

# Effects of Virtual Meeting Communication Toolson Labor Turnover in The Zimbabwe Banking Industry

Nyasha Wonder Chinyanganya, Marry Murambi and Chipo Mutongi

*Midlands State University, Zimbabwe*

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**Abstract:** The study sought to analyze the effectiveness of virtual meeting communication tools employed by the Zimbabwean banking industry. Banks in Zimbabwe such as CBZ, ZB, and Steward have been using virtual communication tools that include Zoom and Microsoft Teams. However, the labor turnover trend has been on the increase from 12% in 2017 to 32% in 2021 with the years 2020 and 2021 being characterized by working from home. Between 2020 and 2021, over 60% of bank staff worked remotely. The study sought to establish whether virtual meeting communications have an effect on labor turnover in the Zimbabwean banking industry. The study reviewed the following theories; Employee Engagement Theory, Functional Theory/ Efficiency Theory, Placating Theory and the Work Design Theory. Positivism research philosophy, deductive research approach, explanatory research design and survey research approach were used. The target population of this study was 234 comprising employees of the three largest banks ZB bank, CBZ bank, and Steward. A sample size of 148 was used. Primary data sources were original to the researcher and were gathered through a research instrument, a questionnaire. The study found that working via virtual meeting communications has a lesser bearing on labour turnover in the Zimbabwean banking industry. The study recommends the establishment of teleworking, social media, email and virtual meeting communications policy and support. Further research on the influence of remote working on turnover intention in other industries is recommended by the study. Because the study was limited to the commercial banking sector, extrapolating conclusions may be disastrous.

**Key words:** Virtual Communications Remote Working tools, Virtual meeting platforms, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Labour turnover

## I. Introduction

The banking sector in Zimbabwe has been using virtual communications remote working tools since 2016 and increased the use during the Covid 19 pandemic. These strategies include Zoom and Microsoft teams. Labour turnover in the sector has been increasing massively. The research seeks to analyse effects of virtual meeting communications remote working tools on labour turnover in the Zimbabwe Banking sector.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

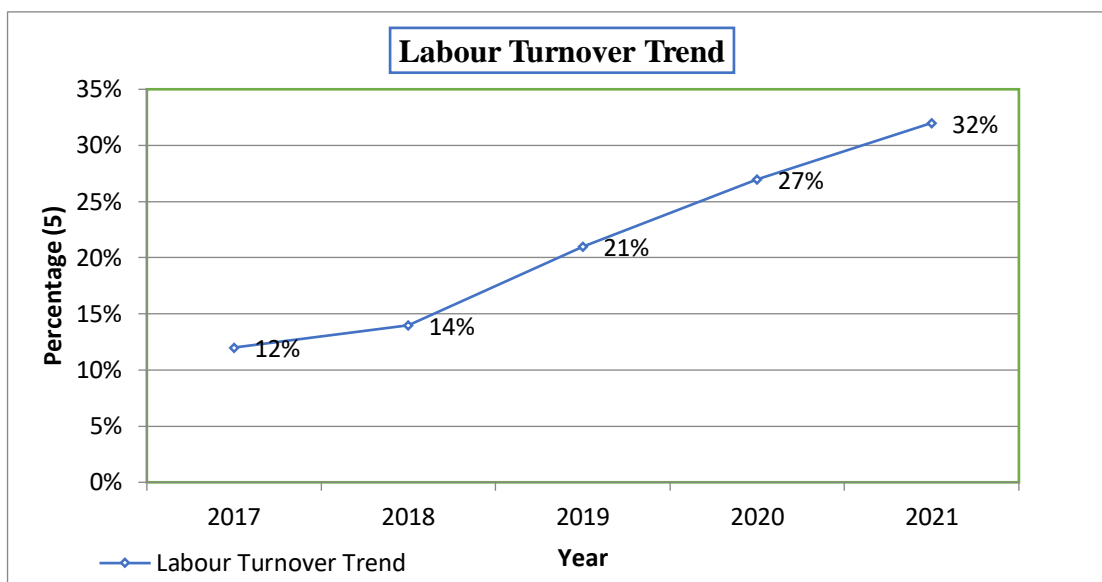
Working during a global epidemic is an occurrence that many people would not have predicted. As a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, the world changed radically, which affected people's work-life and organizational structures (Ipsen et al., 2021). As a result of nationwide lockdowns caused by the epidemic, a significant number of employees were compelled to work from home (Ipsen et al., 2021). Working from home has been defined in various terms over the four decades, namely remote work, flexible workplace, telework, and e-working (Amigoni and Gurvis, 2020). These terms refer to the ability of employees to work in flexible workplaces, especially at home, by using technology to execute work duties (Ipsen et al., 2021). Amigoni and Gurvis, (2020) described teleworking as “an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform tasks elsewhere that are normally done in primary or central workplaces, for at least some portion of their work schedule, using electronic media to interact with others inside and outside the organization,” notably, they indicated that “elsewhere” refers to “home”.

