Hybrid Work Practices

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This appraisal argues how the future of the organization and work mechanism will be according to the outcomes of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. First, the situations related to the process were examined and interpreted. A recent literature review was conducted, and the positive and negative aspects of remote work were noted. In addition, research ideas related to the hybrid model, which is the predicted working model, were presented and explained.

CCS CONCEPTS • hybrid work • remote work • interaction design • experience design • robots • human-robot interaction

1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has shifted the conventional office towards remote and hybrid work practices [5] and accelerated the adoption of these [19]. To decrease the spread of the disease, many industries requested employees to work remotely during this period, and recent studies have suggested that this trend will probably continue in the long term [4,13,14]. The "new better" has changed all understanding, not only "where" employees work but also "how" and "when" they work [19]. Since the advanced technological infrastructure, the exponentially increasing digitalization, and the sophisticated electronic devices are adequate for this diversion, no major challenges are experienced regarding the technical foundation. On the other side, the implementation of technical and organizational matters depended on individual experiences in the workplace due to the regulations of the pandemic [7]. The perceptions of employees and executives state that the era of one-size-fits office-based work structure is over, giving rise to more customized and hybrid work models in the future [1]. Compared to the traditional work pattern, remote work inherently forms organizational and physical flexibility. Although flexibility has provided many positive contributions to the working environment, significant adverse outcomes have also been observed during the remote working period of the pandemic.

1.1 Advantages

The work-from-home applications brought various advantages to the individual working process. Adoption of a new way of working increased an individual's *productivity* mainly [1,3,6,19]. Even previous studies conducted before the outbreak, such as Dell Technologies, indicate that 93% of employees feel better as team members while working remotely, and 86% of them believe they are productive as on-site working or more [15]. Besides, each employee can accelerate the evolution of *self-leadership* methods [1]. Moreover, it provides *workplace flexibility* and *autonomy* [1] and therefore reduces barriers to connecting and combining talented employees [15]. Remote work preferences for each individual are subjective to create a comfortable place generally if they have a chance to arrange their workplace according to ergonomics. However, it is affected by environmental and technical factors, which are commonly arguable by considering advantages. Furthermore, in general, online working maintains more *structured meetings* with *clear agendas* [1]. Moving on to consider companies' perspectives, they can *avoid unnecessary expenses* and *profit* besides benefiting from a *wider labor market* [13]. Adaptation

of remote work implementation also provides cooperation with international standards and fast-paced flow due to digital work speed.

Additionally, many scholars hold the view that the adaptation of remote work decreases the usage of transportation, reduces carbon footprint, and creates an environmentally sustainable system [1,11,17]. In other words, work-from-home ensures *sustainability* [13,15,17], decreases the *commute time* [19], and constrained *mobility* [13].

1.2 Disadvantages

On the other hand, some considerable disadvantages were raised with respect to work-from-home practice, especially in terms of psychology and well-being [1]. Working exclusively remotely, particularly, influences the well-being of the employee from the point of workplace relationship and work-life balance such as job satisfaction and family life negatively [2,7,12]. *Distinguishing between home environment and office vanished*. Additionally, the immediate need to engage in digital telecommunicating software applications and learning new tools in a short time span makes people prone to suffer from some degree of anxiety [1]. Compared to on-site working conditions, remote working needs extensive use of technology and digital support on a daily basis [7], and it can be problematic seriously, especially for people who are not technology enthusiastic or tech-savvy. Accordingly, some interruptions occur due to technical issues, for instance, in the middle of a meeting or a discussion [19]. In addition, recent studies have demonstrated that younger generations, between 20-40, are more successful and willing to use digital working tools, while others consider this time as a temporary period [13]. On top of that, some employees and executives need to handle uncertainties single-handedly and receive limited feedback because they abstain from bothering their colleagues with their tiny issues [1].

