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Project Dissertation Report On An Overview of the past, present, and future of Teleworking

Submitted by

Udit Sharma

2K20/DMBA/142

26 **Under the Guidance of**

Dr. Chandan Sharma

Assistant professor



Delhi School of Management

Delhi Technological University

Bawana Road Delhi 110042

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the COVID-19 epidemic turning the tables and bringing work into our homes, there has been an ongoing effort to reinvent HR methods. Social separation has produced a number of impediments to meeting and engaging. Teleworking had existed before COVID 19 but it has now become the new normal.

The project study will be structured in the form of a document with five chapters. Primary research will be the final part to gain insights into preferences, habits, experiences, and the impact of teleworking before and during the COVID-19 pandemic on the employees. The study's first chapter focuses on the definition, history, and evolution of Teleworking before COVID-19. The second chapter describes the prevalence of teleworking before COVID-19. It also explains the perceptions of employees and organizations towards teleworking before the onset of COVID-19

The third chapter of the study shows the impact of mandatory work-from-home on employees' overall wellbeing and the immediate response by the HR department of organizations to the challenges faced because of full-time teleworking during COVID-19.

The fourth chapter tries to peek into the future of teleworking and its place in the Hybrid working arrangement through both employees' and managers' perspectives. The fifth chapter entails the information collected by the primary research survey designed to gauge the impact of teleworking on the overall well-being of the employees before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary research also tries to peek into the employees' perception about the future working arrangement and their expectations from the same.

The report provides an overview of teleworking and its positive and negative impacts on the overall well-being of employees from both organization's and employees' perspectives before and during COVID-19 and its place in the future working arrangements.

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CHAPTER-1

Teleworking – Brief History and Evolution

Teleworking

Telecommuting has been referred to by a variety of terms, including telework, remote work, dispersed work, virtual work, flexible work, flexplace, and distance work. All these terms essentially portray the same meaning with minimal differences. This might have an influence on the study designs and sample sizes that researchers employ to investigate telecommuting. (Tammy D Allen, Timothy D Golden, Kristen Shockley; Oct. 2015)

Some definitions used for telecommuting:

Term Used	Definition
1) Distributed work	A company with one or more employees who operate in multiple physical places is referred to as a multi-location company." (P. M. Bosch-Sijtsema and A. Sivunen, 2013)
2) Flexible Work arrangements	Work can be done outside of the traditional temporal and/or spatial boundaries of a standard workday with alternative work options. (K. M. Shockley and T. D. Allen; 2007)

3) Remote Work	<p>5 A work arrangement in which an employee lives and works outside of the employing organization's local commuting region; typically involves full-time telework and may result in a shift in duty location to the alternate workplace.</p>
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	(U.S. Office of Personnel Management; 2013)
4) Telecommuting	<p>Working part of the time outside of the traditional workplace, generally from home, and interacting through computer technology. T. D. Golden, T. D. Golden, T. D. Golden, T. D. Golden, T. D. Golden</p>
5) Telework	<p>20 A type of work organization in which work is done in part or entirely outside of the traditional firm workplace using information and telecommunication technologies. (U. Konradt, R. Schmook, and M. Malecke; 2000) “</p>

6) Virtual Task	<p>Work arrangements that are spatially or geographically separated and are characterized by a short life duration, technology-enhanced communications, and a lack of face-to-face connection. (L. C. Tworoger, C. P. Ruppel, B. Gong, and R. A. Pohlman; 2013)</p>
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History and Evolution of Teleworking

Jack Nilles, a designer at projects for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, is thought to have invented the word in 1973.

"Initially, the concept of working from home grew in popularity in the United States. Working from home was first introduced in the United States as a result of the oil crisis. Working from home was also pushed as a way to help people take care of their family while completing their various jobs as the number of double-worker couples grew in the 1970s and 1980s."

The invention of PCs and mobile phones in the 1980s further acted as a motivating factor to promote teleworking. Since then, the sizes of these gadgets have continued to reduce with increasing working speeds facilitating teleworking efficiently. (Tammy D Allen, Timothy D Golden, Kristen Shockley; Oct. 2015)

In the 1990s, as more companies recognized and adopted work-from-home possibilities, mobile phones turned digital, giving rise to the second generation (2G). Texting was launched, PDAs grew popular, and Blackberry positioned itself as a pioneer in corporate communications technology. IBM even built a smartphone-like mobile device with a variety of functions. (Rachael Pasini; 2018)

In 1990, ³³ Tim Berners-Lee introduced the World Wide Web to the world. In 1991, the browser was

made available to the general public, giving users access to networks of data and information exchange capabilities. Later that year, Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google, which soon grew to become the most popular search engine on the Internet. (Rachael Pasini; 2018).

In the 2000s, telecommuting employment models rose in popularity and eventually became the standard. Social networking, ³⁴ third-generation (3G) mobile devices, and streaming technologies have made communication easier and faster." The first iPhone was released in 2007, ushering in a new era of portable devices and user experiences. (2018, Rachel Pasini).

In addition, new software tools such as Slack, Hootsuite, Skype, and Asana have been developed to allow people and colleagues to interact and work from different places. Remote cooperation has also become more effective and accessible because of advances in cloud computing. (Rachael Pasini; 2018)

³⁹ in order to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the usage of telework expanded substantially after the pandemic began in 2020. The existing research on the usage of telework in 2020 as a reaction to the Covid-19 epidemic has begun to highlight some major concerns and give vital insights into what may be required as part of any future development of a balanced framework for businesses and employees to manage telework. (Rachael Pasini; 2018)

The Covid-19 outbreak revealed further data on individuals' and enterprises' rising use of telework from a strictly statistical standpoint. Existing data reveal that many of the same issues raised by teleworkers before 2020 were also experienced by those forced to telework because to the Covid-19 outbreak in terms of working hours and rest. According to surveys conducted in 2020 in a variety of countries around the world, many teleworkers had long working hours, but what was notable was the consistency of these findings.

According to European Union surveys, nearly 35% of teleworkers in the 27 member states assessed indicated an increase in woe office working hours. Teleworkers in Israel extended their working hours by 47 minutes each day on average, according to another report.

The average workweek rose by 48.5 minutes per day, according to a Harvard Business School

survey of 3.1 million people teleworking in 16 locations throughout North America, Europe, and the Middle East. (OECD, 2021).

Teleworking during Covid-19 rose rapidly but not in an organized manner with the set legislature in many countries and organizations. But it has entirely changed the way the future of Teleworking looks. Hence it will be important to look into the employee and organization perspectives on Teleworking before, during, and after Covid 19 pandemic.

CHAPTER - 2

Teleworking before COVID-19.

Teleworking before COVID – 19

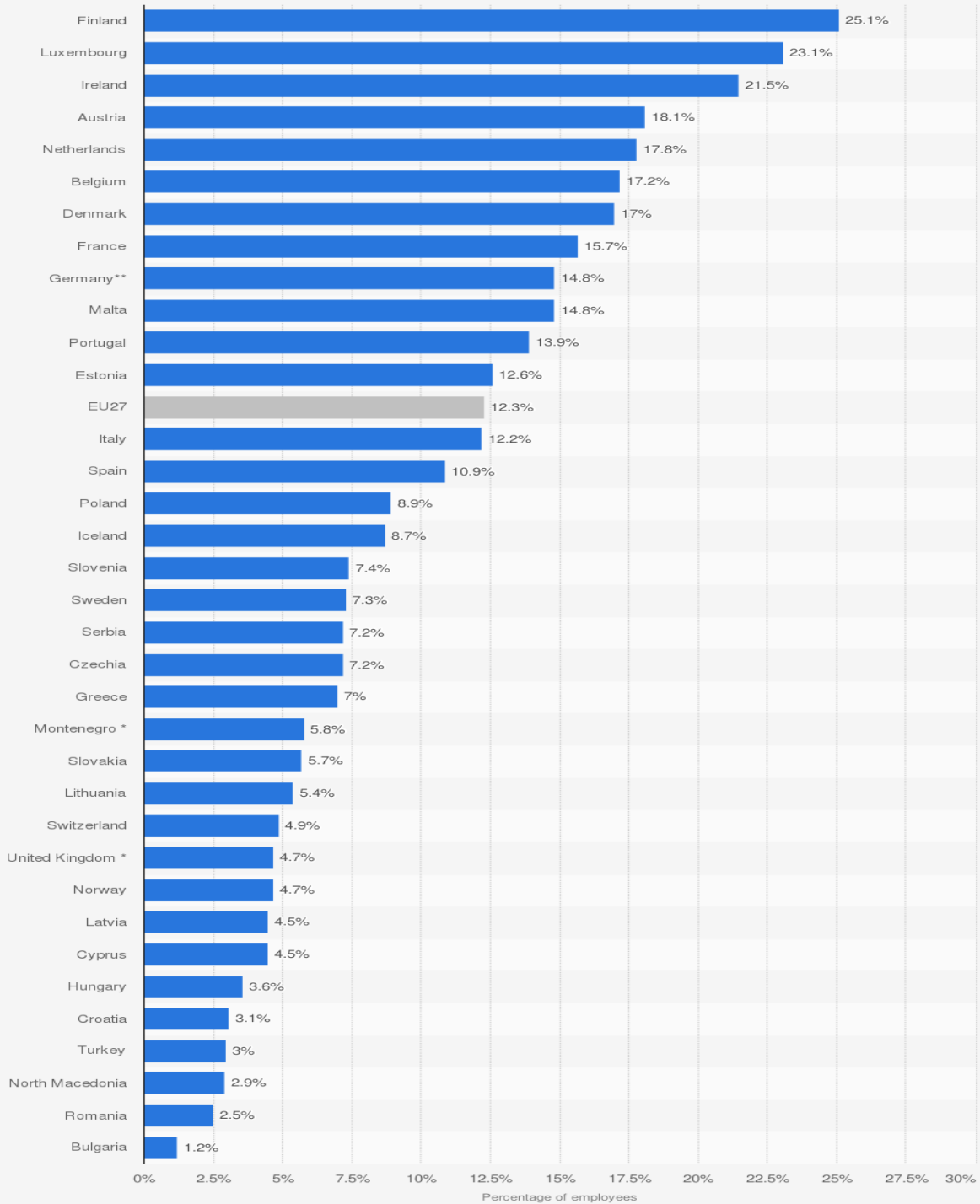
As explained earlier, Teleworking had gained popularity before the onset of COVID. Although, during the pandemic, it became the “new normal” many organizations and managers were engaging the employees in partial or full-time teleworking before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Prevalence of Telework before Covid-19

