

Chapter 1

A Systematic Review of Home–Office–Related Studies in the Business Context During the COVID–19 Pandemic Term

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ABSTRACT

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, organizations in many sectors switched to the remote working system in order to maintain social distance among people. With the increase of home-office working in management literature, examining how useful the home-office working model as an example of smart working systems has gained importance to ensure the continuity of the systems. After the pandemic, some organizations did not return to their physical working environments and preferred completely online or hybrid business models. What kind of study is being executed is an important question for the realization of new research. In these studies, revealing how effective home-office research is and how much they can provide the expected benefit will be useful information for business human resources management in the strategy development processes. The purpose of this study is to investigate home office-related studies conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and to reveal pros and cons of the home-office working in management literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Working from home has a much longer history than working in offices outside. The

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history of work from home dates back to the middle Ages, when craft and trade shops were set up within the living space (Radovic-Markovic, et al. 2021).

Covid-19 pandemic brought unexpected changes in our daily life. During the current COVID-19 pandemic, most companies reduced office times and encouraged their employees to work from home in order to protect people from infection. Direct face-to-face communication was replaced by online meetings using video conferencing, chats, and cloud-based collaboration (Schmidtner et al, 2021). In the mean time, the pandemic has been causing negative socioeconomic effects throughout the world (Fujita, et al, 2021). A wide range of jobs in various industries can be done from home, including remote work. Namely, work from home, teleworking, remote office-it has several names, but no matter what you call it, it means working in an environment that is not the company's office, while ensuring that productivity does not suffer (Radovic-Markovic, 2021).

The term 'smart working' has been used to describe an evolutionary change taking place over a number of different dimensions in the world of work (Boorsma and Mitchell 2011). There has been a decline in the importance of place in work activities; greater scope for collaboration; employee autonomy and talent management; and an emphasis on innovation (Hamel and Breen, 2007). Much of the discussion around the concept of 'smart' working is focused on work traditionally performed in offices – administrative and managerial tasks. Personal life can be enhanced through smart homes that support advanced communication with devices via an Internet-of-Things (Carillo et al. 2017; Bednar and Welch, 2019). In this working mode, there are no specific constraints on the time or location of work. Due to the use of technology, smart workers may perform the same duties and activities as those of ordinary workers and achieve the same set targets and results while choosing a workplace and time schedule that are more convenient for both the activity to be performed and their personal needs (Angelici and Profeta, 2020)

A recent survey found that the majority (79%) of employees seeking flexibility in work are well educated and have managerial experience, while 73% felt that flexibility is a prerequisite for strong interpersonal relationships of employees (Ishay, 2019). According to Ishay (2019), the Gallup survey of good governance is a key factor in improving employee productivity and innovation. Remote employees require a different management style, so managers need to make sure they master the appropriate skills. Achieving these benefits requires strong, consistent leadership and constant communication. Founders and managers must set an example, be transparent and work to communicate the company's mission, values and goals. Some good starting points include (Freeport, 2020):

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