Report on

Revolutionizing Work from Home and the contribution of Human Resources
Management in times of COVID-19

By

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An internship report submitted to the Graduate School of Management in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master's in Business Administration

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Letter of Transmittal

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, PhD

Associate Professor,

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Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir / Madam,

It is my utmost pleasure to present you with my internship report that I have prepared on the revolution of Work from Home and the contribution of Human Resources Management in times of COVID-19. I must confide in how I enjoyed preparing this report despite the fact how the time constraints made it a substantial challenge to overcome. I have included all relevant information related to WFH demographics, jobs that can/cannot be done remotely, as well as perceptions of both HR managers and employees regarding the organizational changes brought in by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am humbly confident that the report will fulfill your expectations and is all accord to your instructions. I found this term paper a worthy one as it enabled me to combine all of my knowledge that I have achieved through my major courses these last few semesters. I would like to express my gratitude towards you for the continuous support I got from you throughout the semester, and I am extremely thankful to you for the enthusiasm you created in me.

Sincerely yours,

_____

Nabiha Azad Noor

19264022

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: January 19th, 2022

Non-Disclosure Agreement

[This page is for Non-Disclosure Agreement between the Company and The Student]

This agreement is made and entered into by and between [Name of Company] and the undersigned student at BRAC University ……………………………………….

Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to almighty Allah, He who has invisibly blessed us with sustenance in our faith, in our intellect, in our health and ourselves.

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I want to thank my parents, Md Foyzur Rob Azad & Syeda Nazneen Ahmed, without whose undying love and support it would have been impossible to even prevail in the first place; my brother, Munawwer Azad Rafi, for always uplifting me with the warmest smile every time I looked up from the keyboard; and my dearest friend, Izazul Haque, for persistently being there for me from the beginning to the end of this journey despite being on the other side of the world. Thank you for not letting me give up.

Lastly, this thesis is dedicated to my late grandfather, Shahzada Syed Nizamuddin Ahmed, who unfailingly appreciated and was proud of even the smallest of my achievements. For a man whose life has been a remarkable inspiration to many, this too, would have been made him the proudest.

Executive Summary

With 30 carefully chosen journal articles, this review article outlines how the deadly pandemic COVID-19 has aggravated organizational challenges along with health implications. With the health risks directly associated with any organization's largest capital, human resources, the HR leaders have been put in the front-line. How each of the HR practitioners handled this crisis across countries is a testament to the coming years of organizational revolution. The findings of this report showed two major insights: the first being how some organizations, due to not having any contingency plans and resort to short-term cost cut approaches like downsizing, hiring contractual workers as well as withdrawal of financial incentives. This led to the remaining workforces resuming their jobs in fear and unmotivated, eventually resulting in the organizations' downfall. The second one was HR practitioners opting for a relationship-oriented leadership, where employees were seen as whole individual beings rather than the organization's resource input. Instead of downsizing, HR practitioners of the latter insights focused more on formulating policies that cut costs excluding the workforces, fostered employee retention through lesser shifts and ensured that their employees were of sound health, both mentally and physically. Employees in WFH were given autonomy and the liberty to be self-responsible, whilst onsite workers were given the utmost care and concern regarding their safety and health measures– which helped organizations recover from the pandemic and build mutual trust and openness between managers and employees. In the future, how well organizations will adapt to remote working and comprehend human capital in its truest form will prove its resiliency in terms of crisis management and sustainability in the long run.

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List of Acronyms

F2F	Face to Face
HBW	Home based work
HHR	Health Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
HR	Human Resources
HRP	Human Resource Professionals
ILO	International Labor Organization
WFH	Work from Home
WHO	World Health Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
LTC	Long term care
MNC	Multi-National Companies
MNE	Multi-National Enterprises
PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
LMPS	Labor Market Panel Surveys
STEP	Skills Towards Employability and Productivity
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
O*NET	Occupational Information Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IT	Informations Technology
CHRO	Chief Human Resource Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
NASDAQ	National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations

Chapter 1

Introduction

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire dynamic of jobs and job structures have gone through drastic reformations, including the element of working from home (WFH) becoming a substantial determinant of employee performance. According to ILO, in 2020, high-income countries in Northern America and Western Europe have adapted the WFH smoothly without any adverse performance effects (ILO, 2020). While technological advancements have fueled this adaptation to a greater scale, a massive disruption in the way workplaces operate has also been observed. This is where human resources management comes into the context. The essential human resources management (HRM) concept is constantly being modified and improvised over the last two and a half years, with researchers focusing on how human resource roles need to be extended further than just employee retention and motivation to optimize performance and organizational success beyond the boundaries of office, education, medical as well as industrial spaces, without the employees having to stay present onsite (Garrote Sanchez et al., 2020). This paper will review a portion of the numerous literature regarding WFH that has emerged over the COVID-19 pandemic and conclude with areas of strategic development and limitations of the reports.

1.1 Background

With companies immersing themselves in the competition brought on by globalization, Noe et al. (2010) stated that HRM was the only factor that provided any organization with a competitive advantage. According to Aslam et al. (2014), HRM deals with how employees perform, their behavioural tendencies and attitudes at workplaces and how these can be aligned with the organizational goals while retaining employee motivation and productivity. This included managing employer-employee relationships, formulating appropriate compensation and benefits, ensuring the health and safety of the employees in the working conditions as well as providing training and skill development initiatives. While these aspects were considered to be salient mostly inside the office boundary, the past few years expanded that boundary into telecommuting or remote working. The expansion was further catalyzed by the deadly SARS-CoV-2 or simply the COVID-19 pandemic. As of January 2022, more than 5 million deaths were recorded by WHO, and 320 million were affected by it (WHO, 2022). Due to the diseases' severely contagious nature and increased potential diffusion in crowded or closed areas, organizations had to immediately shift to WFH models to ensure the health and safety of the

employees while maintaining business continuity. Since this was a human-sensitive crisis, the need for integrating HRM was much more imperative than other organizational aspects, just like the need for financial experts during the time of economic, financial crises. This is because employees are assets to the organization, and their form of maintenance and repair implies looking out for their wellbeing, physical and mental health – something organizations do not have to worry about regarding their other tangible assets, e.g. machinery, equipment, furniture, land etc. While this paper does review two papers where an experiment regarding WFH was conducted before the COVID-19 crisis, it is worth mentioning that those papers did not take into consideration the pandemic factor when assessing results. This indicates that the added psychological factor regarding fear of life and job loss was not in the experimental criterion; nonetheless, there is no dispute that the results were significant for the researchers to build on in the upcoming WFH in COVID-19 related researches.

1.2 Research Objectives

From the 30 articles that are related to WFH and HRM practices during COVID-19, this review article aims at obtaining insight regarding the following aspects:

- Jobs that are feasible to be categorized under WFH and the economic contribution towards the proportion.
- Organizations preparedness during COVID-19 regarding both WFH and onsite jobs
- The extent to which HR was involved and acted as a support instrument towards the employees during COVID-19 in both WFH and onsite jobs
- Identifying future resilience strategies to sustain the organization's positive outcomes from WFH as well as implementing on organizations that failed to do so.

1.3 Rationale

COVID-19 is highly contagious, and it can spread easily through air droplets from the affected individual to others around them (WHO, 2020). While vaccinations reduce the vulnerability of individuals against COVID-19, it does not make them invincible (Business Insider, 2021). Hence, proper safety measures like social distancing, using protective equipment like face masks and PPE, sanitizing and washing hands frequently was recommended for every citizen around the world – and that included organizations and their employees as well. In order to convey these measures to the employees without inducing fear in them and ensuring that this crisis does not affect employee performance as well as productivity, the role of HR became

salient more than ever. While some employees were sick with the disease, others had family members who were affected. Organizations were looking for ways to cut costs, and downsizing seemed like the easiest way to do so in the short run. As there were employees laid off and already out of a job, the remaining were starting to feel uncertain about their jobs as well, with the added fear of losing their loved ones as well as being affected themselves. HR managers now had to take matters into their own hands, reaching out to each and every employee personally and communicating with them, offering to support in possible ways so that employees would not feel lost and uncared for. Even though the extent of control has somewhat been limited due to the physical distance in virtual/remote working (Chen, 2021), HR managers around the countries have overcome the limits by alternating monitoring tools without making employees feel that they are being micromanaged or the safety of life was compromised for the sake of the organization's objectives. As for onsite work, ensuring that employees were working in shifts and maintaining all the safety precautions (Adikaram et al., 2021) was expected of HR. Dingel & Neiman (2020) pointed out how developing countries were less amenable to jobs that could be performed remotely, whereas developed countries had implemented them successfully, which implied that even though countries had similar jobs, the execution of the tasks was not the same. Although this dissimilarity meant organizational behaviour among countries would be different, the studies showed that a lot of the factors like productivity, increased autonomy and work-life balance was something HR managers were able to avail themselves for their employees (Rahman & Rahman, 2021). Suddenly, it seemed that HR departments were in the spotlight and how they strategized each of their steps was being watched closely. Whatever successful outcomes or failures arose from the strategies HR practitioners were implementing at the onset of the COVID-19 were the stepping stones of integrating the concept of HRM. The future practitioners or researchers could build on the successfully implemented strategies, as well as look at the gaps and identify faults in the strategies for future workplaces. Through this review article, both HRM practitioners and researchers can gain insights regarding effective policies and use them as a basis to conduct large-scale experiments in the future with HR experts as well as the employees when the pandemic has ceased; and physical interviews and observations will be more feasible.

1.4 Limitations

This review article was completed as a requirement to fulfil the internship credits of my Masters of Business Administration. Due to the time constraint and the nature of the work being individually assigned, the sample size was very narrow as compared to published

review articles. Even though a global-based study is almost unviable in such a short time, I have attempted to review the HR practices of organizations residing in countries of various income ranges; Sri Lanka, USA, Bangladesh, Kuwait, Netherlands, Canada, Pakistan, Indonesia, Georgia etc. Additionally, the HRM practices of tourism, education, health was reviewed in detail, and a few other industries were skimmed over due to the time constraint. Since there is a disparity among the industries regarding the jobs and the tasks and the extent to which COVID-19 had affected them, the findings of this review article may not reflect HR practices industries collectively.

1.5 Methodology

In order to construct this review article, I sought out 40 articles using the following keywords: HRM/Human Resource Management, COVID-19 and Work from home/WFH on Google Scholar. The time frame was limited to 2020-2021 since a large portion of the context revolved around the COVID-19 pandemic. The said keywords were searched altogether first, then in the patterns of HRM and COVID-19, then HRM and WFH and finally COVID-19 and WFH. Out of the 40 articles found, 30 articles were chosen, and the rest ten were eliminated out due to not having any qualitative or empirical researches, as well as no theoretical applications on the observations. Some of the articles were excluded due to not being peer-reviewed yet, even though they qualified in the criteria. With the remaining 30 articles, the review was performed. There was no coding or categorization of the content involved due to the brevity of the review sample.

Chapter 2

Review of the Articles

2.1 Using paradox lens to look at the HR perspective during COVID-19

Early in the pandemic, organizations went through massive labour changes – they responded to the crisis either through downsizing or adapting remote or hybrid working situations. While the work-from-home concept has somewhat buffered the disruption of the pandemic, there were differences in the performance and productivity based on both gender and types of tasks (Collings et al., 2021). Identifying these differences and formulating immediate HR strategies was a great challenge for HR managers or leaders. The managers would now have to reevaluate intercommunications, recruitment, performance evaluation and management, succession planning, developing leadership qualities in employees and enhancing global motility in organizations with employees all over the world. Collings et al. (2021) used two paradoxical perspectives to comprehend how HR practitioners have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. One was the people-profit paradox, which took into consideration the minimization of costs but also retaining employees' motivation and taking care of their wellbeing and mental health at the same time. The research showed that while for service organizations, the profit margins were higher despite cutting costs and increased WFH workers. This was feasible only because the job was knowledge-oriented, and the tasks were not interdependent. On the other hand, the more interdependent the job tasks were, the lesser productivity WFH employees showed since there was, the lesser scope of face to face teamwork and alignment. In such situations, human resource managers were suggested to look for ways to manage such tension between the workers, look out for their physical and mental health as well as ensure sustainable retention as well as profit in the longer run (Collings et al., 2021). The second perspective this research talked about was the long-term-short-term, or decisions made by the top management teams to maximize shareholder's wealth. Organizations often cut down costs through massive layoffs in times of such crisis, as this seems the only feasible and easier way than liquidating assets (Collings et al., 2021). However, while this may be attractive in terms of shareholders' financial interests, the implications of such decisions are usually negative in the long run. Additionally, some organizations also reduce CSR or charitable donations, which might help financial demands in the short run but affect their impression of the community in the long run. The

research further discusses how HR leaders can foster a quality relationship between employers and employees by aligning the two in terms of employee's knowledge and job skills, how similar the employer and employees goals towards organizational success are, alongside providing flexibility and encouraging commitment, fair levels of pay as well as what the organization requires in terms of skills and how employees are fulfilling it (Collings et al., 2021).

In order to navigate the people-profit paradox, the researchers suggested through several questions like how HR leaders manage and decide priorities between time and resources, how it affects their leadership qualities as well as the organization, and how WFH can influence organizational outcomes such as innovation, employee wellbeing and productivity and whether a healthy balance between onsite and remote working exists, and whether the performance can be managed better by the HR leaders. By examining the results of strategies implemented by current leaders such as providing allowances, bonuses, hiring contractual workers and so on, managers can look out for the positive impacts and work on it while minimizing the negative impacts and evaluate how this can be made sustainable in the long run. HR leaders also have to keep in mind that with the ongoing pandemic, with the uncertainty of job, mortality, loss or sickness of loved ones, there will likely be tension within employees, and conflicts may arise between the groups of employees working from home the ones working onsite (Collings et al., 2021). For jobs that are considered to be essential for the society to operate in such as front-line workers as well as product and service delivery sectors, their jobs will also have to be reevaluated and ranked in terms of priority and ensure their pay or recognition of efforts are not compromised in the long run.

