised the way we live and work [13]. From enhancing delivering of extension services in agriculture [14], delivery of financial services such as mobile money [15], to delivery of online classes in education [16], these technologies continue to reshape the way humans live and work. Working from home also known as remote work has been practiced for centuries with both positive and negative outcomes. A study by TINY Pulse showed that employees who work remotely are much happier with the arrangement than those work at their office. However, there should be a good collaboration framework among employees for remote work to be effective [12]. According to Enrico, et al, positive outcomes of remote work like higher job satisfaction, performance, autonomy and work-life wellness and lower work-family conflict, enhance performance and productivity [2]. Studies show that employees are more satisfied with their jobs if they incorporate flexible work schedules, promote collaboration and knowledge sharing and motivation [17, 18]. Employees are able to have an improved work-life balance. However, Christine et al study shows that this can lead to increased family-to-work conflict due to blundering of work and family boundaries as employees solely at home find it increasingly difficult to disengage from work [1]. They end up working longer hours, thus negatively impacting their family-oriented roles getting overly indulged in work and eventually creating “mental fences” for boundary management. Others create a pattern of behaviors that dis-

tinguishes “integrators” (i.e., using the same calendar for work and family activities) from “segmentors” (i.e., using separate keys rings for work and home). It is from this background that the study aims at finding out the effect of remote working on employee performance and organizational productivity [5].

2.1. Remote Working General Insights

Remote working a practice implemented by organizations offering employees freedom and flexibility of working away from their designated duty stations or offices, often time it simply means working from home [18, 17]. Remote working has been described as the ability to work flexibly using remote technology to communicate with the workplace but also collaborate with peers and clients. The practice has adopted due to a number of reasons including; organization adjustments to the changing market demands and industry practices like in civil society organization and financial industry, response to global pandemics, globalization and technological advancement have pushed organizations to consider the introduction of remote working, desire to incentivize employees among others [6]. Demands from employees and the need to access a wider scope market have driven the implementation of remote work arrangements and created a shift in the balance of the employee and employer contract. This has forced employers to implement a remote working process that involves stakeholders who implement their assignments virtually. The adoption of remote working has been known to so far reduce on time spent travelling to and from work and defined remote targets for responsible persons. Pham, et al highlights that centralized structures in the organization where information flows through specific offices or personnel contribute to the concept of remote working [10]. Results are dependent on identifying key activities, outcomes and time frames.

Christine et al asserts that remote working improves productivity because of the flexible approaches to work [1]. It also reduces the work-life conflict and increases job satisfaction because a worker does not have to always commute to the place of work to get work done. The use of technology as someone works remotely implies changes in working practices, behaviors, skills and competencies. Leung and Zhang, further assert a positive change in job effectiveness, work-life balance and well-being of employees when remote working is emphasized [8].

2.2. Legal and Regulatory Gaps as Far as Management of Remote Working Phenomena is Concerned in Corporate Uganda

Remote working has become a policy priority for countries to develop guiding rules and regulations that ensure work is done remotely. Working remotely entails an employee to make decisions on the environment that supports work and some have been known to relocate. Policies have been put in place to guide remote work for organizations and their employees. The remote work policy by OECD provides standards and expectations for employees to use as guiding principles while working online. Employees are allowed flexible hours and are expected to share remote work dates or days on condition they have the required software tools to support work. These include a laptop, internet access and others. One is expected to be able to handle video or voice conferencing, hub meetings, have a google calendar and is able to have a google drive where other employees can share documents and work on them, [9].

Irrespective of the fact that the remote work policy is in place, it has to be able to support hybrid remote working while improving people's quality of life. The policy gaps to be considered by government are in respect to the following areas.

- 1) Reduction of the digital divide and facilitation of the adoption of remote working. This can be done by investing in digital skills for workers and ICT capacity among small medium enterprises. Ensuring communication services like internet are affordable for all and helping to overcome cultural and legal barriers for remote working.
- 2) Enhancing accessibility to quality services particularly in non-metropolitan regions by adapting support services to enhance conditions for remote working. This can also be done by enhancing the provision of quality education and health, promoting a greater use of digitalization to provide services.
- 3) Ensuring efficient and environmentally sustainable outcomes for remote working. This is done through policy development
- 4) Providing up-to-date, reliable and accessible information on remote working by giving minimum requirements that employees, train and clarify on applicability of tools and gadgets [4].

2.3. To Establish the Effects of Remote Working on the Performance of Employees, Organizational Productivity, and Quality of Life of Workers and their Families

For any employee to carry out their duties, one should have a work plan to guide on the implementation of activities to accomplish the organization's objectives. The authoritative design has the commitments, abilities and obligations of every

person in the organization. Remote work configuration alludes to the technique management uses to foster the substance of a task, including every connected errand, and the interaction by which the occupation is made and reconsidered. Given the new environment, remote work configuration has turned into an undeniably significant application procedure [3].

Remote workplace design approaches can be broadly divided into work simplification, work rotation, work extension, and work performance. This is one of the most effective ways to optimize employee performance. The design of an employee's work often determines the perception that the employee has towards them [3].

Remote work autonomy is the level of independence and freedom that a person has. An individual with more elevated levels of independence feels more answerable for their work. From one viewpoint, independence might set off delaying when it is thought of as threatening to the individuals who are inclined to evasion. Lacking independence may likewise prompt pressure since individuals may not be given the attentiveness to deal with the requests of a task. Subsequently, by and large, independence is viewed as a positive and engaging component of remote work, however for the individuals who are avoidant; it might prompt adverse results with regards to execution and prosperity. They might come up short on self-control to perform on time, which might prompt expanded pressure.

When work affects others, it feels more meaningful and leads to greater satisfaction thus performance. Skill diversity is the extent to which a wide range of skills are required for a job. Employees who manage two different departments have a greater variety of skills and require more abilities than employees who manage a particular department.

Remote work offers significant advantages to employees. Employees benefit from improved time management and flexibility in their schedules. Moreover, telecommuting contributes to addressing environmental and sociological concerns. The reduced need for daily commuting translates into a cleaner and more sustainable environment by reducing gas consumption, mitigating pollution, and curbing the destruction of natural landscapes for urban development. Additional benefits include reduced wear and tear on vehicles, leading to longer vehicle lifespans and decreased waste generation, as well as diminished expenses associated with formal office attire and dining out [10].

