Organisational Culture Change: Overlapping Challenges of Working from Home and Digital Transformation by Pandemic Crisis

Sharifah Rahama Amirul, Sharifah Milda Amirul[1], Siti Nor Bayaah Ahmad, Oscar Dousin, and Syarifah Hanum Binti Ali

Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

[1]sma@ums.edu.my

Abstract

The global pandemic crisis brought on by COVID-19 has prompted a massive scale of implementation of WFH and increased the usage of digital technology due to the movement control order (MCO) enforced by the government. Digitally mature organisations have adapted better to the disruption caused by COVID-19, but this is not the case for organisations that are still stumbling their way through the use of digital technology. The existing research has not delved enough into analysing the influence that digitalisation and working from home have on the culture of organisations, which may alter how employees behave; this continues to be an open question. This study's primary objectives are to investigate the challenges that WFH and digital transformation framed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and to investigate how these challenges have impacted the organisational culture in Malaysia. A structured interview was conducted to reveal that there were overlapping challenges between WFH and digital transformation. The use of technology is intricately bound up with WFH, and WFH is the key factor that has fueled digital transformation throughout the pandemic crisis. Although WFH might be the answer to the problem of business continuity, it still has its drawbacks that might hinder the efficiency of workers and be detrimental to their health. Another major finding is that the introduction of digitalisation and WFH has caused a change in the culture of the workplace. As a consequence, the organisation has become more result-oriented, with an increased focus placed on completing tasks and achieving performance goals.

Keywords: Organisational Culture, Working from Home, Digital Transformation

Introduction

The aftermath of the pandemic may change the trajectory of business. Deloitte (2020) asserted that as new infection cases continue to emerge, the lockdown, social distancing norms, working from home, and restrictions on public gathering have disrupted both demand and supply. The rapid emergence of COVID-19 has forced organisations to make digital transformation an overnight strategic focus (Amirul et al., 2023). Businesses are heavily reliant on digitalisation and working from home in order to survive this pandemic crisis. This has led to the rapid adoption of digital tools and intensive internet access because almost all organisations need to arrange flexible work, mainly working from home (WFH), due to movement control orders enforced by the government during this pandemic time. A protracted pandemic crisis might alter the way in which businesses see themselves and influence the ways in which their employees behave and approach their work. Organisational culture can be defined as a shared way of being, thinking, and acting collectively and coordinating people with mutual expectations (Serpa, 2016). Changes on a large scale in the economy and society as a result of the pandemic crisis have a substantial impact on organisational culture and raise questions

about the ways in which such a significant societal shift unsettles organisational culture (Spicer, 2020). As workforces continue to work from home, at least part-time, on a large scale, many of the factors that make up organisational culture are no longer within the organisation's control in the same manner and to the same extent as they formerly were (Weston, 2020).

This study is significant because it raises awareness of people's well-being amid the environmental jolt caused by the pandemic and how organisational culture may play a vital role in maintaining organisational people's well-being. It has been demonstrated via empirical research that well-managed organisational cultures not just for the sake of the individuals who work in the organisations, but also can lead to higher levels of organisational performance (Odiakaose, 2018; Warrick, 2017). Subramaniam et al. (2015) previous seminal work indicates that more family-friendly workplace strategies need to be implemented to achieve a better work-life balance. However, amid the pandemonium of a pandemic crisis, the digitalisation rapidly adopted and flexible work that has not previously been given by some organisations but has to do so for business survival may face significant challenges. Deloitte (2020) added that organisations displaying the characteristics of a digitally mature have adapted to the disruption caused by COVID-19 more effectively. This may not be the case for organisations that are still stumbling their way through the use of digital technology. This continues to be an open problem since the current research has not delved far enough into analysing the effect of digitalisation and flexible working hours such as working from home on organisations' culture, which may affect how people behave. Thus, this paper aims to investigate the challenges of digital transformation and WFH and how this has impacted the organisational culture change during this pandemic crisis.

Literature Review

The Impact of Pandemic Crisis on Organisational Culture

Nga (2020) summarised earlier researchers' (Hofstede, 2011; House, Jovidan, & Dorfman, 2001) definition of culture as the underlying common shared ideas, values, motives, interpretation, and identities of community members or groups that are passed down through generations. Thus, organisational culture comprises shared values, beliefs, and assumptions about how people should behave and interact, how decisions should be made, and how work activities should be carried out (Chartered Management Institute, 2015). According to the research study organised by Obrenovic, Du, Godinic, Khan, and Jakhongirov in 2020, COVID-19 has introduced changes in the organisational culture and workforce responsibilities. During COVID-19, organisations experienced challenges in productivity and sustainable business operations. Recent findings by Obrenovic et al. (2020) reported that organisations have an increasing trend of a flexible hierarchy of control during the pandemic by delegating authority at all career levels in the organisation. Such practises make employees more independent and creative to deal with uncertain disruptions in the workplace caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Athar (2020) found that corporate visions and departmental responsibilities influence organisational cultural values. Before the pandemic of COVID-19, organisations were focused on competitive positions, market expansion, and sustainable business growth objectives. However, during the pandemic of COVID-19, most organisations face threats to survival because of government restrictions and lockdowns and a decrease in market demand. Environmental jolts have created pressure on organisations to introduce change plans in workplace operations and business processes. According to research findings, jolts can cause an organisation to be hypocritical and overreact in uncertain environmental conditions. The previous financial crisis changed markets, but highly resistant organisations to change

experienced failure. Research findings highlight the importance of organisational change and response to environmental jolts by adjusting to workplace culture (Spicer, 2020).

