

Adaptation of Flexible Working System to Support Team Productivity in Pandemic-Changing Situations

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to study the adaptation of a flexible working system and what supports team productivity in pandemic-changing situations. It uses qualitative research by performing in-depth interviews and focuses on the interviews of eight managers of four supporting functions: IT, Finance, HR, and Legal, in three leading companies in Indonesia. The finding in this research shows the companies have experienced and still adapting to formulate a new working system. To support team productivity in the new working system, several factors need to be addressed, such as: facilities and technical support, the adaptation of SOP and job function, supervisor control, company and team agility, improved communication, work environment, and self-motivation. The new working system is expected to bring impact: improve productivity, cost reduction, environmental improvement, and employee well being.

SARI PATI

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mempelajari adaptasi dari sistem kerja fleksibel dan apa yang mendukung produktivitas tim dalam situasi yang berubah akibat pandemi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan melakukan wawancara mendalam dan berfokus pada wawancara dengan delapan manajer dari empat fungsi pendukung: IT, Keuangan, SDM, dan Hukum, di tiga perusahaan terkemuka di Indonesia. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perusahaan-perusahaan tersebut telah mengalami dan masih beradaptasi untuk merumuskan sistem kerja baru. Untuk mendukung produktivitas tim dalam sistem kerja baru ini, beberapa faktor perlu diperhatikan, seperti: fasilitas dan dukungan teknis, adaptasi SOP dan fungsi pekerjaan, pengawasan dari atasan, kegesitan perusahaan dan tim, komunikasi yang ditingkatkan, lingkungan kerja, dan motivasi diri. Sistem kerja baru ini diharapkan dapat membawa dampak positif, antara lain: peningkatan produktivitas, pengurangan biaya, perbaikan lingkungan, dan kesejahteraan karyawan.

INTRODUCTION

The world is currently entering a new phase: peace with Covid-19. Barriers to entry for most countries have been lifted, which keeps the wheels of the economy moving and gives hope to sectors impacted by this long global problem that has forced the world to slow down. The COVID-19 pandemic-related economic and health catastrophe has demonstrated to us how vital it is for organizations to foster creativity and innovation if they are to survive and expand. (Tønnessen et al., 2021). The world is never the same compared to before Covid-19; it's changing. One of the changes it brings is the way people communicate with each other. Connected anywhere, social networking, internet advertising, virtual reality, and teleconferencing are no longer optional but a must. COVID-19 also plays an essential role as a trigger, uncovering positive, negative, and inadequate factors associated with the work system (Williamson et al., 2022). This is how vital the work from anywhere (WFA) or home (work from home) system ensures the company's sustainability. The company and its employees have learned to adapt, develop, improve, and optimize the new working system concept. Several other terms are related to the concept of work from home. For example, (di Martino & Wirth, 1990) define work as telework or flexible work arrangements where workers work on location, away from the head office or production facilities, without personal contact with colleagues, but with the ability to communicate with co-workers—using information and communication technology. There are many other terms, but basically, there is a trend of work systems where time and place restrictions are more flexible, including place, time, and way of Work. In the UK, the trend of work from home is booming. (Felstead & Reuschke, 2021) said the amount

of homework in the UK during the pandemic increased dramatically. Before 2020, it took nearly 40 years for homework to grow by three percentage points, but its prevalence grew eightfold almost overnight as people were ordered to work from home if they could because of the pandemic. A study by (Straus et al., 2022) revealed that remote working has becoming more acceptable due to the changing work environment. It also suggests employers to review their conventional work policies and practices to effectively facilitate remote working. Despite conflicting theories and predictions, employees report that their productivity is not affected. There is an increasing proportion of employees reporting an increase in their productivity. A study from work from home and productivity stated that white-collar employees found that the work-from-home method made their productivity drop initially. However, the decline in productivity reversed after a few months. The study also found that work from home employees found themselves working 10 to 20% longer hours on average How is the work system in the world's giant companies? Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook has chosen to adopt this new work system or work from anywhere (WFA) permanently because he thinks this way of working is compatible with Facebook (Conger, 2020). Meanwhile, Elon Musk has just made a controversial statement that WFA is not allowed in his company (Wayt, 2022). We know that many types of research were made to analyse remote working systems and team productivity or the factors that affect productivity in this changing situation. Still, there have been only a few studies have analyzed the factors influencing managers' preference for working systems that can support team productivity in a pandemic-changing situation. Therefore, this study's aim is to understand the factors influencing

managers' preference for flexible working systems to support team productivity in this pandemic-changing situation, especially in the supporting functions: Finance, HR, IT, and Legal departments. The four supporting functions were chosen because those functions exist in almost every company, and the nature job of this function has a possibility for the minimum need for physical contact.