Telecommuting also has the potential to alleviate sociological challenges by allowing employees to spend more quality time with their families in the comfort of their homes. The adoption of remote working has been known to so far reduce on time spent travelling to and from work and defined remote targets for responsible persons.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design because

of its ability to examine the relationship between variables. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used to collect data for the study. Data was collected through the Survey Questionnaire and Document Review methods.

An online survey was conducted on employees for collecting primary data using questionnaires with both closed and open-ended questions. Kothari defines the survey as the most appropriate method because it can be used to collect large amounts of information in a relatively short amount of time. This was more specific and is more likely to convey similar meanings and questions to respondents [7]. Respondents were chosen to take part in the study through the purposive sampling technique. This technique was used because of its ability to choose the relevant respondents to fit the aim of the study.

Researchers also reviewed existing documents related to research issues and variables in the form of reports, published and unpublished research papers, journals, electronic journals, websites, and databases to obtain detailed information about the research issue. Sekaran, classifies these documents as secondary data sources and states that this method saves time and reduces the cost of information gathering [11].

Empirical data was analyzed using descriptive statistics using spreadsheet software, while the qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Background Statistics

A total of 314 employees responded to the survey as shown in Table 1 of with 47.1% (148) were female and 52.9% (166) were male. The majority of the respondents 63.7% (200), were between the age range of 26-35 years and a smaller proportion, 20.1% (63), were between 36-45 years, while 12.4% (39) were between 20 and 25 years and 3.8% (12) of the respondent were in the age bracket of 46 to 55 years. The respondents were from strategically targeted sectors of Uganda corporate class i.e. Private, Public and Civil Society. The private sector contributed the highest number of respondents, comprising 70.1% (220) of the total respondents, followed by public sector with 19.1% (60) and civil society with 10.8% (34) respondents respectively. Table 1 below presents a summary of respondent demographics providing valuable insights of the characteristic of the study respondents to help contextualize the findings.

Table 1. A summary of respondent demographics.

Gender	Male	Female
Total	52.9%(166)	47.1%(148)
Age		

Gender	Male	Female
20-25	6.1%(19)	6.4%(20)
26-35	32.2%(101)	31.5%(99)
36-45	12.7%(40)	7.3%(23)
46-55	1.9%(6)	1.9%(6)
Education		
A-level	1%(3)	1.3%(4)
Bachelors	33.1%(104)	28.3%(89)
Diploma	3%(9)	2.2%(7)
Masters	13.7%(43)	14%(44)
Ph D	2.2% (7)	1.3%(4)
Sectors		
Civil society	5.1%(16)	5.7%(18)
Private sector	35.7%(112)	34.4%(108)
Public sector	12.1%(38)	7%(22)
Position		
Graduate trainee	5.1%(16)	3.2%(10)
Management	14.3%(45)	13.7%(43)
Senior management	4.8%(15)	2.5%(8)
Professional staff	26.4%(83)	26.1%(82)
Support staff	2.2%(7)	1.6%(5)
Professional back-ground		
Non ICT	25.8%(81)	30.9%(97)
ICT	27.1%(85)	16.2%(51)

Source: Primary Data 2025

The respondent demographics shows in Table 1 indicate that majority of the respondents (64.4%) had a bachelor’s degree which means that these are young professionals in early stages of the career and a technology survey demographic ideal for remote work. Respondents with graduate qualification made up 31.6% at both master and PhD level, implying that these are like to be in middle to senior leadership positions in the organization. Therefore, the respondent demographic are fairly representative of staffing structures in a typical Ugandan corporation organization which have more bachelors holders in technical positions and graduate holders in managerial and senior leadership positions as confirmed in Table 1. Respondents from Non-ICT industries made up 56.7% (178) of the total respondents while ICT professionals represent 43.3% (136) of the total respondents, indicating the results are be interpret to fair represent a typical corporate organization in Uganda in the three sectors i.e. public, pri-

vate and civil society. Note surprising, the survey had more females' respondents from non-ICT professional background with over 30.9% of the total respondents while males dominated the ICT professional background with over 27.1% of the total respondents. It is well known that male's domain the science and technology professions in Uganda [19].

In addition to survey questions respondents, a total of 21 key informant interviews were conducted cover the three sectors of the economy; public (7), private (10) and civil society (4). Of the 21 key informants, 7 were at senior level of management, 6 middle level managers and 8 were at professional level.

Table 2. A summary of respondent by industry.

Employment industry	Number of respondents
Agriculture	3.8%(12)
Civil society	10.8%(34)
Education	12.1%(38)
Engineering	4.1%(13)
Finance	11.1%(35)
Health	6.1%(19)
ICT	24.8%(78)
Local government	3.2%(10)
Media and communications	1.3%(4)
Public service	7.6%(24)
Tourism	26.4%(83)
Trade and business	37.9%(119)