Digitalisation in the Pandemic Era

Digitalisation has led to the transformation of how work can be done and where it can be carried out (Shaari & Amirul, 2023). Digitalisation refers to new digital technologies that are currently transforming the industry (Antikainen, Uusitalo & Kivikytö, 2018). In the event of pandemic crisis, nearly all contacts with consumers and employees must happen virtually or over communications technologies. Digitising and virtualisation have been around for years; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the usage of technologies. It is the only way to keep businesses operating and survive during the movement control order or federal shutdown. Advanced digitalisation capabilities can provide new functionality, higher reliability, greater efficiency, and optimisation opportunities that exponentially increase the value that companies deliver to customers (Porter & Heppelmann, 2014). Antikainen et al. (2018) asserted that the digitalisation of industry makes it possible to use fewer resources more efficiently, reduce energy consumption and logistics routes, and utilise capacity more efficiently. Despite its advantages, digitalisation still has challenges. For instance, increase usage in technologies blurring the line between work and life (Cijan et al., 2019). Getting access to remote work makes it hard to get a work-life balance because it is usually difficult to turn off at home. Broom (2020) reported that billions of people are going online to stay in touch during the COVID-19 pandemic, but almost half of the world's population has no access to the internet. Broom (2020) added that fewer than 1 in 5 people in the least developed countries are connected. Apart from that, individuals with stronger social skills will be better able to use online social norms and be relatively strongly involved in online social interactions. Likewise, internet users who are socially isolated in an offline environment can find it challenging to succeed on the internet (Ross & Cram, 2016).

Work from Home (WFH)

Working from home (WFH) is always associated with the use of technology. One of the most noticeable ways ICT influences organisations is by changing how people are working; connectivity allows paid labour patterns to move beyond conventional temporal and spatial boundaries (Nansen et al., 2010). Technology and modern life are no longer the only factors that promote WFH. To keep businesses operating through lockdown or restriction movements enforced by the government, WFH has become the norm during the pandemic crisis, resulting in a disruption to routine for many employees (Vyas & Nantapong, 2020; Shareena & Shahid, 2020). Cascio (2000) highlighted that WFH made employees feel happier as WFH offered them more time with their families, less hassle of driving in peak traffic, and the flexibility that comes with working in the home contributing factors to their increased happiness (Cascio, 2000). Although WFH could be the solution for business continuity, there are significant concerns about the sudden introduction of WFH due to a pandemic situation. Lippe and Lippényi (2020) asserted that WHF is expected to provide employees with more opportunities to focus on their work. However, their (Lippe & Lippényi, 2020) findings indicated that employees who work from home perform worse than those who work in traditional workplaces. Besides, Scott (2020) added that "a higher reliance on smartphones and laptops is associated with higher stress levels in addition to greater social isolation and even insomnia, both of which are conversely linked with greater stress." WFH has its benefits and drawbacks. Investigating the current situation of rapid WFH implementation due to the outbreak of COVID-19 will further help to understand the challenges and problems arising from WFH.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design because it is still a relatively new area requiring a depth of understanding and investigation. Facts and figures generated by quantitative research are undoubtedly helpful, but they cannot elaborate further on the statistics into more meaningful information. Thus, qualitative research is seen as more reliable as it provides a unique understanding of studied issues. As the study is qualitative in nature, the philosophical foundation of this paper was based on the interpretivism epistemology, which develops the truth based on social interaction. Interpretivism is often combined with the ontology of constructivism or social constructivism. Creswell (2014) further explained that social constructivists hold that individuals seek to comprehend and grasp the world in which they live and work and subsequently build subjective interpretations of their experiences. These meanings are oriented toward specific objects or things. Both the epistemologies of interpretivism and the ontology of social constructivism are relevant to capturing the objectives of this paper.

This paper aims to investigate the challenges of digital transformation and WFH and how this has impacted the organisational culture change during this pandemic crisis. Hence, the research questions of this paper are twofold: (1) What are the challenges of digital transformation and WFH during the pandemic crisis of COVID-19? (2) How have these challenges influenced organisational culture change during the pandemic crisis? The interview approach was chosen to get insight into the paper's objectives and address the research questions. The interview protocol was developed as the main instrument to guide the administration of interviews in this paper. Interview protocol is vital to ensure that the interviewer focuses on topics set out in the questions to meet the research objectives of this paper and maintain consistency across interviews with different interviewees (Osman & Kamar, 2021).