The OECD Productivity Paper, published in January 2021, provides an overview of the trends and differences in the prevalence of telework across EU countries, sectors, and occupations before the outbreak of COVID – 19. (Santo Milasi, Ignacio González-Vázquez and Enrique Fernández-Macías, 2021). The above chart was sourced from the same OECD report mentioned above. It's clearly evident from the chart that teleworking was widely varied across sectors before the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU. It was particularly high in knowledge and ICT-intensive services. It was also significant in telecommunications and financial and insurance activities (~20%) and conversely, it was particularly low in the manufacturing sector. (Santo Milasi, Ignacio González-Vázquez and Enrique Fernández-Macías, 2021)

According to the report, until the pandemic, telework mostly benefited highly trained individuals who conduct the majority of their work on computers, have high degrees of autonomy and work in knowledge-intensive activities. Teachers had the highest incidence of telework (43 percent) in this category, reflecting the occasional time spent at home preparing for face-to-face classes and assignments. Teleworking was also prevalent among ICT professionals, managers, and professionals working in legal, business, administration, and science. (Santo Milasi, Ignacio González Vázquez and Enrique Fernández-Macías, 2021).

Percentage of employed people usually working from home in Europe 2020, by country



Source
Eurostat
© Statista 2021

Additional Information:
Europe, Eurostat; 2020; 15-64 years

Source: Eurostat

This trend can be expected more or less consistent throughout the globe since the prevalence of teleworking, before the pandemic, was more industry-dependent. As it can be seen in the chart above sectors having a very low prevalence of telework is due to the fact that the nature of work in some occupations makes it very difficult or nearly impossible to perform them away from the work-site.

Impact of Teleworking on employees before COVID-19

In 2019, a research survey, was done by Katie Genadek, Erin Kelly, Anne Kaduk, and Phyllis Moen; on employees working in fortune 500 companies, a differentiation between voluntary and involuntary teleworking was found. This research was however done only on the IT department of the respective companies. A significant minority of these employees report having unpredictable schedules and working from home involuntarily. In models that account for personal traits, job, work hours, family needs, and other factors, involuntary variable schedules are related to higher work-to-family conflict, stress, burnout, turnover intentions, and worse job satisfaction. Voluntary remote work, on the other hand, is more protective and more prevalent in this professional sample. Employees who spend at least 20% of their hours from home and report having moderate or high control over where they work had reduced stress and desire to leave the company.

In 2015, a survey was done by Tim Bentley and Stephen T T Teo; on 804 participants (teleworkers) from 28 different New Zealand organizations to collect their perceptions on the psychological strain, job satisfaction, and social isolation during work from home. Increased job satisfaction and lower psychological strain were linked to organizational social support and teleworker assistance.

In 2014, a sample size of 102 employees from a prominent US government agency was used to explore hypotheses concerning the association between teleworking and emotional well-being. Employees felt greater job-related positive affective well-being (PAWB) and less job-related negative affective well-being (NAWB) on days when they telework vs days when they work in the office, according to the findings. The findings indicate that numerous individual variations affected the associations. (Amanda J. Anderson, Seth Kaplan, Ronald. P Vega; Oct. 2014).

In 2013, a group of Australian researchers questioned 28 people (25 teleworkers and 3 non-teleworkers) from various industries, including education, government, and so on. The major goal was to learn more about people's attitudes, perspectives, and the impact of telework on productivity and well-being. The majority of those asked said there was a positive link between telework and happiness. The flexibility and 'head-space' provided by telework contributed to individual well-being and made employees feel more productive. The flexibility to work away from the office permitted a better work-life balance, which encouraged a good attitude toward work, according to both interview data and daily experience data logs in all of the case studies. Teleworking, according to employees, provided more freedom and a sense of control over their work which energized workers, lowered stress levels, and in turn allowed for more productive work. “Additionally, workers could better balance family and work life, and the ability to have a presence at home contributed to happier family life. (Rachelle Bosua, Marianne Gloet, Shehra Kurnia, Anotonette Mendoza, Jongsay Yong; 2013).“

Organisation/Managers perception to Telework before COVID-19

A study done by Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke in 2004; conducted surveys with HR managers and employees based out of Belgium to understand telework. impact on large organization by taking into account both top-down considerations (managerial perspective to strengthen organisations' competences) and bottom-down demands (employee needs). In this survey, 83 managers took part, from organisations employing over 156,000 employees. Out of this 83, 19 had already implemented telework and all expressed a desire to implement it at even a larger scale. 13 of them had just started to implement telework. The participating organisation firms included: AGF-Belgium Allianz Group, CPM Belgium Field Marketing, FORTIS Bank, HP Belgium, IBM Belgium, Siemens -Belgium, Thyssen and many more. (Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke, 2004).

The study had tabulated resource-based impacts of telework into two groups (according to previous studies): -

Expected Beneficial Impact	Expected Detrimental Impact
Recruiting Potential	Organisational Culture
Retaining Staff	Employee Loyalty
Staff turnover	Social Isolation
Absenteeism	Promotion
Work time	Training
Flexibility	Trade Union Relations
Productivity	Investment in ICT
Office Space	Activities requiring face to face contact
Customer Service	Security of internal data
Image of Organization	Health Legislations
Job Opp. for specially abled people	Labour Legislation

HR managers were asked to rate these factors on a scale of 1 to 5 to measure the expected beneficial or detrimental Impact of each of the factors. (Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke, 2004)

The response of the survey showed current ³⁸ adopters and non-adopters of telework alike having similar perceptions about many of the expected beneficial impact of teleworking. Exception was there in the case of retaining highly qualified employees which was not considered as expected beneficial impact by the non-adopters of telework. According to the study the current adopters perceived two specific benefits – “Flexibility” and “Enhanced Productivity”, more positively than the non-adopters. Conversely the non-adopters perceived two specific detrimental factors – “Organisational Culture and Social Isolation” more negatively than the adopters. As a matter of fact, the adopters had not encountered such difficulties in practice. Although both groups of

managers identified internal data security issues, face-to-face contact issues, and teamwork issues as negative effects, the group that had not yet adopted telework had a much more negative view of the teamwork issues, indicating its doubts that appropriate HRM practises could be introduced to solve the expected telework adoption problems. (Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke, 2004).

Non-adopters anticipated that this technique would be associated with cheap capital and operational ICT expenses, as well as the lack of challenges in applying current labour regulations. In contrast, managers at firms that had already introduced telework clearly viewed this practise to have significant investment cost consequences, as well as uncertainty in the application of labour legislation inside the firm. (Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke, 2004).

Due to the varied difference in sectors, industries, nature of work, organisational culture etc. amongst the participant organisations; certain constraints come into picture with quantifying the HR perception with utmost perfection. But it can be fairly suggested that there were differences in the perceptions of managers/organisations who had already adopted teleworking and the ones who had not yet adopted it.

The factors that were common in both the set of managers were – **Expected Beneficial Impact** – Absenteeism, Flexibility, Productivity, Office Space, Image of Organisation, Job opportunities for specially abled people.

Expected Detrimental Impact – Activities requiring teamwork, Activities requiring face to face contact, Security of Internal Data. (Viviane Illegems and Alain Verbeke, 2004).

