
THE INFLUENCE OF TELEWORKING ON PERFORMANCE OF CLEARING AND FORWARDING FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

This study sought to establish the influence of teleworking on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of flexible working arrangement on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya, to assess the influence of temporary contracts on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. This study used of a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis in this study was the 450 clearing and forwarding firms operating in Nairobi County. The study targeted 900 respondents. Primary data was collected through use of questionnaires. Quantitative and qualitative data was generated from the closed-ended and open-ended questions, respectively. Qualitative data was analyzed on thematic basis and the findings provided in a narrative form. Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed for analysis of quantitative data with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). 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 study results were presented through use of tables and figures. The study concludes that flexible working arrangement has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. In addition, the study concludes that temporary contracts has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. From the results, the study recommends that the management of clearing and forwarding firms should continue embracing flexible working arrangement during the COVID 19 period.

Keywords

Teleworking, flexible working arrangement, clearing and forwarding, temporary contracts

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INTRODUCTION

The transport and logistics sector is a major victim of Covid-19. The industry, which is driven by facilitating cargo movement to or from different geographical locations, supports key economic sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, aid and relief, construction, education amongst others. However, the interventions to stop the spread of the Covid-19 have made it challenging if not impossible to move goods from point A to B thus affecting trade between regions (Pocock, & Charlesworth, 2020).

According to Ikegwuru and Horsfall (2020) the impact of COVID-19 pandemic was earliest experienced in China owing to the role it plays in worldwide manufacturing, with Wuhan, the epicenter of the deadly disease, playing a predominantly momentous role. Major industries around the world, including automotive, electronics, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and supplies, as well as consumer goods, were affected. The pandemic stretched to the rest of the world, leading to lockdowns and border closures that constrained the movement of goods. Additional protocols (such as social distancing at warehouses) pioneered to guarantee the protection of workforce contributed to restricted access for shipment. The impacts on shipment aptitude were visible in three key worldwide transportation fragments: ocean, land, and air. Governmental restrictions wishing to unhurried down the stretch of epidemic and pandemic outburst show the way to mutilations for trade and industry processes, which impact on logistics operations. Ensuing panic buying and mounting home consumption had multipurpose impacts on transportation, warehousing and inventory management.

Telework has become a very popular arrangement that has grown rapidly worldwide, most recently due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Tapas & Taggar, 2021). As the lockdowns measures entered into force, a large proportion of the workforce was instructed to stay home and continue to work remotely - if their functions make it possible. Organizations that were previously familiar with teleworking, as well as organizations that haven't experimented with teleworking before, were sending their employees home, creating the conditions for the most extensive mass teleworking experiment in history.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking was widely adopted in the European Union in domains such as information and communication services and knowledge-intensive business services (Milasi, *et al.*, 2021), areas where teleworking has remained an optimal solution during the pandemic (EU, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only private companies but also public institutions have adopted teleworking, predominantly in the fields of education, financial services, and public administration (Milasi, *et al.*, 2021). In its first manifestations, teleworking was understood to be an advantageous work arrangement, given its task performing flexibility (Tapas & Taggar, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The transport and logistics sector is a major victim of Covid-19. The industry, which is driven by facilitating cargo movement to or from different geographical locations, supports key economic sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, aid and relief, construction, education amongst others. However, the interventions to stop the spread of the Covid-19 have made it challenging if not impossible to move goods from point A to B thus affecting trade between regions (Cheruiyot, 2020)

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the aviation sector supports 6.2 million jobs in Africa or 2.6 per cent of Africa's GDP. However, since January 2020 over 185,000 pax have cancelled flights and vital cargo capacity disappeared. This has a negatively affected the air freight sector whose goods primarily comprise pharmaceuticals, chemicals, flowers, vegetables and fruits (Ongera & juma, 2020). Flower exports to key

markets such as the European Union (EU) have dropped by over 50 per cent due to the financial crisis caused by the Covid-19. The Dutch auction has been operating below capacity, making some farms to suspend shipping of flowers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only private companies but also public institutions have adopted teleworking, predominantly in the fields of education, financial services, and public administration (Martin, 2020).