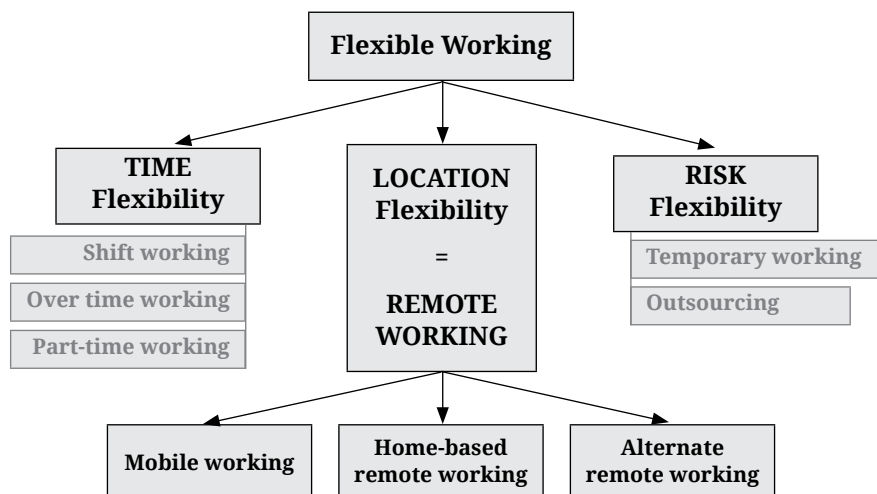
Theoretical Background

Flexible Working System and Productivity

Before 2020, it had taken almost 40 years for homeworking to grow by three percentage points, but its prevalence grew eightfold virtually overnight as people were instructed to work at home if they can because of the pandemic. The work from home idea, which has been out of a box concept for most organizations, has emerged, like it or not, to make sure the company's sustainability. In these more than two years of adaptation, the companies and their employees have studied to adapt, develop, improve, and optimize the concept of work from home. More new terms arise to replace the work from home term. Work from home is part of the Flexible working system. We use the flexible working system term as below:

The diagram above explains that companies that want to implement a flexible working system must formulate policies related to dividing employee work time and locations and managing risks if a job is done outside the office. For the aspect of work location, employees can work anywhere, home as a home-based, or there are other alternatives to do work. While performing remote working, the worker must have full responsibility contacted with colleagues using information and communication technology, so the manager can still monitor dan manage their employee productivity.

There are studies and research that of course found positive and negative opinions regarding work from home. According to (Sutarto et al., 2021) work from home provides advantages including better work-life balance, reduced commuting time, more flexibility, increased perceived autonomy, lower turnover intention, increased job satisfaction, improved productivity, and lower occupational stress. On the other side, it meets some challenges, such as the necessities of multitasking, the feeling of social isolation, decreased work motivation, some additional cost, distraction, and limited communication.



Source: Digitalization in Organizations, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA,

Research from (Angelici & Profeta, 2020) described that remote working at least working one day a week from home, would increase the productivity and well-being of workmen in a traditional Italian company. Another study by (Birkinshaw et al., 2020)) also found that productivity was up mainly because employees spent less time in meetings and more time with customers and partners, while non-essential activities were down by 25%. A survey by (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2020) found that managers and employees have a different view on productivity. It stated that 44% of managers expressed that employee productivity had increased, although only 28% of the employee’s self-report stated an increase in their productivity. Despite theories and predictions to the contrary, employees reported that their productivity was not adversely affected. Seven out of ten employees said that they were able to get as much done while working at home in June 2020 as they

were able to do six months earlier, however by September 2020, this proportion had risen to 85%. Meanwhile, another study by (Farooq & Sultana, 2021) found the opposite result, where remote working has decreased work productivity. So, we will explore more about how remote work affects work productivity in opposite results. Are there any factors affecting the success of remote working team productivity?

Factors influencing the remote working system

Many studies have been performed on how an organization determines the proper working system, especially in the changing situation as happened in recent years, and what factors influence these decisions. A study by (Williamson et al., 2022) shows that some factors influencing the manager’s decision to perform remote working system are as follow: Another study by (Patanjali & Bhatta, 2022)

Table 1. Factors influencing managers’ working from home allowance decisions

Level	Pre-pandemic (Study 1)	During-pandemic (Study 2)
Organisational	Culture of presenteeism Workplace health and safety used as barrier Resistance	Culture of presenteeism less of a concern Workplace health and safety factor gready diminished Previouse resistance generally redused New resistance factor emerged related to the pandemic namely, ‘criteria’
Group	Barriers raised such as technology or nature of the job (particulary client facing roles) Productivity and performance concerns	Creative solutions found for adapting jobs to working from home Productivity and performance concerns alleviated New evidence that employess can be outcomes-focused, based on epiphanies
Individual	Managerial discretion Low trust	Managerial discretion lessened High trust Fewer future ad hoc decisions Claims of previous support - belief of ‘always’ supportive

Source: Williamson (2022): *Public servants working from home: Exploring managers’ changing allowance decisions in a COVID-19*

found that time traveling to the office was an essential factor in employees' preference for working from home, allowing them to have more time for themselves and their families. In this study, employees also stated that they would have much autonomy when they could do their jobs, and this allows them to be more productive.