CHAPTER - 3

Teleworking During Covid-19

Teleworking during COVID-19

The global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had created an unprecedented scenario with far-reaching health and economic consequences. The working arrangement had significantly changed with thousands of employees even losing out on their jobs. Those employed in sectors where teleworking was already prevalent or even had potential to exercise teleworking had started to resort to full time teleworking in no time. Eventually a major chunk of employees around the globe had adopted the “new normal”. In the mix of existing benefits of teleworking, the blurring of physical and organisational boundaries between home and work affected many employees’ mental and physical health negatively.

Impact of teleworking on employees during COVID-19 pandemic

Many studies and surveys have been done to identify the employees’ response towards teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between the 22nd of May and the 15th of June 2020, researchers from the University of Kent and the University of Birmingham conducted a poll of UK employees to better understand how the COVID19 pandemic, lockdown, and widespread working from home affected a variety of work-life concerns. (Heejung Chung, Hyojin Seo, Sarah Forbes, and Holly Birkett, 2020).

According to the survey, the positive impacts of COVID -19 cited by the employees were: to take care of the children, do housework and spend more time with their partners. During lockdown, 36% of respondents stated they were able to get more work done in less time from home, and 43% were able to focus on work priorities when working from home. Employees cited the following as significant reasons for wanting to work from home more in the future: reduced travel times, more time with family, more productivity, and improved wellness. (Heejung Chung, Hyojin Seo, Sarah Forbes, and Holly Birkett; 2020).

The blurring borders between work and home were regarded as a major disadvantage of working from home by 67 percent of employees. When working from home, many people complain about a lack of equipment and workspace. Missing interactions with co-workers was identified as a major disadvantage¹⁸ of working from home, particularly among women without children. This group was also far more likely than their male counterparts to feel worried and agitated throughout the lockdown. There are indications that increased workload and friction between job and family have had a detrimental influence on parents' emotional well-being, particularly for mothers. Almost half of the moms felt harried and pushed for time during the lockdown, which lasted more than half of the time. (Heejung Chung, Hyojin Seo, Sarah Forbes, and Holly Birkett; 2020).

³¹ Yijing Xiao, Burcin Becerik-Gerber, DDes, Gale Lucas, and Shawn C. Roll conducted a web-based survey in 2021. ⁷ A questionnaire was sent out from April 24 to June 11 2020, and 988 valid responses were obtained. ³² Approximately two-thirds of respondents (64.8 percent) reported new physical health issues after WFH, whereas more than three-quarters (73.6 percent) reported new mental health issues. 41.7 percent of respondents said they had two or more new physical health issues, compared to 23.1 percent who said they had only one. The majority of respondents (55.1%) said they were experiencing two or more new mental health issues, while 18.5 percent said they were experiencing one new mental health issue and 26.4 percent said they had no new worries. As a result, respondents reported having more physical and mental health concerns. ³⁰ Respondents reported increased physical and mental health issues as a result of ⁹ less physical activity, more junk food consumption, having at least one infant at home, being distracted while WFH, decreased communication with co workers, increased workload, increased work hours, and adjusting work hours around others.

In 2021, a cross sectional study was done by Pedro Afonso, Miguel Fonseca and Tomas Teodoro; on 143 full time teleworkers in Portugal. Participants experienced ⁷ anxiety/depressive symptoms, with anxiety dominating, and extremely high levels of sleep disruption. Anxiety/depression were linked ⁷ with worse sleep quality and were inversely connected with quality of life. Better sleep quality was linked to long working hours and better job satisfaction. The literature available suggests that the employees felt an increase in their productivity and those living with their

partners also got more time to spend with them but a major concern of negative impacts on their mental and physical health can not be overlooked because of teleworking during COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges faced by HR during COVID 19 pandemic and their immediate response

1. A crisis is a situation that has an impact on an organization's long-term viability, performance, and profitability. Managers are concerned that crises, such as the current crown outbreak, might have a negative influence on a variety of businesses at any time and in any area. With the commencement of complete lockdown during the COVID – 19 pandemic for organizations and top level management, a number of issues of worry developed.
2. The problem for the corporation is that the employees' abilities aren't up to par for the WFH pattern. Traditional office skills were no longer adequate to meet the company's objectives, so the organization needed highly trained individuals to carry out their task.
3. WFH-induced psychological stress has a negative impact on achieving corporate objectives.
4. Due to the loss of physical contact the role of company culture was significantly weakened (Amelia Manuti, 2021).

The role of HR professionals became vital in this crisis management during the pandemic. According to ADP Canada 2020, approximately 61 percent of HR professionals think that their work has gotten more difficult as a result of the COVID 19 epidemic, and 43 percent believe that their function has entirely altered as a result of the crisis. (Nino Nutsbidze, Dusana Alshatti Schmidt; 2021).

Aside ¹⁷ from digital skills, which would enable but not guarantee employees' flexibility, fast adaptability, and creativity, HR had to focus on strengthening the cooperation abilities of its

digitally distributed employees to ensure a seamless transition to virtual work.

A study published in Review of Socio-Economic Perspectives, Vol 6(1), 1-12; used qualitative HR expert interviews based in Kuwait to understand the problems faced by HR professionals to manage employees during the COVID-19 and how they are tackling the same. (Nino Nutsbidze, Dusana Alshatti Schmidt; 2021).

During the interview, experts stated that the pandemic issue had an impact on "staff morale," notably that HR has struggled to offer comfort to its employees, hence maintaining employee engagement, motivation, and morale. (Nino Nutsbidze, Dusana Alshatti Schmidt; 2021).

Regular pay plans were a problem for HR to implement. Due to financial pressures on the organization's leadership, HR had to find a delicate balance between cost/benefit reduction and staff productivity maintenance to please management. One of the issues that HRM has had to deal with throughout the pandemic has been staff retention. They'd also had problems keeping open lines of contact with their personnel. Some of the primary issues faced by HR professionals across organizations include a lack of remote online management experience and a lack of crisis management knowledge and experience. There were major shifts in the HR practices such as Digitizing recruitment process, emphasizing on upskilling the employees, providing trainings and developing crisis management skills, establishing transparent communication based on trust and full discretion, replacing short-term thinking vs long term mindset. (Nino Nutsbidze, Dusana Alshatti Schmidt; 2021).

Companies and HR professionals around the globe faced similar challenges and had taken steps to adapt to the new normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain challenges were more prominent to the other in different industries because of asymmetric impact of COVID – 19 on them. Now that the post-pandemic era is starting to begin, it will be vital for the HR professionals to enter into the complete Response phase and develop practices for smooth organisational functioning for the future ahead.

CHAPTER - 4

Teleworking: The way forward

The way forward: Role of Teleworking in post pandemic era

The pandemic has compelled the development of new working methods. Organizations must reinvent their work and the role of offices in providing employment and lifestyles that are safe, productive, and pleasurable for their people. Leaders across sectors will leverage the insights learned from this large-scale work from-home experiment to creatively and boldly redefine how work is done—and what role offices should play.

Most firms are moving toward a hybrid workplace, where a big number of office employees rotate in and out of offices structured for shared areas, whether by design or default. It is likely to alter a company's culture, employee involvement, work processes, and how office space is utilized.

PwC conducted an extensive survey amongst 133 executives and 1,200 office workers in November and December 2020 to understand the future of remote working in the post pandemic era. The survey found out that:

- Both employees and employers had a positive attitude towards remote working and felt that it is here to stay for a long time.
- Close to 45% employers felt that to keep a strong culture employees should be in office for two to four days a week along with remote working for the rest of the week.
- Those with the least professional experience (0-5 years) are more inclined to desire to be in the workplace more frequently.
- Over 60% of executives expect to spend more on virtual collaboration tools and management training in the future. Half of the respondents planned to boost their investment in areas that

support hybrid working practices, such as hotel booking apps (50 percent) and shared office space (48 percent).

- Employees place a high importance on flexibility. Recognize the areas where remote work works best and be prepared to adjust your schedule accordingly. EY performed a more recent poll in March 2021 that includes close to 16000 respondents from 23 countries and 16 industries. It contained replies from senior executives and personnel from many departments. The results of the survey revealed that

- After the COVID-19 epidemic, more than half (54 percent) of employees polled around the world stated they would consider leaving their jobs if they were not given some flexibility in where and when they worked.

- More than half of respondents (67%) believe their output can be successfully monitored regardless of location.

- Despite their apparent desire to shift jobs for more flexible working arrangements, the majority of employee respondents (76%) say they are satisfied with their existing roles, and nearly all (93%) say they want to stay in their current positions for the next 12 months.

- Employee responses to the COVID-19 vaccine were also examined in the poll, and it was determined that 61 percent want their company to make immunization a prerequisite for working from home.

In interviews with 80 CHROs at some of the largest organisations in the United States and Europe in 2022, Mckinsey and Company found that significant changes to the HR operating model are predicted in the next two or three years. The upcoming changes would include:

- Rampant digitalization of HR

- Putting the business in the driver's seat by shifting responsibility for traditional HR tasks to line managers.

- Creating HR practice groups and emphasizing on employee experience design.