Various studies have been conducted on teleworking and performance. For instance; Karácsony (2021) conducted a study on the impact of teleworking on job satisfaction among Slovakian employees in the era of COVID-19, Sefora, Dabija and Stanca (2021) researched on the influence of teleworking on performance and employees' counterproductive behavior, Odu (2018) conducted a study on the effect of teleworking system on employees' performance in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Upstream Sector and Cheruiyot (2020) researched on the influence of telework adoption and its effects on employee engagement: a survey of ICT organizations in Kenya. Nevertheless, none of these studies focused on teleworking and performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to determine the influence of teleworking (flexible working arrangement, interaction reduction, professional isolation and Self-regulatory capacity) on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya

1.3 Objective of the Study

- i. To establish the influence of flexible working arrangement on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya
- ii. To assess the influence of temporary contracts on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya

Theoretical Literature Review

Spill Over Theory

Spill over theory was postulated in 1979 by Piotrkowski. The theory actually talks about work and family life. The author advocated that job related factors and family related factors should be in equilibrium for employees to be productive, brings about customer satisfaction, have job satisfaction and control their employee turnover. The theory emphasizes on the tendency of the worker to carry their emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors that they establish at work into their family life and vice versa (Sidin *et al.*, 2010). The spillover process can be either positive or negative. The negative spill over induces stress in individuals and the positive spillover can lead to high levels of satisfaction. Extensive research into the field of work life balance has indicated that employees who continuously work long hours have greater degree of work life conflict (Dex & Bond, 2005). The boundary between work and home are relatively weak and tend to spill over positive or negative spills into the home or work environment (Kipkoech, 2018).

Simultaneous membership in the two systems often entails strain and overload for individuals, families, and work units. In general, the spillover effects pattern shifts attention from the effects of social institutions on each other to the effects of family members on each other, ignoring the social and political consequences of the context in which family and work are located. Spillover can be positive or negative. Positive spillover refers to fact that satisfaction and achievement in one domain may bring along satisfaction and achievement in another domain. Negative spillover refers to the fact that difficulties and depression in one domain may bring along the same emotion in another domain (Pocock & Charlesworth, 2020). This study used spill over theory to establish the effect of flexible working arrangement on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya

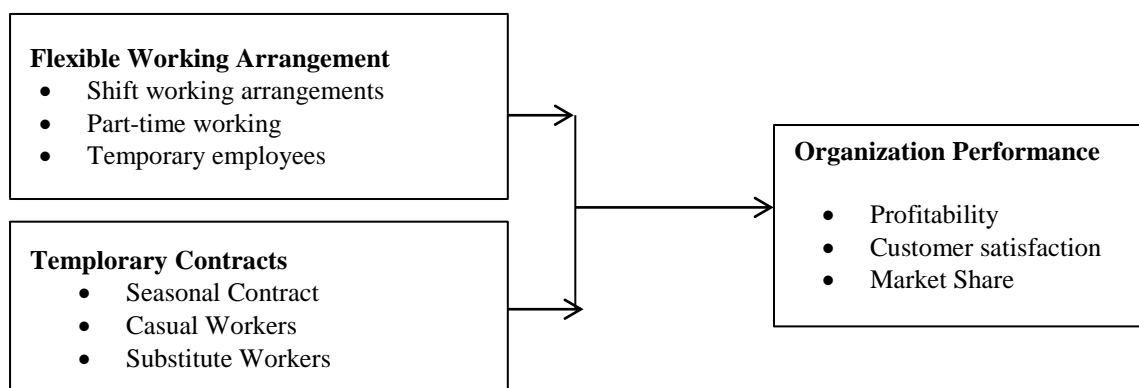
Equity Theory

Key components of motivated individuals are fairness and equity, Adams (1965). Fairness is believed to be source of motivation of individuals according to Equity Theory. Whenever inequalities are identified in overall outputs or inputs in reference to their referent groups, such employees will make adjustment in their level of performance to the level of their perceived level of equity. High level of input should always be rewarded highly and this is the expectation of employees. For instance, when staff put in more performance, they have high expectations of an increase in the pay they will ultimately receive (Cropanzano, 2016). This can be expressed as a ratio of outcomes per inputs. Employees will always compare what they produced against what they are paid with what other employees producing the same tasks are paid; this enablesthem gauge if there is equity at the work place. This theory suggests that motivation of staff at the work place will go up if they receive fair treatment (Dessler,2018)

