

Productive Innovation or Disruptive Irritation: An Exploration of Stakeholder Perspective on Remote Work in the Institutes of Higher learning in Zimbabwe (A Case of Midlands State University)

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Abstract

Objective: The major objective of this study was to establish whether remote work was yielding positive results in the Institutions of higher learning. In order to achieve the major objective, the study explored the advantages of remote work and the challenges that are associated with remote work. Furthermore, the study explored some intervention mechanisms that may be can be implemented to support remote work. **Method:** In order to achieve the research objectives, the study adopted the qualitative study, using a case study design. Convenience sampling methods was adopted to come up with a sample of 45 participants that would be interviewed. Face to face interviews were conducted using semi-structured interviews. **Result:** After data collection and analysis, the study results showed that remote work enables employee flexibility, employee autonomy, increased employee productivity as well as cost savings. The results of the study also showed that remote work also comes with its own challenges such as isolation, role conflict and technological challenges. Furthermore, the study found that there are some intervention mechanisms that can be employed to support remote working in the institutions of higher learning. The intervention mechanisms include training, technological infrastructure, data access and mental health care. **Conclusion:** Conclusions from the study indicate that remote work is viable and beneficial at MSU. However, the study also established that remote work has its own challenges. The study concluded that the challenges can be mitigated by some intervention mechanisms.

Keywords: academic staff, COVID-19, flexibility, higher education, remote work