Therefore, the company should formulate a new way of working. Today the workplace has evolved, and remote. In addition to investment in technology tools, socialization, and training, these IT tools also play an essential role. They also found that organizational culture can influence employees to perform extra-role behaviours inside and outside the organization. The limitations during the pandemic are finding that professionals are adapting to remote working cultures. The work environment positively and significantly impacts employee performance in remote work situations. This shows that the work environment for employees who work from anywhere must be physically appropriate so that they usually feel comfortable doing their jobs (Vina Da'watul Aropah et al., 2020). A comfortable work environment provides a sense of security, allows employees to work optimally, and can also affect employee emotions. On the contrary, work-from-home issues due to COVID-19 lockdown in India revealed that online teaching, lack of technology acceptance, poor work environment, and work-life conflicts have a negative impact on team productivity (Anuradha et al.'s 2022). However, nine out of ten employees working from home during the pandemic want to continue working from home when social distancing restrictions are lifted entirely. It seems that the growth of remote work is not a temporary trend and is likely to become a permanent system of

the new world of Work; many will seek the best of both worlds by working at home and in various other places, including the office (Felstead & Reuschke, 2021).

METHOD

Research methodology

Positively oriented qualitative research will need larger samples than in-depth qualitative research in order to obtain a representative image of the entire community under consideration (Boddy, 2016). As an exploratory study, we did an in-depth interview method for data collection. We designed a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions based on literature. The interview was performed between 12 until 29 July 2022. All researchers were involved in the interviews. Before conducting the interviews, a reference guide was sent to the participants so they could prepare their responses. The interview processes were conducted online in an intimate atmosphere with the aim that all interviewees could comfortably have the freedom to express their experiences, opinions, and choices regarding the work process during the pandemic. The interview's average duration was approximately between 45-100 minutes, and all were audio-recorded with all participants' consent. To simplify the interviews and writing process, the interviews conducted featured questions that had been adapted to the research model being carried out. By mapping the question asked based on the existing research model, it was hoped that the interview process carried out can be more effective without the need to expand the discussion, which may later move away from the topic that is actually being discussed. To strengthen data validity, we also took notes during the interviews and used the notes to verify the information obtained from the interviews.

All of the initial interview data collected was transcribed manually by a professional transcriber. The researchers then coded the transcripts chronologically and analysed them one by one, following a descriptive coding process to identify specific data relevant to the research inquiry, thus focussing on the participants' remote working experiences before discussing the conclusion that can be made from the research. The researchers began the interpretative coding process immediately after agreeing to the descriptive codes. We applied manual coding and a thematic process by deriving first-order codes and creating conceptual categories by consolidating the codes. To do so, we thoroughly reviewed the data and theory by searching for commonalities, relationships, and differences between them (Gibson and Brown, 2009).

Participants

The participants in this study are the department managers from 3 different industries in Indonesia and four supporting departments: Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, and Legal. The total number of samples is 8 participants (2 females and six males) as described in below table:

The ages of participants range from 31 to 50 years old. They are professionals with adequate educational backgrounds and have worked for the companies for more than five years, with 8–27 years of total working experience. This proves that the participants have enough experience and knowledge as the key person to the teams' situation and performances. In total, there were 8 participants interviewed. We assured the anonymity and the confidentiality of their identity and the information shared. We use pseudonyms to represent the participants' names by ascribing letters to them.

Data Analysis

Overall, all the researchers generated a semi-structured guide, recorded and transcribed interviews, and developed a systematic coding frame. The data analysis produces themes and sub-themes that are considered factors of each source's opinion. In detail, the data analysis process was divided into three steps. The first step; was transcribing interview data, which was done by a professional transcriber. In the second step; researchers coded the transcripts and grouped them into sections. In the last step; researchers analysed the coded transcripts and discussed them based on the research purpose.

