COPING WITH POST COVID-19:
CAN WORK FROM HOME BE A NEW NORM?

Nur Afiqah Akmal Abdullah,
Noor Hanim Rahmat[i],
Fatin Zafirah Zawawi,
Muhammad Adib Nazhan Khamsah,
Afiqah Humaira Anuarsham
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa,
Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Malaysia

Abstract:

The ever-advancing world of technology has made it possible for people to work from home and this has affected the way people, especially employees work. It has also benefitted them during this difficult time of pandemic. Working from home which is also known as teleworking is when employees carry out their organisational responsibilities remotely such as in their homes instead of the norm of working in the office. Previous studies have only discussed the topic theory wise, but the feelings or views of employees on the topic have not been thoroughly studied. The purpose of this study is to explore the advantages and disadvantages of working from home from the employees' perspectives. Specifically, this quantitative study investigates how employees feel about working from home in the aspects of family values, increase of performance, isolation, and disrupt work-life balance. A survey via Google Form using Likert scales was used as the instrument which was answered by 110 respondents. Findings revealed that a majority of the respondents agreed that working from home has more advantages than the disadvantages and this showed that working from home brings more convenience for the employees.

Keywords: working from home, employee, organisation, family values, performance, isolation, work-life balance

i Correspondence: email patanim@gmail.com, noorh763@uitm.edu.my

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

The trend of working from home is rapidly on the increase in today's digital era, where limitless access to information and connection availability is everywhere. Work from home, also known as teleworking or telecommuting is the work activities with the deployment of information and communication technologies (ICT) that enables workers to access their work tasks wherever possible such as at home (Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012; Nakrosiene et al., 2019). In this new age of information and the vast development of technology, being present physically in the workplace has no longer been the only way of the operating organization (Christensen, 2019). In Malaysia, the work from home approach has been utilized in private colleges as a method of the long-distance-learning program but has not been formally implemented in conventional universities (Rahim et al., 2018). Today's advent of the technological era has changed many organizations' needs of supervision, communication, and collective use of equipment and resources separated from the centralized workplace to work in the home.

With the recent COVID-19 pandemic that struck around the globe, many organizations are impacted by it. They are upended to arrange the work mode for almost every employee from the centralized workplace to work from home. However, even before the COVID-19 became a reason, this digital way of working is nonetheless has been employed by many organizations in developing countries such as China, South Africa, Belgium, Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia (Bloom et al., 2015; Garg & Rijst, 2015; Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012; The et al., 2013). Employers and employees can make use of this benefit, communicating using technologies and ditch their usual onerous daily commutes to just work in their own homes. With more employees now working from home, employers are turning to technology to prepare for the new normal transition at work to adapt and adjust the way organization works while recognizing different impacts on employees (Fraser et al., 2020). Despite the appropriate use of technologies with the current pandemic situation, the consequences faced by workers can be negative or positive.

According to Yancy (2020), people have been working from home to maintain social distancing as it is discovered as the most effective strategy to reduce the risk of coronavirus infection. Hale et al. (2020), also agreed that work from home has been enforced by every government in more than 150 countries as a response to break infection chain and transmission from this deadly virus. Work from home has been associated with benefits such as cost-efficient (Heng et al., 2019), high levels of work satisfaction (Schall, 2019) and saves time on commuting to work (Klopotek, 2017). However, working from home also creates a work-life conflict and ICT overabundance usage at home (Arlinghaus & Nachreiner, 2014). Other negative impacts of working from home are the increase of unemployment rate (Brynjolfsson et.al, 2020). This may cause employees to struggle with *"grappling with the tension between the desire for flexibility"* (Fonner & Stache, 2012).

In Malaysia, work from home raises its popularity recently when the Ministry of Health (MOH) releases the advisories on 2020 Movement Control Order (MCO) under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Disease Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967 (Mat et al., 2020) in March where restrictions are promulgated where all workers except the essential services are prohibited to attend workplaces to avoid making close contacts. Tumin (2020) explored the viable option of working from home for workers in Malaysia. A study by Quoquab et al. (2013), explored the advantages and disadvantages of work from home among Malaysian employees seems to contradict these raised issues. In their study, it is revealed that most employees working from home perceived this method of working as positive.