For the long-term-short-term paradox, the researchers suggested comparing and contrasting HR leaders and observing whether the variations regarding background, knowledge, skills can impact the long term and short term decision-making capabilities. The focus should not entirely be on HR leaders; their effects on the core organizational results should also be taken into consideration (Collings et al., 2021). Finally, the paper concluded by recommending conducting qualitative research to understand the relationship dynamics between executive teams and board of members and how it affects shareholder-based decision making. Additionally, HR leaders were also encouraged to ask themselves to keep looking for the scope of opportunity to reduce cost while simultaneously improving quality instead of dwelling on the tension and conflicts arising from the two paradoxes discussed above. The functions of HR management can be revolutionized if leaders can make decisions impacting the organization's sustainability and employees' work-life quality in times of such crisis (Collings et al., 2021).

While this paper referenced several papers to cite statistical and factual data regarding the topic, this paper would have been more insightful if it had ventured into empirical research and used more data regarding developing countries in consideration. However, while keeping in mind that this was written at the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, hence access to limited resources and researches might explain the inadequacy.

2.2 How HR played a role in managing a mentally-healthy workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic was a true testament to how generic and flimsy contingency policies were and how this affected a crisis no one saw was coming. Maddox-Daines (2021) conducted research with 15 HR professionals working in private and public sectors in the UK to find out how the HR responded and managed their employees at the onset of COVID-19, what were the changes in the work environment, as well as a management system and how HR supported the mental health and wellbeing of their employees. Most of these organizations had contingency plans with vague criteria that only discussed technical aspects like payroll and had a timeframe of a month maximum, so when the effects of the pandemic extended from weeks to months to almost half a year, organizations started to struggle with the reviewing of their health and safety policies. While managers were tested whether their leadership skills would increase retention and productivity in remote working, HR practitioners had to work twice as hard as their responsibility was to oversee that the relationship between the line managers and employees were fruitful and collaborative. The main stakeholder here, e.g. employees, did not just have to work around the clock now but also dealt with mental health issues related to remote working and social distancing such as zoom fatigue, loneliness, job insecurity, personal life issues and so on. Therefore, HR practitioners now had a salient role in curbing the disruption of the working medium without invading the employee's privacy boundaries. As for findings, it was discovered that the majority of the organizations were unprepared for this crisis since no one expected the COVID-19 to turn into a pandemic. The policies did not consider the physical or psychological problems associated with human capital. Most of the responses were ad hoc, and past policies were not helping here since this was an entirely different situation. To facilitate the change of the work environment, HR practitioners' ensured necessary equipment and furniture were supplied to their employees for a proper WFH experience. While this has helped the efficiency of the organization's performance, necessary follow-up was not conducted; therefore, the study lacks information on whether the employees found this helpful or redundant. Organizations that were already flexible and IT-based easily adapted to this transformation. On the contrary, public sectors that operated in the observational method had

the most difficulty since most of their managers were resistant to the change and the concept of WFH (Maddox-Daines, 2021). The HR practitioners as well as the managers understood the importance of one on one conversations between the colleagues and the line managers and ensured that there was continuity of communication through meetings, follow-ups and personal conversations. This helped strengthen the understanding and communication skills among the management and employees. Organizations attempted to assist their employees through development and learning trainings and mental health seminars conducted virtually. Additionally, employee assistance programs were also executed, but they were reported to be of little use. Managers were encouraged to connect with their employees through recreational activities like playing virtual bingo, showing pictures of their home working desks to each other and so on. While this helped improve employee morale, some were dissatisfied as they felt while they were working the hardest; employees on furlough were, on the other hand, doing nothing and yet getting paid the same. The incorporation of continuous work and household duties caused presenteeism and eventually burnout among the employees, as they had to work more than they had done prior to COVID-19. The study further concluded by stating how contingency plans should be more detail centric and consider both the long run and short-run objectives in the future, and more effective use of communication channels to ensure supervision does not turn into micro-management, which will only further aggravate the workers' mental health. The positive side of supporting employee wellbeing was that within the next few months, the intervention could be reduced as by then employees were more self-responsible and knew how to manage their mental health and work stress, allowing HR practitioners to delve into other policy-making aspects. How the policies are being formulated in the light of COVID-19 will dynamically change the strategic role of HR practitioners in the future.

2.3 Influence of COVID-19 pandemic on Human Resources Management

Chen (2021) conducted a study on how workplaces integrating towards WFH during COVID-19 has its own drawbacks and how HR practitioners can resolve them. He identified four key problems – lack of new office skills and virtual communication etiquettes, psychological stress caused by WFH, employees failing to maintain work-family balance and identification with cultural values. In order to provide suggestions, Chen (2021) offered three hypotheses – the first one was using the PE fit model to support HR management addressing the four WFH

issues. The second hypothesis was using crisis management awareness to reduce the impact of the four problems, and the last one was adapting WFH with the given problems and responding and reacting whenever a problem came up. In order to upgrade WFH skills, HR practitioners can provide online training courses, vocational skills training, new ICT based training as well as cybersecurity training to ensure that employees do not compromise the privacy of the organization's data since they are working with sensitive company information outside the workplace. The trainings should be designed in a way that they can be reviewed and updated over the years so that the knowledge is sustained in the long run. The psychological stress among employees was identified due to the lack of social support, loneliness arising from social distancing, job uncertainty, and fear of loss of loved ones due to COVID-19 and so on. To combat this issue, HR practitioners were suggested to develop family-friendly work programs, where line managers would interact with the employee's family and acknowledge their contribution towards the said employee's mental health and work productivity and the understanding that the impacts of COVID-19 have affected all of them. Seminars regarding wellbeing and mental health could be conducted. HR practitioners should review the compensation, benefits, performance evaluation, promotion and transfer policies to make them sustainable in the long run and well-prepared for any potential unforeseen crisis. As WFH took up a large amount of time of the employees, employees were seen to complain regarding not having time to spend with family or assist their family members with activities like chores, homeschooling, and sickness of a family member or child etc. HR practitioners can enable the idea of non-traditional WFH hours, which can make the working hours flexible; hence the workers can have the liberty to work whenever they can without affecting their personal affairs. It is often noticed that people at WFH give more hours than they do onsite. This can be limited by setting a target work hour for WFH employees. Additionally, employment assistance programs like family relationship management, reconciliation of family and work as well as the post-conflict resolution can be offered to those workers to help them manage the work-life balance efficiently. Lastly, when more workers start working from home, the manager loses a significant portion of control and supervision; hence they cannot impose enough leadership and cooperative culture on the employees. This often affects the quality of work, and there is a lack of interpersonal and social interaction. To ensure the work quality is up to the standards of the organization's core values and culture, HR practitioners should reflect upon their selection and hiring process in the pandemic. According to the PE fit model, individuals choose organization's whose values and culture align with that of their own ideas. HR can take this aspect into consideration and look out for potential employees whose objectives and ideas can

align with the organization's objectives. To establish a more collaborative culture, managers can host virtual collaborations where spontaneous communication and social interaction can be encouraged. Management should comprehend the fact that they cannot have unnaturally higher expectations or standards towards the employee's performance quality, as this can further demotivate the employees and trigger their psychological stress. In the present situation, these solutions can alleviate the problems, and the study concludes by further implicating research scopes with the access of the post-COVID-19 work model.

2.4 Health Human Resources in Pandemic Context

While the importance of human resources in the corporate workplace is imperative for an economy to survive, focusing on human health resources (HHR) is far more crucial in the context of COVID-19. This paper by Denis et al. (2021) addresses HHR three major issues Quebec, Canada's HHR workforce had to face, namely questionable working conditions, lack of proper recognition of their contribution and the scope of practice of both professional and non-professional health workers. The reasons for these challenges were identified as extreme labour shortages, endemic deficiencies and unequal opportunities of workers in occupational categories. All of these issues were identified through Canadian newspaper articles along with journals published in early to 2020.These issues have been discussed in light of the five dimensions of the HHR model. The first discussed dimension was system integration, which depicts the right mix of all kinds of workers and sufficient quality of these workers for the care of both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 workers. Due to workers' absenteeism due to COVID-19 related sickness, burnout from pulling multiple shifts, there was an extreme shortage of labour in the healthcare sector (Denis et al., 2021). This affected the Long Term Care (LTC) patients the most as they needed immediate and utmost care. The government intervened by offering to train new aides as well as increase the wage rates of these aides. As a result, almost 10000 new workers were attracted and trained (Denis et al., 2021). The second dimension was sector integration, which refers to the balanced approach of human capital among the various healthcare sectors. While Quebec was the most prepared for the care of COVID-19 patients, it overlooked the need for labour in other health sectors. Additionally, with a poor supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), workers were vulnerable to more infections. The third dimension, occupational integration, talked about utilizing working skill capacity so that workers would perform to their full potential. While there was scope for WFH in cases of medical practitioners seeing patients over telemedicine, patients requiring immediate care and were critically ill required more than just virtual assistance. With the shortage of workers, the

existing workers now had to focus on both COVID-19 affected and non-COVID-19 related patients (Denis et al., 2021). This gave rise to the requirement of expanding the scope of practice of non-medical professionals', e.g. physiotherapists, therapists, pharmacists, so that they could be involved as well. The contributions of nurses, in this case, were imperative, yet their opinions were not taken into consideration at all during decision-making processes. Clinical governance was suggested here, which would support healthcare workers through facilitative leadership and management, provide the workers proper feedback, training for better team working, and expect relevant results in terms of services. The fourth dimension is gender integration, which explains the segregation among the genders in both the professional and non-professional occupations. In the healthcare sector, it was noticed that almost 80% of the public service workers were female in Quebec (Denis et al., 2021). Nurses, social workers, care aides were the front-liners combating the COVID-19 crisis. With this emergency pressure, workload, mandatory overtime, having to work in high-risk zones, being the sole assistant for patients extremely distressed, fear of committing life-threatening mistakes while caring for the patients, and being guilt-tripped into having to work for the patients due to labour shortage has taken a toll on these workers both mentally and physically (Denis et al., 2021). Hence, it was observed here that there was an unequal opportunity of fulfilling work experience in terms of gender. While the worker's contribution was recognized verbally by the government and politicians, no appropriate policy was devised to relieve them of the pressure (Denis et al., 2021). The last dimension was socio-cultural integration, where it was suggested that if the socio-cultural aspects are considered in the health system, the provision of health care will be more aligned since workers of other racial communities and groups worked just as hard. Volunteers were encouraged to apply, but whenever immigrants or minorities applied or asked for proper compensation, the system was delayed. This is ironic as they held occupation at the lower end of the healthcare hierarchy yet had to take the most daunting tasks like cleaning up after the COVID-19 patients without any proper protective equipment. Recognition and protection of this sector of workers are important for the healthcare system to sustain itself in times of newer waves of the pandemic. Based on the problems identified from the five dimensions, the study presented transformative propositions like increasing participatory initiatives where team-based organizations and clinical governance will go side by side. This will ensure equitable exchange among professional and non-professional segments as the workers will feel valued and respected and mobilize the immediate front line workers. By imposing joint policies, the workers will gain back power across all the occupational categories. By supporting unions, worker representations, policymakers will have to identify the important

sectors and renew HHR policies accordingly (Denis et al., 2021). Lastly, the importance of investing in capacity development was implied as a solution to these issues to ensure that the front line worker's competencies, skills and knowledge were valued and they would have influence over their work context. It was apparent that the preparedness of the health sector for the pandemic depended on how the HHR policies were utilized when no one saw it coming. Having said that, the post-COVID19 scenario should be more organized, and the resources will be allocated efficiently if the propositions are reviewed and implemented by the government (Denis et al., 2021).

2.5 The "Next-Normal" Workplace and Human Resources

Using pop culture references, Kulik (2021) attempted to describe the roles of HR practitioners and professionals, how they play dual roles of Clark Kent and Superman when implementing policies behind the scene, as well as taking action whenever needed in terms of human capital. As the effects of COVID-19 are becoming more controllable and decreasing significantly, employers are asking their workers to come back to work physically. However, with the new autonomy and flexibility of WFH, employees are reluctant as with physical work, there are negative aspects associated with long hours of commute, paperwork, bureaucracy and numerous meetings in a day. While it cannot be denied that WFH has not only revolutionized workspaces but also has given rise to productivity and innovation, HR practitioners can team up with researchers to find ways to create a hybrid working environment that is psychologically safe based on mutual trust and social connectedness. In order for a workplace to be psychologically safe, HR managers have to establish physical safety first. This means ensuring the workers that their health comes first, encouraging collective concern between employee groups, creating a transparent communication structure where employees can confide in each other without the fear of being reprimanded or judged. It was also noticed that employees that were "coddled" too much by their managers through virtual surveillance and constant requests for status reports felt demotivated and constricted. The performance metrics should be more outcome and value-based which can have tangible results instead of managers having to supervise their performances. If the manager can trust them for being self-responsible in terms of attendance and work ethics, the employees can perform better and be more efficient. Employees should be encouraged to involve themselves in recreational activities in between works like exercises or meditation to ensure that the breaks are being used productively.