CHAPTER - 5

Primary Research

Research Methodology

Throughout the report we have discussed the impact of teleworking on employees' and organisations across the globe before and during COVID-19 pandemic. The report also tries to gaze down the future of teleworking in the Hybrid working environment.

Secondary research was used to create a hypothesis about the employee and managerial perceptions towards teleworking before COVID-19 pandemic (2000- 2019), during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-mid 2021) and post pandemic (mid 2021-present). The primary research was designed to investigate the hypothesis formed by the secondary research. It also tried to find the expectations of the employees from organisations in the Hybrid Working environment of the future.

The deductive approach was used in this research study. The primary data is used to strengthen the overall content of the report. Various existing remote working surveys were studied to form the primary research survey.

Respondents were asked to complete a survey. The questionnaire was designed on Google Forms (Refer to Appendix I), and it was easy and accessible for the respondents. Respondents received the questionnaire via e-mail, texts and social media messages. They were invited to answer a few questions, which took about 4-5 minutes to complete. Strict ethical norms were observed throughout the data collection process. The respondents were assured that the information was collected solely for academic purposes and that their responses would be kept fully confidential. Furthermore, respondents had the option of withdrawing at any time during the questionnaire completion process, ensuring confidentiality. A 5-point Likert scale was used, asking the respondents to evaluate their response on a scale of 1 to 5. Non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used for the conducting the primary research.

The questionnaire was floated to 150+ participants based out of India, out of which 102 responded. The responses from the survey were collated and appropriately combined to reach a more in-depth understanding and conclusion and what can be the way ahead for the organisations for smooth functioning of Teleworking.

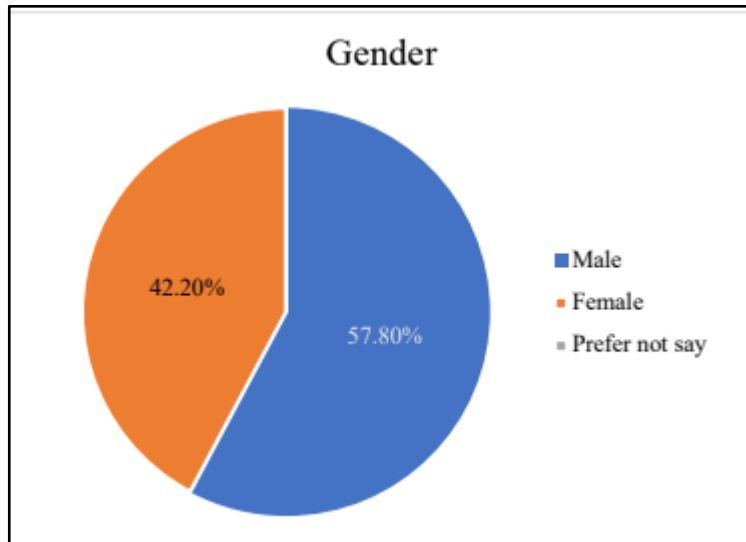
The sample comprised 59 male (57.8%) and 43 female (42.2%) respondents. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group 18-25 years (62%).

Type of Industry the respondents were working in:

Industry	Count
Administrative Services	1
BFSI	13
Consultancy Services	15
E commerce	8
Education and Training	2
FMCG	1
Healthcare and Pharma	3
IT Services	36
Legal	2
Manufacturing	13
Marketing and Advertising	1
Media and Journalism	2
Other	5
Grand Total	102

Table 1: Total number of respondents distributed on the type of Industry they are working in.

Gender distribution of respondents:



Age and Total Work Experience of respondents:

Age Group (In years)	Total Work Experience (In years)					Grand Total
	0-3	3-8	8-15	15-20	>20	
18-25	62	3	0	0	0	65
26-35	5	23	3	0	0	31
36-50	0	0	2	2	0	4
>50	0	0	0	0	2	2
Grand Total	67	26	5	2	2	102

Table 3: Total number of respondents distributed based on Age group and Work experience

Objectives of Primary Research:

- To trace the trend of Teleworking before the onset of COVID 19 pandemic (i.e., from 2000 – 2019), during COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. 2020- mid 2021) and after COVID 19 pandemic (i.e. mid-2021 to present time).
- To understand the difference between voluntary and mandatory work from home work arrangements w.r.t overall wellbeing of employees.
- To gain insights about the perception of employees towards teleworking
- To identify the challenges faced by employees in returning to offline work post pandemic

e) To identify the employee expectations w.r.t. future work arrangement and benefits.

Discussion and Analysis

a) Prevalence of Telework before COVID-19

Type of Industry	Experienced teleworking before Covid?		
	No	Yes	Grand Total
Administrative Services	0	1	1
BFSI	8	5	13
Consultancy Services	9	6	15
E commerce	5	3	8
Education and Training	0	2	2
FMCG	1	0	1
Healthcare and Pharma	3	0	3
IT Services	9	27	36
Legal	2	0	2
Manufacturing	9	4	13
Marketing and Advertising	0	1	1
Media and Journalism	1	1	2
Other	4	1	5
Grand Total	51	51	102

Table 3: Total number of respondents distributed on the basis of Industry and if they had experienced

teleworking before COVID 19.

Out of the total 102 respondents, 51(50%) had experienced teleworking before COVID-19. It can be seen evidently from Table-3 that teleworking before COVID-19 was significantly more prevalent in industries such as IT industries, BFSI and Consultancy services (~75%). The nature of work in these industries complemented voluntary Work from Home before the pandemic.

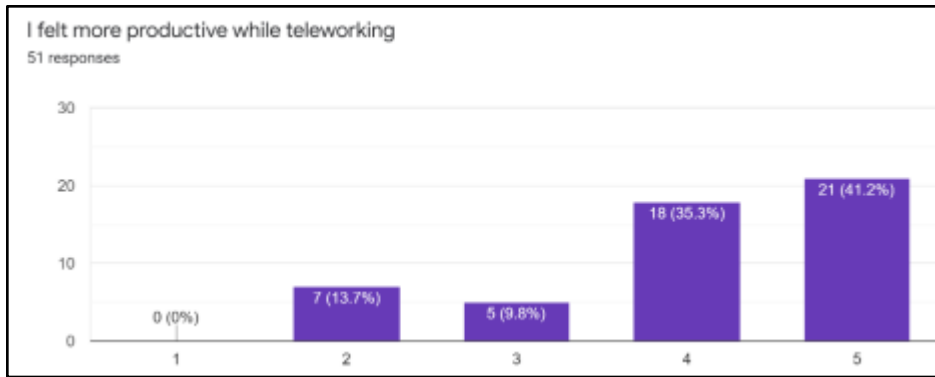
75% of IT services professionals had experienced teleworking before COVID-19. 67% of Consultancy services professionals had experienced teleworking before COVID-19 and close to 63% BFSI professionals had experienced teleworking before COVID-19.

The survey findings support the secondary research findings mentioned in Chapter-I of the report

b) Impact of Voluntary Teleworking on Employees before COVID 19.

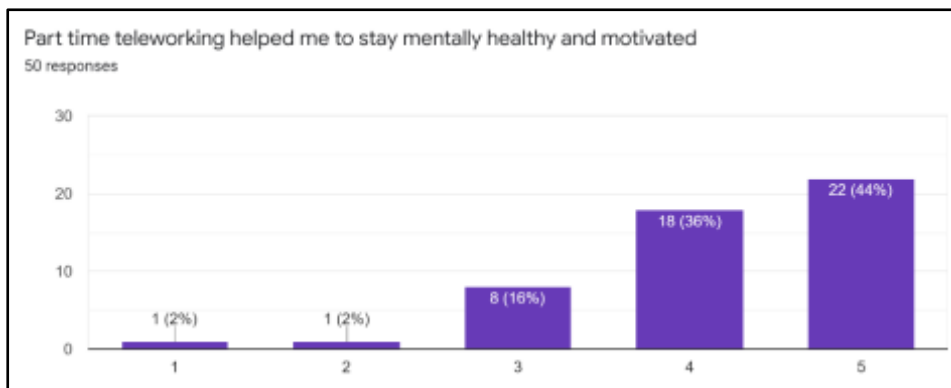
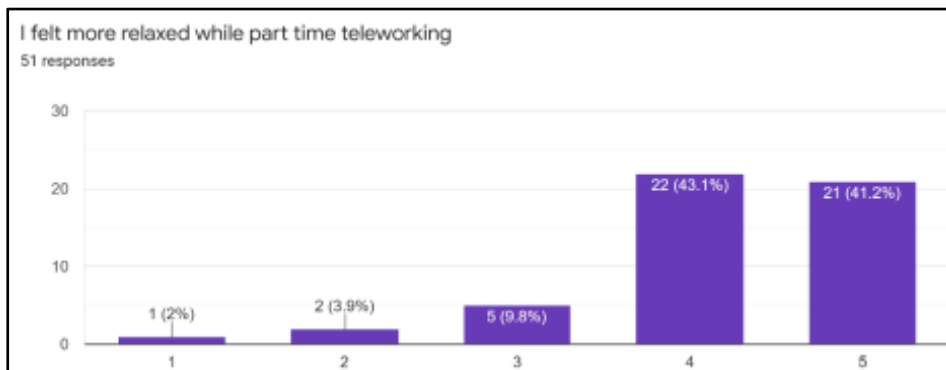
Productivity:

