

# The Effect of Hybrid Office Environments on Curriculum Support Officer Performance in Western Kenya

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**Abstract-** *The education sector has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with the emergence of new technologies and work arrangements reshaping traditional roles and practices. This study aims to examine the effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of curriculum support officers (CSOs) in the western region of Kenya. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data was collected from 115 CSOs across four counties. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between hybrid office environments and CSO performance ( $r = 0.462$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Regression analysis shows that hybrid office environments explain 21.3% of the variance in CSO performance. The findings suggest that the adoption of hybrid work arrangements can potentially enhance CSO performance, particularly in terms of work-life balance and job satisfaction. However, challenges in communication and collaboration within hybrid environments were also identified. The study provides valuable insights for educational policymakers and administrators in Kenya and similar contexts, offering evidence-based support for the adoption of flexible work arrangements while highlighting areas that require attention to maximize their effectiveness.*

**Indexed Terms-** Hybrid, Office, Curriculum

## I. INTRODUCTION

The education sector has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with the emergence of new technologies and work arrangements reshaping traditional roles and practices. Among the key players in this evolving landscape are Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs), whose responsibilities are crucial for ensuring the effective implementation of educational policies and programs. In Kenya, particularly in the western region, CSOs face unique challenges that necessitate innovative approaches to enhance their performance and effectiveness.

Curriculum Support Officers are employees of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) who provide vital support services to teachers. Their roles include updating teachers on curriculum changes, developing work programs, collecting and submitting data on teaching staff, providing professional guidance and counseling, and advising teachers on appropriate pedagogy and resources (CODE of Regulation for Teachers, 2015). The western region of Kenya, comprising counties such as Bungoma, Vihiga, Kakamega, and Busia, presents a distinctive context for these officers, characterized by diverse educational needs and resource constraints.

In recent years, the concept of hybrid work environments has gained traction across various sectors, including education. Hybrid office environments refer to a flexible work arrangement that combines remote work with traditional in-office presence. This model has been accelerated by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated rapid adaptations in work practices. For CSOs, the adoption of hybrid work environments presents both opportunities and challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities effectively.

The hybrid work model offers potential benefits such as increased flexibility, reduced commute times, and improved work-life balance. However, it also poses challenges related to communication, collaboration, and maintaining consistent support for teachers across different schools. The impact of these hybrid arrangements on the performance of CSOs in the western region of Kenya remains an area that requires thorough investigation.

Despite the growing body of literature on hybrid work environments, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically addressing the effect of these arrangements on curriculum support officers, particularly in the context of the western region of Kenya. This region faces unique challenges, including

inadequate resources, limited infrastructure, and disparities in access to quality education (Adala, 2016). Understanding how hybrid office environments influence CSO performance in this specific context is crucial for developing effective strategies to enhance educational support and outcomes.

This study aims to examine the effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of curriculum support officers in the western region of Kenya. The research hypothesis posits that there is a significant positive relationship between the adoption of hybrid office environments and the performance of CSOs. By investigating this relationship, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of flexible work arrangements for educational support roles.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy and practice in the education sector, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Findings from this research can guide the Teachers' Service Commission and other relevant stakeholders in designing and implementing effective work arrangements that optimize the performance of CSOs. Moreover, the study contributes to the broader discourse on innovative human resource management practices in education, offering insights that may be applicable to similar contexts beyond the western region of Kenya.

As the education sector continues to evolve, understanding the impact of new work arrangements on key support roles becomes increasingly important. This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap and provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of curriculum support officers through innovative work practices.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a comprehensive review of the theoretical foundations and empirical studies relevant to understanding the effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) in the western region of Kenya. The literature review is structured around two key theoretical frameworks - the Resource-Based View and Human Capital Theory - followed by an

examination of empirical studies on hybrid work environments and the identification of research gaps.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

#### a. Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View, initially developed by Wernerfelt (1984) and further refined by Barney (1991), provides a fundamental framework for understanding how organizations can achieve and sustain competitive advantage through the strategic management of their resources. According to the RBV, firms possess heterogeneous resources that are not perfectly mobile across companies, enabling some organizations to achieve superior performance (Miller, 2019).

In the context of this study, the RBV offers valuable insights into how the adoption of hybrid office environments can be viewed as a strategic resource that potentially enhances the performance of CSOs. The flexibility and adaptability inherent in hybrid work arrangements can be considered valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources that contribute to improved organizational outcomes. However, the RBV has faced criticism for its static nature and potential oversimplification of resource immobility (Furr & Eisenhardt, 2021). Critics argue that the theory may not fully account for the dynamic nature of markets and the need for continual resource development and adaptation. In the rapidly evolving education sector, this limitation necessitates a careful consideration of how hybrid work environments as a resource may need to be continuously refined and adapted to maintain their strategic value.