According to this theory, when employees receive low pay, it makes them dissatisfied. This would further act as demotivator for individuals to reduce their efforts resulting into poor performance. One way of reducing efforts could be a reduction in inputs that would lower performance. The theory argues that over-rewarding an individual may result into feelings of guilt, resent or anger and other negative emotions. These feeling would thus act as motivator for employees to move towards lowering the imbalance. This will mean increasing output and therefore overall performance (Magassouba, 2019).

This theory can be used in all situations involving exchange. Thus, where there exist several components that can be enlisted as outcomes/inputs. However, there is difficulties in what these components are because they are subjective in nature (Siegel, Schraeder, & Morrison, 2017). According to Siegel, et al. there could exist patterns of how outcomes/inputs are framed by individuals. For instance, staffs are used to distinguishing inputs in relation to whether they can be controlled or not controlled (Siegel, *et. al.*, 2017). This study used equity theory to establish the influence of temporary contracts on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework



Flexible Working Arrangement

Flexible working arrangements are actually emerging issues in human resource management field. The world is becoming a global village, hence as an employee in any organization the balance between personal life and work responsibilities should not be ignored, if the employee performance is to be achieved. Employee performance is defined as work related task that is expected on employees and how well the task was done. The performance can be measured monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually to be able to provide improvement of

identified segment in the business (Dessler, 2008). Armstrong (2009) added that it is an element of both motivation and abilities of employee. The author addresses that it can be improved through careful placing and training programs with right incentive both monetary and non-monetary to improve the overall performance of the organization

Flexible working relates, to an organizations working arrangement in terms of working time, working location and pattern of working (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development). Flexible working arrangements like flexible part time, shift work, compressed work hours and job sharing are often used to help employees in balancing their family and work life (Lim & Teno, 2000) during 'core hours' which is usually fixed or a period between the latest permissible starting time and earliest permissible finishing time.

Temporary contracts

Temporary contracts are hard to determine since its evaluation is based on the job to be done. There not been clear view on the benefits or cost attached to the temporary employment. This has created divided view based on lack of commitment, insecurity, expensive, low esteem, high absenteeism and low performance (Armstrong, 2019). Though it can be considered as a way to evaluate the employee for further consideration making manager not make the wrong choose as well as used in job fluctuating industries to regulate balance or satisfy a job undertaking. Dessler (2018) added that it may be productive and cheaper in recruiting and training, though the overall cost is more by 20% to 50% as compared to some who is permanent employee

Empirical Literature Review

Pocock and Charlesworth (2020) studied the influence of workplace culture on quality employment that supports employees to resolve work and family over the life course in Australia. This study revealed three WLB interventions. Firstly, macro social and economic initiatives for employees that include provision for childcare, aged care, disability care, healthcare, transport, housing, education, social infrastructure, taxation and social security payments. Secondly, the regulation of work which consists of the nature of the employment contract, salary, working hours regulations and leave, the opportunity for an individual and collective voice. Finally, critical interventions occur at the workplace where local enterprise and workplace culture and immediate supervision are the filters through which regulation takes or fails to take effect. This study also revealed that workplace cultures are essential as a determinant in ensuring employee quality that accommodates care. In regard to the flexibility in working hours, the study discovered that intense workloads and long working hours impedes flexibility.