Table 2: Participant background

Demographic characteristic of participants						
Participants	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Industry	Job Position	Years in Service
Participants A	50	Male	Married	Educational	IT Manager	9 Years
Participants B	37	Male	Married	Property	Finance Manager	11 Years
Participants C	46	Female	Single	Educational	HR Manager	14 Years
Participants D	42	Female	Married	Educational	Legal Manager	14 Years
Participants E	56	Male	Married	Property	HR Manager	27 Years
Participants F	40	Male	Married	Telecommunication	Finance Manager	15 Years
Participants G	49	Male	Married	Telecommunication	Legal Manager	24 Years
Participants H	31	Male	Married	Property	Legal Manager	8 Years

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our study finds that all participants prefer a flexible working system then going back to the 100% work-from-office system. This matched the research done by (Angelici & Profeta, 2020; Birkinshaw et al., 2020; Caligiuri & de Cieri, 2021; Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2020), and stated by our participants below:

“More likely to hybrid, 100% work from home will cause no socialization, no face-to-face meeting. Whatever it is, if I had to choose, hybrid is more fun to apply.”
(Participant A, IT Manager)

“I always prefer flexible working. The point for IT is, we have a target which can be done from home or anywhere and anytime, as long as the target is achieved”

However, it is mentioned that there are some essential factors to be considered to perform the flexible working system which influences work productivity. These factors will be discussed afterward.

1. Adaptation of working System

From the interviews we conducted, the participants perceived how they adapt working systems during pandemic until now. This experience will influence their perception of factors needed to formulate the new working system to support employee productivity.

Pre-Pandemic situation

Before the pandemic, companies we studied used a direct interaction working system – Work from the office. They required employees to come to the office five days a week for offline meetings, travel, communication, training, etc. As one of the leading companies in the industry, they already stepped ahead in

technology and prepared to develop system collaboration tools but did not imagine that it would be used that soon or massively. Nevertheless, before the pandemic situation, the implementation of the collaboration system was not 100% and was running slowly. For example, a participant comment

“By July 2019 we have already started several initiatives by moving to digital platforms. In this case, we are partnering with Microsoft, so we use Microsoft’s platform. We have also used Microsoft Teams in the organization. So when there is a pandemic, it is just a matter of direct socialization. Then, on the other hand, we have prepared a learning management system. Just like that, December was over; the learning management system was in place, so when there was a pandemic, like it or not, we are planning to live in July next year, which is 2022, finally, speed up, everything is brought forward, live in March” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“First of all, we had built, before the pandemic started, we have built a legal management system that can be accessed anywhere. So indeed, it was far from a pandemic; around 2013, 2014 was uh... there was a desire to create a system; I happened to be 14 here, so I was the one who initiated it; it was from all previous experiences where everything we did manually, in the manual sense, here is a request that comes via email, while our request is 300 people, right, sir, it will create confusion when we review one person. He comes back to us, then what discussion, what was yesterday, the documentation, what is it, and which email is it?” (Participant F, Finance Manager)

During Pandemic Situation

Based on research by (Andriani, 2020), Starting in June 2020, the government has implemented transitional PSBB in some red zone areas, including the capital of Indonesia, Jakarta and East Java province. PSBB enables regional governments to limit the movement of people and suppressed the spread of Covid 19. This includes that companies had to stop operating on the premises and employees were not allowed to work in the offices. This situation does not last for days or weeks but for months; therefore, companies must adapt the work system to maintain team productivity.

At that time, none of the companies were ready. They experienced a hard-landing situation but must quickly adjust. This is where the support of the IT and technology team in a company plays an important role. Although not yet ready, the current digital system is essential to run the company's operations during the transition period. However, changing the way things work suddenly from offline to full online is not easy.

*“In the offline transition process to PPKM 4, once it was initiated, everything was not allowed to come, the term PPKM level 4, all 100% yes, because we are not essential, indeed in the first week, it was **chaos**, because you can imagine, we have to prepare the infrastructure as well, so laptops, which the staff used to use were desktops, right, it is impossible to take desktops home. So, like it or not, we have to order a laptop on May 1, if I am not mistaken, 100-200 laptops are a must... Furthermore, decide together at that time, everything is impacted, the supply chain is impacted, and so on. That is what we decide together, so whoever decides quickly, it can be easier to follow the...*

his full potential, I see. So that is how we felt at the beginning of the pandemic”

(Participant A, IT Manager)

“So, everything that offline became online. Unbelievable, we did; at the end of February, if I am not mistaken, in March, it was announced that covid had entered Indonesia, and after that, everything changed completely. So, at that time, inevitably relied on IT. So, my team inevitably has to prepare for our users. So, we have around... have to cover 600 employees” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“The difficulty, in the beginning of work from home, there were slow administration processes, urgent approval needed takes time. But in time, we got used to it now. Besides, coordination and communication were less effective at the pandemic's beginning.” (Participant E, HR Manager)

Companies with strong IT personnel could get through this “struggling” faster in developing the remote-digital work, and this includes the responsibility to introduce and socialize how to run the new technology to all the staff and related parties (suppliers, customers, etc). The use of new technology tools must be set up and aligned with the procedures (SOP), which need to be adapted and collaborated with all the users and managers. Another problem that arose was how to control the employees can be done. Control of the working time and results was challenging when it was done remotely. With excellent coordination and co-operation, the problems in the adaptation of remote working were finally under control after some time. The team managed to find the rhythm to a new way of remote working.