Generally, this research will analyse the advantages and disadvantages of working from home. Specifically, this research analyses the advantages and disadvantages of working from home from the employees' perspectives in Malaysia. The study is conducted to answer the following questions;

1) How does working from home influence employees' family values?
2) How does working from home increase work performance?
3) How do employees feel isolated when working from home?
4) How does working from home disrupt employees' work-life balance?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section will discuss the theoretical framework used in this research paper, the themes in the framework, and the past studies that are related to the themes. It starts with an introduction, followed by the theoretical framework, the themes in it are family values, increase in performance, feeling isolated, and disrupt work-life balance. Lastly, it will also discuss the past studies that are related to the four themes mentioned.

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This research is done to study on the advantages and disadvantages of WFH from the employees' perspectives. Due to this, the theoretical framework used for this paper includes some of the possible factors that could contribute to the advantages or disadvantages of WFH. As can be seen in the theoretical framework attached, the lowest hierarchy are eight blue boxes that are the possible factors that can lead to the main elements investigated in this paper. Every two factors will lead to one element such as Relationship with Spouse and Relationship with Children will lead to Family Values element, Flexibility and No Distraction will lead to Increase in Performance element, No Interaction and Lack of Supervision will lead to Isolation element, and lastly, Long Working Hours and Productivity Loss will lead to Disrupt Work-Life Balance element. The four elements lead in the yellow boxes are the elements studied among the respondents to find out whether they are considered as part of the advantages or disadvantages of WFH from the employees' perspectives. The elements and factors

included in the theoretical framework also correlate with several past studies such as those done by (Bloom et al., 2015), (Troup & Rose, 2012), and (Song & Gao, 2019). The theoretical framework proposed for this paper is as follows:
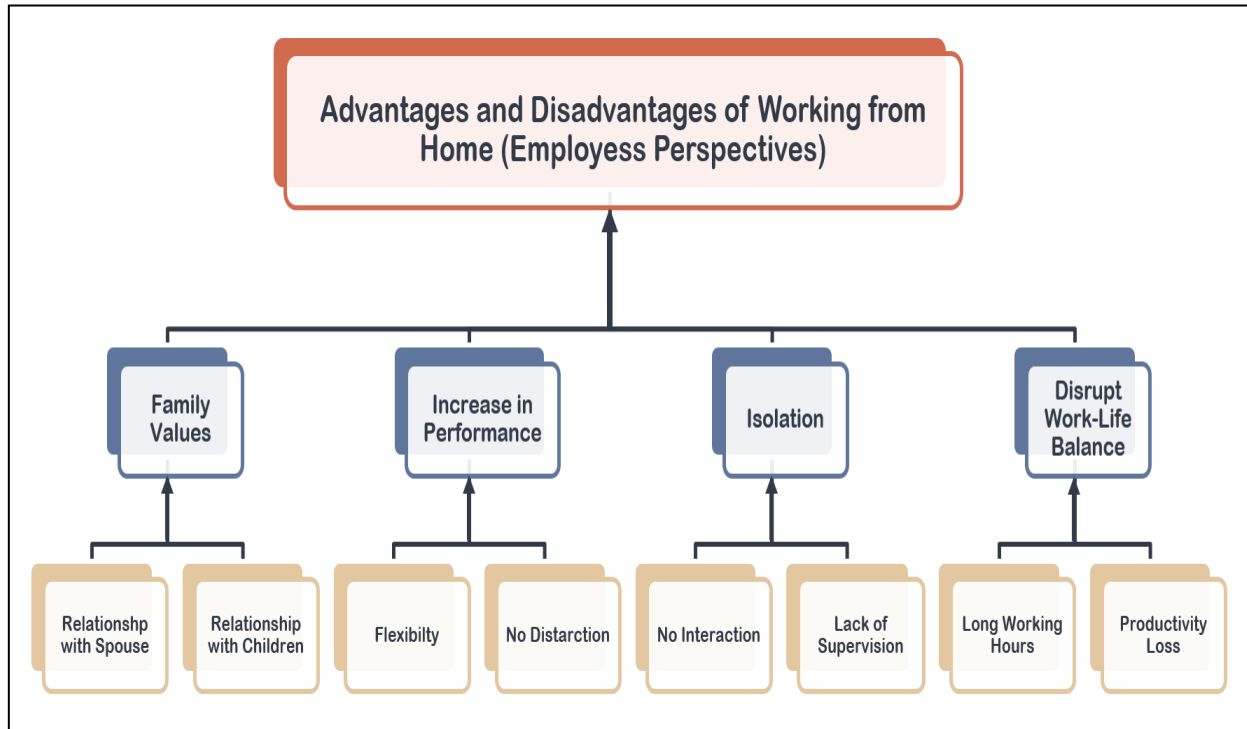
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework
(source: Bloom et al., 2015; Troup & Rose, 2012 and Song & Gao, 2019)