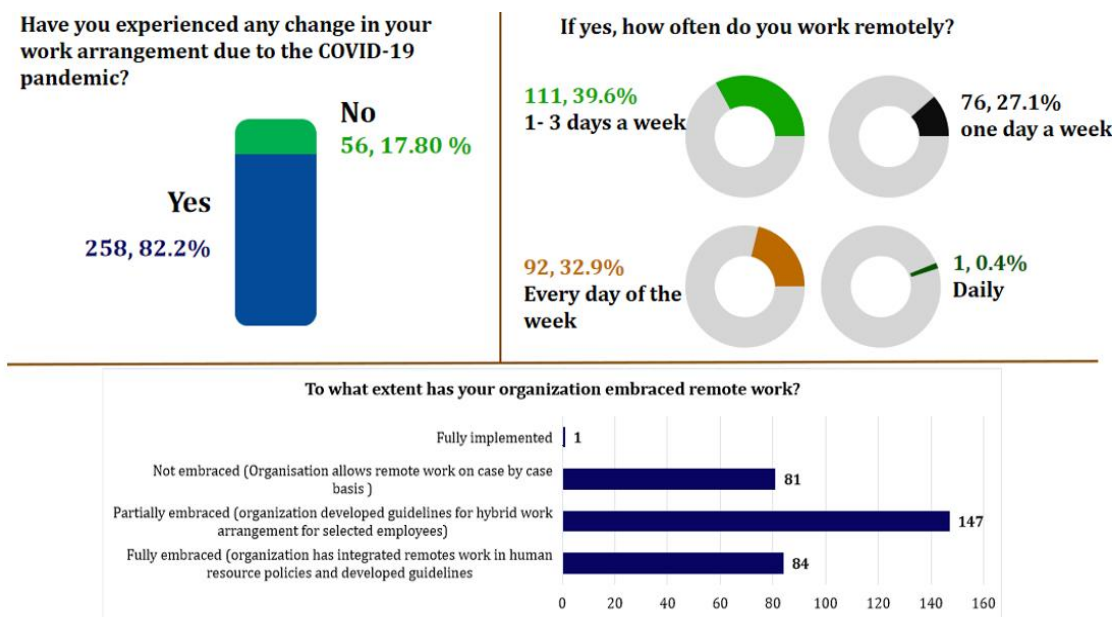
Source: Primary Data 2025

4.2. Remote Working Trends in Uganda

This study thought to establish extent to which remote working practices are being embraced by corporate organization in Uganda in various sectors of the Ugandan economy. The study aimed at exploring the motivations behind organizations' decisions to implement remote working arrangements and determine the practical aspects of how remote work is being implemented in terms of technological tools and platforms deployed to facilitate remote working. Furthermore, the study sought to establish the impact of remote work on the effectiveness of remote work.

1) Remote working arrangements in organizations

The majority of the respondents of the study 82% had experienced change in their work arrangements due to the COVID-19 resulting into placements on remote working schedules. A total of 27% (111) indicated to work for 1-3 days remotely, 32.9% (92) indicated to work remotely every day of the week and 27.1% (76) one day a week as shown in Figure 1. These results finding confirm that remote working is slowly becoming an integral part of Ugandan corporate culture.



Source: Primary data 2025

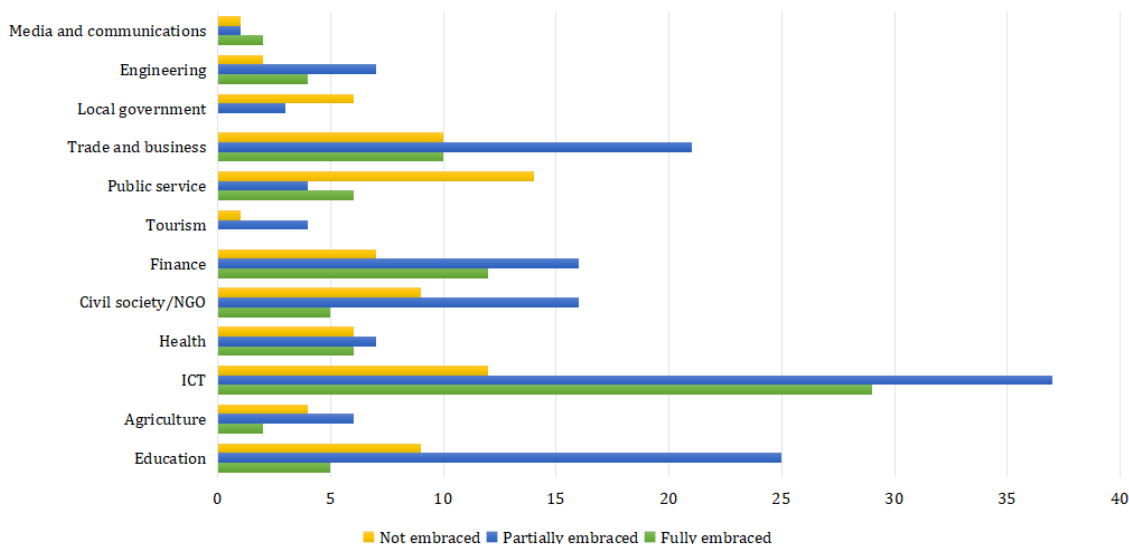
Figure 1. Existence of work arrangements in organizations.

The findings were well summarized by one key informant who stated that;

“COVID 19 transformed how educational institutions operated, from having physical classes to zoom classes. Today we have an eLearning policy and promote hybrid learning and I deliver 80% of my lectures on zoom from my home”. - Lecturer from University”

In terms of embracing remote work by industry, the results of the study as shown in Figure 2 indicated that ICT, Education, Trade and Business, Finance and Civil Society in that order are leading in embracing remote working practices. This is not surprising as these are predominately service industries and the nature of services can easily be delivered remotely.

Extent of embracing remote work with in industries



Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 1. Extent of embracing remote working by industry.

Based on the analysis, it is observed that Information Communication Technology (ICT) stands out as the industry that has most fully embraced remote work, with 29 out of 84 respondents indicating a complete transition to remote work. Education and Finance also show significant levels of full embrace, with 5 and 12 out of 84 respondents, respectively. On the other hand, Tourism and Local Government appear to be the least inclined towards remote work, with no full embrace at all, and only 4 and 3 respondents, respectively, indicating partial embrace. The results also highlight a broad spectrum of responses in the "Partially embraced" category, suggesting that many industries are still in the process of adapting to remote work to varying degrees. These findings are backup up observations from a key informant from a Bank who observed;

“It is easily for service industries to shift to remote working for example, some of us who work on risk assessment

of Loans in the Bank we can do the work from anywhere, actually some of our clients are in other countries yet the contribute to deliver services to Ugandan clients”. - Senior Risk Officer from a Financial Institution”

2) Motivation for adopting remote working practice

It was important to understand the main factors motivating organizations to adopt remote working practices. The analysis of the respondent’s feedback indicates that COVID19 pandemic was the main factor highlight by 47.2% (142) of the respondents, followed by employee desire for remote work at 42.5% (128), cost saving at 36%, and business continuity at 27% as the main reasons as show in Figure 3. It is clear from the study findings that COVID19 accelerated organizations appreciation of remote working and has stimulated the integration of the practice into the corporate culture of Ugandan organizations.



Source: Primary data 2025

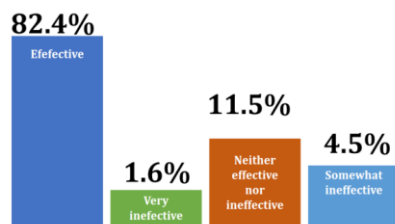
Figure 3. Motivation for adopting remote working.

