Chapter 9
Teleworking:
The "New Normal" in Response to a Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This chapter intends to understand how telework pre-adoption perceptions differ from post-adoption realized benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether an organization will continue the use of telework once the pandemic subsides. Literature was examined and a hybrid framework incorporating components of the perceived value theory and expectation confirmation model (ECM) was used. The perceived value theory focuses on the perceived business value of Telework pre-adoption and ECM focuses on continued use post-adoption. Resistance by managers to allow employees to telework is evident in surveys conducted as recent as 2019. While surveys conducted initially in 2020 during the pandemic indicated that at least 74% of CFOs intend to implement more telework in their organization and 60% of employees would opt to remain teleworking after the pandemic despite possible health implications, later surveys suggest that after continued use of telework, 59% of the employees now no longer prefer to telework into the future due to constraining factors such as isolation and blurred work lines.

INTRODUCTION

Teleworking is not a new concept and has been in the American workspace since the early '70s. Telework has been a world trend that has been widely adopted due to the influence and modernization of information communication technologies systems (ICTS). The concept of Telework did not start as it is known today, it was developed originally in an attempt to lower the consumption rate and dependency on fossil fuels by reducing the need for employees to travel to office spaces (Nilles, 1975). This concept however was not adopted in all organizations as Telework has been met with resistance in its implementation. These factors of resistance have been identified mainly as, management who have been seen as a stumbling block (J Morrison, 2017), as well as some employees who did not find interest in this non-traditional way of work (Offstein, Morwick & Koskinen, 2010).

The International pandemic caused by Covid-19 has influenced organizations to evolve and transform their business models, as well as how people perform daily tasks and interact with their surroundings. A pandemic occurs when a new disease has spread worldwide and infected a large portion of a population, such as the Covid-19 virus [4] (WHO, 2020). This is due to most governments and organization's mandated policy to implement social distancing to flatten the curve and reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). Social distancing has compelled organizations and people to leverage ICTs to complete day-to-day work and tasks that would have been previously performed on-premise such as socializing, education, entertainment, and shopping to now be performed remotely as they are unable to leave their homes.

This paper aims to provide an overview of how Telework has been adopted and utilized in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and if it will be continued to be utilized. This will aid in providing a more comprehensive explanation to determining which factors lead to eventual adoption/rejection, and how initial attitudes and satisfaction towards the innovation could change/persist during its continued use. As this adoption occurred during a pandemic, which has forced a mass adoption in a brief period. This bypassed some of the normal pre-adoption stages and overlooked some constraining factors or found them to be acceptable at the time (Naidoo, 2020). This will aid in our understanding of which construct has a higher value to an adopter, usefulness, or satisfaction.

A hybrid conceptual framework that incorporates components of Perceived Value Theory and Expectation Confirmation Model (ECM) were utilized to understand these Telework adoption perceptions. Perceived Value Theory focuses on the perceived business value of Telework pre-adoption and ECM focuses on continued use post-adoption. The subsequent sections provide definitions of Telework and an

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