2.3 Family Values

Employees who work from home do have the advantage of being around their spouse. This includes communicating with their spouse and also the time spent with their spouse. Working couples are able to maintain a good communicative relationship when they are well aware of each other's schedules, and they split up household duties (Ward, 2020). This ensures that both parties would have a better understanding of each other's priorities and when it is the correct time to engage with one another in casual instances. Working couples or if either the spouse is working can cause tension in the focus that they give to work while being at home. To overcome this, the employees and their spouse should always focus on the positive, give each other attentive attention to discuss matters with kindness (Lane, 2019). Having these qualities improve communication between the employee working from home with their spouse.

Working partners can build a routine together to ensure that their time spent together is filled and improves their togetherness of being together, this includes knowing when it's time to get of work or having lunch breaks and dinner breaks together (Compton, 2020). The place of the time spent with the spouse is also essential as it should be a work-free space; this creates a boundary between time for work and time spent for spouse (Brower, 2020 & Brunelli, 2019).

In addition to that, giving the children undivided attention will also help both parties to communicate better with one another (Fitzgerald, 2020). Children will enjoy the communication that is happening as they will be freer to express how they feel and have the parents respond to them immediately. As communication is critical in interacting with the employee's children, the time spent between both parties is also as important. The study by Troup & Rose (2014), Craig (2006) and Bianchi & Milkie (2010) also found that working from home lets working parents spend more than 40 hours per week with their children. Working from home employees prioritize the leisure pursuits of their children or their leisure time spent with family, over their leisure time alone (Rego, 2017). This shows that employees can have a good relationship with their children and also establish a secure connection with the ample time spent with their children while working from home.

2.4 Increase in Performance

WFH can increase performance due to flexibility because the employees can decide their own working time and place. According to Church (2015) and Bloom, et. al (2015)., numerous workers feel a strong, positive satisfaction because of the flexibility that they get from WFH. This might be because the employees are able to work in the time, they find most convenient and where they feel most productive (Singh, et al., 2017 and Nurul, et al., 2013). This is supported by Singh et al. (2017), one of the prominent benefits of WFH is definitely because the employees can work according to their best convenience.

Working from home can increase performance due to the absence of distraction because the employees will have less break time and no contact with their co-workers. It is quite normal to see the situation at the office where the employees abuse their break time probably due to stress or the less comfortable working space so, they need longer time to rest (Nakrošienė, 2019 and Garg & Rijst, 2015). This will not happen if they practice WFH as they already have such comfortable workspace that is their own homes that will result in less stress.

2.5 Feeling Isolated

Regardless of the advantages of working from home, some researchers have argued that separating the workplace from the centralized office to work remotely causes negative outcomes on the employees. The absence of face to face communication experienced by employees could lead them to lose the benefit of seeking help with their colleagues. According to Yusof & Rahmat (2020), communication at the workplace helps build bonds among employees and employers. This prevailing argument has been criticized by several scholars. (Davis & Cates, 2013; Malik et.al, 2016; Taskin & Bridoux, 2010; Wilton et al., 2011; Teh et al., 2013). According to Davis & Cates (2013), the absence of face to face communication may disrupt social relationships between employees and colleagues. Given this condition, according to Taskin & Bridoux (as cited in Malik et al., 2016) the negative consequences of work from home among the employees as compared to

traditional work settings or centralized workplace are such as inability in interacting verbally, socially and personally among colleagues.