As a result of the lockdowns, the number of remote employees in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and other western nations surged from approximately 5 percent (before the pandemic) to approximately 40 percent (during and after the lockdowns) (Etheridge, Tang, and Wang, 2020). The same development patterns in remote work were also observed in other nations throughout the world, particularly in Asia and Northern Africa. Studies done in India by Cheng, Cheung and Magramo (2020) point out that telework can reduce turnover rate and increase employees' productivity, job engagement, and job performance. As noted by (Campa, 2020), the Covid19 crisis has sparked a significant increase in the experimentation and roll-out of new technologies across the EU financial sector. On the customers' side, (Baicu et al., 2020) have found that lifestyle changes due to the pandemic have implied more willingness to trust the safety of internet/mobile banking services, a positive perception about the ease of use of new technologies, and an increase in the perceived utility of these services. World over, the major platforms for remote working

have been telephone communications, social media communications, email communications and virtual meeting platforms through sites that include zoom and Microsoft teams (Baicu et al., 2020).

In Zimbabwe, the number of remote workers for various organizations has increased (Murombedzi, 2020). Banking sector and other institutions, like Deloitte, Axis Solutions, PWC, and ZOL, had long before implemented this work adjustment, and the COVID19 epidemic just entrenched this strategy within these firms, resulting in the usage of this method being restricted to practically every employee (Mabasa, 2022). Working from home required them to balance work and personal obligations, such as child care, which could be a distraction (Murombedzi, 2020). COVID-19 has created a novel environment in which remote work is necessary rather than voluntary, so calling into question the current knowledge of distant working (Wang et al., 2021). Numerous firms in Zimbabwe have adopted a rather novel technique for adjusting to the substantial changes brought about by the pandemic: remote work. This strategy has yielded a variety of insights. This work adjustment of remote working has been implemented by banks in Zimbabwe, resulting in banks such as FBC and Steward bank 2020 announcing the closure of the majority of their branches in Harare's central business district. In addition, the banking industry has experienced an increase in employee turnover. Figure 1.1 presents the Labour Turnover Trend from 2016 to 2021.

Figure 1.1 Labour Turnover Trend for Zimbabwe Banking Sector



Source: Institute of Bankers of Zimbabwe, 2022.

Regarding Zimbabwean banks such as ZB bank, CBZ bank, and Steward bank, the labour turnover rate rose from 12 % in 2017 to 32 % in 2021. More than 60% of bank workers worked remotely between 2020 and 2021. In accordance with the findings of Baicu et al. (2020), Zimbabwean banks utilized telephone communications, social media communications, email communications, and virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Unknown is the impact of these platforms in promoting employee retention within the setting of Zimbabwe.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Banks in Zimbabwe such as CBZ, ZB and Steward have been using remote working tools that include the use of virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. However, labor turnover trend has been on the increase from 12% in 2017 to 32% in 2021 with the years 2020 and 2021 being characterized of working from home. Between 2020 and 2021, over 60% of bank staff worked remotely. Literature reveals that telework can reduce labor turnover rate and increase employees' productivity, job engagement, and job performance (Collins & Moschler 2021, Delanoije & Verbruggen, 2020). In this scenario labour turnover is increasing despite having remote working. Therefore, this study sought to analyse effects of virtual meeting communication tools on labour turnover in the Zimbabwe Banking Industry.

### 1.3 Research Objective

1.3.2. To assess the effects of virtual meeting communications tools on labor turnover in the Zimbabwean banking industry.