Additionally, it was found that people who were more socially active and had more friends and acquaintances outside work adapted to WFH easily, whereas employees with no connections outside work were facing isolation and loneliness during WFH more than others. In order to ensure the proper wellbeing of employees, hybrid work models can be established where some days could be working onsite and the rest days could be remote. This will increase social connectedness and improve productivity and interpersonal skills among employees. It does not necessarily have to be colleagues to socially connect with; clients and other stakeholders could be encouraged to stay connected as well, which was detached due to COVID-19 related social distancing. In order to create a workplace as dynamic as explained, HR researchers will have to cross-research organizations with similar HR programs to compare and adjust their policies. HR researchers should think about both macro research (organizational performance) as well as micro research (employee wellbeing) instead of only one to ensure the impacts are sustainable in the long run. Additionally, research regarding HR practices of different nations should also be taken into consideration to identify the long term and short term effects employee groups are having. As for practitioners, they should focus more on the long-run impacts of employee value, even if it means restructuring the entire management system since human capital is the largest asset of any organization. Instead of dwelling on only the negative impacts of WFH (no handshake, face to face interaction, communal lunches) and limiting their policy context to either WFH or no WFH, HR practitioners should have a broader mindset and focus on the positive performance related impacts of WFH brings. While formalization means aligning the organizational culture and goals with rigidity, discipline and a definitive working schedule, HR practitioners will need to practice flexibility towards these aspects to allow innovation and employee productivity to foster side by side. The researcher concluded their study with the idea of HR researchers and practitioners coming together to create "sandboxes" which can generate and implement innovative ideas with the professional or managerial level employees first, which can then trickle down to the lower-level employees. The innovations or experiments should be short-term that will not require any costly investment or commitments like having scrum calls instead of zoom meetings, allowing to keep cameras turned off etc. Finally, as there are fewer scientific experiments associated with past HR literature, it is difficult for practitioners to find solutions that are more actionable than ambiguity. However, with more and more literature coming in related to workplaces in COVID-19, researchers and practitioners can collaborate in making robust and sustainable strategic HR policies (Kulik, 2021).

2.6 How Education Facilitators Developed Human Resource Development Competencies In COVID-19

As COVID-19 slowly developed into a pandemic, all sorts of workplaces were transitioning towards virtual or remote models. This also included the educational sectors, where faculties, education administrators, as well as HR professionals specializing in hiring and selecting an appropriate employee for the institutes had to adapt to the virtual teaching and operations. This also challenged the way education was being offered. In a short amount of time, faculties had to synthesize large amounts of information, use them to create high-quality lecture materials and support the students in the COVID-19 situation. Lloyd-Jones (2020) used 15 of her students, aged 25-79, to experiment with the types of competencies that can be acquired by education facilitators through virtual learning. She identified three competencies – coaching, caring and collaboration. Coaching was differentiated from teaching as teaching is simply the transfer of knowledge and skills to one person from another, whereas coaching was enabling an individual with instruments and information to achieve personal satisfaction and develop an individual's characteristics. Lloyd Jones (2020) coached students to develop their learning processes and enhance their experience while teaching them virtually. Caring refers to one's investment in others wellbeing with the intention of helping others. By providing supportive responses to the students' through motivation, reflexive methods and pedagogical care, the researcher invoked a competency that enhanced students' participation and zeal. Outside the zoom classes, personal messages, emails, and virtual labs helped with the collaboration aspect to help the students feel connected to their classmates just like they would have in physical classes. These competencies were further said to be operationalized by three types of behaviour under Human Resource Development – one was using emotional support; by acknowledging students' fear, anxiety related to the learning progress and COVID-19, as well as encouraging a two-way communication by voicing own concerns and needs so that the students would feel that their faculties need them emotionally just as much they do. Another behaviour is instrumental support, where the faculties supported ways of virtual communication by providing how-to manuals, creating Zoom etiquettes and protocols and communication opportunities to ease technological-based challenges. The last behaviour is informational support, which refers to the timeliness and transparent exchange of information to help the students stay connected with the institution's plans and policies. In a situation where students are unable to visit their campus to solve administrative or grading related issues, informational

support is imperative. The results that came out of this experiment was positive – all the 15 students were more participative, they comprehended the significance of learning the courses, they were more motivated, and their examinations and submissions were successful. From this study, HR practitioners can learn communication tactics, conflict resolution, negotiation as well as organizing duties and responsibilities in WFH. When hiring and selecting faculties and teachers to teach virtually in the COVID-19 pandemic, the applicants could be assessed and examined under the identified competencies for better educational as well as organizational outcomes.

2.7 Impact of WFH in the HR functions of Bangladeshi Organizations during COVID-19

After a year of WHO announcing that COVID-19 had turned into a pandemic, Rahman & Rahman (2021) surveyed 642 workers from the service industry in Bangladesh, out of which 487 were working in the human resources department. In an emerging economy like Bangladesh, where office cultures are entirely different from the Western corporate cultures, the drastic change from working in office spaces to remote working has been a blessing for some and a mere drawback for others. The research used the results of the survey to find how remote working has transformed the day to day activities in a job, the process of training and developing employees as well as recruiting applicants. Additionally, the difference between individual and organizational experience with both remote and onsite jobs during COVID-19. The results were divided into four segments. The first segment was the impact of COVID-19 on workers, where competencies like acknowledging employee emotions, opinions, engagement and flexibility of the managers were identified to be important in times of such crisis. The second segment was COVID-19's impact on remote working, under which 63% of the respondents believed remote working had not affected the organizational operations in any way except the physical training & development. 80% agreed that with remote working, they had increased autonomy and work-life balance as their jobs became more flexible and they could spend more time with their families. Since they were working remotely and did not have to interact or commute with others outside, they also felt that the constrictions regarding COVID-19 had no effect on health, commute or open data-related issues. The third segment, the impact of COVID-19 on working in office spaces, was divided into two more segments; organizational and individual. On an organizational basis, it was found that 75% of the HR

workers stated that it had affected the HR planning as well as recruitment and selection crisis. Since some workplaces had to operate in hybrid models, there was an issue of mismanaging the meetings and schedules, to which 44% agreed. One noticeable result was that about 97% of the respondents felt they were not being compensated and rewarded accordingly. As for individual basis, 38% of the employees working in office spaces were in fear for their health and safety, 44% felt their work arrangement was inflexible, a similar proportion felt the loss of autonomy, and 46% felt there was no improvement in their work-life balance and problems regarding commuting in the lock-down. The last segment identified how human resource management functions were being operated in both office spaces and remote working. There were significant negative effects on HR planning, commuting, recruitment and selection processes, meeting and scheduling in the office space working, compensation and rewards, and so on. Out of 233 remote workers, 79% claimed that their work-life balance improved due to remote working, whereas 13% claimed their work-life balance remained unchanged/did not improve. On the other hand, out of 254 office space workers, while 80% claimed there was no work-life balance, only 9% said that working from the office improved their work-life balance. Overall, with the uncertainty of life, job security, taking care of family and homeschooling the children due to disruption of COVID-19, it is evident that remote workers were more content and felt that they were performing better than the workers onsite. The only downside here is reduced physical training and development sessions, which can be substituted for virtually simulated training sessions. However, there are several more concerns that the research did not take into consideration when conducting the survey. For example, when asking questions regarding work-life balance rose, there was an insignificant yet existent proportion of workers who felt onsite working improved their work-life and remote working did not improve their work-life balance. This could have been due to domestic abuse, poor internet connection at home, lack of connections outside of work etc. However, these are purely conjectures, and the actual reasons behind this opinion should have been scrutinized more to find out how the operational experience could be improved in terms of human resources. All in all, the study concluded with the statement how remote working had been a salient part of maintaining organizational continuity in times of disruption like COVID-19.

2.8 COVID-19's Incoming Effect on Mexico's Remote Working Scenario

In early March 2020, Researchers Madero Gómez et al. (2020) surveyed 332 people residing in Mexico with questions regarding the Mexican work environment and the implications COVID-19 could present on it. Since infections of COVID-19 was just only beginning to be detected recently and WHO had declared it as a pandemic, it is implied that this paper was written solely to develop research strategies for the future literature to come in the next one or two years. The research showed that there was a strong correlation between stress and the changes that may occur due to COVID-19 among the respondents. Using three key elements, a model was illustrated based on which future researchers and Human Resources practitioners could influence the growth and development of employees with proper utilization of resources and ensuring employee wellbeing and their mental health was a priority. These three elements were business perspective, human behavioural perspective and organizational behaviour perspective (Madero Gómez et al., 2020). The business perspective discussed how businesses should maintain their employee sources, reduce any redundant costs and expenses, adjust the executive compensation, pause the hiring process till the economy and external environment stabilized (Madero Gómez et al., 2020). It also recommended that businesses manage the teams as a unit of study materials to gain experience, opinions and ideas to make further decisions and incorporate employee involvement. Since businesses would likely be making losses in some of their product lines due to the pandemic, they were suggested to diversify their product lines according to the new demands of the crisis. The human behavioural perspective focused on the fact that the decision-making capabilities of individuals are usually influenced by their psychological, social as well as cognitive factors. HR practitioners would have to take into consideration the fact that remote working or hybrid working would mean that employees' family members would be around them while their colleagues would not. This may affect employee perceptions and performance significantly (Madero Gómez et al., 2020). When making new policies, managers should include the effects on the mental health of employees, their personal and career growth and how isolating employees can generate innovative ideas. Finally, the organizational behaviour showed how the contribution of human resources during the pandemic has expanded; they are proposing new changes like working for home, flexible hours and compensation schemes, creating new job positions, focusing on employee value proposition and so on. These proposals can increase employee motivation, productivity as well as efficiency of the organizations. Additionally, the inevitable requirement of businesses and

offices becoming remote was also discussed, implying how it will be a radicalizing strategy and increase productivity, maintain organizational resilience and continuity, as well as reduce COVID-19 related health complications – prophecy researchers saw coming in the next 20 months or so. As a concluding note, HR practitioners and businesses were recommended to consider the long-term impacts of the policies instead of implementing short-term temporary solutions (Madero Gómez et al., 2020).

2.9 How Online Supervision In WFH Affects Employee Performance

The controlling role of human resources comes from the urgency to make employees meet organizational goals according to the performance standards and to ensure discipline is practiced. After the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations had to enable remote working to maintain the health and safety of the employees. However, remote working has somewhat reduced the ability of HR managers to control their employees as managers are not seeing them physically or minimize any distractions the employees might be facing (Hankir, 2021). Additionally, managers have less control over monitoring the employee's actions and functions. However, HR managers were able to implement some of the control through reports, recording hours of employees accessing the work system as well as clocking in and out, providing deadlines to the employees and observing if they submit within the timeframe and so on. Even though the reports are not reliable in remote working since they can be adulterated and the chance of cross-checking for accuracy is low (Hankir, 2021), this sort of micro-management and questioning integrity of the employees can deteriorate employer-employee relations, often affecting employee performance. To determine the extent to which online control affects employee performance, Hankir (2021) conducted a study with 250 employees working from home in Lebanon. A questionnaire was prepared with questions regarding how online supervision affects the three measures of performance – productivity (maximizing work without affecting the quality of work within the given time frame), effectiveness (the work is being done properly without any errors or mistakes) and efficiency (employees are giving maximum work output with minimal resources and time) and the respondents will answer them based on Likert-scale type answer requirements. In the hypothesis, the online control was the independent variable, whereas the performance and its three criterias were dependent. The first hypothesis stated that implementing online control was correlated to performance, and the other hypothesis stated that implementing online control was not correlated to performance. The results were literature-supported; a strong correlation of about 81.3% was seen to exist between

online control and productivity, whereas the correlation with online control and the other two criteria were extremely weak, efficiency being 4.1% and effectiveness being 3.6%. This implied that while managers could make employees work more and incur more output, its efficiency and effectiveness would compromise the quality. This could be because of work hour inflexibility, having to take care of households consequently, fear of health and loss of loved ones due to COVID-19 and so on. However, there are limitations in this study as the responses could be subjective, and the resources to probe further was limited due to the pandemic. With such outcomes, HR practitioners could look into the reasons for such low efficiency and effectiveness and review policies that could improve this situation like flexible hours, reduced supervision, increased financial incentives and so on.

2.10 How IHRM Has Guided Internationally-Leading Managers in COVID-19

In a short amount of time, managers all around the world had to make big decisions regarding the organization's operations and practices due to the COVID-19. Even the largest MNCs were unprepared for the organizational crisis that was about to come. During any global financial crisis, researchers and practitioners exerted pressure on having the dynamic chief financial officers (CFO) 's, but in COVID-19, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) 's were in the limelight since this was a problem related to the human capital (The Economist, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the way HR leaders and managers were overseeing employee health, morale, layoffs, facilitating remote work and so on. Caligiuri et al. (2020) discussed how previous international business and international human resource management literature has assisted the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic related organizational strategies and suggested future researches to be based on the context of managing global uncertainty, the process of facilitating global work and the outcome of refining the performance standards. According to IHRM, employees possessing traits like resilience towards crisis, higher tolerance of ambiguity and having curiosity were the best suited and efficient employees across cultures and countries in a crisis like COVID-19. Additionally, leaders conducting virtual cross-cultural training facilitated the bonding of employees through sharing stressful experiences regarding COVID-19, which strengthened the communication and collaboration skills among the employees (Caligiuri et al., 2020). The focus on developing competencies of employees was also highlighted through skill-developing training and seminars to help employees have better

growth opportunities. It was also required of leaders and managers to support their employees through employee assistance programs, virtual counselling, acknowledge the sense of loss and family-related conflicts the employees could be facing due to the pandemic, provide ample wellness resources and be empathetic towards the employees. HR leaders were also able to redefine the working models by introducing flexible work arrangements where workers were not confined to the company-defined working hours, which reduced the work-life conflicts. The managers were also seen to recommend healthy lifestyle habits like taking frequent breaks between work to ensure employees' mental health was unaffected by the workload. In order to identify good leadership traits in MNE's, manager's competencies were judged based on how well the managers were adapting to the situations that rose, whether they were able to integrate the perspectives and demands even if they were conflicting with the employees, and whether they were able to provide direction even if it was not well-received. The virtual adaptation of work also brought some positive inputs in terms of talent management. Employees who were usually introverted and did not perform better in teams or face to face were seen to be performing in their most optimal self when working remotely. Employees with better stress and crisis handling capabilities were appreciated, so were the ones who were tech-savvy. This change depicts the fact that in the future, jobs will be designed in a way that will balance the aspirations of different sites as well as be motivating for employees to collaborate virtually. The strategically important positions had to be redefined now, and human resources had to find talent with high potentials who could occupy them (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Once employees started adjusting to the virtual jobs, managers comprehended that the hybrid model could be adapted. This meant that video conferences would be used for information gathering, while face to face interaction would be used only for problem-solving sessions, making communication more efficient. Additionally, the projects and assignments were made short and rotated among the employees so that conflicting opinions would not arise while the employees would be gaining diversified experiences. After identifying the literary sources and implementations, the researchers then moved on to the objectives; under managing global uncertainty, HR leaders functioning in MNE's had to consider aspects like leadership and talent management, collaborating under stress as well as managing health and safety of the employees, on a global scale. When facilitating global work, the employees will need to be divided into global teams and international assignments and work through collaborating virtually. In order for this process to be feasible, management and researchers will need to consider the intervention strategies, potential MNE leaders to sustain this process, assessing the performance of flexible vs organizational outcomes and so on (Caligiuri et al., 2020).