29 Scale	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree



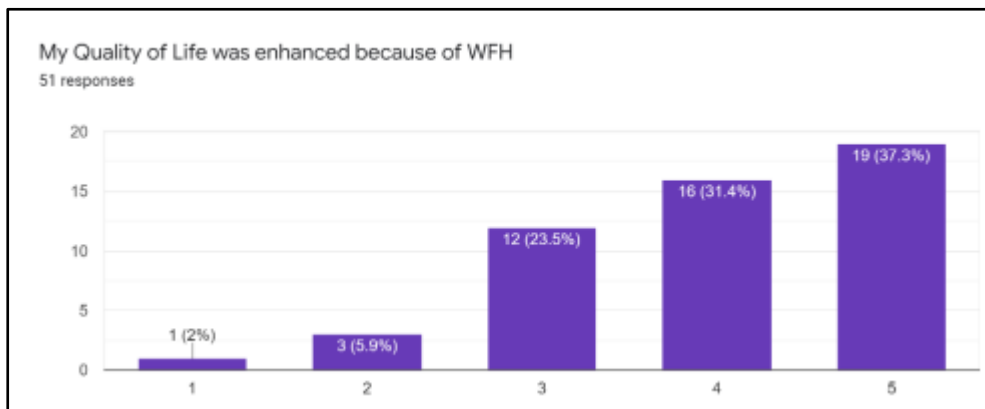
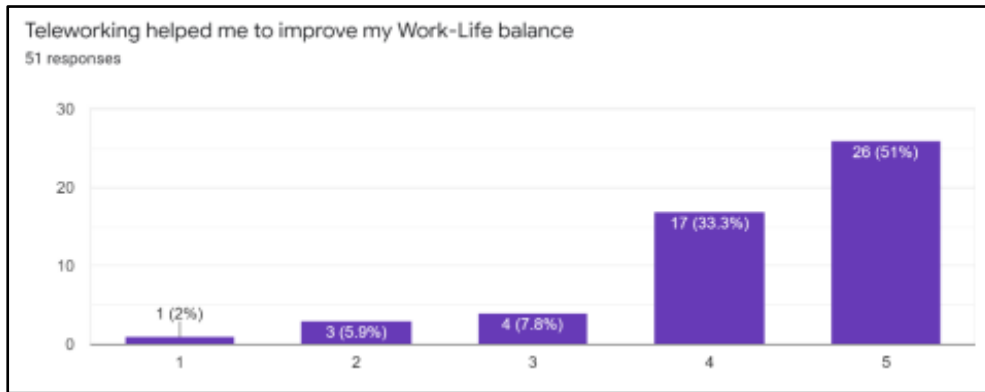
Out of the 51 respondents who experienced teleworking before COVID-19, **76.5%** of them agreed that they had a positive impact on their productivity while teleworking.

Mental and Physical Health:



Close to **84%** of the respondents who had experienced teleworking before COVID-19 felt more relaxed while doing so and **80%** of the same agreed that part-time teleworking had a positive impact on their mental health to keep them motivated.

Work Life Balance and Quality of Life:

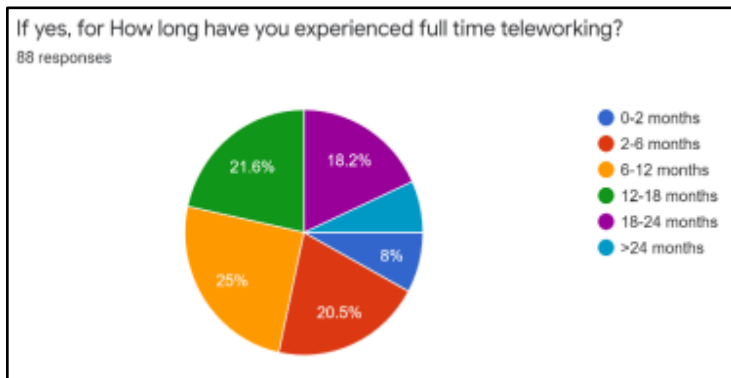
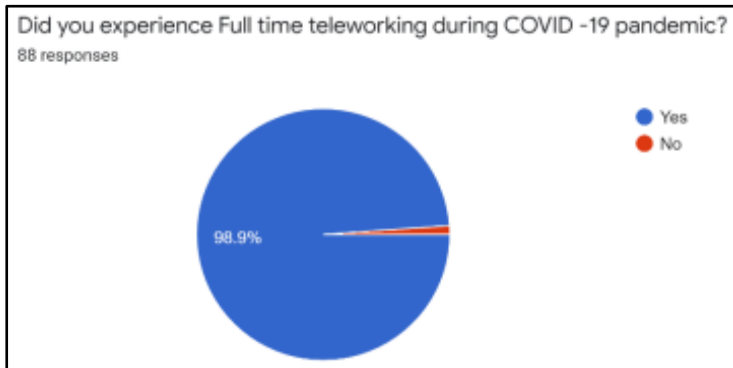
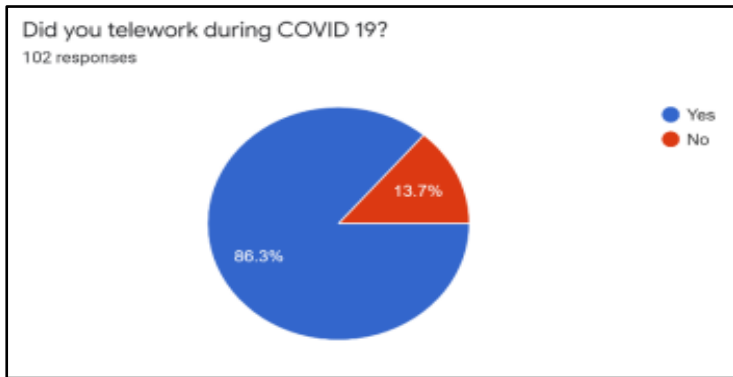


Out of the 51 respondents, who had experienced Teleworking before COVID-19, **51%** strongly agreed that Teleworking improved their work life balance and close to **69%** agreed that their Quality of Life had enhanced because of Teleworking.

The survey evidently suggests that voluntary teleworking before COVID-19 positively impacted productivity, work life balance and overall well-being of the employees which complements our secondary research findings mentioned in Chapter I.

c) Prevalence of Teleworking during COVID-19.

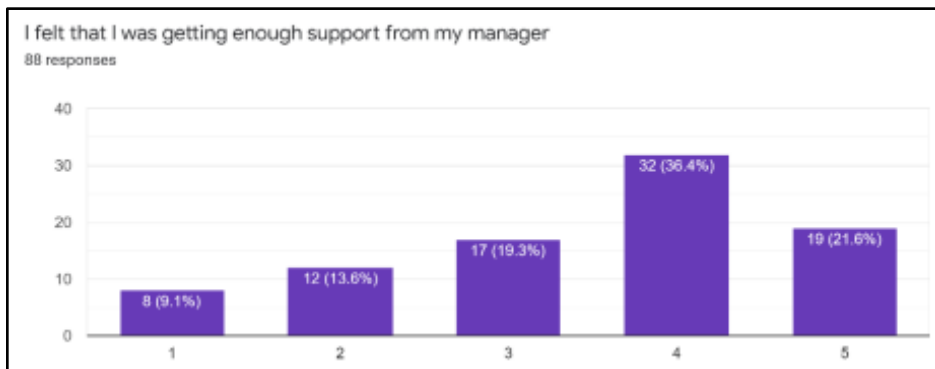
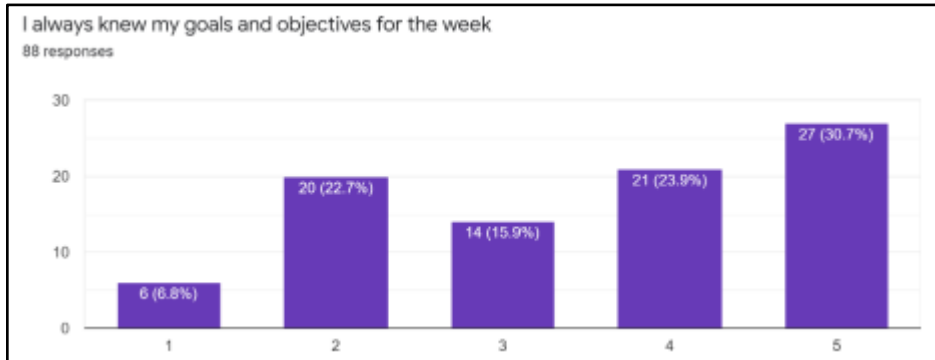
Out of the total 102 respondents, close to 87% respondents did teleworking during COVID-19. Out of these 87% respondents, almost all of them experienced full-time teleworking during COVID-19 pandemic. This increase in the percentage of people teleworking was due to the sudden lockdowns imposed in the country and businesses had to resort to full time teleworking to continue their functions. This result can be translated to companies/employees globally as found out in the secondary research in chapter II.