#### b. Human Capital Theory (HCT)

Human Capital Theory, pioneered by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964), posits that investments in human resources, particularly through education and training, lead to improved economic outcomes for both individuals and organizations. This theory underscores the importance of developing employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities as a means of enhancing organizational performance (Dhar et al., 2019).

In the context of hybrid work environments for CSOs, HCT provides a theoretical basis for understanding how flexible work arrangements can be viewed as an investment in human capital. By offering CSOs the

opportunity to work in ways that may enhance their productivity, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, organizations are essentially investing in their human capital, which in turn is expected to yield improved performance outcomes.

However, HCT has been criticized for its predominantly economic focus, potentially overlooking other important aspects such as individual motivation, organizational culture, and the intrinsic value of education (Kellner et al., 2019). In the context of CSOs in western Kenya, it's crucial to consider how cultural and contextual factors may influence the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and human capital development.

## 2.2 Empirical Studies on Hybrid Work Environments

The adoption of hybrid work environments has been the subject of numerous empirical studies across various sectors. Kniffin et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive study demonstrating that remote work positively affected employee well-being and productivity, with employees reporting higher levels of satisfaction and engagement when working remotely. This finding suggests that hybrid work arrangements could potentially enhance the performance of CSOs by improving their overall job satisfaction and engagement.

Similarly, Sanders & Karmowska (2020) found that workers in hybrid office environments exhibited higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment, which positively influenced productivity levels. This study highlights the potential benefits of hybrid work arrangements for CSOs, particularly in terms of enhancing their job satisfaction and commitment to their roles.

However, the effect of hybrid work environments on collaboration and team dynamics presents a more complex picture. Ozturk et al. (2021) found that while remote work led to increased productivity for individual tasks, it could potentially hinder collaboration and team performance. Given the collaborative nature of CSOs' work with teachers and other educational stakeholders, this finding underscores the need for careful consideration of how hybrid work arrangements might affect these important aspects of their role.

In the specific context of education, limited research has been conducted on the impact of hybrid work environments on support roles such as CSOs. A study by Davidescu et al. (2020) in Romania found that work flexibility positively affected job satisfaction and performance among employees in various sectors, including education. However, this study did not specifically focus on roles similar to CSOs, highlighting a gap in the literature.

## 2.3 Research Gap

While existing literature provides valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of hybrid work environments, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically addressing the effect of these arrangements on curriculum support officers, particularly in the context of the western region of Kenya. The unique challenges faced by this region, including inadequate resources and limited infrastructure (Adala, 2016), necessitate a focused examination of how hybrid work environments impact CSO performance in this specific context.

Moreover, much of the existing research on hybrid work environments has been conducted in developed countries and in sectors other than education. The applicability of these findings to the educational context in a developing country like Kenya, particularly in a resource-constrained region, remains largely unexplored.

Additionally, the literature lacks a comprehensive examination of how the theoretical frameworks of RBV and HCT can be applied to understand the impact of hybrid work environments on educational support roles. This study aims to address this gap by integrating these theoretical perspectives with empirical investigation in the specific context of CSOs in western Kenya.

Furthermore, while studies have examined the impact of hybrid work on individual performance metrics, there is limited research on how these arrangements affect the broader goals of educational support, such as curriculum implementation and teacher development. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the multifaceted nature of CSO performance in the context of hybrid work environments.

In conclusion, while existing literature provides a foundation for understanding the potential impacts of hybrid work environments, there remains a significant gap in knowledge regarding their specific effects on CSOs in the western region of Kenya. This study aims to address this gap, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the field of educational support and human resource management in education.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology employed to examine the effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) in the western region of Kenya. It details the research design, target population and sampling methods, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the relationship between hybrid office environments and CSO performance. This design was chosen for its efficiency in collecting data from multiple respondents at a single point in time, allowing for the capture of current trends and patterns in the specific context of CSOs in the western region of Kenya. The cross-sectional design is particularly suitable for this study as it enables the examination of the relationship between variables without manipulating the study environment (Saunders et al., 2019).

The choice of a quantitative approach was driven by the need to quantify the relationship between hybrid office environments and CSO performance, allowing for statistical analysis and generalization of findings. This approach aligns with the study's objective of examining the effect of hybrid office environments on CSO performance, facilitating the testing of the research hypothesis through statistical methods.