For this paper, the interviews were conducted in a structured way to avoid bias and to ensure that all participants had the same questions. The data was collected in 2020 during the outbreaks. There were fifty participants selected based on a purposeful sampling technique. Fifty-five participants were generally accepted or widely agreed upon sample size in a qualitative study (Amirul et al., 2020) because it fulfilled the law of saturation in qualitative research. Saturation has attained widespread acceptance as a methodological principle in qualitative research, which is generally taken as meaning that, based on the previous information, further exploration of the topic should be unnecessary (Saunders et al., 2018).

Next, the study's obtained data were analysed using thematic analysis by Cruze and Dyba (2011) and adapted by Amirul et al. (2020). Thematic analysis identifies patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Brid Delahunt, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between top-down or theoretical thematic analysis, which is driven by the specific research question(s) and/or the analyst's focus, and bottom-up or inductive analysis, which is driven more by the data itself. Table 1 explains in detail how the thematic analysis was conducted in this study.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Study

Analytic Steps	escriptions
Extracting Data	Transcribed the interview into text with careful editing to maintain accuracy and re-checking for verification purposes. The study used the premises of this information to build a general overview of the topic and structured research around this.
Generating Codes	Generating codes for finding relevant ideas and organising the data in a meaningful and systematic way. First, all information given was transcribed into Microsoft office-words. Generating initial codes was done by coding every segment of the text. Then, we searched for the most frequent or significant codes to answer the research question of this study.
Translating Code into Themes	In this step, we categorised the coded data based on thematic or conceptual similarity. Identified research themes based on two levels: semantic (identify the explicit and surface meanings of the data) and latent (capture underlying ideas, patterns, and assumptions). This step is important to make sure the themes were coherent and distinct to one another and worked according to the codes provided.
Create a model of higher – order themes	Explore relationships between themes and create a model of higher order themes. This step is important to make sure the themes are coherent and distinct to one another and work according to the codes provided. There were considerable overlaps between steps 2, 3, and 4.
Trustworthiness	Assess the trustworthiness of the interpretations leading up to the thematic synthesis.

Findings

This paper's main objectives are to investigate the challenges of digital transformation and WFH, and how this has impacted the organisational culture during this pandemic crisis. The following are the results obtained from fifty respondents who participated in this study.

What are the challenges of digital transformation and WFH during the pandemic crisis of Covid-19?

The MCOs enforced by the government have made working hours shortened since most of the employees were required to work from home. The constrained office time makes it difficult for employees to complete their tasks and duties, resulting in increasing workloads. Besides, limited time at the office made them hard to achieve their target performance, lost sales, and facing retrenchment.

"Work from home is terrible because we are not able to achieve KPI, progress is not going smoothly." G9P6

"Work from home, it's not as efficient as working in an office. We also need to balance between work and family." G9P2

"When the MCO is implemented, the operating time only needs from 7am to 6pm and the customer is only allowed 2 people in each table, or they just take away so this causes my customers and profits business to decrease dramatically. And I had to lay off half of my employees temporarily because I can't afford to pay their salary and to avoid huge losses to my business." G1P2

"The company is a bit stressful because this pandemic has caused the economy to collapse and decline, so sales do not reach the target we should" G1P5

"Due to this pandemic, we find it difficult to meet customers and service had to be held online only. when we did a survey, we found that customer satisfaction levels were at an unsatisfactory level." G4P2

"Many employees were dismissed from the workplace because the company was trying to reduce the loss that the company had to face. So, in this situation, that has impacted them and might be changing people's behaviour like more stress because thinking about how to get some money to bear expenses and food for their family." G6P1

The majority of respondents reported that they are facing work-life distress when WFH and using the online system. First, they were faced with a low control and unconducive environment. For example, they have messed up between work and family responsibility as well as other disturbances surrounding WFH.

"It's more challenging and stressful to work from home than in the office because of the interference of surroundings and to face with human disturbance, I can't focus on my work especially during the day time." G8P1

"I'm working from home, the disadvantages that I found is the environment is not really helpful. I get distracted easily because it is a low-control environment." G2P2

Working from home is a big change for workers. They feel stressed for not being able to concentrate on doing the job because of internet problems. some of them do not mind working from home because they can spend time with family." G5P2

"It's stressful sometimes because we have to work outside working hours in order to complete our tasks on time." G9P1

"The home environment is different from the atmosphere at work and there are many disturbances that may cause the work done to be delayed. Noise disturbances, noisy conditions and an unconducive environment can cause discomfort and an unpleasant atmosphere to work from home" G8P2

"Covid-19 pandemic totally changed the way of my current work. As we were required to work from home. This will disturb my daily work. I need to take care of my siblings because my parents need to go for work at our orchard" G8P3

"For a mother that should work from home, they need to take care of their kids and manage their family as a daily routine." G8P1

"I and other employees feel stressed working during this pandemic because I feel confused about what to do during working hours other than ensuring our workplace is safe and clean condition." G4P4

More than 50% of respondents reported poor internet connections because of living in low internet coverage areas.