The Post- adaptation Pandemic situation

After a few months, the pandemic situation started to subside; the death numbers and hospital occupancy started to curve down, and the government started loosening the mobilization rules. On the other hand, the adaptation to remote working was going well, the working rhythm started to get normal. The pandemic made the previous planned digital transformation much faster as stated by some of the participants:

“We are ready with distance learning infrastructure, yes, and we can adapt it quickly” (Participant D, Legal Manager)

“Yes, all tools and systems are ready for this; work from home” (Participant C, HR Manager)

After the situation no longer requires 100% remote working, companies need to formulate a new working system by adopting some ways of working, such as experienced at the peak of the pandemic. Technology is indeed a critical role in adapting to new ways of working. Companies can still maintain employee productivity by implementing technology such as collaboration tools systems for communication processes, data sharing, e-approval processes, knowledge sharing, digital processes, and providing special internet/toll credit facilities to employees to adapt to the new way of working.

Besides technology, there are also some factors we found in this study to support a company formulating a new formula working system. We will explore the factors at 4.2 key factors influencing managers' preference for adapting new working systems to support team productivity.

2. Key Factors influencing adaptation of new working system

Organizational Factors

From the data we found, several key factors influence the adaptation of new ways of working, namely as follows:

Facility & Technology Support

Our study finds that the company's ability to provide facility and technology support is essential in how employees can adapt to the new work system. This aligned with research done by (Saputra et al., 2021) and (Vina Da'watul Aropah et al., 2020). This conclusion was made by some analysing some comments from participants below:

“There are two problems. If you talk normally, there are 3 of them, process, technology, and the other one is the user itself. Going back to the same as before is not a problem. The first challenge is technology because what was offline has become online. Number First is technology. After technology, the second is the user side because the level of understanding of the user is different” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“That means equalization; my team must... I have to make sure that my team has a proper signal; not all workplaces are proper. I mean, not everything is sterile from home... Most of them are at home, and not all are sterile from their household. Like that” (Participant B, Finance Manager)

“For approval, we are all online; we use... VVID, we happen to invest there too.” (Participant C, HR Manager)

“Indeed, when we work from home, what we need is a system that we really have to enhance.” (Participant G, Legal Manager)

“Since then, I’ve tried several ways to record, whether with... what is the name... That big USB, yes, our name is, we also save it there, we also save it in the system, we also save it in the filing cabinet, so that’s it. we did a double recording there. There is also a license management system there, we hope you don’t have to go back and forth to see um... Bantex contains permits, even though it is for all permits, um... at this point it’s only been in the form of Qris, barcode, early last year still not, so we have to take the letter from the relevant ministry, we will file it at the relevant agency.” (Participant E, HR Manager)

The facilities include **technology tools** (laptops, collaboration tools, video conferencing etc), **IT infrastructure** (data and room storage, cloud storage, server room, cabling, etc), and one of the most essential things is the **competent IT human resources**. These facilities are necessary so that coordination and monitoring of employee productivity could run well. The need for adequate internet sources must also be considered. The company’s investment in technology is not cheap, but it is critical in adapting to new ways of working. Besides the IT facilities, companies need to educate employees, including management, to optimize the use of facilities and technical support that has been invested. Therefore, technology plays a critical role in adapting to new ways of working

Adjustment on Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and Job Function

Changes in the working system will need adjustment in work procedures. Therefore,

it is important to evaluate the SOP regarding changes from a full offline work system. This adjustment is important so that all functions can perform their job well as stated by some participants below:

“The difficulty at the beginning of work from home; is that there are delays of administration processes, for example, legal documents needed to be signed immediately, but takes time. By the time, we have gotten used to it now.” (Participant E, HR Manager)

“And the fourth thing that is no less important is the SOP, the clear SOP. Because if you do not have clear SOPs related to flexible working, this will definitely.... It will be turbulent, especially for employees.” (Participant G, Legal Manager)

“Those are jobs that may not even be online if there is work, there are jobs because they have to be offline. But for other jobs, there is potential to be online, actually, so for example in finance.” (Participant D, Legal Manager)

“Ideally, there should be a division, yes, but basically, in terms of position and function. Like I’m a manager, then under me, there are officers, under officers, there is staff. Now, we take care of things that are principle, so if the staff is related to the administration, the staff is related to the... incidentally, the legal management system, we asked the admin for the staff, so he plays an essential role in communicating with the requester, to carry out ... systems that make errors or something, it can be through our legal staff.” (Participant F, Finance Manager)

Based on our analysis, there are some conclusions to consider regarding the implementation of the new working system:

1. There are certain positions that require work from the office to maintain demand and service, especially related to external parties such as customers or the government. Examples of functions that cannot be done remotely are:
 - Receptionist as a greeter when customers are visiting the site.
 - Office boy, Cleaning Services and Security.
 - IT Help desk for any issues regarding hardware.
 - IT Network function.