The amount of time the respondents had teleworked full-time was evenly spread between **2 to 24 months**. This ensures holistic survey results pertaining to full time teleworking during COVID-19.

d) Impact of Full-time (mandatory) Teleworking during COVID-19.

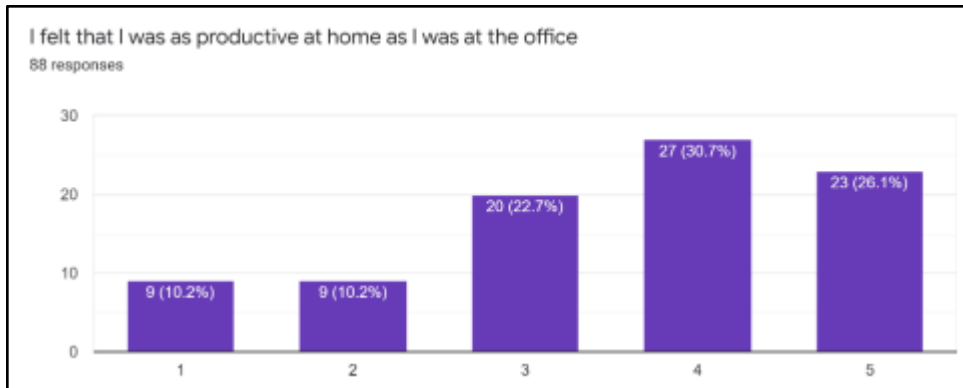
Communication from organization:



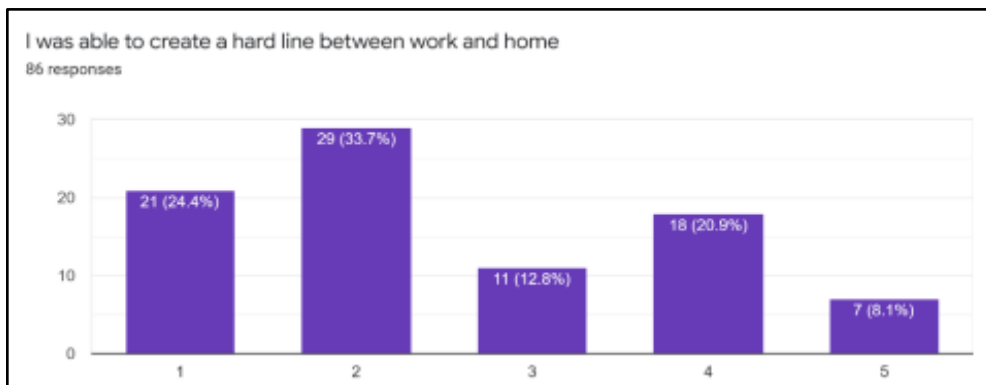
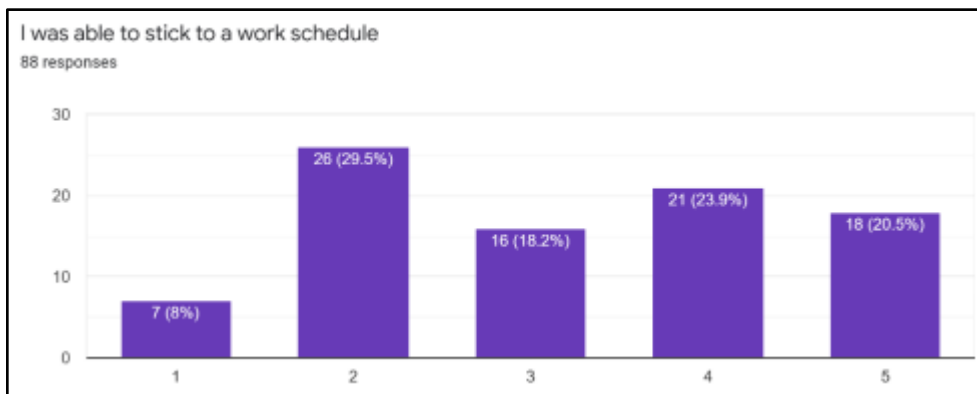
Out of the 88 respondents who had experienced full time teleworking during COVID-19, nearly **half** of them felt that they knew about their goals and objectives for the week. This spread was similar when it came to immediate support from the managers. These findings can be due to the changes in personal lives brought in by the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. The sudden shift to video conferencing and remote working made it difficult for the managers to communicate with the employees as effectively as offline working.

Productivity:

Out of the 88 respondents who had experienced full time teleworking during COVID 19, only **20.4%** disagreed that they were as productive at home as they were at office.



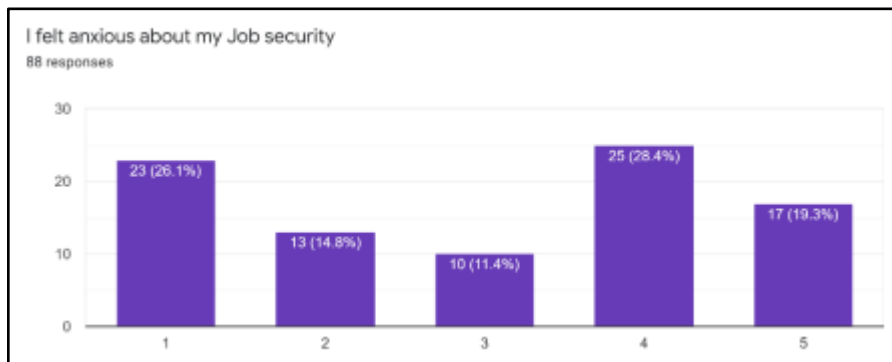
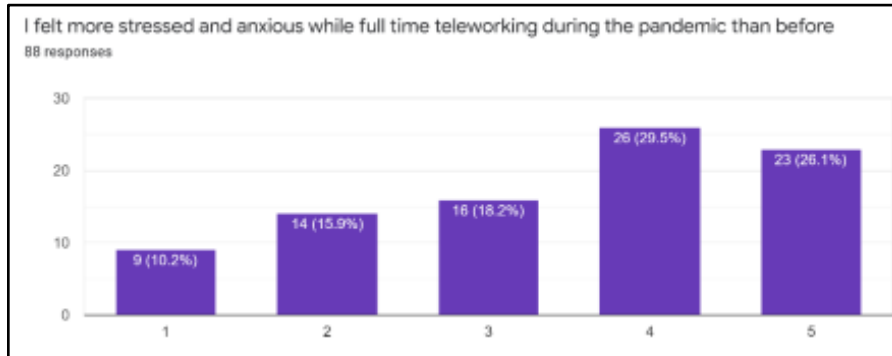
Work life balance:



Out of the 88 respondents who had worked full-time teleworking during COVID-19, **56%** did not agree that they were able to stick to a work schedule and only **29%** agreed that they were able to create a hard line between work and home. This shows that the lines between work and home were blurred during COVID-19 for majority of employees. Since majority of employees were teleworking in flexible hours during COVID-19, a proper work schedule might not have been followed. Also, taking care of personal responsibilities while working from home could have lead

to distorted work schedules during the pandemic.

Mental Health:

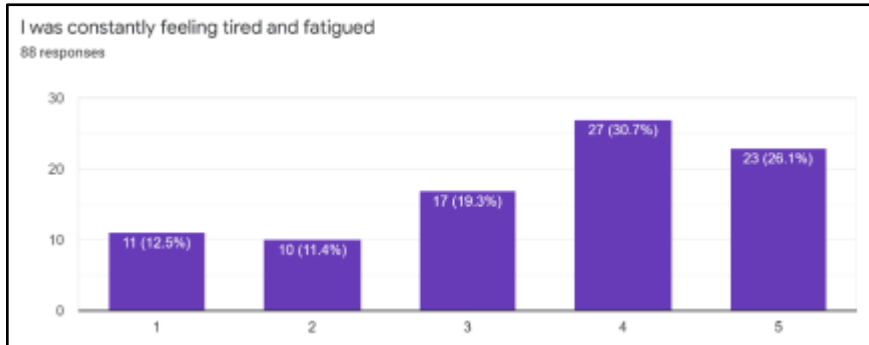


Only **26%** of the respondents, who experienced full time teleworking during COVID 19, did not agree that they felt more stressed and anxiety while full time teleworking during the pandemic. This could be due to multiple factors such as increased work hours, personal responsibilities, fear of the unknown etc. Job security, for increased anxiety, was one such factor that was tried to analyze. The survey suggested that nearly **half of the respondents** identified themselves being anxious about the security of their job.