Whereas the factors that *independence* and *flexibility* of the employee influence the individual constructively, *isolation* and *lack of social relationships* have substantial psychological and physical drawbacks. The combination of positive and negative outcomes instigates uncertainties in individuals' performance. According to recent study results of Juchnowicz et al.,[7], a lack of personal contact between supervisors and co-workers harms trust in others, especially for building a connection with newcomers. It may translate as losing team spirit and integrity. Besides, in contrast to some studies that indicate embracing flexible work practice may reduce burnouts [19], however, expanding work hours, "always-on" culture, prolonged computer usage, unframed boundaries in terms of work and private life, and fear of missing out on a notification generally cause critical fatigue, stress, and exhaustion [1].

1.3 Ideas

The tendency toward *"Hybrid Work"* is the new way of working is not merely a short-term response but a long-term shift [2]. In order to minimize the drawbacks of remote work and maximize the productivity of the employee, first, a comprehensive digital work experience needs to be designed and tested; second, tools, software, and resources need to be provided; and third, hybrid system design frameworks should be established. Otherwise, employee satisfaction, productivity, and well-being are hazarded.

1.3.1 Integration of new interaction channels into Hybrid Work Practice.

The monotonous work-from-home routine and being constantly available for work reduce social interaction between each member of the organization. Being away from the social interaction that we are used to causes disconnections between individuals. In order to avoid this situation, broadly, it is necessary to add a value that has not been experienced before in remote working processes to the newly established hybrid working system. The new communication mechanisms or systems between colleagues, which will distribute the workload and provide ubiquitous, efficient interaction for

individuals, need to be designed based on experiences. Using only digital monitors or sensory advancements is not enough to achieve this unique model. Therefore, we need to consider combining this idea with haptic systems, even robots. Although using monitors and speakers is extremely common in remote work practice, such as the actual office environment, integration of touch and somatosensory elements is scarce. However, establishing the new hybrid work system obviously needs to increase interaction between co-workers.

Moreover, creating a virtual office environment that will proceed simultaneously with the real office may save employers and managers from feeling entirely alone and establish a new form of "common sense" while working remotely. Gather.town (GT) is the inspiration resource for this idea [10,20]. The definition of GT, according to McClure et al., [10] "a virtual platform that offers self-paced learning in a synchronous, distance-learning context" and "it is an online, proximity-based video-conferencing software which offers participants the ability to move freely within a 2-D, pre-designed space where users can access private 'rooms,' interact with shared documents and files (including pre-recorded videos), co-create using a wide variety of available 'objects' and connect with one another." From that starting point, a well-designed, sophisticated virtual platform for catching simultaneous work experience with employees who is in charge of on-site work may be the way for building a proximity feeling to the office. Therefore, co-workers may contact each other readily.

1.3.2 Individual work assistant: RoboBoost

Design an artifact consisting of a standardized system practice that allows the user to experience sensual work practice. Various variations can be considered, such as [8,9,16], to increase interaction with haptics. However, we can consider this idea together with robot integration so that it can be transformed into a product or system that can be continuously improved. Building and increasing accomplish and sustainable structure of integration of hybrid work and employee engagement, a robot for each individual's workplace can be the main idea. From that point, as the inspiration for this idea, Root by iRobot [18,21] can be associated. Root rt0 and rt1 can be considered educational robots that bring a new approach for learning to code. The most significant characteristic of the robot is that even an illiterate child can play with it. From this perspective, the robot will probably be composed of sophisticated hardware and software, and however, at the same time, it should provide ease of use. A haptic product adaptation, such as a mouse, can emerge at the end of the process. In addition, VR glasses integration into a robot for some situations can be considered as an experiential perspective.

1.3.3 Customization

The idea is to design new collaborative and customizable multi-sensory workplace practice forms. Gradually accumulation and adaptation of the artefact generally depend on the simplicity and customizable of the product or system. Proposing a customizable model including workplace integration and mental and physical health considerations to establish a new hybrid work model that provides work-life balance can conclude this project successfully.

Customization is a requirement because employers personalize their work environments, such as desktops, even in an office environment, according to the user's preferences. To provide work-life balance, a customizable model including workplace integration and mental and physical health consideration to establish the new hybrid work model needs to be designed. A modular system design is necessary to propose a constantly evolving system. The system can increase body awareness and supplement conventional auditory and visual telepresence technologies.

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