Kipkoech (2018) conducted a study on flexible working arrangements on employee performance in Kericho county referral hospital, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population was stratified into top management, doctors, clinical officers, nurses and subordinates consisting of 111 employees of Kericho County Referral Hospital. A sample of 104 staff of Kericho referral hospital was selected using stratified sample techniques and from each strata simple random sampling was used. The data was collected using closed and open ended questionnaire. The finding indicated that flexi working strategies was significant to performance of employees in an organization. It was noted that the performance contributed by flexi working methods were 22.9% while other factors which was not measured was 77.1%. Temporary contract, work shift and part time working were positive significant predictors while flexi time positive but not significant to performance

Ongera and juma (2019) conducted a study the influence of temporary employment on employee performance: A Case Study of Safaricom Limited. The study adopted a descriptive

design. A sample of 112 staff of Safaricom Limited were selected using stratified random sampling. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires. Out of the 112 selected respondents, 97 filled and returned the questionnaires. The responses in the questionnaire were tabulated, coded and processed by use of computer Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) versions 17.0. Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were applied in the data analysis. The study found out that there was a positive relationship between temporary employment and employee performance. Employees took up temporary employment as an alternative to lack of permanent employment, and with the hope of gaining permanent employment in the longer term.

Martin (2019) revealed that the average productivity of temporary workers is lower than that of permanent ones due to the negative effect over the worker's effort caused by the expectation that its contract could not be renewed. Temporary contracts can have a positive effect on effort if workers perceive that the rehiring probability depends on past performance. This motivates them to put in more effort to enhance their chances of contract renewal. If the renewal rate is low, firms and workers may be less inclined to invest in specific human capital, which implies that workers with temporary contracts will tend to receive less training and it will affect their productivity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis is what is being targeted in the research. The unit of analysis in this study was the clearing and forwarding firms operating in Nairobi County. According to Kenya International Freight and Warehousing Association (KIFWA), there are 450 clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi County. The unit of observation was therefore 900 participants comprising of two senior employees from each firm. The study's sample size was reached at using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination formula. Simple random sampling was used to select 269 respondents from the total population. Primary data was used in this study. A questionnaire which is a form of quantitative data collection tool was used to collect primary data. Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed for analysis of quantitative data with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). 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.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics

Performance of Clearing and Forwarding Firms

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that performance of some clearing and forwarding firms has stagnated. This is supported by a mean of 3.968 (std. dv = 0.905). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.859 (std. dv = 0.885), the respondents agreed that the profitability of some clearing and forwarding firms has stagnated. Further, the respondents agreed that there are few complaints on the level of service delivery. This is shown by a mean of 3.800 (std. dv = 0.605). As shown by a mean of 3.785 (std. dv = 0.981), the respondents agreed that the market share of some clearing and forwarding firms has improved.

Table 1: Performance of Clearing and Forwarding Firms

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The performance of some clearing and forwarding firms has stagnated	3.968	0.905
The profitability of some clearing and forwarding firms has stagnated	3.859	0.885
There are few complaints on the level of service delivery	3.800	0.605
The market share of some clearing and forwarding firms has improved	3.785	0.981
Aggregate	3.848	0.832

Flexible Working Arrangement and Performance of Firms

The first specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of flexible working arrangement on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that flexible working arrangement influence performance of clearing and forwarding firms. This is supported by a mean of 3.944 (std. dv = 0.989). In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.917 (std. dv = 0.805), the respondents agreed that shift working arrangements has been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms. Further, the respondents agreed that part-time working has been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms. This is shown by a mean of 3.855 (std. dv = 0.981). The respondents also agreed that some of the employees in clearing and forwarding firms are temporary employees. This is shown by a mean of 3.849 (std. dv = 0.923). From the results, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.803 (std. dv = 0.874) that they are satisfied with the flexibility of working arrangement put in place.

Table 2: Flexible Working Arrangement and Performance of Firms

	Mean	Std. Deviation
flexible working arrangement influence performance of clearing and forwarding firms	3.944	0.989
Shift working arrangements has been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms	3.917	0.805
Part-time working has been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms	3.855	0.981
Some of the employees in clearing and forwarding firms are temporary employees	3.849	0.923
Am satisfied with the flexibility of working arrangement put in place	3.803	0.874
Aggregate	3.858	0.914

Temporary Contracts and Performance of Clearing and Forwarding Firms

The second specific objective of the study was to assess the influence of temporary contracts on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that temporary contracts influence performance of clearing and forwarding firms. This is shown by a mean of 3.835 (std. dv = 0.793). In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.813 (std. dv = 0.884) that seasonal contracts have been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms. Further, as shown by a mean of 3.798 (std. dv = 0.786), the respondents agreed that clearing and forwarding firms have employed casual workers. The respondents also agreed that some of the employees in clearing and forwarding firms are substitute workers. This is shown by a mean of 3.788 (std.

dv = 0.892). Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.723 (std. dv = 0.786) that they are satisfied with the effectiveness of temporary contracts in their firm.

