

# The Evolving Remote Workforce, the Multigenerational Workforce, and Supporting Employee Mental Health in the Context of Africa

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## ABSTRACT

This conceptual review delves into the dynamics of the African workforce, influenced by trends such as remote work, multigenerational employees, and the growing importance of employee mental health support. The adoption of remote work in Africa presents both challenges and opportunities. Limited access to reliable internet infrastructure and disparities in digital inclusion are hurdles, yet it brings benefits such as increased job opportunities and better work-life balance. The multigenerational workforce in Africa, composed of various generations, can lead to communication barriers and differing expectations, but it also offers potential for innovation and creativity. Recognizing the significance of mental health in the African context, organizations should prioritize support programs to boost employee well-being and productivity. The review discusses emerging trends like clean technology, gender inclusivity, international business opportunities, global marketing strategies, and global best practices in human resource management. The methodology involved a systematic literature search and analysis. This review, while acknowledging its knowledge cut-off date in September 2021, provides recommendations for enhancing digital infrastructure, promoting intergenerational understanding, implementing mental health support, embracing clean technology, fostering gender inclusivity, analyzing international business opportunities, implementing global marketing strategies, and incorporating global best practices in human resource management. By addressing these aspects, African organizations and policymakers can navigate these workforce transformations effectively.

**Keywords:** Evolving remote workforce, Multigenerational workforce, employee mental health, Africa, Workforce dynamic

## INTRODUCTION

The African workforce is experiencing a profound shift in its composition and dynamics, driven by various factors, such as the increasing prevalence of remote work, the coexistence of multigenerational employees, and the growing recognition of the significance of supporting employee mental health. These transformations have been shaped by global trends, advancements in technology, and the distinct socioeconomic context of the African continent. Understanding the challenges and opportunities that arise from these changes is crucial for organizations, policymakers, and researchers seeking to navigate and leverage the evolving remote workforce, multigenerational workforce, and promotion of employee mental health in Africa. The adoption of remote work has gained significant momentum across the globe, including Africa. Advancements in technology, digital connectivity, and the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated this trend, compelling organizations to explore flexible work arrangements to ensure business continuity and

employee well-being. The shift towards remote work in Africa presents challenges and opportunities. Limited access to reliable Internet infrastructure, inadequate technological resources, and disparities in digital inclusion pose significant obstacles for remote work implementation. Cultural, socio-economic, and geographic factors further compounded the complexities of remote work in Africa. Despite these challenges, remote work also brings potential benefits, such as increased job opportunities, enhanced work-life balance, and reduced geographical constraints (Arlitt et al- 2023).

Alongside the evolving remote workforce, Africa hosts a diverse, multigenerational workforce. This workforce consists of individuals spanning different generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, each bringing unique perspectives, values, and expectations to the workplace. The presence of multiple generations presents challenges and opportunities for organizations in Africa. Communication barriers, differing work styles, and varying career expectations can create tension and hinder collaboration. However, the diverse experiences, skills, and knowledge of multigenerational employees offer immense potential for innovation, creativity, and learning within organizations. Organizations can create inclusive and dynamic work environments by fostering intergenerational understanding and leveraging the strengths of each generation (Begazo, Blimpo, & Dutz, 2023).

Furthermore, the recognition of employees' mental health as a critical component of overall well-being is gaining prominence in Africa. The unique cultural, social, and economic contexts within a continent influence the understanding and treatment of mental health issues. Traditional beliefs and stigmas surrounding mental health often hinder individuals from seeking support and accessing the appropriate resources. Additionally, the limited availability and accessibility of mental health services exacerbates the challenges faced by employees in Africa. However, addressing employees' mental health and well-being provides significant opportunities for organizations to enhance productivity, engagement, and overall organizational success. By cultivating supportive work environments, promoting mental health literacy, and providing accessible mental health resources, organizations can create a culture that prioritizes employee well-being.

In light of these developments, this conceptual review paper aims to examine the challenges and opportunities associated with the evolving remote workforce, the multigenerational workforce, and supporting employee mental health in the African context. Through a comprehensive analysis of relevant theoretical frameworks, conceptual models, and empirical studies, this study seeks to provide insights and recommendations for organizations, policymakers, and researchers. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in Africa, stakeholders can develop strategies and initiatives tailored to the African context, ultimately fostering successful remote work practices, intergenerational collaboration, and employee well-being in the region.