Physical Health:

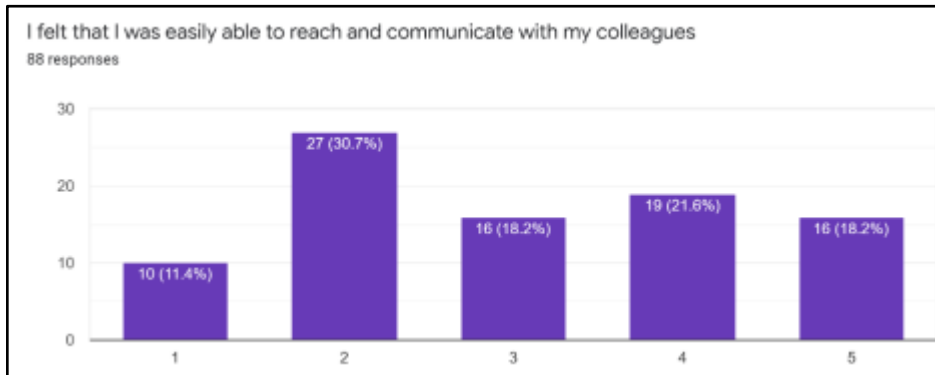
Lack of physical movement and exercise during COVID-19 lockdown impacted physical health of many people negatively. It was worse for employees with increased teleworking hours and distorted work schedules during the pandemic. Our survey results also suggest the same with nearly **57%** of the respondents, who had experienced full time(mandatory) teleworking during

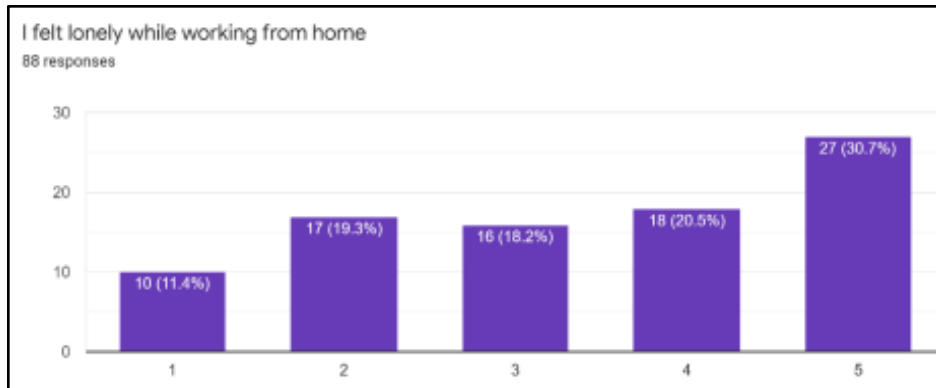
COVID-19, were constantly feeling tired and fatigued.



Social Health:

Social Health and wellbeing of employees was also impacted while full time teleworking during COVID-19. Our survey found out that close to **60%** of the respondents who had experienced full time teleworking during COVID-19 did not agree that they were easily able to reach and communicate with their colleagues. This was a major impact of closing down of office spaces during the lockdown. Only **30.7%** respondents did not feel lonely while working from home during COVID-19 lockdown. The negative impact on Social health of an employee can also affect his/her mental health negatively.

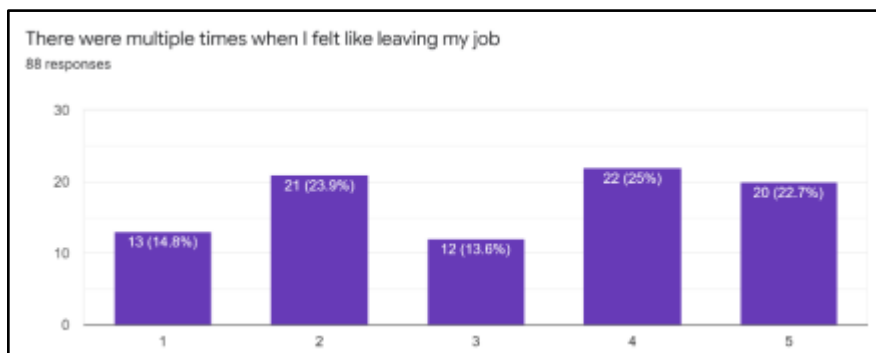




Job Satisfaction:

Due to the negative impacts on their social, mental and physical health, many employees working full time remotely during COVID-19 felt less satisfied with their jobs and looked for opportunities to switch their current job. The survey found out that close to **48%** respondents agreed that there were multiple times when they felt like leaving their job.

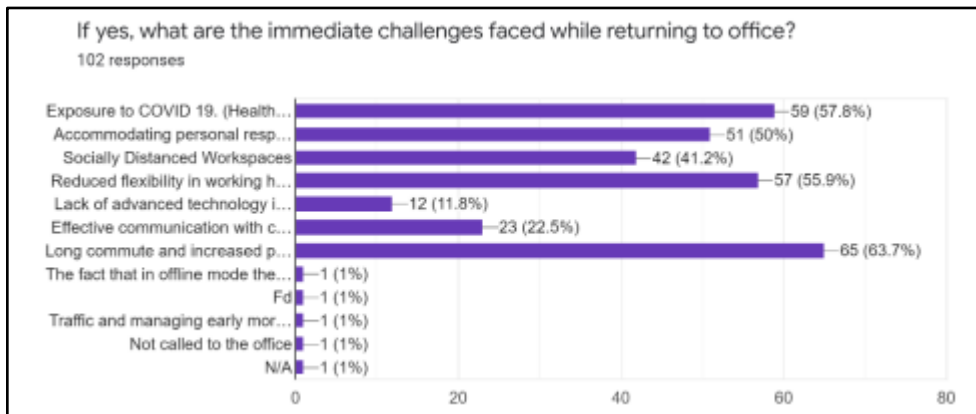
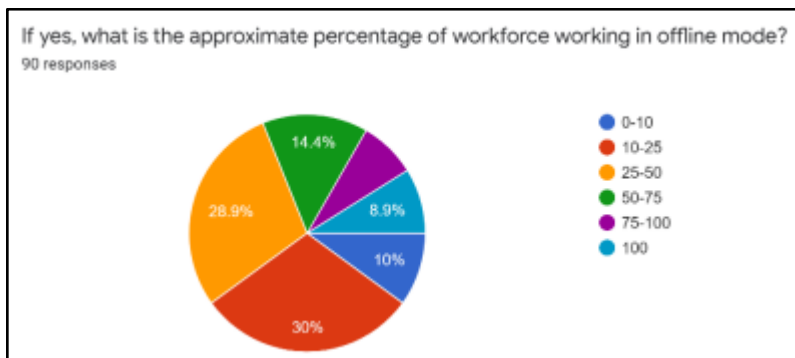
According to the results of the primary research survey it can be said that the productivity of employees was increased while teleworking full time during COVID 19. But due to increased working hours, excessive screen time and job pressure, employees' mental social and physical health were negatively impacted further affecting their job satisfaction. This complements the secondary research findings mentioned in Chapter II of the report.



e) Returning to Office post pandemic:

With almost 180 crore COVID vaccinations being rolled out by the government of India till 7th March 2022, companies are calling employees to work in their office spaces to work in offline

mode. This survey found that organizations of around **80%** of the total respondents have called in their employees to work in offline mode. But majority of these organizations are calling in a percentage of the complete workforce. This can be due to ensure the safety of employees by reducing the risk of contracting corona virus. Also, it helps in saving costs for the organization. The survey results show that the organizations calling in employees to work in offline mode are majorly working in **10-50%** workforce capacity.



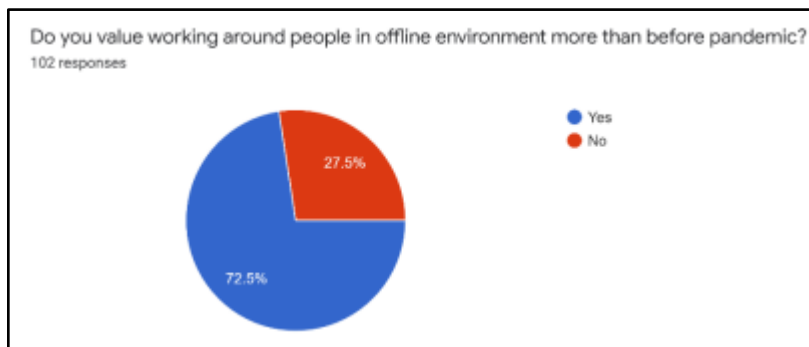
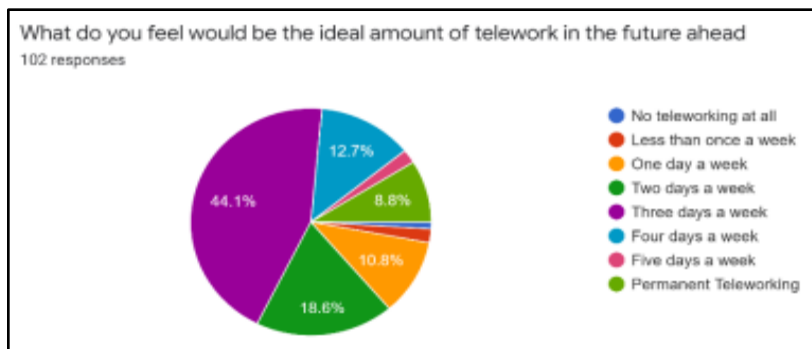
After adapting in full time teleworking for a long time during COVID-19, employees will face challenges while returning to office. According to the survey results major immediate challenges identified are –