2. Most of the job functions in the back office may apply a flexible working system, even for the long term as long as the followings have been sufficient fulfilled:
 - Platform definitions are online services, including ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and online.
 - There is a tracking system for attendance, location, and approval.
 - There is a supporting storage system (e.g.: data center and cloud system)
 - Online document and online approval are accessible.
 - Communication to customer support is available.
 - The digital signature has been legally verified.

For example, in the legal function, although some of the document submissions can be made using barcodes or online, coordination and “handwritten” signature remain required for certain “high risk” contract documents. Digital signature approval has improved productivity for a faster process

for both internal Organization and Customer commitment. Finance payment documents are also required to be verified in original hardcopy to check the authenticity and prevent double invoicing from third parties.

Supervisor Control

Control is needed to make sure the employees work as their jobs demand and do the best for the companies’ interests. Control of working time and working productivity can be achieved by the factors we’ve stated before: the use of technology and adjustment in procedures. It will be needed to be improved from time to time until the companies are satisfied and sure that the control done in the new working system is not less than the previous one in generating the best outcome for the company.

“It is sometimes confusing, regarding how we tracked it. So, in the first time, I will track it by myself, whether he/she works or not, even though it is possible, all of you has been done using some of project management tools, or flexible task management tools.” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“From the corporate side, for me, the thing should be anticipated is control, control on the employee, if remote working will be happening, the deliverability must be stricter from usual, since physically is not at the office” (Participant C, Finance Manager)

“Monitoring and work control. Why? For example, when we work from the office, we can monitor directly, the team is there. But when we work from home, we have limitation to monitor, to discuss, etc, that’s what we should overcome” (Participant H, Legal Manager)

Company and team agility

One thing the pandemic situation brings lesson is that agility is a very important essence in a company as stated by some of the participants below:

“At the beginning, there were a lot of problems. I also had difficulty arranging my team. But uh after we found the rhythm, the problem quickly resolved” (Participant B, Finance Manager)

“True, like it or not, we must adapt quickly, don’t you think so? As I remember, in March 2020, our company established work from the home system from work from the office. We were pretty shocked, but like it or not, we must adapt quickly” (Participant G, Legal Manager)

The company that has this ability will adapt faster and can survive this situation. Both companies and employees must think, act, and adapt fast to any changes happening. This ability must be implanted in the company and employees’ DNA in order to survive the rapid change. The process can be done by performing training, coaching, motivating, and enforcing this ability in the employee’s mind until it becomes the company’s culture.

Improved Communication

All participants stated the importance of physical communication and team social bonding that cannot be replaced by any technology or procedure. Difficulties for giving directions also emerged, non-verbal interaction always remains needed for team coordination, and it increased stress at the management level as stated by our participants below:

“More likely to hybrid, 100% work from home will cause no socialization, no face

to face meeting. If I had to choose, hybrid is more fun to apply.” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“Personally, I like working from the office more than from home. Because why... The communication is direct, and faster; when there is a problem, we can gather to discuss it directly; when we do online work, it takes time, especially if it is related to another department. If we do offline working, we can directly go to their table to discuss; and get it done. So personally, I prefer working from the office.” (Participant E, HR Manager)

“Actually, by going to the office is just for keeping the engagement with all the employees.” (Participant C, HR Manager)

“That human touch side. From the engagement side, Ms. Denish and Ms. Mimi, that is what we don’t have from the work from home system; because once more, it is a different meeting face to face than an online meeting, that is what different I’m talking about.” (Participant G, Legal Manager)

“I personally more comfortable having a brainstorming with my colleague when it is offline working. It more intimates to their personality. So, I’d rather choose offline working than online.” (Participant H, Legal Manager)

This is the main reason for our suggestion that remote working cannot be done entirely in the new working system. The new working system must combine remote working and working from this office to get the optimum result. During remote working time, a rule must be made out that a channel of communication

should be set and the personnel involved must be committed to becoming always reachable. We advise that during remote working, the organization and its managers need to invest more in ensuring constant and effective communication. Without further approach, misunderstanding on a message or task would likely happen.