"Hard to start meetings. Difficulties could occur during the meeting such as unstable networks. The given information might not be clear. Wrong interpretation could happen." G5P2

"For me, working from home is very challenging because not all of us have a good network connection especially when their places did not provide any network connection." G8P1

"As we were required to work from home, it was quite challenging for me. This is due to an unstable network because of poor internet coverage in my hometown." G8P3

"It's more challenging and stressful to work from home than in the office because of a lot of shortage such as the lack of internet connection." G8P5

"The internet connections really a problem and I had to buy expensive data to do my work compared to when I work at office, we a provide with internet connection that very fast" G2P2

"Working from home is a big change for workers. they feel stressed for not being able to concentrate on doing the job because having internet problem." G5P2

"Also, sometimes everyone become a little bit stressful since it is not easy to get work done when internets problem suddenly occurred" G5P4

"People change in organisations because of internet connection. This is because not everyone has a good quality of internet access. This can lead people to be highly stressed and pressured, especially as they are older than us. Therefore, it can lead to postponed meetings which is the cause of pending works in the organisation." G5P6

Due to work-life distress and a poor internet connection, about 40% of respondents felt stressed with their working life. In addition to that, surprising results indicated that less than 10% of respondents stated that WFH helps them have work-life balance and family time.

"Working from home is a big change for workers. Some of them do not mind working from home because they can spend time with family." G5P1

"We work from 8 am until 1 pm compared to before we work from 8 am to 5 pm. These changes help us in facilitating our work and provide a long time to spend with our family." G4P4

It also reported that this pandemic crisis has held responsible for health concerns such as human anxiety and depression.

"It contributes to anxiety and depression as employee have to learn new skills and adjust to new environment" G9P6

"Some of my colleagues also get depressed and stressed because they are being pushed by the Head Department to complete and submit their work on time. they are really depressed with their job and still trying to adapt themselves with the new working environment." G8P3

"People become more or too cautious of health, afraid of coming to office for fear of being exposed to the virus and becoming lazy and some facing anxiety because of feeling confined at home." G9P3

"Many of us has been demotivated to our work, anxiety and scared to be in public." G8P2

"Individuals will also be depressed as these pandemic changes take a long time to adapt." G3P5

How these challenges have impacted the organisational culture change during this pandemic crisis.

To summarise the results of 50 interviews with Malaysian employees, the study found that all respondents are undergoing the changing way of work due to digital transformation and flexible work arrangement, mainly working from home (WFH) resulting from the pandemic crisis. Followings were some of the responses given by the respondents:

"This pandemic crisis changes everything, especially the way of work." G8P1

"Covid-19 pandemic totally changing the way of my current work" G8P3

"Obviously this pandemic affects all of us, especially from the daily routine and work. This pandemic runs our work differently." G8P5

"I, who work in the private sector, have undergone various changes in terms of employment systems and way of working." G3P3

"Look at now the world is upside down. It has led us to arrange our self-timing to work. It's totally changed our life and this can lead us to life balance as well." G5P6

"We need to keep up with the rhythm of new learning norms that are actually 100% run online." G5P5

"As a business owner, I have to change my schedule and more work to do." G6P3
"As a teacher of kindergarten, the change is having to work from home and make it all online." G6P2

"Traditional working environments have to be changed to work virtually with new technology tools. Teams no longer work together in office, communicating with colleagues or customers via video chat, email and instant messages like zoom and Google meet." G5P1

"Since the pandemic crisis, the way we work has changed. All employees work from home and work activities are done online. We use platforms such as Webex or Google Meet to hold meetings and discuss about work matters" G4P3

More than half of the respondents indicated that their organisations were focusing on task completion and hitting target performance.

"At this time, Covid-19 is still rampant, apart from trying to achieve the market target, our company also trying to tighten the rules that we have set" G1P5

"The focus of our company during this pandemic is to gain more income and minimise expenses. More work was given when we work from home compared to working in the office. We have to think of other income sources instead of just depending on our online classes. Our company focuses more on completing tasks instead of people's well-being to hit the target and gain more income." G3P1

"Having this pandemic means that most of the company needs to be prepared for unexpected fluctuations with the market value. Hence, employers wouldn't want to face a company's crisis so they would absolutely keep their company online by forcing their worker to be more hardworking. Some of the workers are even getting fired to keep the company in a small circle to avoid losses due to this pandemic." G3P1

"The main focus of the organisation during this pandemic crisis is to complete the work and achieve the target. This is because most organisations do not think about the well-being of people, but they are more concerned about the benefits of their organisation than anything else." G8P2

"Based on my observation during this pandemic crisis, the main focus of the organisation is more to the task which completing work and hitting the target of their company." G8P2

"The organisation is focusing more on task to make the work complete and hitting targets. Even though, the organisation is still looking forward to our health and welfare. They also followed the new norms that are SOP that are given by the government such as social distance, wearing a mask all the time and cleaning oneself before touching anything." G3P3

"Organisations sometimes stay focused on their work and complete it well so that the business conducted is stable." G1P3

"Organisations pay more attention to completing work and achieving goals," G7P1

"Employers are more assertive in matters of job execution and also in matters of salary distribution." G7P2

"Organisation more focus to their task which is to hit the target and make sure their organisation did not experience any losses." G8P2

Further results indicated that most respondents stated that the pandemic hard time had brought them closer and cared for one another.