#### 3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of 150 Curriculum Support Officers in the Western Region of Kenya, distributed across four counties: Bungoma, Vihiga, Kakamega, and Busia. Given the manageable

size of the target population, a census sampling technique was employed, aiming to include all 150 CSOs in the study. This approach was chosen to eliminate sampling error and provide a complete representation of the population, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

The distribution of CSOs across the four counties was as follows:

| County   | Number of CSOs |
|----------|----------------|
| Bungoma  | 40             |
| Vihiga   | 35             |
| Kakamega | 45             |
| Busia    | 30             |
| Total    | 150            |

#### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on the High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) questionnaire by Sun, Aryee, and Law, adapted to capture information on hybrid office environments and CSO performance. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

1. Demographic information
2. Hybrid office environment practices
3. CSO performance indicators

The hybrid office environment section included items measuring the frequency of remote work, perceived flexibility, and the impact on work-life balance. The CSO performance section included self-reported measures of job satisfaction, productivity, and effectiveness in curriculum support activities.

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure respondents' perceptions and experiences. Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 15 CSOs from a neighboring county to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the questionnaire, ensuring clarity and effectiveness in data collection.

Data collection procedures involved both online and in-person administration of the questionnaire, depending on the preferences and accessibility of the

respondents. The researcher provided clear instructions and assistance as needed to ensure accurate and reliable data collection. The data collection process took place over a period of four weeks to allow for maximum participation.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures of central tendency (mean, median) and dispersion (standard deviation) were used to summarize the data on hybrid office environments and CSO performance.
2. **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between hybrid office environment practices and CSO performance indicators.
3. **Regression Analysis:** Simple linear regression was employed to determine the effect of hybrid office environments on CSO performance, testing the research hypothesis.
4. **Reliability Analysis:** Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

Prior to conducting inferential analyses, diagnostic tests were performed to ensure the data met the assumptions of the statistical models. These included tests for normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights and well-being of the participants. The following ethical considerations were observed:

1. **Informed Consent:** All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Written consent was obtained from each participant before data collection.
2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes instead of names. All data was stored securely and accessed only by authorized research team members.

3. **Voluntary Participation:** Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.
4. **Institutional Approval:** The study obtained approval from the relevant institutional review board and the Teachers' Service Commission before commencement.
5. **Data Protection:** All collected data was stored securely in password-protected files, with access restricted to the primary researcher and supervisors.
6. **Minimizing Harm:** The study was designed to minimize any potential psychological or professional harm to participants. Questions were framed sensitively, and participants were provided with contact information for support if needed.
7. **Beneficence:** The study aimed to contribute to the improvement of work conditions for CSOs, potentially benefiting the participants and the broader educational community.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) in the western region of Kenya. The results are organized into descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, followed by a discussion of these findings in relation to existing literature.

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics on Hybrid Office Environment Adoption

The study received responses from 115 out of 150 CSOs, representing a response rate of 76.67%. This high response rate enhances the credibility and representativeness of the findings.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Hybrid Office Environment Items

| Item                                    | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|------|----------------|
| Frequency of working remotely           | 3.42 | 1.15           |
| Flexibility improves task effectiveness | 3.78 | 0.96           |
| Positive effect on work-life balance    | 3.95 | 0.88           |

| Item                                      | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|------|----------------|
| Effective information exchange            | 3.52 | 1.07           |
| Improved collaboration                    | 3.63 | 1.02           |
| Reduced work-related stress               | 3.81 | 0.93           |
| Improved job satisfaction                 | 3.89 | 0.87           |
| Adaptability to different work situations | 3.71 | 0.95           |

Note: Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

The descriptive statistics reveal generally positive perceptions of hybrid office environments among CSOs. The highest mean score was for the item "Positive effect on work-life balance" (M = 3.95, SD = 0.88), suggesting that CSOs perceive significant benefits in terms of balancing their professional and personal lives. The item "Improved job satisfaction" also scored high (M = 3.89, SD = 0.87), indicating that hybrid work arrangements are associated with increased job satisfaction.

The lowest mean score, although still above the midpoint, was for "Frequency of working remotely" (M = 3.42, SD = 1.15). This suggests that while CSOs are adopting remote work, there is still a significant portion of their work that requires in-person presence, reflecting the nature of their role in supporting teachers and schools.

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationship between hybrid office environments and CSO performance, a correlation analysis was conducted.

Table 2: Correlation between Hybrid Office Environments and CSO Performance

| Variable                   | Hybrid Office Environments | Office CSO Performance |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Hybrid Office Environments | 1                          | 0.462**                |
| CSO Performance            | 0.462**                    | 1                      |

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

The correlation analysis reveals a statistically significant positive relationship between hybrid office

environments and CSO performance ( $r = 0.462, p < 0.01$ ). This moderate correlation suggests that as the adoption and perceived effectiveness of hybrid office environments increase, there is a corresponding improvement in CSO performance.