Table 3: Temporary Contracts and Performance of Firms

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Temporary contracts influence performance of clearing and forwarding firms	3.835	0.793
Seasonal contracts have been adopted by clearing and forwarding firms	3.813	0.884
Clearing and forwarding firms have employed casual workers	3.798	0.786
Some of the employees in clearing and forwarding firms are substitute workers	3.788	0.892
Am satisfied with the effectiveness of temporary contracts in our firm	3.723	0.786
Aggregate	3.788	0.897

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables and the dependent variable (performance of clearing and forwarding firms). Pearson correlation coefficient range between zero and one, where by the strength of association increase with increase in the value of the correlation coefficients.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Organization Performance	Flexible Working Arrangement	Temporary Contracts
Organization Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	251		
Flexible Working Arrangement	Pearson Correlation	.858**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	251	251	
Temporary Contracts	Pearson Correlation	.805**	.289	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.061	
	N	251	251	251

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between flexible working arrangement and performance of clearing and forwarding firms ($r = 0.858$, 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 Pocock and Charlesworth (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between flexible working arrangement and organization performance.

Moreover, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between temporary contracts and performance of clearing and forwarding firms ($r = 0.805$, p value = 0.003). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The

findings conform to the findings of Ongera and juma (2019) that there is a very strong relationship between temporary contracts and organization performance.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (flexible working arrangement, temporary contracts, professional isolation and Self-regulatory capacity) and the dependent variable (performance of clearing and forwarding firms)

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.931	.867	.868	.10428

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 0.867. This implied that 86.7% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of clearing and forwarding firms) could be explained by independent variables (flexible working arrangement, temporary contracts).

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	41.081	4	10.270	349.33	.000 ^b
1 Residual	7.254	246	.0294		
Total	48.335	250			

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 349.33 while the F critical was 2.408. The p value was 0.000. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.000 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 flexible working arrangement, temporary contracts, professional isolation and Self-regulatory capacity on performance of clearing and forwarding firms.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.204		3.517	0.001
	flexible working arrangement	0.377	0.379	3.590	0.000
	temporary contracts	0.462	0.463	4.277	0.001

a Dependent Variable: Firm Performance

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.204 + 0.377X_1 + 0.462X_2 + \varepsilon$$

According to the results, flexible working arrangement has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms, $\beta_1=0.377$, 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 Pocock and Charlesworth (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between flexible working arrangement and organization performance.

The results also revealed that temporary contracts has significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms, $\beta_1=0.462$, 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

conform to the findings of Ongera and juma (2019) that there is a very strong relationship between temporary contracts and organization performance.

Conclusions

The study concludes that flexible working arrangement has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The study findings revealed that shift working arrangements, part-time working and temporary employees influences performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

In addition, the study concludes that temporary contracts has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. The study findings revealed that seasonal Contract, casual Workers and substitute Workers influences performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study found that flexible working arrangement has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. This study therefore recommends that the management of clearing and forwarding firms should continue embracing flexible working arrangement during the COVID 19 period.

In addition, the study found that temporary contracts has a significant effect on performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. This study therefore recommends that the management of clearing and forwarding firms should continue embracing temporary contracts arrangement during the COVID 19 period.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was limited to performance of clearing and forwarding firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya, hence the study findings cannot be generalized to other firms in Kenya. The study therefore suggests further studies on the influence of teleworking on performance of other firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

Further, the study found that the independent variables (flexible working arrangement, temporary contracts, professional isolation and Self-regulatory capacity) could only explain 86.7% of performance of clearing and forwarding firms. This study therefore suggests further research on other factors affecting performance of clearing and forwarding firms.

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