The role of COVID19 in shaping the working culture of Ugandan corporation was well stated by key informant from public sector, who observed that.

“COVID 19 wake us up to reimagine the world order. In Kampala we have challenge of traffic jam especially for us with offices in the middle of the city. Our employees lose approximately 4 hours of productivity daily in traffic jam in Kampala, yet they can deliver their services from anywhere. So as an organization we have realized the need to integrate remote work as it saves costs for employees but also improves employee’s productivity due too saved productive time among others”. - Senior human resources manager, ICT firm”

4.3. Effectiveness of Remote Work in Maintaining or Improving Productivity

It is important to establish opinions of respondents concerning the effectiveness of remote work in maintaining or improving productivity compared to traditional practices. The results of the study show that majority 82.4% (258) of the respondent indicated that remote work is effective in enhancing their productivity as shown in Figure 4.



Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 2. Employees opinions on impact of remote working on their productivity.

In terms of sectors, majority of respondents in all sectors indicated that remote working is effective in enhancing their productivity as who in Table 3.

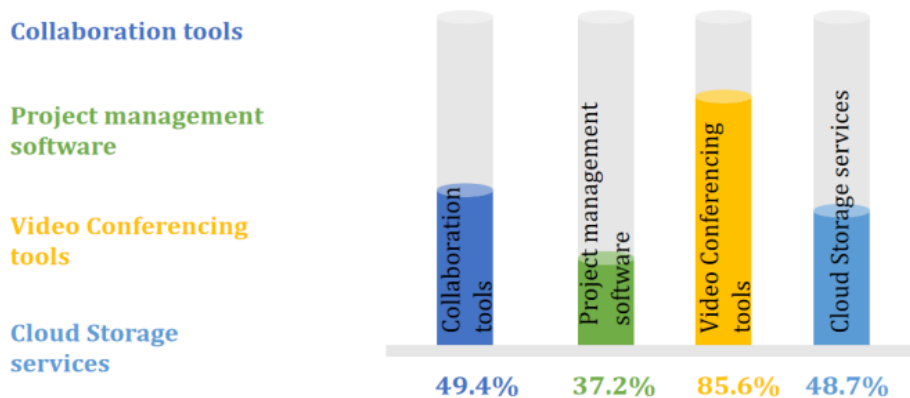
Table 1. A summary of respondent by industry.

	Public	Private	Civil
Effective	49	178	31
Neither effective nor ineffective	6	28	2
Somewhat ineffective	4	10	1
Very ineffective	1	3	0

Source: Primary data 2025

1) Platforms used for remote work

While various technology tools and platforms are available to facilitate remote working, the participants of the study indicated that video conferencing tools are mainly used with 85.6% (267 individuals) reporting their usage. Additionally, nearly half of the participants (49.4% or, 154) mentioned employing collaboration tools, while 48.7% (152 individuals) indicated to use cloud storage services. Project management software, on the other hand, was utilized by a smaller portion, with only 37.2% (116 individuals) indicating its usage. Figure 5 shows the results of analysis.



Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 5. Technology tools or platforms used for remote work.

Respondents were requested to indicate the technology tools they utilize. Upon analysis, Zoom emerged as the predominantly mentioned tool, followed by Microsoft Teams

and Google Meet. A more comprehensive breakdown of this information is presented in the accompanying Table 4.

Table 4. Technology tools for remote work.

Video Conferencing Tools:

- Zoom: (133, 53.2%)
- Google Meet: (57, 22.8%)
- Skype: (24, 9.6%)
- WebEx: (1, 0.4%)
- Free Conference Call: (2, 0.8%)
- Brella: (1, 0.4%)
- Teams: (54, 21.6%)

Cloud Storage Services:

- Google Drive: (32, 12.8%)
- Dropbox: (8, 3.2%)
- iCloud Storage: (1, 0.4%)
- AWS: (2, 0.8%)
- Azure: (3, 1.2%)
- Google Docs: (24, 9.6%)
- Google Sheets: (6, 2.4%)
- Google Cloud: (2, 0.8%)
- Dropbox: (1, 0.4%)

Project Management Software:

- Slack: (38, 15.2%)
- Trello: (23, 9.2%)
- ClickUp: (4, 1.6%)
- Jira: (5, 2.0%)
- Notion: (20, 8.0%)
- Asana: (12, 4.8%)
- Monday.com: (5, 2.0%)

Collaboration Tools:

- Microsoft Teams: (41, 16.4%)
- Google Workspace: (10, 4.0%)
- Skype: (7, 2.8%)
- Google Chat: (3, 1.2%)
- Slack: (35, 14.0%)
- ClickUp: (3, 1.2%)
- SharePoint: (8, 3.2%)
- Jamboard: (2, 0.8%)
- Buffer: (2, 0.8%)

Source: Primary data 2025

One of the key informants noted that; *“Today we’re a ZOOM organization we hold more zoom meetings that physical meetings. The tools allow us to memorize the discussions in real time for our future reference but also these tools have optimized our operational costs since most of our key stakeholder engagements are now online. One can say we thank God for the miracle of*

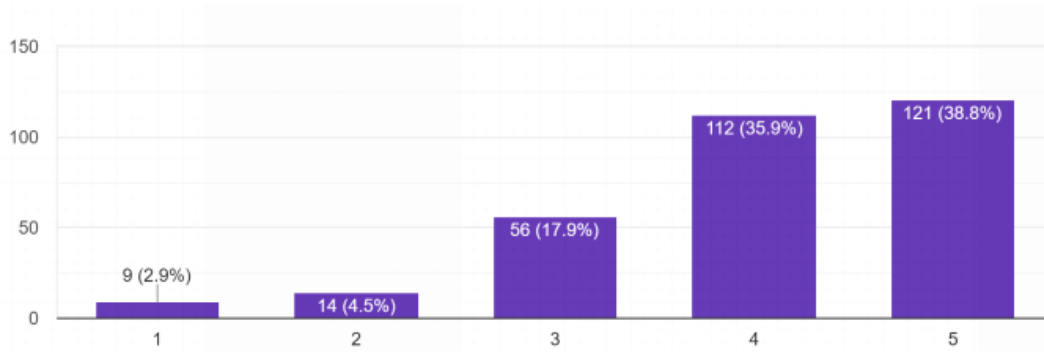
technology”. - Senior Executive from a Civil Society Organization”

2) Level of Employee satisfaction with technology tools for remote work

In regards to level of employee satisfaction with the technology tools, respondents indicated to be very satisfied with the technology tools with (121, 38.8%), (112, 35.9%) were

satisfied, (56, 17.9%) indicating to be neutral, (14, 4.5%) mentioned to be dissatisfied and only (9, 2.9%) very dissatisfied.