"We became closer as colleagues where we shared our daily routine in the group chat. Everyone was supporting each other and encouraged everyone to stay positive as this will pass." G3P1

"Due to this pandemic, behaviour of people also changed in organisations. They are more caring and help each other to make things easier:" G1P2

"In my experience, during this pandemic, people involved in my area of work generally became more understanding and cooperative in an effort to overcome setbacks caused by the pandemic." G1P3

"Organisations are now become more sensitive to the well-being of each other's" G1P3

"The order issued by the government which is a movement control order causes most workers to take care of their behavior, always wearing face masks and taking care of each other. G4P4

"Everyone focused on team members' health and the group chat minimum got 200 messages and asked about health. Most chats are not about tasks and all about different homemade food and covid 19 daily status." G4P6

Less than 10% of respondents stated that they felt isolated and the relationship between organisational people were weakening during the pandemic crisis and felt bored at home.

"The relationship between the company and its employees is no longer so strong, and the outsourcing model will become more popular." G7P1

"The relationship between the company and its employees is no longer so strong, and the outsourcing model will become more popular " G8P1

More than 90% of the respondent reported that their organisations were more vigilant and following rules of Pandemic Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

"They were being extremely cautious; thus, they tend to question more about their surroundings if it's okay to enter the premises." G1P1

"Due to this pandemic, we were more alert to our surroundings than before." G1P6

"Working from home makes me bored due to unsuitable work environment and my daily routine has changed" G9P5

Discussions

The section has twofold. First, it discussed the challenges of digital transformation and WFH during the pandemic crisis of covid-19. Second, how these challenges have impacted the organisational culture change will be discussed further. Figure 1 has been developed to summarise the findings paper's findings and then discussed in further detail. As shown in figure 1, the most prominent red arrow line indicates that all digitalisation challenges will be parts of working from home challenges. Therefore, overlapping challenges can be clearly identified in figure 1, which was developed for this paper. These overlapping challenges were expected since WFH is inextricably linked to the use of technology. Additionally, WFH is the primary

driver that has driven the digital transformation during the pandemic crisis (Antikainen et al, 2018; Broom, 2020).
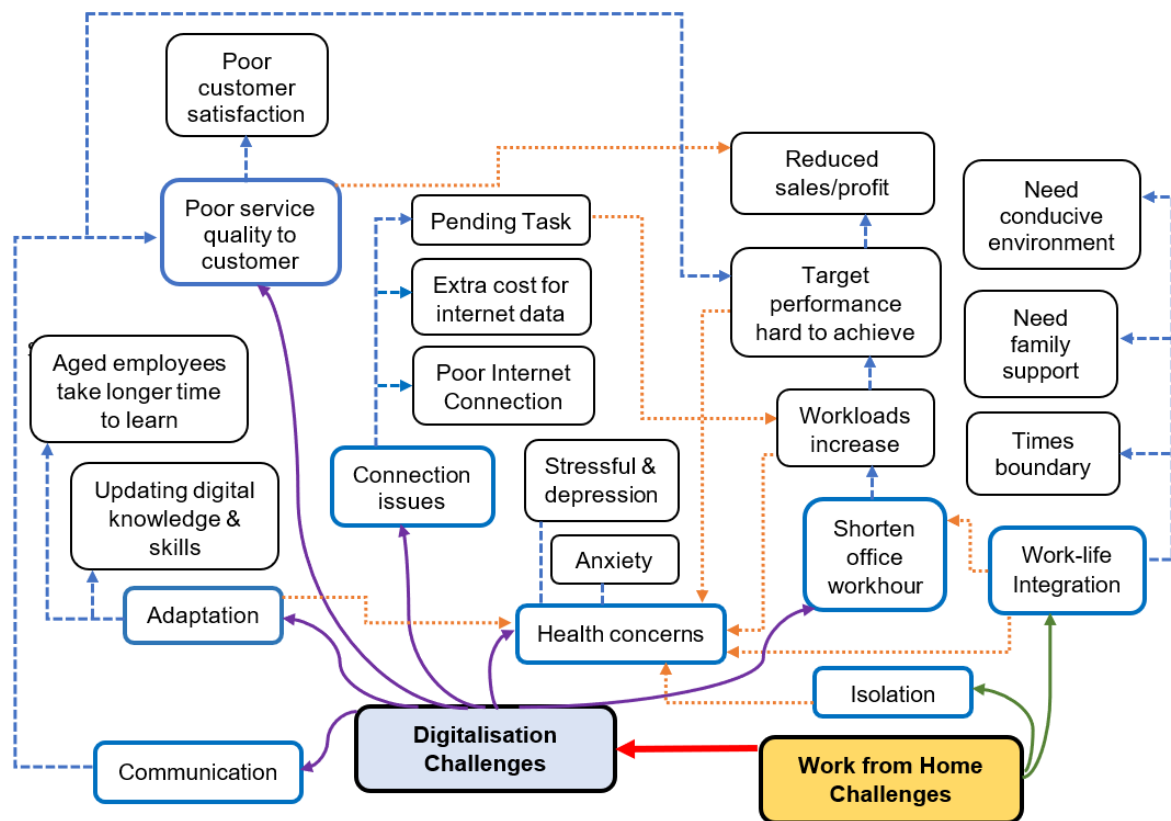