Finally, in the case of redefining performance, the key performance indicators will need to be researched and adjusted as per the changes brought by the pandemic. Similarly, policies and frameworks that cause effective organization adaptation vs the ones that brought failure should be researched alongside new CSR policies and community work (Caligiuri et al., 2020). The researchers of this paper believe that future research on these concepts will revolutionize the way IHRM functions.

2.11 Innovative HRM Strategies to Implement In COVID-19 Affected Organizations

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the human resources of every organization have been disrupted since this crisis has affected human capital the most (Azizi et al., 2021). In order for an organization to achieve success and accomplish its goals, the most important asset is not financial capital or machinery – it's the people of the organization. Azizi et al. (2021) conducted research on how organizational strategies were affected and suggested numerous strategies to combat the challenges. The challenges were basically economic shock, where production had decreased due to shortage in raw materials and disruption in the supply chain since most of the organization's imported their raw materials from China, where COVID-19's inception occurred and had the highest level of logistical restrictions. With reduced income and layoffs, banks faced pressure since loan payments were reduced, and credit growth became slow. The second identified challenge is changes in people's behaviour in terms of their spending patterns, avoiding social gatherings to reduce COVID-19 related risks, reduced investment in tourism, entertainment, schooling, luxury items etc. With remote working implemented across organizations, the overlap of work and personal life impacted mental health. The third challenge identified by the researchers was on the organizational level – unemployment, reducing salaries, increased cost of training and recruitment, reduced sales and clientele, disruption in operational and other processes and so on. Employee morale and motivation was declining as the fear and anxiety of job security, increased work hours due to work from home practices and filling in for employees who were on leave due to sickness related to COVID-19. In response to these challenges, the researchers came up with almost twelves strategies – 1. The flexibility of hours, workspace, work cycle, boundaries between the office space in the home and the employee's home itself. 2. Providing adequate resources to the employees to adapt WFH such as IT resources, logistical assistance to avail and install the technological infrastructure at home, connecting customer networks to the organizational networks which the employees can access in their home offices etc. 3. Providing training courses related to virtual

communication skills and designing a virtual platform that will ease the day to day activities and help assign the projects to said employees. 4. Establishing continuous communication through the participation of employees in innovative methods like Whatsapp formal groups, cloud platforms to share documents, virtual games and tea parties, brainstorming etc. 5. Support employee health and welfare through webinars, virtual counselling, meditation, yoga, Zumba, telemedicine, as well as being involved in employees' personal lives such as what the employees have been cooking or how they have decorated their office spaces etc. 6. Fun activities that are innovative, e.g. celebrating personal talents like music, art, introducing family members with each other, creating an entertainment club. 7. Strengthen internal efficiency and talent management by letting the internal teams attract and hire new recruits. This will save recruiting costs and allow the employees to feel valued as they will feel their involvement towards the organization is being acknowledged. The employees could be given a referral bonus for every recruitment. Additionally, outsourcing of recruits could also be implemented, and the managers should generate constant feedback from the employees about their performance. 8. Taking safety measures like distribution and demonstration of the protective equipment, establishing handwashing facilities and hand sanitizing stations in the workplaces for the employees having to work physically on site. The protocols of social distancing should be clarified and encouraged to follow. 9. Managers should be committed to showing empathy, participate in ad hoc COVID-19 prevention meetings to receive updates regarding COVID-19 and organizational strategies around the world and share that with the employees transparently. The managers should also spend time supervising the employees and gain onsite feedback while resolving conflicts if any of them arise. 10. Involving employees in decision-making processes by encouraging them to participate and give opinions. Managers should comprehend the fact that some employees can handle stress better than others; they are more resilient towards ambiguous conditions and are naturally curious. These characteristics can help management make more unbiased and robust decisions for the organization's sustainability. 11. Enabling cohesion of communication for smoother workflow through technology and validating the common ground of stress and anxiety employees have felt due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 12. Making continuous changes based on the assessment and organization data to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing aspects of the employees are improved. In retrospect, the researchers felt that implementing these strategies will increase employees' productivity, wellbeing, health and safety in a sustainable way.

2.12 How Managers Can Facilitate Stress management in WFH employees

Wolor et al. (2020) suggested six ways employees could be assisted in stress management by their organizations. When organizations had to shift to remote working to alleviate the health and safety risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it brought several disadvantages to the employees. While employees were having to work alongside taking care of their family's needs and attention, scope of role conflict and ambiguity appeared, further compromising their work quality and effectiveness. This overlapping of work with family also affected the employees mentally, causing depression, anxiety, emotional disturbances, burnout etc. If the productivity of each remotely working employee were considered, this would show the significant effect it will have on the organization's performance. With the erratic workload, the uncertainty of the future restrictions related to COVID-19, as well as the job security and inadequate equipment to work from home, stress levels of employees is likely to be higher. As solutions, managers were suggested to encourage flexible hours and avoid employee overtime when remotely working. This way, employees could spend time with their families and get work done efficiently without any overlapping. Another solution was ensuring communication with colleagues was continuous. Employees interacting with their colleagues frequently could share their frustration and give each other words of motivation and hope, which not only will reduce stress but will also develop interpersonal skills both face to face and virtually. Managers must ensure that safety measures, equipment and procedures, as well as compensation benefits, were being provided to those who were working in shifts to acknowledge that their safety is the organization's priority alongside their wellbeing and mental health. Similarly, employees encouraged to spend more time with their family and communicate their emotions with their other family members would feel less vulnerable about COVID-19 related stress. Finally, following government-mandated social distancing rules and limiting reading newspapers to a few reliable sources were encouraged so that fake news and hoaxes would not exacerbate the stress and affect their performance levels. The limitation of this research is the lack of quantitative methods of research to back up the suggestions.

2.13 Impact of WFH on Work Productivity

Mustajab et al. (2020) interviewed 50 remote workers (30 females and 20 males) who had to adapt to WFH due to COVID-19 in Indonesia. Through snowball sampling, the researchers wanted to find out what were the positive and negative effects of WFH on employees, as well as the extent to which WFH enhanced productivity. There was said to be an increase in work-life balance, flexibility in the time and location of work and often at the comfort of being at home, saving time from commuting as the positive effects. However, female respondents who were married and had children, as well as household chores to look after, did not feel that their work-life balance had improved, but they were affirmative that with the saved time on the commute, they were able to utilize those extra hours to finish other chores like cooking, cleaning or taking care of their children. On the contrary, WFH had adverse impacts like decreased motivation to work since employees often associate their home with the place to "unwind" after coming back from work and spend time with family, increased multitasking, especially for women who had difficulty in dividing household tasks with their significant others and received less cooperation and support. While commuting costs were saved, there was an increase in other costs such as electricity, the internet as well as other communication-based costs. Disruption from family members, other social and technical disruptions such as slow internet or power outages would distract employees and hinder productivity. Since communication with other colleagues is done virtually, the scope of communication is limited as employees are unable to share information with each other face to face and receive spontaneous responses. When discussing these findings, it was seen that male respondents were more productive than the female respondents as they did not have the added responsibility of the households, whereas the female respondents were more tech-savvy than their significant others and were seen to help them technologically. Therefore, when preparing human resource policies, this can be a salient suggestion towards the HR managers and leaders to keep these aspects in consideration so that all the employees receive an equitable opportunity for development and growth. The researchers were able to narrow down the advantages and disadvantages of WFH in a more gender-based perspective which showed significant outcomes. However, it is worth noticing that the results between a developed first-world country and developing countries like Indonesia will not be the same since there is a substantial difference in mindsets and cultural perspectives.

2.14 How HRM Can Help Employees With Work-Life Balance And Digitalization In COVID-19

COVID-19 has compelled organizations to adapt to operating digitally. Employees need to be assisted through Human Resource Management to perform their jobs accordingly using the digital platforms, as well as be mentally and physically supported to be able to sustain their performance for the organization's success in the long run. This new crisis requires employees to gain new virtual knowledge and skills that is now a necessity to survive remote/virtual work. To find out how this crisis has affected Georgian companies and business operations, Gigauri (2020) conducted qualitative research with 33 HRM experts with 9-25 years of experience residing in Georgia. The questions consisted of how companies responded to the pandemic, how virtual work and employee well-being has been prioritized and how human resource management processes have been affected by COVID-19. Several challenges, outcomes and suggestions were provided by the experts, based on which the researcher provided her own conclusion. The challenges identified by the experts were financial issues, halt on operations to even closing of the businesses due to the manager's unpreparedness of the crisis and uncertainty regarding the duration of the lockdown. While IT based, businesses had no problem adapting to remote workplaces due to the job being based on technology, other businesses that operated through paperwork were unprepared to switch to remote or virtual workplaces, which led to confusion, stress and panic among employees. Some organizations also had to deal with a large number of layoffs and stress management among the existing workforce. Having to monitor and supervise employees became a challenge for line managers since the scope of supervision was reduced, and managers had to evaluate based on result-oriented measures and provide employees with autonomy for better productivity. Safety-based regulations and procedures had to be reformed for the employees having to come to work. Since not every employee is tech-savvy, the lack of skills and knowledge regarding new technologies and management softwares was a challenge for human resource managers to overcome. This was the most important aspect of remote working since it would be impossible without digitalization for any business to operate in the pandemic. Some Georgian companies have realized the potential of digitizing workplaces and have integrated their work processes for the long run. However, this is not the case of the majority since the experts have noticed that once the lockdown was lifted a lot of the organizations went back to the traditional onsite working

methods. During the lockdown, Georgian e-commerce platforms became increasingly popular, and all the businesses were switching to digital processes for their operations. Additionally, there was a concern of employees losing work-life balance as employees were working from home, and most of them were losing the space between the work and personal life itself, causing more stress and affecting productivity. Another problem that was identified was the lack of socialization, which affected employees mentally and compromised their interpersonal skills that are necessary for employees to perform in a workplace. The experts also mentioned how labour safety consultants were in demand to assist the organization and employees with the safety regulations. Even though virtual platforms were used to maintain business continuity, experts are forecasting that jobs in the future will be transforming into more technological-based ones, meaning they could be performed anywhere, just with stable internet connection and computers. Keeping this in mind, HR managers should emphasize developing employees' digital skills and eradicate the resistance they might have towards the new changes and future uncertainties. Additionally, managers should arrange an occasional face to face meetings for employees to be able to communicate and socialize better, provided that the employees will follow all the necessary safety and social distance measures. Managers should help their employees to be self-responsible and dependent when performing their tasks instead of constant monitoring as it may bring trust issues and affect the work quality. Ensuring employees have a proper work-life balance salient as well since employees have to work from home, and if conflicts seem to appear there, it will likely hamper productivity. Once the risk of COVID-19 transmission is in control and all the employees are vaccinated, some employees may want to come back to work onsite while others would want to work remotely. Instead of forcing employees to come back to work, employees should be given the liberty to decide whichever mode they feel comfortable working in. Based on their opinions, HR managers can develop new strategies and policies regarding commuting, corporate programs and meetings. All in all, the sooner managers comprehend the potential of hybrid models, the more dynamic the organization structures will be in the long run.

2.15 Impact of WFH-HR practices on Educational Facilitators

In educational institutions, the faculties, administrators, regulatory bodies are known to be the employees. Irshad et al. (2021) conducted research on the impact of WFH HR practices on the faculty performances in the higher educational institutions of Sialkot, Pakistan, during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the pandemic, educational institutes were operating virtually, with

faculties taking classes online and preparing digital materials for the students as well as maintaining the work-life balance themselves. While some faculties were able to perform better, others were demotivated, particularly for not receiving enough psychological motivation and morale from the organization hence degrading the education quality students were receiving. In order for the quality of the materials and execution to be aligning with the organization's standards, it is important to find out whether there is any significant effect of the organization's HR practices on the faculty's performance. In order to examine if there was any positive relation between HR practices and the faculty's output, Likert-scale based questionnaires were prepared that consisted of questions regarding the 7 HR practices related to the dependent variable of faculties achieving teaching goals as per the service of the organizations. The 7 HR practices were training (teaching faculties the knowledge, skills, concepts required to fulfil organizational goals e.g. teach the students effectively), performance appraisal (evaluation of the faculty's performance by their superiors to determine if they need further training or promotion for the efficient work), career planning (allowing faculties to self-assess and analyze themselves for self-development), employee participation (whether the faculties are being involved in the decision making process of the education boards), job definition (the duties, responsibilities, supervisory activities, working conditions and reporting relations a faculty is supposed to have in the organization), compensation (financial and non-financial remuneration the faculty receives in return of performing their jobs under the organization) and lastly, selection (effectiveness of HR managers to choose appropriate faculties for their organization). According to the results, it was found that all the 7 HR practices were strongly correlated with faculty performance. This reaffirmed previous literature that stated that there is a positive relationship between employee performance and HR practices. While the limitation of the study was that the results were only depicting the opinions of faculties working in Sialkot and other Pakistani cities should have been taken into consideration, it can be comprehensible that COVID-19 was the main cause of not being able to reach out to other institutes.