In the following sections, we will delve into the existing literature on the evolving remote workforce in Africa, managing the multigenerational workforce, and supporting employee mental health. Through a systematic and critical analysis of these topics, we highlight the key challenges and opportunities, providing a foundation for future research and practical implications. By embracing and addressing these issues, organizations, and policymakers can drive positive changes and create thriving work environments that empower the African workforce.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Multigenerational Workforce**

The presence of a multigenerational workforce consisting of individuals from different age groups has become a prominent characteristic of modern workplaces. This diverse composition brings together individuals from various generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation

Z, each with distinct values, attitudes, and work styles (Gursoy et al. 2020). This multigenerational dynamic poses challenges and opportunities for organizations.

Research suggests that the effective management of a multigenerational workforce can lead to improved organizational performance and innovation. By leveraging the diverse perspectives and experiences of different generations, organizations can foster creativity and problem-solving (Cennamo et al., 2019). Additionally, cross-generational mentorship programs have been found to enhance knowledge transfer and development opportunities, particularly when older generations share expertise with younger employees (Kooij et al. 2017). However, managing a multi-generational workforce is challenging. Communication barriers, differing work expectations, and conflicting attitudes toward work can create misunderstandings and conflicts within teams (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Understanding and addressing these generational differences are crucial for creating inclusive and cohesive work environments (Gursoy et al., 2020). Organizations should adopt strategies that promote intergenerational collaboration, such as flexible work arrangements, ongoing learning opportunities, and open communication channels (Kunze et al., 2013).

### **Supporting Employee Mental Health**

The importance of supporting employees' mental health has gained increasing recognition in recent years. A positive work environment that prioritizes mental well-being contributes to employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational success (Harvey et al., 2018). However, challenges related to mental health exist in both traditional and remote settings. In an African context, cultural beliefs, stigmas, and limited access to mental health resources can hinder employees from seeking support. Addressing mental health issues requires creating awareness, reducing stigma, and providing accessible resources (Makanjuola et al. 2018). Organizations can implement employee assistance programs and mental health training for managers, and promote work-life balance to support employees' mental well-being (LaMontagne et al., 2014).

### **The Emergence of Clean Technology**

Clean technology, including wind power, hydroelectric power, solar energy, energy reduction, and smart energy solutions, has emerged as a vital area of focus for addressing environmental challenges and achieving sustainable development goals. This transition towards clean energy sources presents opportunities for job creation, economic growth, and reduced environmental impact (UNEP, 2019). The adoption of clean technology in Africa is influenced by factors, such as resource availability, policy frameworks, and investment opportunities. For instance, the African continent has abundant renewable energy resources, making it a prime location for clean energy projects (IRENA 2019). Governments and organizations can capitalize on these resources by implementing supportive policies, investing in renewable energy infrastructure, and promoting technology transfers (Ackom et al., 2018).

### **Enabling Diverse Gender Identity and Gender Expression**

Promoting inclusivity and diversity in the workplace encompasses recognizing and embracing diverse gender identities and expressions. Creating an environment that respects and supports individuals across the gender spectrum contributes to employee well-being, engagement, and organizational performance (Egan et al., 2019). Organizations can implement policies and practices that foster inclusivity, such as gender-neutral restrooms, dress codes that accommodate diverse expressions, and awareness training to reduce bias (Bowleg et al., 2017). Additionally, offering support networks and resources to transgender and non-binary employees can enhance their sense of belonging and professional development (Grant et al. 2018).

### **Current Trends in Analyzing International Business Opportunities**

Analyzing international business opportunities requires a comprehensive understanding of market dynamics,

competitive landscapes, and consumer preferences in foreign markets. Organizations must identify appropriate foreign markets, collect home-country market data, and assess their competitive strength to make informed decisions (Hitt et al., 2018). Current trends in analyzing international business opportunities emphasize the importance of market research, data analytics, and strategic partnerships. Organizations can leverage advanced technologies and data-driven approaches to gather market intelligence, identify emerging trends, and assess market potentials (Knight & Liesch, 2016). Collaborating with local partners and utilizing their expertise can provide valuable insights into cultural nuances, regulatory frameworks, and consumer behavior in foreign markets (Contractor et al., 2014).