Employees may have uncertainty in their work performance. According to Peters et al. (2016), supervisors may fear that working from home would affect organizational and trustworthiness among the employees as well as yield social and professional isolation. Concerning the situations caused by little to no supervision from supervisors, work from home could affect employees' limited social interaction and isolation negatively to the extent that it could damage their health (Hraskova & Rolkova, 2012). The supervisor's function to control and monitor employee can also be hindered (Kurland & Cooper, 2002). Furthermore, work from home not only causes difficulties when work progress is less supervised but also involves employees' dependent on completing tasks because when there is little to no supervision, the supervisors or superiors could not exactly determine their subordinates' progress and completing the work (Wilton et al., 2011). This has opened a broad view on employees' challenges in making sure they are working as effectively as working in a traditional work setting because these assumptions among the workers on effective supervision may trigger anxieties about the probability of abusing the work from home arrangement (Wilton et al., 2011). The lack of supervision in work progress may also potentially causing problems in employee's uncertainty in their work performance. It reduces direct supervision and conditions such as lack in overseeing performance from their supervisors which eventually leads to a large increase in neglecting responsibility (Bloom et al., 2015). With such conditions, Bloom et al. (2015) also argued that employees may feel isolated and lonely as work from home pulls them away from the company's office resulting in their work performance being left unsupervised and circumstantially being uncertain. Working from home is also bringing the practice of physically working out of sight which resorts to performance only based on completed tasks in terms of timeliness, quality, and results rather than effective observation (Kurland & Cooper, 2002). This uncertainty performance experience by the workers from home is the primary complex when superiors are unable to physically monitor their subordinate's work performance (Teh, et al., 2013). Thus, the disadvantage concerning work progress left unsupervised and work performance being uncertain have shown that the downsides of working from home have been long discussed in prior literature that plausibly has negative impacts when workers from home are feeling isolated in their workplace.

2.6 Disrupt Work-Life Balance

Long working hours is one of the causes of why working from home affects the employees' work-life balance. This is because they will spend more time on works than usual since their time is flexible and they have unlimited access to the internet. "*Work intensification with access to technology 24/7 leading to long hours, with little respite from work.*" (Farrell, 2017). However, there are side effects that can be found from long working hours which are exhaustion and stress. According to Song & Gao (2019) and Evans (2014),

tiredness can result if people bring work home as it leads to long working hours and difficult for them to rest.

McQuaid (2019) and Alsop (2013) agreed that 'burnout' and an 'always-on' culture can be induced by flexible or remote working even though employees believe it will lead to a better work-life balance and predict it can be the most popular way of employment in the future. Less happiness and more stress can be caused by working at home (Song & Gao, 2019) and Waters, 2018). Thus, working from home can cause the employees to have long working hours then leads to the negative side effects in their lives.

Besides that, productivity is also one of the work-life balance criteria that will be impacted by working from home in which people will lose their productivity as they focus more on the work. This may lead to the bad side effects such as health condition and priority. Farrell (2017), Heid (2018) and McQuaid (2019) mentioned that the temptation to work for longer hours at the computer can be increased by the sitting behaviours then can cause physical problem.

According to Vozza (2018), it can be difficult for people to prioritize what is most important and urgent if this is a product of working environment, people's personalities or their home life. Therefore, employees' health condition and their priority might be neglected if their productivity lost due to the workload that they need to complete it.

2.7 Past Studies
2.7.1 Past Studies on Family Values

The study by Troup & Rose (2012) discussed how formal and informal telework arrangements impact on public sector employee's job satisfaction, time spent on childcare and satisfaction with the distribution of childcare tasks. The study explored in finding out the different nature that working from home and working from the office brings into the family. The samples are of 856 public services employees in Queensland, Australia. The study found that the time spent by employees with their children is at an average of 42 hours a week for the woman with formal telework arrangements and an average of 13 hours per week for men with formal telework arrangements. The difference between formal and informal telework arrangements did not show much difference in the time spent by employees with their children. Therefore, both formal and informal telework arrangement share an average amount of time spent for childcare. It is also found that men and women have different satisfaction of distribution of childcare responsibilities.

A study by Klopotek (2017) dived into the advantages and disadvantages of remote working through the perspective of young employees aged 18 to 30 years old. The study has a sample of 100 respondents (aged 18 to 30 years old) who were working in Poland. This quantitative study consisted of a two-part questionnaire which included age and sex as the first part, and the advantages and disadvantages of remote work as the second part. The study was a pilot study from literature reviews and had combined all past research to come out with the outcome of the study. The data collected from the questionnaire were tabulated by age and sex of distribution of respondents and then followed by the findings of the advantages and disadvantages of remote working. The

study found that employees who had ill family members and children at home had a significant advantage in working from home due to the availability for them to monitor and take care of the family members and children.

The study by Rego (2017) focused on the experience of female telecommuters regarding work-life balance. Rego (2017) gave focus to female workers who telecommute and also aimed to discover how do female workers experience work-life balance from a telecommuting arrangement and how do female workers perceive the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting as a flexible working arrangement. The outcome of the study found that females who work from home enjoy more time spent at home, which includes family time and self-time.