In general, respondents were satisfied with the technology tools as shown in Figure 6.



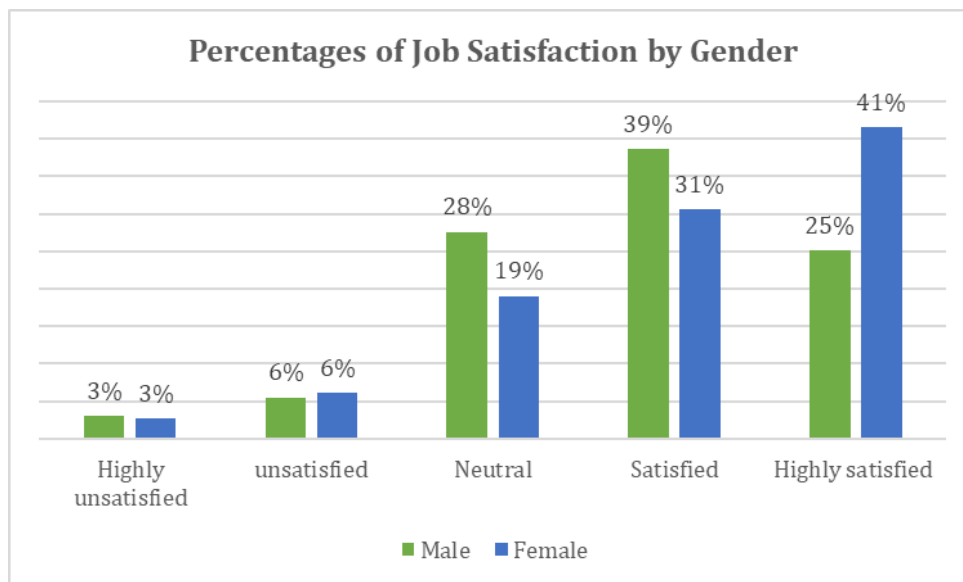
Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 6. Level of Employee Satisfaction with the technology tools for remote work.

4.4. Employee Satisfaction and Quality of Life

In order to establish the effects of remote working on the overall satisfaction of employees and their quality of life, respondents were asked to evaluate this in relation to their satisfaction working on site in comparison to working remotely. Figure 7 shows that majority of respondents were

satisfied with the jobs because of remote working arrangements. Although women are highly satisfied by remote work representing 41% of the respondents who indicated to be highly satisfied. This could be attributed to remote work giving women an ability to balance family and child bearing while also remaining productive in the corporate world.

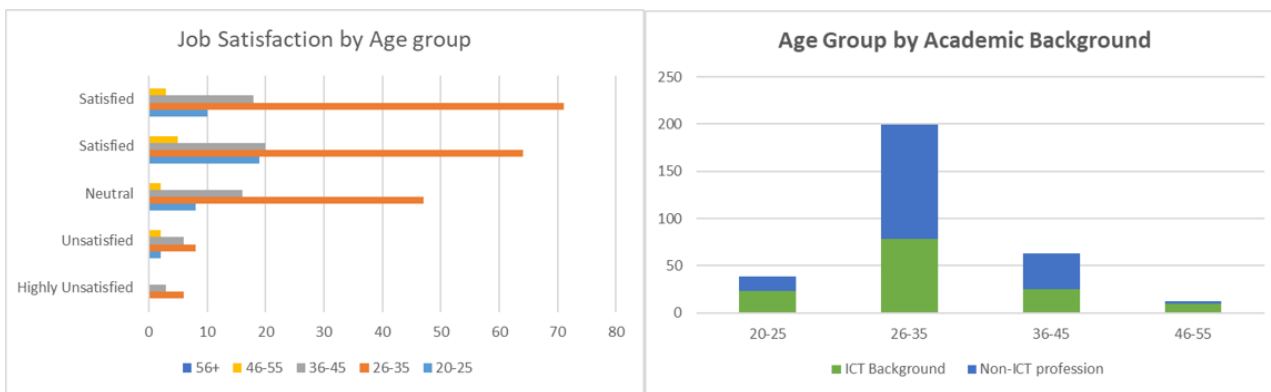


Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 7. Job satisfaction by gender.

In terms of age group, the middle-aged corporates (26-35 years) indicated to have increased job satisfaction and overall improved quality of life stemming from the onset of remote work. This could be attributed to the technological advance-

ment of individuals in this age group as they can ably use technology with minimal difficulty. This age group also covers the highest percentage of respondents with an ICT background.



Source: Primary data 2025

Figure 8. Job satisfaction by age group.

Overall, individuals in the private sector indicated that they had achieved work-life balance as a result of remote work where 75 of the respondents in the private sector rated their level of achievement with the highest ranking and 71

voted the next rating of a 4. Important to note that majority of the respondents were also from the private sector of the study about 67% were from the private sector.