2.16 WFH's Impact on Leadership Behaviors

The study conducted by Stoker, Garretsen, and Lammers (2021) investigated 748 employers and employees in the Netherlands in the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic when the government-mandated lockdown led to organizations working from home or remotely. The

respondents consisted of individuals working in the different hierarchies of management as well as in the non-management positions. Through observation and reviewing organizational leadership literature, the researchers noticed how WFH caused a lack of social interaction among the employees, and the employers felt a significant loss of control. Usually, task-oriented managers are prevalent among organizations, but with the implementation of WFH, it was noticed that employees did not prefer task-oriented leadership, but rather results-oriented and the scope of autonomy. Hence, the purpose of the research was to determine whether pandemic-induced WFH affects leadership behaviours in both employees and the managers practicing the behaviors. The measures that were included in the questionnaire was the extent of control managers were exercising towards their employees and to what extent the employees perceived this control, as well as the number of respondents who were low/high/medium level managers or were working under the said managers, how many of the respondents were satisfied with the leadership qualities of their managers, whether there was a self-observed rise or fall in productivity post-COVID-19 work and how many employees were availing WFH. From the results, it was found that in the perception of the managers, they had lesser control but were more delegating towards their employees. However, for the employees, while they too perceived the declining control, they felt no change in the extent of the delegation. In fact, employees supervised under lower-level managers saw a decrease in their delegation levels. As for the correlation, it was seen that there is a positive correlation of employer delegation with the productivity of both the employer and employees. Similarly, the change in delegation correlated positively with the manager's leadership qualities and self-observed productivity. This concluded that the more delegation managers exercised, the more productivity employees showed. However, no correlation was identified between control and delegation, indicating that these are two very different leadership behaviors. The limitation of this study was the inclusion of only Dutch employees, and hence the same research could yield different results in countries with different organizational cultures, which gives an indication to future researchers to expand the sample population to different nationalities.

2.17 WFH in developing countries

Saltiel (2020) was one of the first researchers at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to assess the WFH demographics in developing countries, particularly the urban areas in the low and middle-income countries under World Bank's STEP (Skills Toward Employability &

Productivity) program, including Laos, Colombia, Macedonia, China, Georgia etc. The STEP database consists of extensive information regarding the job tasks, occupations, employment status and so on. Considering the fact that there were several countries to compare cross-country, the study's scope of feasibility was more expansive than the studies conducted towards an individual country. Saltiel (2020) first narrowed down the sample to employees who were using a computer at work, and then within that sample, he further narrowed it down by occupations that could likely be high-paying hence having a high chance of being able to perform in WFH e.g., managers or professionals. After organizing the sample according to the measures like age, gender, education level, household wealth etc., of almost 17000 workers, the results were computed. It was found that only a mere 13% of the entire sample were able to avail WFH, where the lowest was Ghana (5.5%), and the highest was Yunnan province of China (23%). Just like Saltiel (2020) predicted, there was a strong positive correlation between higher-paying positions with the facility to work from home. These positions were usually filled by managers, clerical, sales/service positions, e.g. employees with better educational attainment and were considered to be "formal" employees. The heterogeneity among the occupation-based employees was visible among the countries compared. As technicians and machinery operators had to work on the equipment directly, the scope of them working from home was very insignificant, making them more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. Saltiel (2020) concluded the research with the importance of designing policies that will be directed towards the vulnerable group of workers to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and stabilize the mortality rates in developing countries.

2.18 Occupational Hazards HR Managers Need To Consider In both Remote and Offline Jobs in COVID-19

In order for HR managers to assess whether the job tasks and responsibilities handed to their employees in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and make appropriate strategies, it is important to understand how vulnerable the occupations are in terms of having to work in close proximity to other human beings. Avdiu & Nayyar (2020) conducted research based on 900 job positions found in O*NET (Occupational Information Network) in the United States to compare the extent of vulnerabilities of employees working in two types of jobs – Home-based work (HBW) and face-to-face (F2F). While the demand for HBW in the COVID-19 lockdown has significantly increased, the demand for F2F positions has been greatly affected due to social

distancing measures. In order to determine the scope of loss F2F positions might face, the researchers used four aspects of F2F to score the occupations (the employees have to maintain personal relationships, the employees are directly involved in selling or influencing others, the employees have to take care or help the customers and the employees have to work directly with the customers or clients). The results varied significantly when it came to the organization's preference between HBW and F2F, e.g. while professional or scientific work could be done from home, workers in health care or retail services were not able to be conducted remotely, hence making them more vulnerable to health and safety hazards. On the other hand, jobs in the lower-wage ranges or non-essential manufacturing industries were more vulnerable to layoffs like restaurants and departmental stores, while essential jobs, particularly in the health sectors, were more secured albeit with more risks of infection. There was a scope of decreased productivity in jobs that were F2F but had to be switched to HBW due to the pandemic, e.g. educational institutes where the online teaching experience might not be as interactive as conducted in physical classrooms, or financial institutes where banking can be done in the telephone or online, but employees will not be as convincing to sell new products. While it will be easy for managers to help employees return to physical workplaces once the lockdowns are lifted in industries where face to face interaction is not as necessary, managers delegating employees in closer proximity will have to ensure that their employees are well equipped with protective materials and maintaining the social distance protocols. Jobs in higher-wage were strongly correlated with HBW jobs. Whereas jobs with lesser flexibility to work remotely were the jobs with lower-wage ranges. A gender disparity was also observed – the majority of the women in the sample were in the F2F jobs, which can make them more vulnerable to becoming infected and prone to mental stress than employees in HBW jobs. All in all, COVID-19 has affected the jobs of mostly female and lower-wage employees. Along with managers, the government must implement suitable policies where it will benefit both F2F and HBW employees in both the short run and the long run.

2.19 Jobs That Can Be Performed WFH

For HR managers to determine the compensation packages and benefits for their employees working from home in the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to take into consideration all the jobs and positions across countries and industries, as well as the economic impact to gain a competitive advantage when retaining employees as well as attracting potential recruits. This

paper will greatly assist those HR practitioners as it gives a better outline of which jobs can be remotely performed and which jobs are vulnerable to it, as well as the type of population, industries and regions that falls under the categories. In order to determine the feasibility of WFH in the United States and 85 other countries, Dingel & Neiman (2020) conducted research with the assistance of recent employment data found in O*NET and ILO. Two surveys from O*NET was taken to narrow down the sample - the Work Context Questionnaire and General Activities Questionnaire. The Work Context Questionnaire had questions regarding the frequency of using emails, dealing with violent people, having to work outdoors, walking or running, having to wear protective or safety equipment etc. Based on the responses, the ones that were coded as jobs that required to be worked onsite or physically were further organized with the General Activities Questionnaire with questions regarding operating, handling, repairing or inspecting mechanical devices or equipments or vehicles, and the degree of proximity or public interaction the job requires. The findings were then classified under three categories - major occupational groups, industries and metropolitan areas. From the findings, it was seen that jobs under industries and groups managerial, educational, financial, legal, technological were more likely to be feasible as remote working in the COVID-19 scenario. The majority of these WFH population had higher median household income, had a college degree and were white. In the USA, more than 45% of WFH jobs were found in states like San Francisco, San Jose, & Washington DC. On the other hand, the characteristics of non-WFH employees were seen on the lower-income ranges, lacked college degrees, were non-white and had no insurance provided by the employer. These jobs are mainly in the construction, production, retail, restaurant, health care industries. For the statistics outside of the USA, recent employment data from ILO was extracted to compare against the GDP per capita adjusted for Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). The results showed that developing countries might face more challenges regarding WFH and combating social distance among employees who have no choice other than working onsite - less than 25% of jobs were under the WFH category in countries like Mexico and Turkey, whereas more than 40% of jobs were WFH in high-income economies like Sweden and the UK. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of the employees had faced difficulty commuting. If HR practitioners can identify those jobs that cannot be performed remotely can help them in formulating policies for better compensation and health insurance packages. On the other hand, it can be a useful indication for the government to determine economic growth based on the proportion of jobs that can be performed remotely in the economy. However, the proportion of WFH jobs cannot be the sole indicator for economic

progress as it does not take into consideration the difference in productivity and performance of employees working offline versus working remotely.

2.20 Resilient HR Practices Implemented in COVID-19 Stricken Vietnamese Tourism & Hospitality Industry

Ngoc Su et al. (2021) conducted a study on the outstanding sustainable HR practices that were implemented by the businesses operating in the Vietnamese tourism and hospitality industry during COVID-19. In the recent years of literature and practice, it has been noticed that HRM strategies emphasized labor more than costs and other intangible factors of production - employees are now seen as assets salient for the organizational development and sustainability during periods of recession (Avey et al., 2008; Bustinza et al., 2019; Naznin & Hussain, 2016; Pfeffer, 1995). While the HR practices in the tourism literature are still quite insignificant (Brown et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2017), this study can be a turning point. Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011) describe organizational resiliency as an organization's capability to utilize and absorb economic or environmental crises or threats to come up with strategies to strengthen the organization's capacity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011, p. 244). Organizations that can come up with innovative and cost-cutting ideas while simultaneously adapting the environmental threats are said to survive and perform better than others. Hotels that aggressively promoted their business during economic downturns or crises were said to perform better than hotels that only implemented cost-cutting strategies (Del Mar Alonso-Almeida & Bremser, 2013). Ngoc Su et al. (2021) 20 informants who were managers of accommodation, travel agency and restaurant businesses in Central Vietnam's three cities with the highest tourist attraction - Hue, Danang and Hoi An. Due to travel bans, lockdowns, and closure of borders, the number of visitors in Vietnam fell by 98% in mid-2020 (Reuters, 2020). With billions of dollars of loss faced by the tourism industry, any other economy would likely have waited for the crisis to pass and put a halt on the industry. But Vietnam's innovative strategy of encouraging domestic visitors to visit the tourist spots by introducing attractive products and travel packages at affordable prices (Reuters, 2020). As stated by the informants, this helped the industry to recover faster, with almost 70-80% occupancy rates on the weekends. The findings further clarified the reasons behind this success. The researchers broke the strategies down into three phases - before the lockdown, during the lockdown and after the lockdown. In the phase of pre-lockdown, the managers emphasized health and safety procedures by providing ample hand sanitizers, face masks, PPE's, flexible work schedules and shifts. Additionally, the managers were

understanding and psychologically supportive about the emotions, stress, anxiety and health of the employees. Employees were encouraged to share what they were going through, and managers ensured their feelings were validated. The managers also helped with the job tasks of the employees as much as they could so that the employees would feel motivated. Employees were encouraged to take leaves and perform on job rotations so that they would not have to be laid off. When the lockdown was in progress, some of the hotels and restaurants tried to reduce training costs, pause the recruitment process, provide unpaid leaves, and cut bonuses to cut labor costs. Other hotels encouraged training even though it affected labor costs because managers felt that training would help with the employee's development and positive values while ensuring they receive enough human interaction and are not feeling isolated or lonely. Additionally, a supportive culture was fostered by conducting stress management seminars for the employees, as well as managers reaching out to the employees personally to induce a sense of belongingness. The employees were encouraged to participate in the decision making processes, thus diffusing the power of managers and making employees feel that they are accountable for the sustainability of the organization. When the lockdown was lifted, and sales started to rise, businesses with resilient and outspoken employees were chosen to be the source to connect with other stakeholders and increase business continuity. The managers' target was now to retain only the qualified employees and let others go if they had better opportunities while attracting skilled recruits. Employees who could multitask at once were redeployed so that labor costs of hiring several employees could be saved as one employee could perform the tasks of many. Lastly, rigorous performance appraisals were conducted so that employees were always alert and motivated to learn more while the service quality remained constant. While all of these practices sound promising and attainable, there were some restraints that might have affected the practices negatively. For example, if the Vietnamese government had not invested in tax cuts, postponing land rental fees and tax payments, as well as encouraging banks to loan tourist businesses with lower interest rates, it would be challenging for the managers to retain employees as well as morale (Vietnam Briefing, 2020). Those with enough assets to liquidate would have survived, but most of the businesses are SMEs, hence going through major cost cuts would have been the only solution for them. If the managers did not foster a people-oriented culture, layoffs and termination would be common in the tourism and hospitality industry. However, the respondents emphasized the need for human capital and how they believed that loyalty and commitment would prevail if the employees felt that they were being cared for. Managers sharing this sort of concern and welfare, as well as considering that these employees' livelihoods would be threatened if they were laid off, was important for the

survival of the businesses. On the contrary, managers who were running hotels and restaurants of lower quality were not concerned about employee retention as their tasks were limited to basic services, and sub-par skilled employees were enough for them. While the limitation here is the number of chosen respondents, cities as well as the economy, these practices could act as an inspiration for HR leaders to build a resilient, people-oriented workforce.