2.7.2 Past Studies on Increase in Performance

This first research was conducted by Bloom et al. (2015) to study the effectiveness of WFH through a Chinese travel agency, Ctrip. This qualitative study was done by studying 249 call centre employees of the company that was chosen at random. The findings of the study show that WFH has more advantages than disadvantages and is valid and can be most effective if the employees are allowed to choose if they prefer to WFH as not everyone prefers it. The implication of the study is that it frees the employers and the managers from worrying if WFH will bring more harm than good to the company as it is now proven in numbers and statistics that it does not and all they have to consider is whether the employees are trustable enough for it and if they want it.

This next study done by Church (2015) was to analyse and measure the advantages and disadvantages of WFH for both employees and employers. It used a mixed-method methodology where she distributed an anonymous descriptive online survey as the quantitative method. The findings showed that employees do like the idea of WFH but they are worried if that will lessen their chance at promotional opportunities compared to those that work in the office.

This last research by Garg & Rijst (2015) was done to study the South African WFH context by examining the cost-saving effects for a private company and their employees if they were to implement WFH. It was also done to study the relations between structural and relational factors with experience of virtual work. The findings concluded that most of the employees were willing to practice WFH and there was the prominent amount of savings that could be done if they were to practice WFH. It also showed that structural and relational factors have positive relations with the experience of virtual work. The implications of this research confirmed that the negative impacts of WFH exist however it was outweighed by the positive impacts.

2.7.3 Past Studies in Feeling Isolated

There is past research investigating the dark side of working virtually away from traditional work settings that concerns workplace isolation among the work from home employees by Davis & Cates (2013). The research seeks to determine the extent of the relationship between workplace isolation and gender among 472 employees. As regards

to the demographic and survey scale data, the study revealed that employees working one, two and four days per week have greater workplace isolation as to compare with employees work three to five days per week. The study also suggests there is significant evidence that workplace isolation is related to gender. This mode of work will become more engaged commonly soon. Employers should consider a great understanding of the disadvantages of utilizing this work mode to the workers' environment. The evidence of this study has also proved that employees who work in this environment face difficulties, especially in tackling a lack of human interaction and eventually causes employees to feel disconnected from the company's environment.

Another past study concerning the downsides of working from home has also been carried out by (Wilton et al., 2011) examined social contact roles in the process of obtaining information as well as decision-making in work mode telecommuting. Findings show both categorizations of pros and cons in telecommuting but this paper focuses on the cons such as (1) corresponding risk of isolation, missed opportunities in meeting people in real life is commonly expressed as it is limiting social interaction; (2) on the other hand negative reaction among co-workers pointing out that telecommuting is unacceptable as a norm in working environment Notably, (3) participants concern of the lack of direct channel for formal discussion when telecommuting practice is employed and (4) clearly traditional concerns of the loss in face-to-face communication impacted social influence among the employees.

2.7.4 Past Studies in Disrupt Work-Life Balance

Song & Gao (2019) did an investigation on the impact of working at home on wage/salary workers' instantaneous subjective well-being (SWB) measured by happiness, pain, sadness, stress, tiredness, and meaningfulness. In analysing data process, the respondents were asked to rate the happiness, pain, sadness, stress, and tiredness they felt in the activity and to evaluate the meaningfulness of the activity, using a scale from 0 to 6, where a 0 means no feeling at all, and a 6 means the strongest feeling. It was found out that stress in both samples of weekdays and weekends or holidays increased because of telework compared to working in the workplace.

Felstead & Henseke (2017) conducted a research relating to the effects of working from home which called Assessing the Growth of Remote Working and Its Consequences for Effort, Well-Being and Work-Life Balance. There is an evidence provided by SES data which remote workers' efforts higher than those who work in conventional fixed workplaces. It suggested that work isolation is a growing trend. Lastly, the presented estimation in the results unable to determine whether the changes of work location leads the changes in effort, well-being and work-life balance.

3. Methodology

This quantitative study used questionnaires as instrument were distributed to the targeted respondents via Google Form. The mean average of the data gathered were then

analysed using SPSS according to the themes in the theoretical framework proposed for this paper that are; Family Values, Increase in Performance, Isolation, and Disrupt Work-Life Balance. The mean average calculated were also transformed into bar graphs to be included in the findings section of this research.