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1 Working from Home

Working from Home (remote working), is currently known as an alternative working to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. However, remote working is not new and has been brought to the attention of several schools of thought for many years. The remote working concept was initially mentioned by Nilles (1988) dating back to 1973, known as “telecommuting” or “telework” (Messenger and Gschwind 2016). Remote working has been defined in various terms over the four decades, namely remote work, flexible workplace, telework, telecommuting, e-working. These terms refer to the ability of employees to work in flexible workplaces, especially at home, by using technology execute work duties (Gajendran and Harrison 2020; Grant et al. 2019). Gajendran and Harrison (2020) described telecommuting as “an alternative work arrangement in which employees perform tasks elsewhere that are normally done in primary or central workplaces, for at least some portion of their work schedule, using electronic media to interact with others inside and outside the organization,” notably, they indicated that “elsewhere” refers to “home” (1525). A recent study by Dingel and Neiman (2020) uncovered that 37% of the job could be completed at home during the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., such as financial work, business management, professional and scientific services. Some jobs, especially those related to healthcare, farming and hospitality cannot be performed at home. Although the acceptance of remote working has increased worldwide, academics argue regarding its pros and cons.

### 2.2 Labour Turnover

The turnover intention of employees refers to the likelihood of an employee leaving the current job he/she are doing (Obiwuru, et al 2018). Every organization regardless of its location, size or nature of business has always given a key concern about Employees turnover intention (Ojokuku, et al 2018, Rukmani, et al 2018, Sofi and Devanadhen 2018). Ojokuku, et al (2018) state that turnover is the process through which staff leaving a business or organization and that business or organization replaces them. Turnover intention is a measurement of whether a business or organization's employees plan to leave their positions or whether that organization plans to remove employees from positions. Turnover intention, like turnover itself, can be either voluntary or involuntary (Sofi and Devanadhen, 2018).

Turnover can be classified as voluntary and involuntary turnover. As Sofi and Devanadhen (2018) stated, since turnover is often associated with variables, such as job satisfaction, it is important to distinguish voluntary from involuntary turnover, otherwise the estimation of such a relationship in terms of all leavers will be inaccurate. When an employee leaves his work and the organization by his or her will the turnover is termed as voluntary turnover. As cited by Obiwuru, et al (2018) described that Voluntary turnovers create significant cost, both in terms of direct cost, such as replacement, or in terms of indirect cost (Longe, 2018).

### 2.3 Work Design Theory

Work design refers to the content and organization of work tasks, activities, relationships, and responsibilities (Parker, 2014). Indeed, the concept of work design encompasses the notion of remote work (since working virtually represents a different “organization” of one's tasks compared to working in the office), and has been argued to be relevant to other contemporary work changes, such as the current digital era (for example, Bélanger et al., 2013; Parker and Grote, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Research from diverse theoretical perspectives on work design has generally converged to suggest that when work is designed in such a way as to result in particular “work characteristics,” then it will also generate well-being, job satisfaction, performance, and other such positive outcomes. For example, a meta-analysis by Humphrey et al. (2020) identified a range of motivational, knowledge, social, and physical work characteristics as predicting desirable employee outcomes (for example, better performance and well-being, positive psychological states, and job satisfaction).

Applying the work design perspective to our investigation on the remote working practice during the pandemic, it is expected to observe a powerful role of virtual work characteristics (that is, work characteristics of one's remote work) in shaping working experiences. Remote working practices influence individuals through shaping the nature of their work (or their work characteristics). Golden and Veiga (2005) stated, “whether individuals can fully benefit from telecommuting is likely to be influenced by the way in which they must perform their work activities” (p. 303). Building upon the premise that remote working policy is only suitable for certain types of jobs (Pinsonneault and Boisvert, 2001), this approach considers employees’ work characteristics as boundary conditions to reconcile the mixed impacts of engaging in remote working. The key implication from these studies is that managers should provide remote working for appropriate jobs and workers (Golden and Veiga, 2005).

### 2.4 Employee Engagement Theory

The employee enjoyment theory states that employee engagement is manifested through employee job satisfaction levels at work, dedication at and employee’s sense of future with the organisation (Truss, et al 2017). The theory states that highly engaged

employees think, feel and act in ways that reflect greater levels of commitment to an organisation (Schaufeli, 2014). In addition, Poulson, et al. (2014) argue that employees that are engaged contribute to the fullest of their knowledge, abilities and skills. These efforts will be aimed towards ensuring that the organisation succeed (Black and Gregersen, 2014). The model states that engaged employees also encourages other employees to do well (Truss, et al 2017). The theory states that employee engagement can be categorized into three being: intellectually engaged, emotionally engaged and behaviorally engaged (Schaufeli, 2014). Intellectually engaged employees are constantly improving the company in terms of ideas and innovations whilst emotionally engaged employees are proud and passionate for their work. Further, they are enthusiastic about the organisation (Schaufeli, 2014). From this theory, we can deduct that behaviorally engaged employees are willing to go above and beyond for the organisation, customers and team members for better results. It has been noted that the employee engagement model states that employee engagement is achieved through achievement, friendship and equity. However, the theory does explain whether remote working can be a source of employee engagement.