2.21 Competencies and Roles expected from HR leaders in COVID-19

Dirani et al. (2020) conducted research on how the dynamics of leadership and employees are affected during times of crisis, particularly COVID-19. When a crisis occurs, the organizational disruption can affect the employees both mentally and physically, hence reducing their morale and productivity. A leader that can rise through the occasions by adapting to the change and making appropriate decisions that will benefit both the employees and the organization will be a competent HR leader (Dirani et al., 2020). Using HR literature, the researchers determined the required competencies employees expect from their leaders during and post-crisis and the roles HR leaders or practitioners play during and post-crisis. Since this crisis was a pandemic that affected human capital, the expectations from HR leaders were seen to be substantial. Employees expect that their HR leaders will be supportive by listening to their concerns with patience, suggesting solutions to problems and providing mental support in times where employees have anxiety and fear over their jobs as well as their lives. Along with the support of HR, employees also expect that they will also support their supervisors or line managers so that the supervisors receive motivation to be more engaging towards their employees. Additionally, positive reinforcement for employees' good work and encouragement to do better rather than criticizing or making rash decisions based on employees' mistakes was commendable. According to the survey regarding communication in COVID-19 conducted by Bogusky-Halper (2020), employees expect communication that is transparent, honest, factual, lucid and direct by their employees. Employees should use examples when leading to make communication easier and use a calm demeanour. In addition to that, communicating about well-being and reaching out to the employees was also considered to be important (Bogusky-Halper, 2020). The five roles that were expected to be played by HR leaders were to be; a *sensemaker*, whose responsibility is to provide guidance and support by making sense of the ongoing and upcoming situation and the tasks assigned to the employees. This will help post-crisis by transforming leaders into quick and rational decision-makers as by then they will be

used to making sense of new situations. In order to make this decision-making process more flawless, leaders might take help from the HR networks and see what HR leaders of other organizations are doing; a **_tech-enabler_**, who will understand how important it is to be competent in terms of technology and help employees to adapt it into their work functions. Post-crisis technological advances will then be easier for the employees to learn and utilize them in their further work; **_overseer of emotional stability and well-being_**, who will continuously reach out to their employees in a direct social context and ensure that employee's mental state is appropriate both for the productivity as well as to lead their personal or social lives. In case employees become too habituated with remote engagement, and they find it difficult to transition back post-crisis, HR leaders should still keep promoting remote communication and create virtual platforms so that the change can be tuned out gradually; an **_innovative communicator_**, someone who provides up to date, reliable news and other necessary information without any fear-mongering. This will help employees in a world where there is too much news with differing statements and opinions, which may confuse and instil more stress in employees regarding the pandemic. While hourly micromanaging employees seemed appropriate in physical offices, Dirani et al. (2020) has observed that this does not help in remote work. Instead, this reduced employee morale. Weekly report and positive reinforcement by leaders are seen to be much more motivating (Dirani et al., 2020); and **_financially aware_**, whose role is to make employees aware of the organization's financial condition so that when the leader is a risk-manager and financially responsible, his/her actions are well-justified. If the employees know how the organization is doing and the leader discusses cost cuts and possible bonus cuts, the employees will be understanding and will even suggest ways for the cost cuts as they will now feel that their permission has been valued. In a time of a humanitarian crisis such as the COVID-19, the need for sustainable HRM practices has become crucial for an organization's strategic decisions, which the leaders need to keep in mind (Dirani et al., 2020).

2.22 Why Poorer Countries seem to have a lower proportion of WFH

While most of the recent research has been on jobs that could be performed from home in particularly urban areas, this paper by Gottlieb, Grobovšek and Poschke (2020) studies how different economic structures affect the economies' WFH proportions. Using Dingel and Neiman (2020) 's research on the proportion of jobs that are WFH across low income and high-income economies as a base, this research used information from labor forces and household

surveys of 612 country-years from 57 countries. This sample consists of economies of all ranges, starting from lowest income countries like Uganda & Ghana to higher-income countries like the UK, USA. When the urban areas are considered of these countries, it is found that the percentage of people working from home is substantially lower in poorer countries (22%) than it is in high-income counties (37%). To delve further into the disparity, the researchers narrowed down the sample by identifying workers who were self-employed. Turns out, poorer countries have a larger share of self-employed workers contributing to more than half of the working population (Gottlieb, Grobovšek and Poschke, 2020), hence explaining the low proportion of WFH. While the study conducted by Dingel and Neiman (2020) is not sufficient to examine how many of these self-employed businesses can be operated from home, the researchers of this study used further examination to find out if these businesses could be worked from home, e.g. cultivating food or making clothes (Gottlieb, Grobovšek and Poschke, 2020). In addition, the prevalence of agricultural employment makes the disparity even more significant, as most of the farming has to be done outdoors. However, if it is assumed that the farmers too can work from home, considering the farming plots are right beside their home or the crops yielded are not sold to retailers and instead consumed by the farmers and their families, it can be said that their work does fall under the WFH category. In this case, the combined WFH ability of poorer countries will exceed the proportion of richer countries. However, in economies where employees might not have the liberty to work remotely due to work falling under agricultural or elementary occupations (which contributes to almost 30% of those economies), the policies implemented for social distance will differ significantly in terms of the tradeoff between costs and benefits when compared to high-income countries. In the COVID-19 pandemic, an economy's ability to facilitate WFH is important to survive the economic disruption. Hence, for developing countries, the scope for WFH is lesser due to self-employment, agricultural and elementary occupations. The extent to which these jobs will be able to be performed remotely will determine the country's ability to WFH (Gottlieb, Grobovšek and Poschke, 2020).

2.23 Impact of COVID-19 on Organizations HRM practices

With organizational disruption caused by COVID-19 affecting businesses across countries, the managers and leaders looked up to the HR managers and relied on their decisions since this pandemic affected the human capital the most. Janadari (2020) identified challenges and strategies HR managers faced and utilized respectively at the onset of COVID-19. The major challenges were; shifting employees from a workplace-induced social interaction to remote

working. This change was affecting communication as well as interpersonal skills between the managers and employees; maintaining the paradox of profitability and safety of employees', e.g. more profitability is required to look after employee well-being, but profitability depends on employee well-being; and a lack of preparedness – most organizations failed to present contingency plans that were appropriate for the long run or addressed any significant crisis. In order to combat these challenges, Janadari (2020) suggested strategies like encouraging remote work to be the "new normal"; investing in employees' self-development by training them to upgrade their skills and qualities that will strengthen organization's sustainability (Gigauri, 2020); Ensure employee well-being by supporting employees psychologically and showing concerns to manage their stress and anxiety; making pay cuts instead of layoffs to increase loyalty and commitment; making employee selection process more efficient by looking for employees who can adapt to crisis situations and are immune to COVID-19 (Opatha, 2020); encouraging employees to follow the health guidelines and maintain a work-life balance, with managers redefining the performance measures to evaluate remote work performance; allowing employees to participate and voice their opinions in decision making processes, encouraging them to think creatively; and finally, adjust the workplace culture to align with the organizational changes due to the pandemic. Janadari (2020) concluded the research by saying how all the organizational departments must think and act like HR managers since they are now actively responsible for the well-being of their employees. Since this research was conducted during the early months of the pandemic, very little research material was found, which explains the limitations of the study.

2.24 Impact of WFH on Academics

Bandara & Senanayaka (2020) conducted an experiment on the private sector universities of Sri Lanka to find out if the workplace isolation arising from government-mandated lockdown for COVID-19 pandemic has any significant effect on the faculty and educational facilitator's job satisfaction. In order to compute the results, Bandara & Senanayaka (2020) provided questionnaires related to job isolation, physical isolation, workplace isolation, informational isolation and job satisfaction to 100 academics and personally interviewed 20 academics in a semi-structured way. The objective of this experiment was to determine the current state of job satisfaction and workplace isolation the respondents were facing, identify the relationship between workplace isolation on the academics' job satisfaction with mathematical formulae

like regression analysis, correlation analysis, and compare and analyze the findings with the descriptive statistics and the semi-structured interview to cross-check. From the findings, it was evident that any sort of isolation was negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Since the faculties were used to interacting with students, colleagues and other stakeholders of the universities frequently, the sudden isolation reduced the sense of belongingness, social support as well as potential scope of friendships among the faculties (Morrison, 2004; Mulki & Jaramillo, 2011; Wiesenfeld et al.,2001). Additionally, since remote work meant the activities like classes, curriculum planning was done virtually, and not being able to teach the students face to face or collaborate with other faculties could induce a feeling of loneliness as well as loss of information. Even when the lockdown was lifted and faculties could come back to the campuses but had to work in shifts, it was not still the same. Since the faculties had to maintain social distancing and shifts meant few colleagues would be present, this could brew frustration, and low morale as something as trivial as engaging in informal conversations with the colleagues can be positively motivating (Marshall et al., 2007; Mulki et al., 2008). Statistically, the impacts were negative in beta coefficient – a negative beta coefficient of -0.644 meant that for every unit of work isolation, job satisfaction would decline by 0.644 units. To prove these findings were true, excerpts from the respondents were used to show how lonely and unappreciated they were and how this affected the way these faculties conducted the classrooms and failed to attract students' attention virtually. In order to regain employee's job satisfaction, HR practitioners of those educational institutions were advised to focus on the faculty's career development through offering them training, stress management and mental health counselling seminars, providing social support and attractive financial incentives, conducting frequent virtual meetings so that communication among faculties have continuity, and build interpersonal trust among the supervisors and employees so that faculties feel their integrity and well-being is respected even though their supervisors are not interacting face to face or are residing in their home office spaces (Bandara & Senanayaka, 2020). Although this research's limitation was that it considered only job satisfaction among faculties, future studies based on this can extend the variables to other measures (Bandara & Senanayaka, 2020) like job productivity, efficiency, effectiveness etc.

2.25 Crisis management by HR Professionals in COVID-19

The challenges organization's had to face at the onset of COVID-19 was overwhelming, even for the ones who were the most alert, adaptive and prepared for what was about to come (Adikaram, Priyankara & Naotunna, 2021). With a crisis affecting human resources the most, HRM became the core of organizations, with managers having to ensure employees' health, safety, well-being, work arrangements morale as well as laying them off and dealing with pay cuts too. Adikaram, Priyankara & Naotunna (2021) noticed how little researches regarding organizations crisis management during health pandemics existed. Hence, Adikaram, Priyankara & Naotunna (2021) decided to examine how HR professionals were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in Sri Lanka. 24 HRP (Human Resource Professionals) 's of 24 different organizations were chosen. These organizations ranged from local to operating their businesses globally, specializing in technology, retail, manufacturing, apparel, logistics etc. The researchers presented numerous literature based on crisis management, especially a comparison of models of crisis management phases, with the earliest model by Steven Fink in 1986, which was mentioned in Pan & Meng's article (2016) and the very recent one by Rapaccini (2020) making an appearance, where the phases explained the occurrence of the event, being in denial about the event, acceptance and continuity of organizations. These 24 respondents were interviewed in the context of crisis management and were asked questions based on the 5 phases the researchers compiled. In phase 1, the anticipatory phase, most of the global companies were prepared as different countries faced different sorts of crises regarding civil wars, terrorist activities, epidemics etc. As a result, most of them had continuity plans/disaster recovery plans ready. They divided their employees into Team A and B, who would work in shifts, e.g. Team A would work remotely while Team B would work in the office and vice versa. WFH employees were provided with laptops and a portable internet connection to ensure that remote working would not be inconvenient for the employees. The IT infrastructures were well prepared, which made it easier. Additionally, manufacturing and apparel companies diversified their supply sources to avoid dependencies on a few suppliers. In order to minimize infections, employees were provided transport facilities and alternatives for fingerprint attendances. On the other hand, companies that were mostly unprepared and in denial about the consequences of the pandemic were the most affected. The HRP's of those organizations were not involved in strategic decision-making processes, as the CEO's were directing the operations with prior-set rules. In Phase 2, the crisis phase, organizations were

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starting to feel the challenges increase as the duration of WFH extended from weeks to months, lack of proper government guidelines and uncertainty of how serious the pandemic was getting to them. Manufacturing organizations suffered the most as the operations required manpower, hence following government regulations and safety measures, some of the employees had to be brought back to work onsite. Retail/supermarket businesses were able to integrate online and door-to-door delivery systems in their operations which helped with continuity. Since service organizations and technology-based organizations did not require employees to operate or look after any operations in the plant, it was easy for them to adapt to WFH. Financial and supply chain disruption started to unravel due to lockdowns and government restrictions in export-import in the other operating countries the companies had their businesses in. In phase 3, the adjustment phase, it was noticed that service, telecommunication and IT businesses were well adjusted with the new work arrangements. Those companies who could not provide their employees with new laptops managed to transport their designated work desktops to their homes. For the employees who had to work from an office, HRP's had to ensure that necessary documents and measures like curfew passes, thermometers, face masks, disinfection chambers were available. Those who lived nearby the factories or offices were the ones to be requested back to work first. Some of the HRP's had to visit the communities and even persuade the locals and political leaders that the organization was maintaining safety protocols and it was safe for the employees. The retail and supermarket businesses were adjusting both online deliveries as well as maintaining outlets with social distancing. Pay cuts up to 50% were observed, with layoffs and withdrawal of extra facilities to cut costs. In phase 4, the rebounding phase, those employees that were well adjusted were now streamlined with the organization's renewed goals, which led to an increase in productivity. Employees had higher morale and motivation because of the additional payments and salary they were receiving from their organizations, hinting towards the gratefulness they felt that they were not laid off instead. Retail businesses were using innovative marketing strategies to gain more customers, and those who met the customer demands better than their competitors survived. Finally, in the last phase, called the continuance phase, the HPRs talked about how they wanted to facilitate WFH for a few more months and phase it out gradually. The HPRs' realized that online training is just as helpful as physical training but cost way less; hence they opted for more online training. Apart from that, social distancing, frequent temperature checks and designated health rooms were established in the organizations where employees were coming back. The bonuses were restarted, so were the pay cuts. However, the transportation facilities were withdrawn by some of the organizations. All in all, the strategies that enabled the organizations to sustain effectively in a

crisis like COVID-19 could be a true testament to how the modern HRM has been integrated (Adikaram, Priyankara & Naotunna, 2021).