Figure 1: The challenges of digitalisation and WFH

One of the challenges of digitalisation is adaptation. The findings of this paper highlighted that the majority of participants are unprepared for rapid technological development and must quickly learn how to operate digitally or be left behind. The findings also found that the aged employees took a long time learning and adapting to work digitally. Adapting to digital work also has made them stressed. Connection issues are another significant challenge for digitalisation work in Malaysia. Broom (2020) emphasised that billions of people are going online, but almost half of the world's population has no access to the internet. This is consistent with the findings of this paper which found that more than half of the respondents had poor internet connections due to living in areas with limited internet coverage. This obstacle contributes to pending tasks, which raise employees' workloads and make their target performance much more difficult to achieve. Respondents also complain that they have to bear the cost of having more data for their internet connection.

As indicated in Figure 1, internet connection issues have also been linked to health concerns as they are reported to be stressful. This is also in line with Scott (2020), who asserted that a higher reliance on digital tools is associated with higher stress levels. Another major challenge is communication. Respondents asserted that inadequate internet connectivity resulted in poor quality service to consumers, making it difficult to sustain customer satisfaction levels over time. In addition, poor online communication also leads to misunderstanding, vague information, and improper perception. This study highlighted that it is essential for employees to know how to use the internet and technological tools and be prepared to be working at home.

The study findings showed that the government's MCOs had made working hours shorter since most employees were required to work from home, contributing to digital hastening during the pandemic. This has become the major challenge for employees because the constrained office time requires them to do their work at home, and the job they must do begins to mount up and working time seems unlimited regardless of being at home or during the weekend. Besides, short hours at work rendered it difficult for them to reach their goals, lose profits, and appear for cutbacks. As seen in Figure 1, this circumstance might also result in health problems, as the findings of this paper found that digital transformation and working from home during this pandemic crisis has held responsible for health concerns such as human anxiety and depression.

Some respondents claimed that they were more relaxed, spent more time with family and enjoyed WFH. As Cascio (2000) noted, WFH made employees happy since it provided them with more time with family, reduced the stress of travelling in rush hour traffic, and the flexibility that comes with working from home, all of which contributed to their improved happiness. However, this paper's findings suggest that most respondents reported experiencing work-life distress because of WFH. Being confronted with work and family responsibilities at the same time and place (at home) has resulted in work-life distress, as the majority of respondents were unable to manage their responsibilities and other types of chaos that follow WFH, such as a noisy environment, an unconducive workspace, a lack of family support, and etcetera. Most of the respondents claimed that it is hard to complete their tasks when WFH. Lippe and Lippényi (2020) have proven that employees whose WFH are negatively related to their performance than those who work at their workplace.

The second fold of this section is to elaborate on how these challenges have impacted the organisational culture change during this pandemic crisis. This paper has significantly found that the digital transformation and WFH have given some impact to organisational culture. Particularly the daily routine of respondents have all been changed and they must adapt to the new rhythms of working that have emerged as a result of virtual work environments. Hence, this study is consistent with Obrenovic et al. (2020) who also found that COVID-19 has introduced changes in the organisational culture and workforce responsibilities. Obrenovic et al. (2020) stipulated that organisations have a growing pattern of delegation of authority during a crisis. The result of this study extends more into understanding that delegation is not the only pattern resulting from a pandemic crisis but the most pressing concern in this study was the strain of mission-driven, in which more than half of study's respondents indicated that their organisations were focusing on task completion and hitting target performance. According to the findings of this study, organisational culture is evolving into a result-oriented culture rather than a people-oriented culture. This shift may be explained by the fact that this pandemic crisis is a threat to organisational survival. Sharp et al. (2018) recent study emphasised that task-focused working styles are more prevalent in workplace cultures where focused on efficiency. This pandemic crisis has led the organisational culture to focus on tasks to ensure that employees who were WFH are always on track. According to Burke et al. (2006), leaders adopting such behaviours ensure that members have a clear sense of direction and purpose. Savelsbergh et al. (2015) further added that the leader could take control and determine in detail what and how works should be done by focusing on task completion. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents experienced the task-oriented culture, most respondents also claimed that the pandemic's difficult period had brought them closer together and made them care for one another. Although most respondents were found to be more connected and caring for one another, a minority of respondents (less than 10%) stated that they felt isolated and that the relationship between organisational members was deteriorating during the pandemic crisis.