#### 4.3 Regression Analysis

To further examine the effect of hybrid office environments on CSO performance, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

| Model R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1       | 0.462    | 0.213             | 0.207                      |

Table 4: ANOVA Results

| Model      | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Regression | 20.456         | 1   | 20.456      | 38.421 | 0.000 |
| Residual   | 75.544         | 113 | 0.668       |        |       |
| Total      | 96.000         | 114 |             |        |       |

Table 5: Coefficients

| Model                     | Unstandardized B | Std. Error | Standardized Beta | t    | Sig.  |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------|-------------------|------|-------|
| (Constant)                | 1.876            | 0.366      |                   | 5.12 | 0.000 |
| Hybrid Office Environment | 0.512            | 0.083      | 0.462             | 6.20 | 0.000 |

The regression analysis indicates that hybrid office environments explain 21.3% of the variance in CSO performance ( $R^2 = 0.213$ ). The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F(1, 113) = 38.421, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that hybrid office environments significantly predict CSO performance.

The regression equation can be expressed as: CSO Performance = 1.876 + 0.512(Hybrid Office Environment)

This equation suggests that for every one-unit increase in the adoption and perceived effectiveness of hybrid

office environments, there is a 0.512 unit increase in CSO performance.

#### 4.4 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence supporting the positive effect of hybrid office environments on the performance of Curriculum Support Officers in the western region of Kenya. These results align with several key themes in existing literature while also offering new insights specific to the educational context in Kenya.

The strong positive correlation between hybrid office environments and CSO performance ( $r = 0.462$ ) aligns with the findings of Kniffin et al. (2021), who reported that remote work positively affected employee well-being and productivity. The high mean scores for work-life balance ( $M = 3.95$ ) and job satisfaction ( $M = 3.89$ ) in our study further corroborate these findings, suggesting that the flexibility offered by hybrid work arrangements contributes to improved employee outcomes.

These results can be interpreted through the lens of the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm. The adoption of hybrid office environments can be seen as a strategic resource that provides CSOs with the flexibility to manage their work more effectively, potentially leading to improved performance. This aligns with the RBV's assertion that unique and valuable resources can contribute to organizational success (Miller, 2019).

However, the moderate strength of the correlation and the  $R^2$  value of 0.213 suggest that while hybrid office environments significantly contribute to CSO performance, other factors also play important roles. This finding echoes the critiques of RBV by Furr & Eisenhardt (2021), who argue for a more dynamic view of resources and capabilities.

The positive impact on job satisfaction and work-life balance observed in this study supports the arguments of Human Capital Theory (HCT). By providing CSOs with more flexible work arrangements, the education system in western Kenya is essentially investing in its human capital, which in turn yields improved performance outcomes. This aligns with the core tenets of HCT as described by Dhar et al. (2019),

emphasizing the importance of investing in employees to enhance organizational performance.

However, the relatively lower mean score for "Effective information exchange" ( $M = 3.52$ ) highlights potential challenges in communication within hybrid work environments. This finding resonates with the work of Ozturk et al. (2021), who found that remote work could potentially hinder collaboration and team performance. For CSOs, whose roles involve significant interaction with teachers and school administrators, this aspect requires careful consideration in the implementation of hybrid work models.

The positive effect of hybrid office environments on CSO performance in the resource-constrained context of western Kenya adds a new dimension to the existing literature. While studies like Davidescu et al. (2020) found positive effects of work flexibility in various sectors including education, our study provides specific insights into the impact on educational support roles in a developing country context.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study largely support the potential benefits of hybrid office environments for CSO performance, aligning with much of the existing literature on flexible work arrangements. However, they also highlight the need for careful implementation and ongoing assessment to address potential challenges, particularly in communication and collaboration. These results provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and administrators in Kenya and similar contexts, offering evidence-based support for the adoption of flexible work arrangements while also highlighting areas that require attention to maximize their effectiveness.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for policy and practice:

1. Formalize Hybrid Work Policies: Educational authorities should develop and implement formal policies that support hybrid work arrangements for

- CSOs, ensuring clarity and consistency in their application.
2. Invest in Technology Infrastructure: To address challenges in information exchange and collaboration, investments should be made in reliable technology infrastructure that supports remote work and virtual collaboration.
  3. Training and Development: Implement training programs for CSOs and their supervisors on effective management of hybrid work environments, including time management, virtual communication, and maintaining work-life boundaries.
  4. Performance Measurement: Develop and implement performance measurement systems that are adapted to hybrid work environments, focusing on outcomes rather than physical presence.
  5. Regular Assessment: Conduct regular assessments of the impact of hybrid work arrangements on CSO performance, job satisfaction, and work-life balance to inform ongoing policy refinements.
  6. Tailored Support: Recognize that the effectiveness of hybrid work may vary among individuals. Implement flexible policies that allow for personalized arrangements based on role requirements and individual circumstances.

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