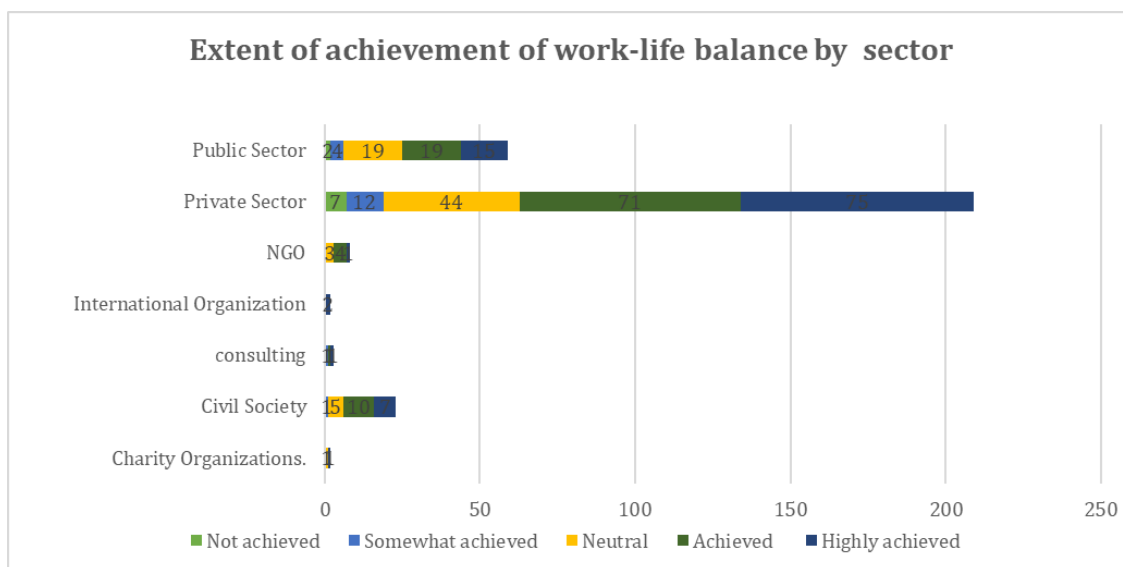


Figure 9. Achievement of work life balance by sector.

In terms of position level, Professional staff indicated to derive job satisfaction as a result of remote working. Also, job satisfaction as a result if incorporating remote work decreases as position level decreases. This suggests that employees in higher-level positions are generally more satisfied with their jobs than those in lower-level positions. Employees in lower positions could be engaged in more manual work that has low chances of being done offsite which is not the case for employees with professional or senior positions.

This is elaborated in the figure below.

In particular; 70% of senior management employees are highly satisfied with their jobs, compared to only 40% of support staff employees. 60% of professional staff employees are satisfied with their jobs, compared to 50% of management employees and 40% of graduate trainee employees. 30% of support staff employees are highly unsatisfied with their jobs, compared to only 10% of senior management employees.

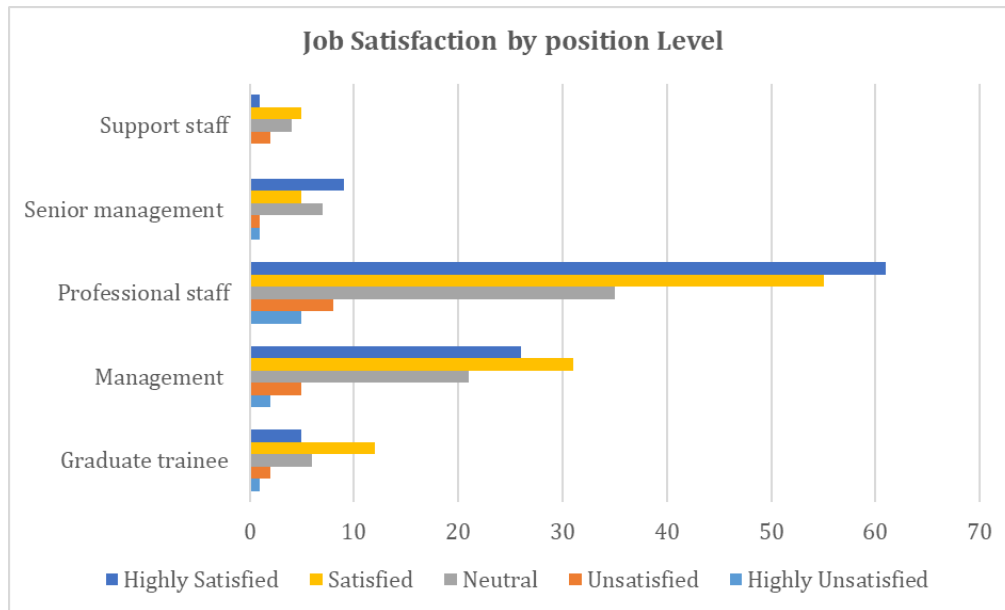


Figure 10. Job satisfaction by position level.

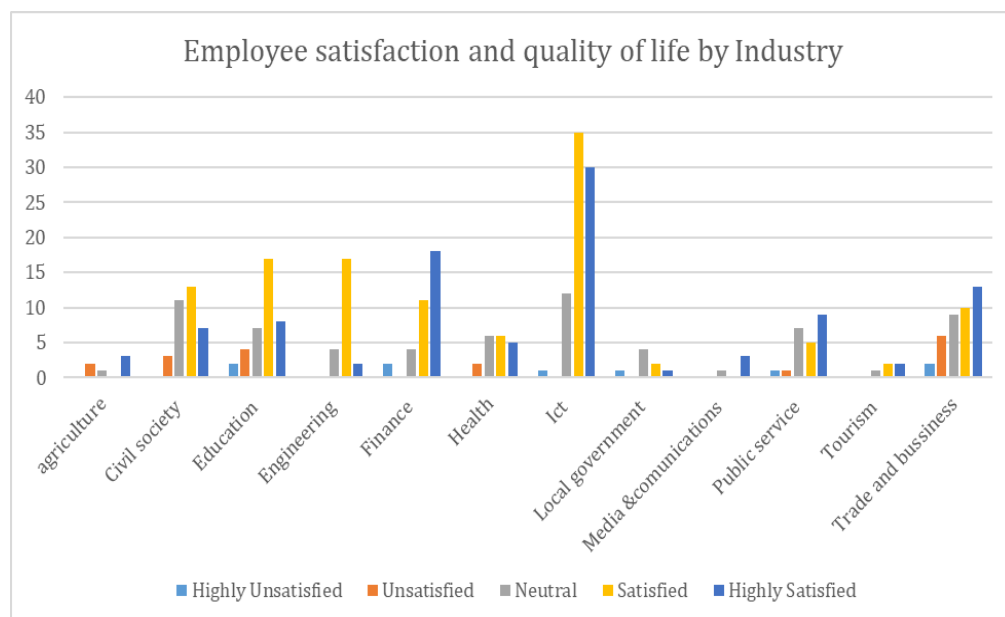


Figure 11. Employee satisfaction and quality of life by industry.