The research sample was mainly focused on employees who are married and have children as one of the main themes of this paper is to study on employees' family values. However, there were no specific group that was targeted in terms of age, gender, social class, and cultural background. This is because this paper focused on investigating the advantages and disadvantages of working from home from the employees' perspectives in general. Because of that, anyone who are familiar and have experience with working from home are qualified to be the samples of this study.

Cronbach's Alpha report was done to prove that the instrument prepared is reliable. This is because, a Cronbach's Alpha is used as a measurement to assess the reliability, or internal consistency of a set of scale or test items (Goforth, 2015). Reliability shows the amount of measurement error in a test, and internal consistency is an extent to which all the items in a test measure the same concept or construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Report

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.913	21

As shown in Table 1 above, the Cronbach's Alpha Report for the questionnaire (see appendix A) that was used to conduct this research scored at .913 with a number of 21 items. As the report showed a high level of alpha, the items in the test are highly correlated and an alpha score that is more than .9 has an excellent internal consistency (Glen, 2014). The questionnaire used in this research is proven to have a strong internal reliability as values of .7 or above is achieved when a test explores multiple constructs or testing for several different aspects of knowledge or understanding (Taber, 2018).

A thorough questionnaire was firstly adapted (from Ward (2020), Compton (2020), Brower (2020), Brunelli (2019), Rego (2017), Troup & Rose (2012), Church (2015), Singh et al. (2017), Bloom et al. (2015), Garg & Rijst (2015), Davis & Cates (2013), Wilton et al. (2011), Farrell (2017), Song & Gao (2019), and Vozza (2018)) and built to retrieve data that was relevant and helpful for the research. The data collected from this study was analysed using SPSS version 24 to find the percentage and mean of the items of the questionnaire. The demographic section of the data was presented in a pie chart showing the percentage of each item (gender, age and number of children) and discussions were drawn to explain the results. The results of the following sections (Family Values, Increase in Performance, Isolation, and Disrupt Work-Life Balance) of the data was presented in a table and bar chart to show the mean score of each of the questions in the questionnaire. The discussions were drawn to explain the significance of each of the

items. All the data presented are supported with a discussion to enhance the meanings of the results retrieved from the questionnaire.
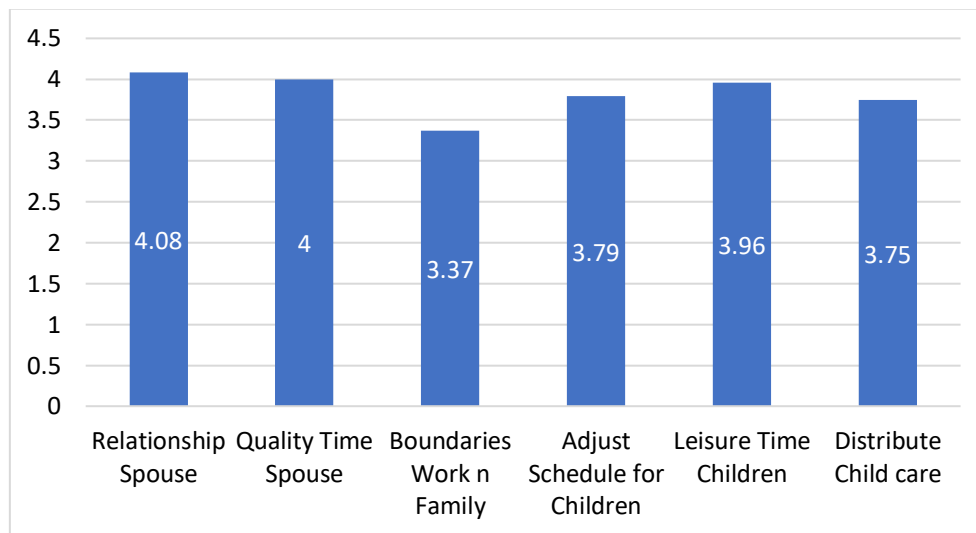
4. Findings

4.1 Introduction
This section of the chapter discusses the research questions that have been presented by this study with the findings obtained. The qualitative findings will also be thoroughly discussed in this segment. The research questions mentioned are as follows:
1) How does working from home influence employees' family values?
2) How does working from home increase work performance?
3) How do employees feel isolated when working from home?
4) How does working from home disrupt employees' work-life balance?