- 1) Long Commute and increased physical fatigue (**63.7%**)

- 2) Exposure to COVID-19. (Health and safety) **(57.8%)**
- 3) Reduced flexibility in working hours **(55.9%)**
- 4) Accommodating personal responsibilities **(50%)**
- 5) Socially distanced workspaces **(41.2%)**

f) The future ahead

There is no doubt about the fact that Teleworking is going to stay for a long time and Hybrid working arrangement is the future ahead as mentioned in Chapter III of the report. Our survey also complements the same. Out of a total of 102 total respondents, **75.4%** felt that the ideal amount of teleworking in the future ahead would be **2-4 days a week**. This result also conforms with the secondary research result mentioned above in Chapter III.



After being a part of mandatory work from home for a long time during COVID 19 lockdown, it's interesting to know if employees now value working in a social arrangement in offices more than before pandemic. The survey found out that **72.5%** of the total respondents valued working around people in the offline arrangement more than before pandemic. As mentioned above in the report, full time teleworking had negatively impacted social health of employees and also working in

offline arrangement ensured smooth and effective communication from the employers to the employees. These might be the reason for the employees to value offline working arrangement more than before pandemic.

For any organization to run smoothly and successfully, the HR policy of the organization must align in tandem with the expectations of the employees. Hence, we tried to find out the most important things employees expect from their employers in the future to stay happy and motivated at their jobs. The results were as follows:

- 1) Flexible working hours (**78.2%**)
- 2) Work Life Balance (**67.3%**)
- 3) Apt Compensation (**36.6%**)
- 4) Increased acknowledgement and support for Mental Health issues (**33.7%**)
- 5) Effective communication and social arrangement (**31.7%**)
- 6) Increased health and safety benefits (**30.7%**)
- 7) Autonomy (**26.7%**)
- 8) Inclusive Work Arrangement (**23.8%**)

The above results shows that Teleworking is here to stay and for a long time. The ideal teleworking time in the future turned out to be 2-4 days a week. People are now valuing the importance of office spaces and offline arrangement. Respondents gave value to Flexible Working hours and Work Life balance more significantly than others. An increased importance for acknowledgement and support for mental health issues can be seen by the employees. This can be due to the increasing awareness about mental health issues during the pandemic globally. The secondary research findings mentioned in Chapter III also suggests the same.

CONCLUSION

The report documents the changing impacts and perception of teleworking before, during and post COVID-19 on both the employees and managers. The prevalence of Teleworking before COVID-19 was more in industries like IT services, consultancy services, legal services etc. because of the nature of the work in these industries. Teleworking before COVID-19 was majorly voluntary in nature which had an overall positive impact on productivity, work life balance and overall wellbeing of the employees. Managers who had adopted teleworking before COVID-19 had differences in perception of positive and detrimental impacts teleworking than those who had not adopted the same.

The study identified the differences between the impact of voluntary and mandatory teleworking (during Covid-19). Employee productivity rose when teleworking full-time during COVID-19. Employees' emotional, social, and physical health were significantly impacted as a result of increasing working hours, excessive screen usage, and workplace pressure, further impacting their job satisfaction. Organisations also faced immediate challenges with the sudden onset of COVID-19 pandemic. HR was challenged to implement regular compensation programmes. Because of the financial challenges that put pressure on the organization's leadership, HR had to find a delicate balance between cost/benefit reduction to please management and employee productivity maintenance. Staff retention has also been mentioned as a concern that HRM had faced during the pandemic. These challenges were tackled by the immediate response from organisations across the globe.

Managers regard telework as having the ability to improve business performance since, in their perspective, people work more intensively and productively (due to the possibility for being more focused at home and for saving commuting time and effort). Furthermore, this technique may result in cost savings from less office space as well as improved job matching from a geographically bigger pool of people. Workers, on the other hand, are eager to telework more since it allows them to save money and time on travelling, and it allows them to be more focused and comfortable at home. Flexible hours and work life balance are valued the most by the employees now. Teleworking is here to stay and rampant changes by the organisations are expected to accommodate smooth functioning in the Hybrid Working Arrangement. Excessive focus on digitising the HR, shifting traditional HR tasks to line managers and formation of effective public policies. Public policies will play an important part in the Hybrid work arrangement in the future. Penetration of internet into both urban and rural areas will complement teleworking. Also, safeguarding employees from negative impacts of teleworking could be facilitated by public policies by modifying the legal arrangement with a particular emphasis on health insurance coverage for remote work.

Overall, the report provides an overview on the changing impact and perception of employers and employees towards teleworking. The report also attempts to identify the employee demands from their employers and the organisations expectations from the future working arrangement.

APPENDIX - 1

The questionnaire floated for the primary research.

This screenshot shows the beginning of a Google Form titled "Teleworking (Work from Home)". The form includes an introductory paragraph about the survey's purpose, followed by several required questions:

- Age ***: Radio button options for 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, and >50.
- Gender ***: Radio button options for Male, Female, and Prefer not to say.
- Industry (Currently Working) ***: Radio button options for Administrative Services, BFSI, Consultancy Services, E commerce, Education and Training, Healthcare and Pharma, IT Services, Manufacturing, Media and Journalism, and Other.
- Years Of Experience ***: Radio button options for 0-3, 3-8, 8-15, 15-20, and >20.
- Have you experienced Teleworking before COVID-19? ***: Radio button options for Yes and No.

At the bottom, there are "Next" and "Request edit access" buttons. The form is created by vedant.amc16@sot.pdpu.ac.in.

This screenshot shows the middle section of the Google Form, featuring several Likert scale questions (1-5) with "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree" anchors:

- Teleworking helped me to improve my Work-Life balance**: 1 2 3 4 5
- I felt more relaxed while part time teleworking**: 1 2 3 4 5
- My Quality of Life was enhanced because of WFH**: 1 2 3 4 5
- I used to prefer working in office over teleworking before the pandemic**: 1 2 3 4 5
- Part time teleworking helped me to stay mentally healthy and motivated**: 1 2 3 4 5
- I used to prefer working in office over teleworking before the pandemic**: 1 2 3 4 5

Below these questions are "Back", "Next", and "Clear form" buttons. The form is created by vedantasawa26@gmail.com.

7:08 Please rate the following sentences on the scale of 1-5 if you have experienced full time teleworking during COVID-19

1- Strongly disagree
2- Disagree
3- Neutral
4- Agree
5- Strongly agree

I always knew my goals and objectives for the week

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I was able to stick to a work schedule

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt that I was as productive at home as I was at the office

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt that I was getting enough support from my manager

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt that I was easily able to reach and communicate with my colleagues

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt that the work from home policy of my company was communicated clearly to the employees

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I was able to create a hard line between work and home

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt more stressed and anxious while full time teleworking during the pandemic than before

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I was constantly feeling tired and fatigued

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

My company had provided the employees with new technologies or tools to make working at home more efficient

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt anxious about my Job security

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

There were multiple times when I felt like leaving my job

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

7:08 like leaving my job

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt lonely while working from home

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

I felt very happy and comfortable while working from home as my family was with me

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree ○○○○○ Strongly Agree

Back Next Clear form

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7:09 docs.google.com/forms/d/e/

Teleworking - After COVID 19

What do you feel would be the ideal amount of telework in the future ahead *

No teleworking at all
 Less than once a week
 One day a week
 Two days a week
 Three days a week
 Four days a week
 Five days a week
 Permanent Teleworking

Have employees in your organisation being called to work in offline mode? *

Yes
 No

7:09 If yes, what is the approximate percentage of workforce working in offline mode?

0-10
 10-25
 25-50
 50-75
 75-100
 100

If yes, what are the immediate challenges faced while returning to office? *

Exposure to COVID 19. (Health and safety)
 Accommodating personal responsibilities
 Socially Distanced Workspaces
 Reduced flexibility in working hours
 Lack of advanced technology in the office
 Effective communication with colleagues
 Long commute and increased physical

7:09 fatigue

Other:

Do you value working around people in offline environment more than before pandemic? *

Yes
 No

Select the 3 most important things you expect from your employers in the future working environment? *

Flexible work hours
 Autonomy
 Effective communication and support
 Inclusive work environment
 Apt compensation
 Increased health and safety benefits
 Increased acknowledgement and support for Mental Health issues
 Work-Life Balance
 Other:

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