Personal Factors

Work Environment

Our study finds that the work environment is one of the essential factors in the working system to support work productivity which is aligned with a study conducted by (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2022). The workers must choose the most convenient place to perform their work in this Flexible Working System, some find it at home, and some might find it at the nearest coffee shop near their home. Working from home also creates difficulties for employees e.g., housewives with small children. They must juggle time all day between household matters and office, cannot focus on work, and find it exhausting as stated by our participants below:

“But when we do online work, the obstacle comes with the environment near our house, especially in the first 2 years, what makes that call...Not to mention that is a barrier but more likely added more constraints. But I think all working moms face this problem. Dad must have some difficulties as well. There is our child that might cause some lack of focus.”
(Participant F, Legal Manager)

“They felt disturbed, cannot 100% concentrate at home, because they have small children during online working”
(Participant E, HRD Manager)

This finding is aligned with a study done by (Felstead & Reusche, 2021) that stated productivity varied according to household factors such as the need to supervise their children for workers with family and the household chores; if they work from home. This suggests that the situation of a household has an essential impact on productivity when it is done at home. However, the remote working system requires a conducive work environment, free from distraction during work hours, preferably a dedicated workspace with good internet access or family support, and no problem with flexible working hours. By choosing remote working, the employee needs to make sure they are not interrupted by the responsibilities of a family member or household chores. They should feel more benefited and effective because they can manage their schedule, and fewer offline guests/users spend more time discussing than offline. Although they still prefer to have sure days offline to maintain close social bonds and communication within the team.

These findings are aligned with a research by (Rodrigues et al., 2022) that concluded the five factors with more capacity to influence productivity, which are 1) Availability of adequate equipment and peripherals to develop the work activities; 2) leadership support; 3) The adequate place to develop work activities; 4) Internet and electricity supply stability; and 5) Clarity from the collaborator regarding their role in the company, responsibilities and activities to be developed.

3. The Expected Impact of Flexible Working System

The Expected Impact of New Working System to Productivity

Our participants mostly said that the remote

working system increases the productivity level, due to the working time constraint. According to research by (Darja et al., 2022), certain employees are more concentrated when doing their work because they are more “inside the work zone” when completing tasks. This is because there are fewer spontaneous interruptions made by coworkers in the office. They also stated that there were no KPI adjustments during the pandemic. Instead, some respected units must adapt promptly to maintain their productivity and achieve their KPI. We also found that productivity was even higher during the pandemic since working from home affects longer working hours or not strictly standard working hours from 8-5, driven by the mindset that employees should be accessible through online platforms or devices. They increased the work efficiency, mainly because the preparation for online meetings was faster, and location boundaries did not affect the time to switch from one meeting to another. These findings can be found in below participants’ statements:

“There’s a decrease of the target at the beginning of 2020, but at the end of 2020, it started to increase again, maybe because we adapted. So, in 2021 there’s no problem, offline or online.” (Participant E, HR Manager)

“At the beginning of online working, the productivity was higher, because the working hour was more than normal, not from 8 to 5, but until night. Hahaha... higher productivity, but I don’t know about the employee’s job satisfaction. The clear thing is productivity is obvious higher” (Participant A, IT Manager)

“In my personal opinion, work from home is quite productive, and the increase is

very high. Why? Because I think when we need something urgently, we can directly use application to hold a meeting, different from before; when we had to wait until the working hour. With work from home and supportive application, the work productivity will more effective” (Participant H, Legal Manager)

This finding aligned with research by (Susilo, 2020) which demonstrated that working from home increasing employees’ enjoyment, job satisfaction and motivation. It believes that Job satisfaction has become an important determinant of job performance, where employees must be satisfied first before they perform better to achieve organizational goals.

The Expected Impact of New Working System to Cost Reduction

Our study finds the flexible working system should impact cost reduction as stated below:

“Not only worker productivity, the office efficiency can be done, but of course with some condition and arrangements. Depending on the space of the office, which floor to be closed. That kind of arrangement will be important if the main reason is to bring efficiency the expense in an organization.” (Participant B, Finance Manager)

“In HR, we are reviewing productivity and the company’s expense, we can set 3-2, meaning 2 employees go to the office, will be able to reduce the company’s cost. Operational side, electricity, the air con will be a significant benefit.” (Participant D, HR Manager)

The pandemic situation gives the company a new perspective if the company can operate

with minimal resources. For example, using certain office facilities (floor) impacts office rental efficiency, less electricity cost for air conditioning and lighting, and less staffing support is needed. Even the lunch and employee transportation allowances can be saved. There are many advantages with less commute from home to office. The worker saves more time, energy, and money from traffic. For the environment, it contributes to less traffic and cleaner air with less carbon. The cost of the employee lunch and transportation allowance can be converted to an internet communication allowance to support employees to work from home / anywhere. So that by adapting the work of the pandemic situation from a cost perspective, it was found that both company and employees could save costs.