### 2.5 Functional Theory/ Efficiency Theory

Probst (2015) states that the functional theory is also called the efficiency theory. Choi and Lee (2011) postulate that the theory is premised from the fact that if the employer takes good care of employees, they will tend to be more efficient and effective. Blackand (2014) further state that the model emphasises on the need of ensuring, securing, preserving and developing efficient and productive labour force. Engaged employees tend to be more efficient and they are not wasteful. In addition, Ankita (2010) found that motivated employees have the organisation at heart and they are willing to work an extra mile. Further, Probst (2015) states that motivated employees are more productive than demotivated employees. Hence, the study is premised on the idea that working from home is aimed at improving employee engagement in the banking sector. However, there is need to make sure that staff welfare policies are put in place to protect the interests of staff. The theory does not explain whether remote working is part of taking good care of employees.

### 2.6 Effect of working from home virtual meeting communications on labour turn over

There are two main factors that will be taken into consideration by the workers when working from home using virtual meeting communications. "Organizational factors" would initially be involved in the work of the employees. Studies discussed that organizational factors are crucial for e-working arrangements (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2022). Examples include but are not limited to employers supporting employees demands while working from home, cost of facilities related to e-working, training in the use of technology, as well as organizational communication. Other support for the e-working arrangements, includes employee well-being and IT support from the organization (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2020). Organizational trust and trust by managers are some other organizational factors critical in the implementation of virtual meeting communications in e-working. As found in previous research, organizational trust and trust by managers are correlated with the e-working outcome. The studies by Baruch (2020), Grant et al. (2019) and Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2020) found that a culture of trust in an organization trust by colleagues and managers is needed for e-working. Based on previous studies, these factors were found to be closely correlated with e-working. As indicated in previous studies, e-working is influenced not only by organizational factors but also by "individual and family factors" (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2020; Solís 2016). Baruch (2020) suggested some factors that need to be addressed for e-working, such as "self-discipline, self-motivation, ability to work independently, tenacity, self-organization, self-confidence, time management skills, computer literacy knowledge." A study revealed that the number of working days and the time a person spent in e-working also have an impact on work-family conflict (Solís 2016). In addition to individual factors, family factors also influence e-working. For example, household characteristics such as the size of the living area, the number of family members sharing the same accommodation and the number and age of children in the household are considered family factors influencing e-working (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2020). Moreover, e-working can also be influenced by the individual working space available in the house and the number of people present when working at home (Baruch 2020; Shaw, Andrey, and Johnson 2018).

## III. Research Methodology

This research study employed the quantitative research approach. The research philosophy employed by this research was positivism, a deductive approach was used and the research design was a descriptive survey. Target population was 234 for CBZ, ZB and Steward Harare headoffices. A sample size of 148 was drawn for this research. The study made use of simple random sampling because it gave the participants equal chances of selection. Hence, it eliminated selection bias. A self-administered questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The results were presented in a quantitative analysis of data through correlation and regression techniques.

#### IV. Findings

##### 4.1 Effect of virtual meeting communications tools on labor turnover

Table 4.14 presents descriptive findings on the effect of virtual meeting communications tools on labor turnover.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics on the effect of virtual meeting communications remote working tools on labour turnover

	I want to continue working for this organisation when I work from home using virtual meeting communications	I feel trusted when I work from home using virtual meeting communication	I am considered an immediate solution to the problem when I work from home using virtual meeting communication	I am allowed to make decisions when I work from home using virtual meeting communication	The boss guides me when I work from home using virtual meeting communication
Mean	3.8023	3.7764	3.67867	3.765458	3.6943
Median	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
Mode	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
Std. Deviation	1.43907	1.44950	1.4564	1.498940	1.458745

Source: (Survey Results, 2022)

The majority of respondents strongly agreed that they would foresee working for the organization for more years to come, feel trusted, considered for an immediate solution, allowed to make decisions and boss available for guidance when working from home using virtual meeting communications. This was reflected by a mode of 5, a median of 5 and means of 3.8023, 3.7764, 3.67867, 3.765458 and 3.6943.