Employee satisfaction and quality of life vary significantly by industry, Overall employees in the ICT (industry are the most satisfied with their jobs and have the highest quality of life as a result of working remotely, while employees in the agriculture industry are the least satisfied with their jobs and have the lowest quality of life. This could be attributed to the fact that employees in the agricultural sector largely need to be on site to achieve productivity which is not the case for employees in the ICT sector. Employees in trade and business, finance and education also indicated a high level of quality of life as a result of remote work incorporation.

4.5. Support Mechanisms to Mitigate Employee Stress and Mental Health Challenge

The study sought to explore existing mechanism employed by organizing to support employee with effects of mental health and work-related fatigue. The results from the respondents indicate that organizations have developed a number of approaches key among other include;

- 1) Establishment of regular and structured communication from management. The existence of clear reporting lines that help in reducing uncertainty and task ambiguity which are common sources of stress in remote

working setups. These address the issue of work load analysis by supervisors to ensure employees are not overwhelm with tasks from multiple sources. One of the best practices emerged from an ICT firm is the use of daily morning and evening check-in meetings.

- 2) Provision of remote working tools and allowances: Some private sector respondents highlighted that their employers offered data/internet which made their remote working experience smoother.
- 3) Wellbeing initiatives and flexible work schedules which were mentioned as another way to mitigate stress. A number of respondents indicated that organization have introduced mandatory office working days and team building activities to ensure cohesion and stress management.
- 4) Establishment of online anonymized professional counselling services to support employees with mental health challenges.

Notably employees in senior and professional positions reported receiving more tailored organizational support compared to support staff thus the need to make more equitable mechanisms across roles. These initiatives were well summarized by one senior executive of an ICT firm.

“As firm we have prioritized the health of our employees and integrated team building and wellness activities in our core working routine. We have a joint gym and aerobic classes once a week, a monthly team building event and an online professional counselling service for our staff”. - Senior Executive from a ICT firm”

4.6. Legal and Regulatory Gaps as far as Management of Remote Working

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries worldwide came up with and adopted policies and frameworks that could enable working remotely. These policies and frameworks mainly focused on arrangements that foster not only remote work arrangements but also employee responsibilities and data privacy. The following policies and frameworks have been enacted in the existing Ugandan labour laws to accommodate remote work.

The Employment Governance Framework (EGF): Employment Governance Framework (EGF) for the national employment strategy by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) 2021 was drafted to provide strategic and policy-level guidance as well as effective oversight of the design and delivery of the National Employment Council (NEC) reform priorities and interventions. The EGF also defines the structures and associated processes for operationalizing and strengthening integrated whole-of-government coordination framework. In practice, the EGF outlines the concerned institutions, articulating their respective roles and responsibilities while, equally, defining new ways of coordinating decisions related to employment creation. Accordingly, the employment governance frame-

work provides a new way for driving concerted efforts towards designing and implementing strategies for job growth in the country. The Employment Governance Framework was drafted as part of the implementation of “Fiscal Decentralization and Service Delivery Programme Agreement” which strives to establish pre-conditions for national and sub-national employment governance. The formulation process engaged and benefited significantly from the contribution of all relevant stakeholders including members of the National Employment Council (NEC). Some of the gaps identified include;

- 1) Unclear roles and responsibilities.
- 2) Low levels of institutional buy-ins where some stakeholders may not appreciate their contribution.
- 3) Inadequate technical capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate interventions.

The National Employment Policy for Uganda: The 2011 National Employment Policy for Uganda by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development proposes an integrated framework for a macroeconomic environment that provides linkages of employment creation to labour absorbing economic sectors. The policy is based on: sound basic education followed by skills training for more productive employment, promoting agriculture and enhancing its linkage with other sectors; pursuing more innovative strategies for employment creation and job intensive investments, particularly, within the National Core Projects of the National Development Plan. Increasing productivity in both the largest and the very smallest enterprises in Uganda whether remotely or not; mainstreaming vulnerable groups; strengthening labor administration, social dialogue, improving working conditions and the workplace environment as well as establishing a more appropriate institutional framework for coordination and sustainable employment are also key action areas. The National Employment Policy for Uganda provides a framework for the goal of decent and remunerative employment for all women and men seeking such work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Gaps include;

- 1) Inability of actors and stakeholders to mainstream the policy and place appropriate mechanisms to increase flexible and decent employment opportunities at the workplaces.
- 2) Weak and inappropriate infrastructure for the implementation of the policy increases the risk of respect for international labor standards, recruitment and retooling relevant staff.
- 3) Lack of a priority budget to fund proposed strategies and interventions that contribute to the promotion of social dialogue for productivity.

A recent 2023 analysis was done by International Labor Organization (ILO) on the key role Uganda’s policies promote decent work for improved employability and equipping the local markets with skills to access development opportunities. The analysis aimed at providing an understanding of

the current policies, legislative and regulatory frameworks and practice in relation to the access of work, employment, livelihood and training opportunities on remote work, including self-employment, business development and rights at work. The policies reviewed included but not limited to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2020/21-2024/25, National Physical Development Plan (NPDP), Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda 2020/21- 2024/25 (JLIRP), NSSF (Amendment) Act 2021, the Employment Act 2006 which is also known as the Labor Unions Act 2006. Gaps identified include;

- 1) Although a progressive legal and policy environment is key to ensure the protection of employees in the labor market, implementation challenges across a range of areas remain wanting.
- 2) In respect to refugees, some policy areas have not yet fully mainstreamed their existence in work. The Ministry of Education and Sports has however dedicated national TVET policy but still does not explicitly consider the case of refugees.
- 3) The sector Development Plan although recognizes many persons for work, the needs of refugees remain largely un-addressed by the sector.
- 4) Effectiveness of remote working on the performance of employees, organizational productivity, and quality of life of workers and their families.

National Information and Communications Technology Policy for Uganda: The 2014 National ICT policy is a revision based on the 2003 guidelines structured in the National ICT policy Framework. It incorporated new policy directions in line with the ever changing technological advancements. It also includes planned action items in conformity with existing policies and strategies for underlying sub-sectors. The National Information and Communications Technology policy puts into consideration the emerging policy areas brought about by technological changes and convergence of technologies. It enlists a number of interventions and elaborates on the required actions in the traditional areas of Telecommunications, Broadcasting Infrastructure and Postal Services, but also goes into new areas of Information Technology and Information Management Services. Other areas considered are the Internet and Information Security among others. The guiding principles for the National ICT Policy include enhancing private public partnership in delivery of ICT infrastructure and services; ensuring universal access to basic ICT infrastructure; technology neutrality of ICT services; convergence of technologies, globalization, human rights principles, democracy and good governance; among others. Gaps identified include;

- 1) Inability to mobilize adequate resources which include financial, human and physical.
- 2) Inability of all stakeholders to play their respective roles in enhancing the policy.
- 3) Irregular adjustments to respond to the rapid techno-

logical changes that characterize the ICT sector.