### **Global Marketing Strategies: Pricing Decision and Foreign Market Pricing**

Developing effective global marketing strategies involves considering pricing decisions and adapting them to the dynamics of foreign market pricing. Pricing strategies should align with market conditions, local purchasing power, and competitive landscapes (Jain 2018). Organizations can adopt various pricing strategies, such as penetration pricing, price skimming, and value-based pricing, based on their market-entry objectives and target segments (Kotler et al., 2020). It is crucial to conduct thorough market research to understand the local pricing practices, consumer price sensitivity, and competitive pricing strategies (Morschett et al. 2015). Moreover, organizations should consider factors such as currency fluctuations, inflation rates, and purchasing power parity to determine optimal pricing in foreign markets (Cavusgil et al., 2020).

### **Social Media in Global Marketing**

The advent of social media has revolutionized global marketing practices, enabling organizations to engage with global audiences, build brand awareness, and drive customer engagement. Social media platforms offer cost-effective and targeted marketing opportunities for organizations to expand into foreign markets (Strauss & Frost, 2018). Organizations can leverage social media to tailor marketing messages, engage with local communities, and adapt communication strategies to cultural norms and preferences (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2015). Localizing content, utilizing influencers, and utilizing social listening tools are strategies that organizations can employ to optimize their global social media marketing efforts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019).

### **Global Best Practices in Human Resource Management**

Implementing global best practices in human resource management is crucial for organizations to attract, develop, and retain talented employees in an increasingly globalized business landscape. These best practices encompass various HR functions including recruitment, training and development, performance management, and employee engagement (Schuler et al., 2017). Organizations can adopt strategies, such as global talent acquisition programs, cross-cultural training, and performance evaluation systems that account for cultural differences (Dowling et al., 2017). Cultivating a diverse and inclusive workplace, promoting work-life balance, and offering competitive compensation and benefits are additional practices that contribute to effective global HR management (Deresky 2017).

## **METHODOLOGY**

A systematic analysis of the sample articles in this conceptual review involved a carefully planned process to ensure comprehensiveness and rigor. Here is a step-by-step breakdown of how this analysis was carried out:

**Initial Search and Data Collection:** The process began with a systematic search of various sources, including academic databases, search engines, and library catalogs. The researchers cast a wide net by using specific

search terms related to the research topics and the African context, such as “evolving remote workforce,” “multigenerational workforce,” “supporting employee mental health,” and others.

**Broad Search:** In the initial stage, the researchers aimed to identify a wide range of studies that addressed the research topics. The goal was to gather a diverse selection of articles, books, and dissertations that could potentially contribute to the understanding of the subject matter.

**Screening Based on Relevance:** Following the broad search, a screening process was implemented. This step involved evaluating each retrieved article, book, or dissertation for its relevance to the research questions and inclusion criteria. The criteria focused on publications that discussed theoretical frameworks, concepts, challenges, and opportunities related to the evolving remote workforce, multigenerational workforce, and supporting employee mental health within an African context.

**Theoretical Rigor and Contributions:** To narrow down the selection, the researchers further examined the selected literature. They focused on whether the chosen articles demonstrated theoretical rigor and made significant contributions to the field. This step ensured that the articles were not only relevant but also met academic standards and added value to the review.

**Detailed Review and Analysis:** The selected articles underwent a thorough and detailed review. This involved an in-depth examination of key findings, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks used in each article. The purpose was to gain a deep understanding of the content and methodologies employed by each source.

**Objectivity and Bias Minimization:** Efforts were made to ensure objectivity and minimize bias throughout the analysis. Multiple researchers were involved in the selection and analysis of literature to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. Any disagreements or discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus among the researchers..

## **DISCUSSION**

The evolving remote workforce in Africa is experiencing a significant transformation driven by technological advancements and the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This transition is marked by both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include limited access to reliable Internet infrastructure and technological resources, as well as disparities in digital inclusion. However, the shift towards remote work also presents opportunities, such as an increase in job opportunities, improved work-life balance, and the reduction of geographical constraints.

Simultaneously, the presence of a multigenerational workforce in Africa, encompassing generations from Baby Boomers to Generation Z, brings diverse perspectives and work styles. This diversity presents challenges like communication barriers and varying career expectations, but findings suggest that effectively managing and leveraging the unique experiences, skills, and knowledge of multigenerational employees can lead to innovation, creativity, and learning opportunities within organizations. Furthermore, the recognition of employee mental health as a crucial component of overall well-being is emphasized in Africa, though it faces challenges due to traditional beliefs and stigmas surrounding mental health, as well as limited availability and accessibility of mental health services. Supporting employee mental health is seen as a means to enhance productivity, engagement, and overall organizational success.