These results show that virtual meeting communications remote working toolshave an effect on employee retention levels. Related to this, Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2022) state that when working from home via virtual conference communications, employees will consider two crucial factors. "Organizational factors" would first be involved in employee work. According to studies, organizational characteristics are critical for e-working arrangements (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2022). Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2020) Examples include, but are not limited to, employers granting employees' requests to work from home, the cost of facilities related to e-working, technological training, and organizational communication. Other aid for e-working arrangements includes employee well-being and corporate IT support, among other things (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2020). Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2020) further stated that organizational trust and manager trust are two other organizational aspects that are critical in the adoption of virtual meeting communications in e-working.

Table 4.2 presents a Model Summary for hypothesis testing.

Table 4.2 Model Summary for hypothesis testing

Model	'R'	'R' square	Adjusted 'R' square	Standard error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					'R' square change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F change
1	.644 <sup>a</sup>	.662	.688	.180	.642	26.660	6	93	.000

The study noted that the adjusted 'R' square was 0.688, which meant that there was a relatively positive relationship between virtual meeting communications remote working and labour turnover. The closer the adjusted 'R' square is to 1, the stronger the relationship. These results are similar to Baruch (2020), Grant et al. (2019), and Baker, Avery, and Crawford (2020) who stated that organizational trust and management trust are related to e-working outcomes. According to the findings of Baruch (2020), an organizational culture of trust between colleagues and supervisors is necessary for e-working.

Table 4.3 presents the ANOVA calculations.

Table 4.3: ANOVA calculations

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.400	6	.863	26.660	.003 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	1.987	93	.032		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6.387</b>	<b>99</b>			

**Predictors:** Virtual meeting communications

**Dependent Variable:** Labour Turnover

The fact that the sum of squares value of the regression was 4.400 greater than the residual value of 1.987 shows that there was a strong relationship between variables. Further, a significant value was less than 0.05, which shows again that there were close relations between variables. The study, therefore, accepts the null hypothesis that;

H1: Virtual meeting communications remote working tools significantly impact labour turnover in the Zimbabwean banking industry

Study conducted by Sols (2016) found that the number of working days and the amount of time spent on virtual meeting communications tools had an impact on work-family conflict. Family concerns, in addition to individual traits, influence e-working. Household characteristics such as the size of the living area, the number of family members sharing the same lodging, and the number and age of children in the home, for example, are regarded as family variables influencing e-working (Baker, Avery, and Crawford, 2020). Furthermore, the individual working space available in the home and the number of people present when working at home might influence e-working (Baruch 2020, Shaw, Andrey, and Johnson 2018, Shaw, Andrey, and Johnson 2018, and Baruch 2020).

## V. Conclusions

Majority of respondents strongly agreed that they would foresee working for the organisation for more years to come, feel trusted, considered for immediate solution, allowed to make decisions and boss available for guidance when working from home using virtual meeting communications. This was reflected by mode of 5, median of 5 and means of 3.8023, 3.7764, 3.67867, 3.765458 and 3.6943. These results show that virtual meeting communications remote working tools impact employee retention levels. The study noted that the adjusted 'R' square was 0.688, which meant that there was a relatively a positive relationship between virtual meeting communications remote working and labour turnover. The closer the adjusted 'R' square is to 1, the stronger the relationship. The fact that sum of squares value of the regression was 4.400 being greater than residual value 1.987 shows that there was a strong relationship between variables. Further, a significant value was less than 0.05, which shows again that there were close relationships of variables. The study, therefore, accepts the null hypothesis that;

H1: Virtual meeting communications remote working strategy significantly impact labour turn over in the Zimbabwean banking industry

Working via virtual meeting communications significantly affect labour turn over in the Zimbabwean banking industry. According to one study, the number of working days and the amount of time spent on virtual meeting communications had an impact on work-family conflict (Sols, 2016).

## VI. Recommendations

### Capacitating virtual meeting communications infrastructure

Commercial banks should continue using virtual meeting communications remote working tools. Employees are in favour of these tools. However they must assess for other factors other than virtual meetings communication tools that might have a negative effect on labour turnover in commercial banking sector.

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