- 4) Inability of individual sub sectors to draw their priorities from this policy.
- 5) Inability of each household to have broadband internet, computers, television etc.

National Information Security framework: The 2014 National Information security policy was developed for and mandatory to all public and private sector organizations that use, own or operate computers, handle official communications for the sole purpose of reducing vulnerability to cyber threats. The use of the security measures mandated by the policy would increase the capacity of the organizations to endure and recover from cyber-attacks. The policy works in accordance with other policies that include; the Computer Misuse Act 2011, the term “protected computers” refers to computers used directly in connection with or necessary for Uganda’s security, defense, diplomacy; law enforcement; communications infrastructure, banking and financial services, public utilities; public key infrastructure and public safety. In this policy, “official communications” encompass information that Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Local Governments (MDALs) create and process during their day-to-day business activities. Official communications have lower security sensitivity than data handled by protected computers. However, the loss, theft and unauthorized disclosure of “official communications” could have negative consequences on the MDALs. Lastly, “personal data” covers data that relates to an individual. Gaps identified include;

- 6) The application and use of the security measures mandated by the policy may be slow because of ignorance and vulnerability of the law on cyber threats.
- 7) The inability to regulate the use of electronic signatures to ensure security (confidentiality, integrity and availability) of communication and non-repudiation and if electronic signatures are used, there is lack of mechanisms of control, competent skills and tools to investigate such crimes.
- 8) The lack of developed procedures for digital evidence and encryption technology.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Remote Work Trends in Uganda

- 1) Existing work arrangements: The frequency of remote work varied, with 27.1% working remotely 1-3 days a week, 32.9% working remotely every day, and 27.1% working one day a week. Notably, respondents from the Information Communication Technology (ICT) indicated to work more remotely, while Tourism and Local Government displayed the least inclination.
- 2) Adopting Remote work: The adoption of remote work was primarily triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as indicated by 47.2% of respondents. Additionally, 42.5% cited employee desire for remote work, 36.2% men-

tioned cost savings, and 27.9% emphasized business continuity.

- 3) Effectiveness of remote work: A significant majority (82.4%) of respondents found remote work effective in maintaining or improving productivity, while 11.5% considered it neither effective nor ineffective. Sector-specific analysis revealed that the private sector predominantly endorsed the effectiveness of remote work, with 56.9% of respondents expressing satisfaction.
- 4) Technology tools or platforms for remote work: Video conferencing tools, collaboration tools, and cloud storage services were widely used, with 85.6%, 49.4%, and 48.7% of respondents employing them, respectively. Zoom emerged as the most utilized tool, followed by Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. Overall satisfaction with technology tools was high, with 74.7% expressing satisfaction, emphasizing their contribution to improved communication, enhanced collaboration, efficient task management, and easy access to files and documents.
- 5) Remote work experience in Organizations: A positive remote work experience was reported by a significant majority of employees (68.4%), affirming a favorable work-life balance. Awareness of remote work policies was low (22.9% aware), mainly found in HR and work-related policies. Notably, 68.4% expressed a preference to continue working remotely in their careers.

5.2. Employee Satisfaction and Quality of Life

- 1) Both male and female respondents express high job satisfaction due to the introduction of remote work. Notably, women show a higher satisfaction rate (41%), possibly attributed to remote work providing them with the flexibility to balance family and professional responsibilities. Middle-aged individuals (26-35 years) report increased job satisfaction and improved quality of life with the advent of remote work.
- 2) Employees in the private sector indicate a high level of work-life balance achieved through remote work, with 75% of respondents giving the highest rating. The private sector dominates the respondents, constituting 67% of the total, further emphasizing its impact on employee satisfaction. Professional staff members derive higher job satisfaction from remote work compared to lower-position employees. As position level decreases, job satisfaction tends to decrease, indicating that employees in higher positions generally find greater satisfaction in their roles.
- 3) Level of Education: Bachelor's degree holders predominantly rate job performance positively (ratings 3 to 5), suggesting adaptability to remote work conditions. Master's and Ph.D. holders exhibit a more diverse range of ratings, reflecting varied experiences in remote work.
- 4) Age Group: The 26-35 age group, representing the

largest segment, displays balanced job performance ratings, highlighting their successful adaptation to remote work. Contrary to stereotypes, older age groups (36-45 and 46-55) also exhibit positive performance ratings, challenging assumptions about age-related adaptability to remote work.

- 5) Remote work has both positive and negative outcomes, with studies indicating higher job satisfaction, autonomy, and work-life wellness, as well as lower work-family conflict. Factors such as a good working relationship among employees and with supervisors contribute to positive remote work outcomes. While remote work enhances flexibility and job satisfaction, it can lead to challenges like difficulty disengaging from work, longer working hours, and increased family-to-work conflict.

5.3. Organizational Productivity as a Result of Remote Work

The impact of remote work on organizational productivity varies across sectors, with the private sector generally experiencing more positive outcomes. While the private sector has successfully adapted to managing remote teams, the public sector and civil society display mixed perceptions.

5.4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

In Uganda, although there are no specific policies to accommodate remote work, although there exist a few Key policies, such as the Employment Governance Framework (EGF), the National Information and Communications Technology policy, the National Information Security framework, and the National Employment Policy, which have been enacted to provide strategic guidance, enhance ICT infrastructure, ensure information security, and promote employment creation.

5.5. Recommendations

- 1) Organizations need to develop clear policies and associated guidelines for the implementation of remote workings
- 2) Organizations need to design and implement robust systems for providing mental health support to remote working employees
- 3) Organizations need to define appropriate technology ecosystem to use to support remote working

Abbreviations

EGF	Employment Governance Framework
ILO	International Labor Organization
MDAL	Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Local Governments
NEC	National Employment Council
NDP	National Development Plan

NPDP National Physical Development Plan
PhD Doctor of Philosophy

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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