2.26 Countries with jobs that are WFH amenable

With the increasing need for economies incorporating WFH due to the social distancing policies brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to assess which countries have the necessary infrastructure and labor demands to have amenable WFH jobs increased. Hatayama, Viollaz & Winkler (2020) used popular skill surveys like the PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) survey, STEP (Skills Towards Employability and Productivity) surveys and Labor Market Panel Surveys (LMPS) to cover 53 countries of differing economic conditions. These surveys consist of data regarding both rural and urban workforces, as well as the tasks performed at those work. In order to assess a country's amenability towards WFH, the tasks were divided into four groups (i) physical or manual labor where the work consists of machinery handling, operation or is labour-intensive, (ii) F2F jobs, where physical and public interaction is necessary, (iii) use of ICT in the jobs and (iv) having a stable internet connection at home which increases the scope of switching to remote jobs or do the jobs remotely. The tasks were then measured against the GDP per capita of each country, after which the findings were broken down into two sections - cross country findings and within-country findings. Under cross country findings, it was found that in richer countries, the jobs were less labor-intensive and more F2F intensive, whereas in poorer countries, with low GDP per capita, the proportion of labor-intensive jobs was higher. In economically developed countries, most of the occupations were F2F jobs that had a major proportion of ICT based tasks, hence making them more amenable towards remote working. The variables of ICT and stable internet connection were highly correlated as in developed economies, more ICT based jobs at the workplace meant that there was a higher possibility of those workers having a stable internet connection at home. However, there were cases where at work there was average use of ICT (Mexico, Peru, Ecuador) and high use of ICT (Philippines), but there was low, poor internet connection at home, making WFH a challenge despite the job's amenability to be remote. When all the 4 task groups were combined and then compared against the GDP per capita, it was found that the vulnerable countries were Turkey, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Ghana, Laos, as well as countries in the LAC region. On the other hand, countries that were highly amenable towards WFH jobs were the countries in the ECA region. When compared to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, the USA has less amenable WFH jobs due to more manual-intensive

jobs. However, if it is compared with other developed countries like Norway and Spain, the USA will have higher jobs amenable to WFH. This disparity exists because the occupations may not consist of similar tasks in different economies. Countries under the LMPS surveys were the only countries with a negative correlation between WFH and GDP per capita. The reason why Jordan had low GDP per capita yet a high number of jobs amenable to WFH was that Jordan has better internet connectivity at home than Egypt & Tunisia has. When compared within countries, women were seen to have jobs that were more WFH compliant than men since most of them do not perform labour-intensive jobs. The correlation between educational qualifications and WFH amenability was positive, as people with college degrees were more likely to have jobs that could be performed remotely than those who were less educated. Older people were less qualified for WFH jobs as they were more likely to have jobs that had more F2F tasks. However, it does not apply to F2F jobs that incorporate ICT tasks. Countries with a lower scope of WFH had a larger proportion of self-employment. The industries that were amenable towards WFH were mainly professional services, public sector, finance, legal, ICT etc. On the other hand, industries like manufacturing, retail, agriculture, hotels and restaurants had lesser flexibility to operate remotely. While this paper will help HR practitioners of the 53 countries design appropriate WFH policies based on their employees' internet connectivity and job tasks, the managers operating in the vulnerable sectors will be helped in formulating better social distancing based compensation and safety policies which will ensure a better quality of living as well as contribute towards economic growth (Hatayama, Viollaz & Winkler 2020).

2.27 A decade-old WFH experiment relevant in COVID-19's scenario

In an era where anything like a globally-crippling pandemic was unthinkable, Bloom et al. (2015) conducted an experiment on 994 employees working in the airfare and ticket booking department of a popular NASDAQ-listed Chinese travel agency, Ctrip. The experiment was to determine the impacts of WFH on the organization's productivity and employees' performances. In order to ensure the results were reliable, a survey was taken of those 994 employees who had questions regarding demographics, working conditions and their willingness to work in WFH situations. More than 50% of the respondents (503) agreed to be on the experiment. Then, employees were selected randomly based on birthdates to be in the treatment group. In the experiment, employees under the treatment group had to work four out of the five working days at home and one day at the office for almost eight months. They were provided all the necessary equipment, access to data and internet connectivity to perform remote work. The rest of them were in the control group, who would perform the same tasks

but in the office for five days per week. In order to measure performance, the variables were the number of phone calls taken by the employees and the minutes they spent communicating with clients. The results were quite promising. The WFH group was handling 3.3% more calls due to quieter background and less distraction. Since the employees had no distraction and lesser breaks from eating or using the bathroom, they worked 9.2% more than the control group in the office. In the 9.2% increase of productivity, the reasons stated were zero commute time which the employees utilized for personal errands, the employees could still work comfortably even if they were sick, which was impossible in office spaces, and they required lesser breaks. The Shanghai and Nan Tong branches in China were compared to see if there was any disparity. Both the branches showed an increase in the treatment group's productivity, whereas the control group's productivity remained the same. The possibility of the Hawthorne effect or gratitude-incentive was ruled out when treatment employees came back to work in offices and had the same productivity levels as they had during WFH periods. Secondly, since the experiment subjects were randomly chosen, there is little evidence that their increased productivity levels were due to feeling loyal and committed that they were the "special chosen ones' '. After the experiment was over, it was found that the organization saved up to $2000 per WFH employee annually. Due to this discovery, the organization decided to roll out the option of WFH for all employees, which increased performance furthermore. Those who were not performing well in WFH came back to work in offices and performed better. Overall, there was an increase in employees' positive attitudes and a 50% drop in attrition. Out of the treatment group, 17 employees were promoted, and 23 from the control group were promoted. Total factor productivity rose by 21% due to the 3.3% more calls per minute than the office workers and a decrease in 54% of capital input since the space, electricity, and commute costs were being saved by the organization. In a follow-up survey after two years of the experiment, when employees were asked whether they would want WFH, most of them replied "no" due to the lack of social reasons and causing inconvenience to their family members by having to maintain a professional ambience in the house when the employees were working. While this experiment lacks the impact of a pandemic on those employees, the results have prophesied the literature curated in the theme of COVID-19 and its impact on organizations work structures causing several recent researchers to cite this article to prove their statements – among them the most popular is by Dingel & Neiman (2020).

2.28 Tourism & Hospitality Employment in Sri Lanka during COVID-19

During the mid-tourism season in Sri Lanka, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Just when the tourism sector was slowly recovering from the Easter Sunday Terrorist Attack, which had occurred less than a year ago, the pandemic catalyzed the decline (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020). Tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka fell over by 30% (SLTDA, 2020) due to social distancing, travel bans and curfews. As a result, almost 78% of the hotels, travel agencies, and airlines around the tourist attraction spots had to lay off three-quarters of their workforce. As a cost-saving alternative, the businesses hired temporary trainees and contractual workers. This significant portion of unemployment and lower number of tourists led to a domino effect, threatening the livelihood of indirect employees like street vendors, souvenir shops, jeep and boat operators, as well as the community residing in the tourist attraction spots. In order to find out what sort of resilience strategies Sri Lanka should have opted for to prevent a crisis like this as well as assess future challenges, Arachchi & Gnanapala (2020) interviewed ten individuals. The interviewees consisted of government officials, academics and stakeholders of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Sri Lankan Airlines, The Hotel Association of Sri Lanka (THASL), Sri Lanka Inbound Travel Operators (SLITO), and Sri Lanka Institute of National Tourist Guide Lecturers (SLINTGL). The interviewees discussed how Sri Lanka should not have laid-off workers, instead retain them through wage support, flexible working hours, shorter working periods and offer WFH for the knowledge-based jobs. Even though the Sri Lankan government provided the tourism industry loan schemes with 4% interest rates so that organizations could pay off the rent, leases, salaries of employees, utility bills for the upcoming few months, no such facility was available for SMEs. The SMEs should also have been helped through tax cuts, tax rebates, and relief packages with conditions like zero job cut policies to facilitate the packages so that employee retention and industry growth could have been supported side by side. Due to the massive layoffs, the remaining employees had low motivation and job insecurity. To help them, their organizations can avail advantages like transport facilities, remote working, flexible working hours, maximum safety and health measures, transparent communication and looking out for the employees like a family to ensure them that their loyalty is appreciated. According to UNWTO (2020), 54% of the workers are female in the industry, which is supposed to be the lowest in proportion when compared globally (UNWTO, 2020). Female empowerment should be emphasized by lowering entry barriers for women, providing training and other support, especially to the low-skilled workers,

those who are supporting a family or might have lost jobs due to the pandemic. In the future, the interviewees speculated that automated services, robotics and AI might take over the manual jobs employees had in this industry, potentially threatening their livelihoods. Even though the WFH initiative has been taken seriously by organizations and industries all around the world, the representatives of the industry stated that employees with knowledge-based jobs complained about having no work-life balance due to having to take care of their families while simultaneously working from home. Additionally, having seen their colleagues and closed ones losing their jobs due to the layoffs instilled the fear of losing jobs and pay cuts in them, further affecting productivity. Lastly, if these disadvantages persist and remaining labor forces in the market are discouraged from joining the industry, the organizations may have to hire foreign workers at a higher cost which will not only affect the labor costs but also will affect the competitiveness of the labor supply (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020). While implementing the resilience strategies may help with damage control, Sri Lanka should learn from Vietnam's Tourism and Hospitality industry on how to effectively retain employees and sustain profitably during a pandemic (Ngoc Su et al., 2021).

2.29 How COVID-19 has changed Kuwait's traditional work setting

Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020) wanted to assist HR policy makers by demonstrating the effects of the changes brought into the workplace structures due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Kuwait, especially remote working. The objectives of this study were to compare the efficiency employees had in WFH vs onsite, how the pandemic has affected traditional working standards and finally, what employees expect from their workplaces post COVID-19. The researchers prepared a survey with yes/no questions, multiple-choice questions, and questions with Likert-scale type ratings. These questions were related to pre-COVID 19 work conditions, current work conditions, future expectations and how the organizations responded. Out of the 192 respondents, almost 70-80 % had a positive attitude towards remote working as it boosted their productivity, saved time in commute, maintaining a work-life balance, increased decision making abilities, ability to perform more proportion of workloads remotely than in the office and so on. However, there were some drawbacks as well. Mixed reactions on team cohesion/work sharing were found as employees were not being able to communicate face to face or read each other's body language. Since Kuwait's majority of the population is Muslim, the female employees were hesitant to come on the camera during meetings due to religious and cultural sentiments. Even though 70% of the employees were satisfied with how their

organizations adapted to the changes and looked out for the concerns of their employees, 62% mentioned that their organizations had no contingency plan and were not prepared for the crisis. This predicament is one of the aspects HR policymakers should keep in mind when preparing their organizations for the unforeseeable future. In contrast, these employees provided some valuable insights on how the organizations can integrate these changes for the long run in order to sustain with efficiency. For example, flexible work hours, making the work week last for four days instead of five, opting for a hybrid model if complete WFH is not possible, using emails instead of conducting meetings to save time and energy were some of the constructive recommendations provided by the employees. 80-90% of the respondents agreed that integrating a hybrid work model will increase efficiency. Finally, while for some organizations it will not be completely possible to shift to the WFH model, their traditional work policies could be reviewed so that the changes that brought more productivity and efficiency in achieving the organizational goals could be adapted for the long run rather than a temporary fix (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020).

2.30 Pre-COVID 19 WFH Experiment in Italy's Public Administration

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, only 16% of the Italian public sector incorporated remote or agile working (Osservatori, 2019). As the pandemic struck, almost all the sectors were forced to shift to remote working without any pre-planned guidelines since there was no time to spare. Coincidentally, right before the pandemic, Zappalà et al. (2021) was working on an experiment where 21 public administration employees in Italy took part in a non-emergency remote working experiment. Most of these workers were managers and colleagues of remote workers who were already working. The respondents consisted of engineers, accountants, librarians, surveyors etc. Each of the respondents was interviewed in a semi-structured method, with questions regarding the location of their work, when they were working remotely and where, how the managers and agile workers decided on tasks that were performed remotely, as well as the outcomes of the remote work. It was found that most of the respondents worked in their homes, preferably living rooms or their terrace, where the environment was quieter. The librarian had an advantage here as the library was the perfect place to work. While some spent 6-7 hours at once, others worked throughout the whole day in smaller portions. Employees that had information-based jobs would perform the same tasks they used to perform onsite, whereas

employees that had more public interaction had to narrow down the jobs they could do remotely, which they had to discuss with their managers. New forms were created to evaluate performance – one for reporting in detail daily and another for reporting in detail but monthly. Since the tasks were narrowed and performed remotely, the performance indicators had to be reviewed as well by the HR officials. There was a problem of certain tasks that were challenging to be reported in order to be evaluated, e.g. a librarian's task of cataloguing photos, which could only be described by what type of photos were being arranged. However, there was a positive response towards the new monitoring system from both the managers and employees. In terms of outcome, the employees reported that they performed much better as they were able to get more work done faster with fewer interruptions and noise, a proper work-life balance, time saved from the commute, as well as psychological and health benefits as they were able to work comfortably and in a flexible routine and did not have to travel in extreme weathers. Additionally, the new monitoring system brought a sense of empowerment and trust in the employees as it made them feel that their integrity was not questioned and they were allowed to be self-accountable. In all of these phases, the role of HR was to be the change agent, who constantly coordinated, negotiated and constructed the dynamics between employees and managers to ensure the processes were going smoothly (Taskin & Devos, 2005). Without HR's intervention, the whole process would be out of place and riddled with conflicts between the two parties and also among the employees themselves. Even though more organizations are moving towards the remote working model to ensure the health and safety of employees, this change has benefitted several other factors, which organizations should consider and adapt to for the long run. For example, this has been a relief for disabled employees who would face difficulty commuting or utilizing the office interiors (Zappalà et al., 2021). Virtual training can save costs and be just as effective; hence employees will not have to waste time off work, nor will they have to commute extra days for training. The option to WFH should be made available for all employees even after the pandemic, and equipment to perform remotely should also be provided. De Vries et al. (2019) identified how some employees have been suffering from isolation due to working remotely. In order to combat this issue so that this does not harm employee productivity and wellbeing in the long run, HR officials have been suggested to foster productive interaction and effective communication systems (Fonner & Roloff, 2012), as well as inspire managers to be relationship-oriented rather than task or results-oriented (Dahlstrom, 2013). Bearing in mind that the limitation of the study was that it was only based on public administration workers and did not take the psychological effects of the pandemic into consideration, the study is still helpful for HR practitioners to

understand the value of remote working rather than regarding it as a part of contingency plan (Zappalà et al., 2021).