In the face of digital transformation and WFH, organisational and family support and individuals' ability to adapt are all critical.

Conclusion and Future Research

The movement control order (MCO) has affected Malaysia's economy. Most companies have their employees working from home (Ain Umaira Md Shah et al., 2020) as the MCO required people to remain indoors and instructed the closure of all facilities except primary and essential services such as health services, water, electricity, telecommunication and food supply companies (Aziz, Othman, Lugova & Suleiman, 2020). A result of the lockdown, the vast majority of individuals are talking, engaging, and carrying out their job obligations from their homes, using the Internet and digital tools for online communication and jobs completion purposes. The increased use of technologies has accelerated the digital revolution and WFH.

This study looks at aspects in which Malaysian employees are responding to the pandemic crisis of Covid-19. Particularly how this pandemic crisis has brought the challenges of digital transformation and WFH and to investigate whether the digital transformation and WFH have impacted organisational culture during the pandemic crisis of Covid-19. The results of this paper concluded that digital transformation and WFH had changed the way in which organisational culture has used to be. These include how works were executed and how people behaved in this pandemic crisis. Every challenge arising from the transformation of digitalisation and WFH resulting from the crisis pandemic is interrelated. For example, digital transformation and WFH have been closely linked to the increase in depression and anxiety among those affected by this pandemic. This is in line with previous scholars (Cijan et al., 2019) who reported that extensive technologies make it hard for employees who work remotely because it is usually difficult to turn off at home. Besides, Jacukowicz et al. (2020) recent study showed that extended work hours or doing work while at home can have detrimental effects on employees' physical and mental health and overall quality of life. While WFH may be the solution for business continuity, WFH still has its pitfalls that interfere with employees' performance and well-being.

Another significant conclusion is that the advent of digitalisation and WFH have altered the workplace climate, causing the organisation to tend to be more result-oriented, emphasising job completion and meeting performance targets. Despite the fact that most organisations tend to be task-oriented culture, the vast majority of respondents stated that the pandemic crisis had brought them closer together and prompted them to care for one another. This study was conducted in the first year of the pandemic crisis, leading to a jolt of working environment where most organisations and employees were not prepared. Thus, for future research, we would like to recommend this study to be reconducted again as the result may generate different outcomes because people and organisations are expected to be more accustomed to pandemic conditions and new norms.

Acknowledgements

References

Ain Umaira Md Shah, Syafiqah Nur Azrie Safri, Rathedevi Thevadas, Nor Kamariah Noordin, Azmawani Abd Rahman, Zamberi Sekawi, Aini Ideris, Mohamed Thariq Hameed Sultan (2020), COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia: Actions taken by the Malaysian government, International Journal of Infectious Diseases,97, 108-116.

Amirul, S. R., Amirul, S. M., & Mail, R. (2020). Strategic Flexible Working Arrangement: The Realignment between Human Resource and Management Accounting. Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews, 2020.

Amirul, S.R., Ahmad, S.N.B., Nasip, S. (2023). Organisational Culture and Dynamic Marketing Capabilities in the Digital Age of Pandemic Crisis. In: Alareeni, B., Hamdan, A. (eds) Impact of Artificial Intelligence, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution on Business Success. ICBT 2021. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 485. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08093-7_21

Antikainen, M., Uusitalo, T., & Kivikytö-Reponen, P. (2018). Digitalisation as an enabler of circular economy. Procedia CIRP, 73, 45-49.

Athar, H. S. (2020). The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Commitment Post Pandemic Covid-19. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 7(5), 148-157.

Aziz, N. A., Othman, J., Lugova, H., Suleiman, A., behalf of the Economy, O., & Cluster, S. W. (2020). Malaysia's approach in handling COVID-19 onslaught: Report on the Movement Control Order (MCO) and targeted screening to reduce community infection rate and impact on public health and economy. Journal of infection and public health.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative research in psychology, 3(2), 77-101.

Broom, D. (2020, April). Coronavirus has exposed the digital divide like never before. In World Economic Forum (Vol. 22).

Burke, C. S., Stagl, K. C., Klein, C., Goodwin, G. F., Salas, E., & Halpin, S. M. (2006). What type of leadership behaviors are functional in teams? A meta-analysis. The leadership quarterly, 17(3), 288-307.

Cascio, W. F. (2000). Managing a virtual workplace. Academy of Management Perspectives, 14(3), 81-90.