Clean technology adoption in Africa is a focal point for addressing environmental challenges and sustainable development. Abundant renewable energy resources on the continent offer opportunities for clean energy projects, which can be harnessed through supportive policies and technology transfers. Gender

inclusivity and diversity in African workplaces are recognized as important, with recommendations focusing on creating policies and practices that support transgender and non-binary employees and reduce gender bias.

In the realm of global marketing strategies and international business opportunities, current trends emphasize the significance of market research, data analytics, and strategic partnerships. Organizations can leverage advanced technologies and data-driven approaches to gather market intelligence, assess market potentials, and are encouraged to collaborate with local partners to gain insights into cultural nuances and regulatory frameworks in foreign markets.

Lastly, global best practices in human resource management are deemed essential for organizations to attract, develop, and retain talented employees in a globalized business landscape. Strategies encompass global talent acquisition programs, cross-cultural training, performance evaluation systems accommodating cultural differences, and initiatives promoting work-life balance.

## CONCLUSION

This conceptual review paper explored the evolving remote workforce, multigenerational workforce, and supporting employee mental health within an African context. By synthesizing and analyzing the relevant literature, this study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities associated with these topics. These findings underscore the importance of tailored strategies and initiatives that consider the unique African context. This study serves as a stepping stone for further research and the development of practices that foster successful remote work, intergenerational collaboration, and employee well-being in Africa.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis conducted, this section provides implications and recommendations for African organizations and policymakers. The following strategies and recommendations are proposed to enhance the understanding and implementation of the evolving remote workforce, and multigenerational workforce, and support employee mental health.

**Enhancing Digital Infrastructure:** Given the increasing adoption of remote work, organizations and policymakers should invest in improving digital infrastructure across Africa. This includes expanding broadband connectivity, ensuring reliable Internet access, and promoting digital literacy among employees. By investing in digital infrastructure, organizations can facilitate remote work and create opportunities for individuals in various geographical locations.

**Promoting Intergenerational Understanding:** Organizations should recognize the value of a multigenerational workforce and create initiatives that foster intergenerational understanding and collaboration. This can be achieved through mentoring programs, reverse mentoring opportunities, and inclusive decision making processes. By leveraging the diverse perspectives and experiences of different generations, organizations can enhance their creativity, innovation, and overall performance.

**Implementing Mental Health Support Programs:** Acknowledging the significance of employees' mental health, organizations should prioritize the implementation of comprehensive mental health support programs. This includes creating a supportive and stigma-free work environment, providing access to mental health resources and counseling services, and promoting work-life balance. Organizations can enhance productivity, job satisfaction, and retention rates by prioritizing employee well-being.

**Embracing Clean Technology:** Organizations and policymakers should embrace emerging trends in clean technology such as wind power, hydroelectric power, solar energy, energy reduction, and smart energy. By

adopting clean technology solutions, organizations can contribute to sustainable development, reduce their carbon footprints, and address environmental challenges. This not only aligns with global sustainability goals, but also presents economic opportunities for Africa.

**Fostering Gender Inclusivity:** Organizations should actively promote diversity and inclusion by enabling diverse gender identities and expressions in the workplace. This involves creating policies and practices that support transgender and non-binary employees, ensuring equal opportunities for career growth and advancement, and addressing gender bias. By fostering an inclusive environment, organizations can harness the full potential of all employees, driving innovation and competitiveness.

**Analyzing International Business Opportunities:** Organizations seeking to expand internationally should adopt a strategic approach to analyzing foreign markets. This includes identifying appropriate foreign markets based on market potential and compatibility, collecting comprehensive market data from both the home and foreign markets, and assessing competitive strength in the target market. Thorough market analysis can help organizations make informed decisions and develop effective market-entry strategies.

**Implementing Global Marketing Strategies:** Organizations operating in the global market should develop pricing strategies that consider the local market conditions, customer preferences, and competitive dynamics. This involves conducting thorough market research, adapting pricing structures to specific markets, and employing pricing tactics that maximize profitability while remaining competitive. Additionally, organizations should leverage social media platforms to enhance brand visibility, engage customers, and build relationships in diverse markets.

**Incorporating Global Best Practices in Human Resource Management:** Organizations should benchmark and adopt global best practices in human resource management to enhance their talent management strategies. This includes implementing effective recruitment and selection processes, providing comprehensive training and development programs, and adopting performance management systems that align with international standards. By embracing global best practices, organizations can attract and retain top talent, leading to improved organizational performance.

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