Chapter 3
Findings

3.1 Objective outlines

3.1.1 Prophecies

Bloom et al., (2015)'s WFH experiment brought on several useful insights for the upcoming decades; that productivity and efficiency of employees can be increased by reducing capital inputs drastically through remote work. All the time saved from commuting can be invested into work-life balance and self-development, while the business still can be operating efficiently (Bloom et al., 2015). However, there is an aspect of the type of the job, since Bloom et al. (2015)'s experiment was based on a travel agency whose jobs were mainly ICT based, which meant anyone with a computer and a mobile phone could work from anywhere. Not every job has the same compliance. Zappala et al. (2021) used jobs in the public sectors in Italy to find how WFH could be integrated into traditional workplaces and similarly showed how the employees were able to get more work done with lesser time and retain their psychological health. While these two studies were done before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, they did not take the psychological effects such as being isolated or affected by the disease might have in the productivity levels of the individuals. However, just when the pandemic was about to be declared in Mexico, Madero Gomez et al. (2020) predicted that businesses would be focusing on cost cuts and continuity, while human behavior and organizational behavior will respond to the pandemic through psychological changes regarding social distancing and expanding HR practices to a more relationship-oriented basis. It is worth noting that all of these predictions were made even when the questionnaire used by Gomez et al. (2020) showed responses that mentioned that a significant portion of them did not even believe in the pandemic; that it was a rumour or a cover-up of other controversial political events. Fast forward to now, WFH has become a salient part of every organization and results reflecting past experiments were visible in the articles reviewed.

3.1.2 Breakdown of Jobs according to countries and amenability towards WFH

According to Saltiel (2020), the lowest scope of WFH jobs worldwide was in Ghana (5.5%), whereas the highest was in the Yunnan province of China (23%). Countries with more dependence on ICT and improved infrastructure had more WFH compliant jobs to offer to their labor population. On the other hand, countries with less dependence on ICT or poor internet connection at home were less likely to have more remote jobs since a stable internet connection

would be necessary for remote working. Countries like the Philippines, Peru, and Ecuador were on the vulnerable list (Hatayama et al., 2020). Hatayama et al. (2020) further elaborated that the poorer countries had a proportion of more self-employed individuals as well as increased dependence on jobs in agricultural or elementary sectors. If the jobs' WFH feasibility was indexed and then compared with that of developed countries, it would show that poorer countries had more employment rates, regardless of the income. A similarity that was found in both developed and developing countries was that the more educationally qualified and higher positions in a job, the more scope of that job being able to be performed remotely was existent. Information-based jobs like technology, legal, financial, clerical, administrative jobs were more likely to be WFH based in times of crisis since they could be performed remotely due to the task contents. On the other hand, jobs that required operation and maintenance of machineries and equipment, involved production processes and had the criterion of interacting with the public in close proximity were less flexible regarding WFH. These jobs were in retail, manufacturing, restaurants, tourism and health sectors.

3.2 Similarities

3.2.1 Autonomy and flexibility

Maddox-Daines (2021), Rahman & Rahman (2021), Irshad et al. (2021), Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020) and Kulik (2021) had observed similar findings in their experiment regarding an increase of autonomy and flexibility among employees when WFH was implemented. Since the extent of supervision decreased due to remote working and managers were only able to keep track of their employees progress through reports and results, employees felt liberated and were able to execute the tasks however they wanted to, as long as the desired outcome was found. Similarly, remote working meant that there was no certain time limit or consequent hours required to work in a day, which meant employees were able to get their work done whenever they felt appropriate while not compromising spending quality time and responsibilities towards family in their home spaces. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Zappala et al. (2021) and Bloom et al. (2015) saw similar results as well. Most of the articles showed that the HR departments were responsible for ensuring that proper equipment, internet connection, access to organizational network and cloud was available to each and every employee so that the change was less overwhelming for their employees.

3.2.2 Productivity

Hankir (2021), Lloyd-Jones (2020), Caligiuri et al. (2020), Stoker et al. (2021), Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020), Zappala et al. (2021), Bloom et al. (2015) and Kulik (2021) reported increased levels of productivity of employees in WFH. According to the statements of the respondents, the convenient work environment, quieter atmosphere with no work noise, lesser breaks as colleagues were not around and ability of multi-tasking, e.g. (eating and working simultaneously) caused fewer disruptions in work and employees were able to get more work accomplished on time than they would usually do in physical office spaces.

3.2.3 Work-life Balance

Caligiuri et al . (2020), Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020), Rahman & Rahman (2021), Chen (2021), Bloom et al. (2015), Zappala et al. (2021) and Kulik (2021) found that respondents had increased work-life balance as the employees were able to make time for their family members simultaneously while working, and since most employees were working remotely from their home, they were in close proximity with their family members and hence making time for their children and significant others was easier. While commuting and working in office spaces would take a substantial portion of time away from the employees that they could have spent with their family members, WFH compensated for it.

3.2.4 Compensation

Among the articles, Irshad et al. (2021) and Ngoc Su (2021) investigated whether the HR practices in universities of Sialkot, Pakistan and tourism businesses in Vietnam, respectively. These two studies, along with 80% of the collectively reviewed articles, illustrated that the compensation packages formulated by the HR managers were well received by their employees and the outcomes in the compensation aspect were highly positive. Even though the fact that pay cuts or pausing the benefits or bonuses might reduce employee morale or motivation, in times of such crisis, the employees were grateful that their jobs were secured. The employees had forgone the extra benefits as long as they had their jobs. Additionally, the studies showed that the more financially transparent the HR managers were regarding the expenses and costs the organizations were incurring, the more understanding employees were with the pay cuts. Instead, the employees felt valued as the managers "confided" in them, providing a sense of responsibility and belongingness.

3.2.5 Preparedness

In a crisis like COVID-19, the key to organizational success was how effective the organization's recovery/contingency plans were and how detailed they were in terms of employees' psychological as well as physical needs. While the paper showed that MNC's were more prepared for such crises (Caligiuri et al., 2020) due to operating in countries that were ravaged by war, civil unrest and other epidemics, e.g. (SARS outbreak in Singapore) (Adikaram et al., 2021). However, organizations operating domestically were seen to be unbothered and unprepared for the crisis. Gigauri (2021) and Maddox-Daines (2021) mentioned how the contingency plans for organizations operating in Georgia and UK respectively were "vague", only mentioning criteria regarding payroll and work shifts. Most of the organizations underestimated it as a crisis that would last for a few weeks, whereas others simply shut down with the hopes of reopening as the crisis would cease to exist any time sooner. Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi (2020)'s study showed that 62% of the respondents' organizations operating in Kuwait had no contingency plans to tackle a calamity of this magnitude at all.

3.3 Contradictions

Studies conducted by Bandara & Senanayaka (2020), Azizi et al. (2021) and Mustajab et al. (2020) showed that productivity and motivation had declined among workers to due fear of losing jobs as well as losing loved ones amidst the pandemic. However, since these studies were based in countries with developing economies (Sri Lanka, Indonesia), the findings could be subjective as per the work culture differences across countries. Additionally, while most of the articles reviewed mentioned satisfaction with adjusted compensations, Rahman & Rahman (2021)'s study showed that 97% of the respondents were extremely unsatisfied with the compensations. While Rahman & Rahman did not present enough back-up as to why respondents felt so, this could be interpreted as employees having to tackle the increasing costs of living in Bangladesh as the pandemic loomed upon (The Daily Star, 2021). Another unconventional finding in Rahman & Rahman (2021)'s study was how almost half of the respondents (46%) said that they felt a loss of autonomy as well as work-life balance. There is no significant explanation for such reasons either, which I conjectured that factors like domestic abuse, lack of personal or social connections or poor internet connection at home might have contributed to such statistical results. Additionally, the study was conducted with a comparatively smaller sample of fewer than 700 respondents; hence the scope of subjectivity is something to be considered here.

Wolor et al. (2020) mentioned how WFH caused increased work disruptions in Malaysia, especially for employees who had a family to take care of round the clock, therefore contradicting the rest of the findings derived from the other articles reviewed. While productivity among selected employees in Lebanon was high when correlated with higher virtual control, efficiency and effectiveness were as low as 4-5% (Hankir, 2021). While this could mean that employees had to "show" their managers that they were getting work done online while the outcome of the tasks was unsatisfactory, HR's supervision strategies should have been questioned in the study as well since the results were unusual when compared with other articles reviewed in this paper.

According to Avdiu & Nayyar (2020) as well as Denis et al. (2021)'s findings, women in USA and Canada were more prone to jobs that were not possible to conduct remotely, e.g. nurses, sales reps, waitresses etc. where the tasks had to be performed in close proximity of customers and potentially exposing them to be affected by COVID-19 more. Antithetically, Hatayama et al. (2020)'s research showed that in developing countries, women had jobs more compliant towards WFH. Similarly, Arachchi & Gnanapala (2020)'s research on Sri Lanka's Tourism sector showed that there was less scope for women to work in the sector, and the tourism authority representatives were suggesting initiatives for increased women empowerment in the tourism sectors. This difference indicates that there exists an unequal opportunity for female employees to be able to enjoy the benefits of WFH based on the economic development of the country.

In Hatayama et al., (2020)'s study, an exceptional finding was discovered when comparing WFH amenability across countries against GDP per capita – if OECD countries were compared with the USA, the USA was seen to have a lower number of WFH compliant jobs due to higher number of manual-intensive jobs in comparison. However, when the USA was compared with similarly developed countries like Norway and Spain, the USA had higher WFH-based jobs. The reason for this disparity was identified as the difference in task executions even though the job positions were similar.

When comparing the HR practices of Sri Lanka's tourism sector against Vietnam's tourism sector, the importance of prioritizing human capital when strategizing HR policies is evident – tourism-based organizations in Sri Lanka cut costs by laying off a significant portion of their workforce and yet failed to recover, whereas businesses in Vietnam's tourism sector flourished while retaining their workforce and working instead on new service lines. While downsizing can be a temporary or short-term solution, this finding proves that organizations cannot survive solely on downsizing in times of a crisis.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

According to the findings, it can be deduced that intervention of HR among employees can be contributed towards the positive findings like productivity, better mental health as well as improved work-life balance. The idea that all of these were possible without having to gather all the employees in one place used to be unconventional, and remote work could not be the next normal. However, as months passed and the pandemic went through several phases, organizations had to integrate remote working into their culture. In order to ensure that this process was smooth and less chaotic among employees, HR managers had to take up newer roles other than just the usual recruiting, selecting and formulating compensation packages. The paper agrees with Dirani et al., (2020) suggestions towards HR practitioners – making sense of events and information as they come and processing before passing on to the employees; integrating more technology in the tasks so that employees can be prepared for the upcoming technological advances and not fall into dilemmas when similar crisis arrives in the future; ensuring employees' emotional stability as well as their wellbeing by constantly looking out for them, providing them words of encouragement, develop relation-oriented leadership in line managers; make communication more innovative so that remote working does not compromise employee's interpersonal skills through zoom parties, fun games and webinars for mental health counselling and stress management (Azizi et al., 2021); and maintaining financial transparency regarding the organization with the employees so that when making compensation and downsizing related decisions, employees can be more understanding and help make the best decision which will not affect employee productivity or job security. Further adding to Caligiuri et al., (2020)'s statement of HR practitioners having to deal with increased virtual collaboration, it must be kept in mind that the HR leaders should be culturally open to the differences that may arise when assisting managers with their virtual teams as hybrid or remote working becomes the staple. Companies may want to cut costs and gain a competitive advantage through employees, hence encouraging HR to recruit employees all over the world, which will be easier since most of the work will be remote. In those cases, HR leaders may find employees who are self-responsible, workaholics as well as ones who are more laidback and often do not perform productively if not closely monitored – attributes that might be cultivated from the work cultures the said employees have been hired from. Therefore, in order to ensure that the organizational goals align with that of the employees' regardless of location, appropriate and fair policies must be formulated. Adikaram et al. (2021) and Dirani (2020)

found that most of the HR managers were not involved in strategic decision-making processes, which should be changed. In a crisis where the human capital is the most vulnerable, it is only reasonable that the appropriate form of management should be allowed to intervene. Enabling HR managers and leaders to adjust strategic decisions can revolutionize the future of HRM and help organizations to stay better prepared for uncertain conditions in the future. Finally, as more companies understand the cost, as well as performance benefits of WFH and hybrid working models and, are thinking to switch to it as a long-term solution, some conventional organizations are still resistant to this change and are determined to go back to onsite working even though their tasks are WFH compliant (Gigauri, 2020). HR managers should play the role of change agents here (Arulraja, 2020) to ensure that the idea of WFH is not only limited to contingency plans. Organizations that were more employee-oriented were more resilient in the crisis, indicating a positive correlation between ensuring employee wellbeing and the organization's sustainability (Collings et al., 2021). Finally, all the recommendations and suggestions discussed above should not be implemented in the light of a short-term strategy since it is imperative for the organizations that these changes sustain in the long run and HR leaders are able to modify and adjust it with proper monitoring and assessment.

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