Chartered Management Institute (2015). Understanding organizational culture. Management House, Cottingham Rd, Corby, Northants, NN17 1TT

Cijan, A., Jenič, L., Lamovšek, A., & Stemberger, J. (2019). How digitalization changes the workplace. Dynamic relationships management journal, 8(1), 3-12.

Cruzes, D. S., & Dyba, T. (2011). Recommended steps for thematic synthesis in software engineering. In 2011 international symposium on empirical software engineering and measurement (pp. 275-284). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/ESEM.2011.36

Deloitte, 2020, "2020 Global Human Capital Trends: The social enterprise at work: Paradox as a path forward". Retrieved from https://www2.deloitte.com

Geetha Subramaniam, Peck-Leong Tan, Ruzita Baah, Nurul Ainun Ahmad Atory (2015). Do flexible working arrangements impact women's participation in the labour market? A multiple regression analysis. Malaysian Journal of Consumer And Family Economics, Vol. 18, 2015-9.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalising Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, Vol. 2 No. 1. pp. 1-26.

House, R., Jovidan, M. & Dorfman, P. (2001). Project GLOBE: An Introduction, Applied Psychology: An International Review, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 489-505.

Jacukowicz, A., & Merecz-Kot, D. (2020). Work-related Internet use as a threat to work-life balance– a comparison between the emerging on-line professions and traditional office work. International journal of occupational medicine and environmental health, 33(1), 21-33.

Joyce K.H. Nga (2020). Investigating the Influence of Asian Cultural Value and Financial Knowledge on Investment Behaviours. Malaysian Journal of Consumer And Family Economics, Vol 24, 173-206.

M. Weston (2020). How COVID-19 has impacted organisational culture. The HRDirector.https://www.thehrdirector.com/how-covid-19-has-impacted-organisational-culture/ accessed on 28 july 2021.

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars. *. All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 8(3), 3351–33514. Retrieved from http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335

Nansen, B., Arnold, M., Gibbs, M., & Davis, H. (2010). Time, space and technology in the working-home: an unsettled nexus. New Technology, Work and Employment, 25(2), 136-153.

Odiakaose, H.O. (2018). Organisational Culture and Dynamics. Global Journal Of Management And Business Research, 18, No 1-A.

Obrenovic, B., Du, J., Godinic, D., Tsoy, D., Khan, M. A. S., & Jakhongirov, I. (2020). Sustaining enterprise operations and productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic:"Enterprise Effectiveness and Sustainability Model". Sustainability, 12(15), 5981.

Osman, Hajibah and Mohamad Kamar, Kamarul Anuar (2021). Reporting qualitative research methods. UiTM Press, Shah Alam.

Porter, M. E., & Heppelmann, J. E. (2014). How smart, connected products are transforming competition. Harvard business review, 92(11), 64-88.

Ross, A. C. (2016). Offline Social Functioning and Online Communication: How Social Competence Translates to an Online Context (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California).

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., ... & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. Quality & quantity, 52(4), 1893-1907.

Savelsbergh, C. M., Poell, R. F., & van der Heijden, B. I. (2015). Does team stability mediate the relationship between leadership and team learning? An empirical study among Dutch project teams. International journal of project management, 33(2), 406-418.

Shaari, S.C., Amirul, S.R. (2023). Influence of Digitalisation upon Jobs and Working Conditions: Towards Policy Response. In: Alareeni, B., Hamdan, A. (eds) Innovation of Businesses, and Digitalization during Covid-19 Pandemic. ICBT 2021. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 488. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08090-6_34

Scott, E. MS. (2020). How to Handle the Stress of Working From Home. Verywell Mind. Retrieved from https://www.verywellmind.com/the-stress-of-working-from-home-4141174.

Serpa, S. N. F. (2016). An Overview of the concept of organisational culture. International business management, 10(1)), 51-61.

Shah, A. U. M., Safri, S. N. A., Thevadas, R., Noordin, N. K., Abd Rahman, A., Sekawi, Z., & Sultan, M. T. H. (2020). COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia: Actions taken by the Malaysian government. International Journal of Infectious Diseases, 97, 108-116.

Shareena, P., & Shahid, M. (2020). Work from home during COVID-19: Employees perception and experiences. Global journal for Research Analysis, 9(5).

Sharp, S., Mcallister, M., & Broadbent, M. (2018). The tension between person centred and task focused care in an acute surgical setting: A critical ethnography. Collegian, 25(1), 11-17.

Spicer, A. (2020). Playing the bullshit game: How empty and misleading communication takes over organizations. Organization Theory, 1(2), 2631787720929704.

van der Lippe, T., & Lippényi, Z. (2020). Co-workers working from home and individual and team performance. New Technology, Work and Employment, 35(1), 60-79.

Vyas, L., & Butakhieo, N. (2020). The impact of working from home during COVID-19 on work and life domains: an exploratory study on Hong Kong. Policy Design and Practice, 1-18.

Warrick, D. D. (2017). What leaders need to know about organizational culture. Business Horizons, 60(3), 395-404.