The Expected Impact of New Working System to environmental improvement

The participants also stated that remote working should bring improvement to the environment as below:

“And then from the community side, we can contribute, we can reduce the traffic, in fact, we reduce the emission. That’s from me.” (Participant C, HR Manager)

This finding has been explored by (Nikolaeva et al., 2022), which stated that it is needed more attention to urban design and facilitating sociality through accommodating low-carbon mobility as part of policies aiming at stimulating working from home. Also aligned with research by (Su, 2021), which state that if people engage in commuting compensation mainly by driving rather than by cycling or walking, then this may essentially negate the expected effects of working from home on CO2 emissions. This finding shall be interesting to explore for further study

The Impact of New Working System to Employee’s Well-Being

Our study finds all the participants agree that the flexible working system will be better to be done hybrid than 100% from anywhere; and that working systems influence employee’s well-being as stated below:

“Because from the personal side, the employee will be healthier, a balance between office and home. Work from anywhere associates with a better work-life, work-life balance, flexibility, and positivity. Well-being employee”
(Participant E, HR Manager)

“The mood is better compared to being in the office all the time. To keep a positive and productive mood, one of them is by working from home. For example, the people in my age who has children and husband will feel more assured to work from home.” (Participant H, Legal Manager)

This concludes that a flexible working system is expected to motivate employees for better work balance, flexibility, and positive well-being. This finding is aligned with a study by (Sutarto et al., 2021) which shows an improvement in early evidence of the employees’ mental well-being and productivity in working from home during the pandemic; a study by (Wu et al., 2022) which concluded that WFH was positively related to the perceived time spent with family members, which then positively associated with family relationship quality; and a study by (Chaudhuri et al., 2022) that the flexible working system impacts the employee’s well-being. While the concept of remote working offers better flexibility and more work-life balance compared to working from the office,

the negative emotions escalation during the crisis could decrease their job performance. A study by (Xiao et al., 2021) shows that workers reported a decline in overall physical and mental health status and an increased number of new physical and mental health issues. Regarding the personal wellbeing also conclude by (Tonnelat and Kornblum 2017; Klinenberg 2018) That this loss of social engagement due to reduced mobility indirectly suggests that mobility infrastructures are not only physical structures but also should be viewed as social infrastructures. Nonetheless, our findings suggested that employees reported a relatively high work performance in parallel with less perceived distress.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

During pandemic, none of the companies were ready. They had a hard landing experienced situation but must adjust immediately. The pandemic situation pushed digital transformation without choice. The availability of collaboration tools facility and Technology indeed a critical role in adapting to new ways of working. Companies can still maintain employee productivity by implementing technology such as collaboration tools systems for communication processes, data sharing, e-approval processes, knowledge sharing, and other digital processes. The overall results mostly agree with other research, which has demonstrated that making the permanent adjustment to working from home might be difficult. Socio-demographic and residential location variables as well as job-sector variables were shown to be significant. Each lesson provided new information and improved understanding of the ways that various factors affected teleworking and work-related behaviors. Younger respondents (those under 30 years old) displayed a diverse behavior when expressing their readiness to continue

working from home, despite the fact that older respondents (those over 50 years old) had a decreased probability of continuing to work from home during the pandemic. (Barbour et al., 2021). In the post-pandemic situation, our participants agree that companies need to formulate a new work system by adopting some ways of working, such as in a pandemic. Some digital transformations that have been running can still be used to support work effectiveness and productivity.

Based on the data coded and analysed from the interviews, we found that there are some factors supporting the working system. These factors should be seriously considered to support the flexible working system to run well. Besides facility and technology support, adjustment on procedures and job function, supervisor control, company, and team agility, improved communication, and personal factors which is the preparation of the work environment should be considered before a company formulates a new formula for the working system. The participants also believe that a flexible working system will bring an impact on both organization and its employees. The expected impacts to the organization are: improve productivity, cost reduction, and contribution to environmental improvement, while the expected impact to employees is to improve the employee's well-being. These factors supporting a flexible working system and the expected impact it brings are formulated below framework.

Limitation of this research focuses on the interviews of the managers of four supporting functions: IT, Finance, HR, and Legal, in three companies in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In the end, further studies are needed to be addressed to validate factors affecting the

flexible working system into a more complex model, and whether the impacts of the flexible working system on organization and employees' wellbeing formulated are long-

term or only short-term. Further quantitative research may expand to different level and industry to validate findings in this research.

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