4.2 Findings for Family Values

Figure 2: Mean for Family Values

Figure 2 shows that the highest mean score for findings in Family Values is 4.08. This shows that the respondents agree that working from home (WFH) helps them to maintain a good communication relationship with their spouse. The second-highest mean score is 4.00. Most of the respondents agree that WFH helps them build a routine with their partner where they both can spend quality time together. Next, spending leisure time while WFH with children has a mean score of 3.96. The respondents show positive results towards their leisure time being spent is with their children while WFH. The respondents also show positive results in adjusting their WFH schedule to their children's schedule in making it easier for them to spend time with their children, with a mean score of 3.79. The second-lowest mean score is 3.75, where respondents have positive results towards the distribution of childcare is equally shared with their spouse.

Lastly, the lowest mean score is 3.37. The respondents show positive results in work-free space create boundaries between work and family.
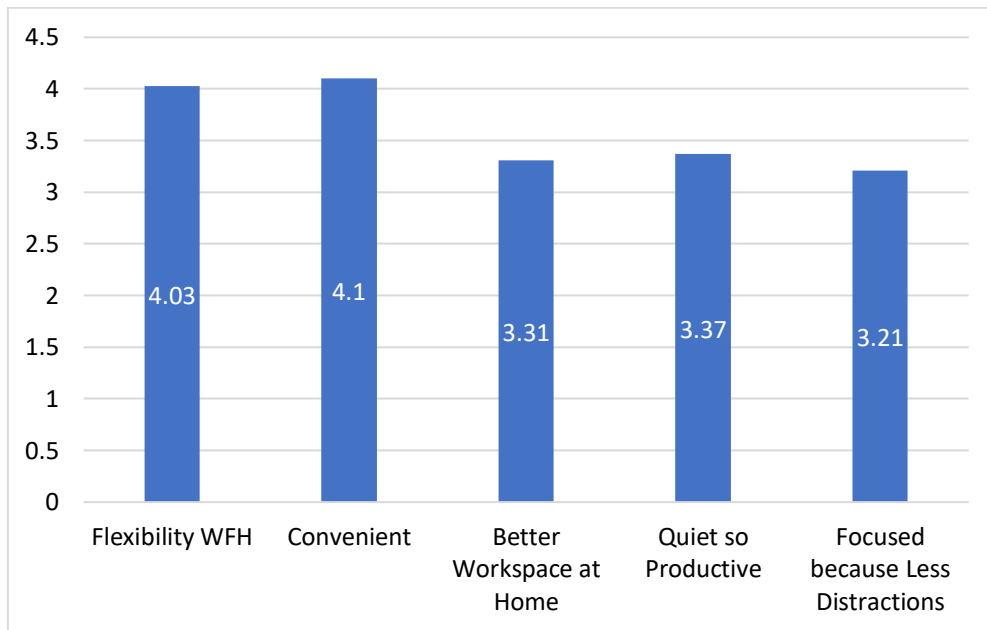
4.4 Findings for Performance Increase

Figure 3: Mean for Performance Increase

Figure 3 shows that the highest mean score for findings in Performance Increase is 4.1. This shows that most of the respondents really find flexible working time because of WFH gives them convenience. Next, the second-highest mean score is 4.03. This means that many of the respondents are satisfied with the flexibility that comes with WFH. Furthermore, the third-highest mean score is 3.37. This translates that quite a number of the respondents do find a quiet environment due to WFH allow them to be more productive in doing their work. Moreover, the second-lowest mean score would be 3.31. This shows that some of the respondents feel more comfortable to work in their homes compared to their working space in the office. Lastly, the lowest mean score is 3.21. This means that not all of them agreed that they are more focused through WFH because of less distraction.

4.5 Findings for Feeling Isolated

Based on Figure 4 above, it can be seen that the highest mean score for feeling isolated findings is 3.80. It clearly shows that many of the respondents show positive results towards this topic where they still get assistance from colleagues even by WFH. Next, the second-highest mean score of this finding is 3.79. Many of the respondents show positive results that by WFH, it did not limit them in getting support from their supervisors. Then, it is followed by the absence of face-to-face communication did not hinder them from socializing, which scored the mean 3.75. Many of the employees find that they still socialize even though face-to-face communication is absent when they WFH. The second-

lowest mean score can be seen from Figure 7 is 3.61. This shows that some of the respondents agree that they are not feeling lonely being out of sight employees. Lastly, the lowest mean score for feeling isolated finding is 3.60. Some of the respondents agree that by WFH it did not affect the effectiveness of supervision from their supervisors.
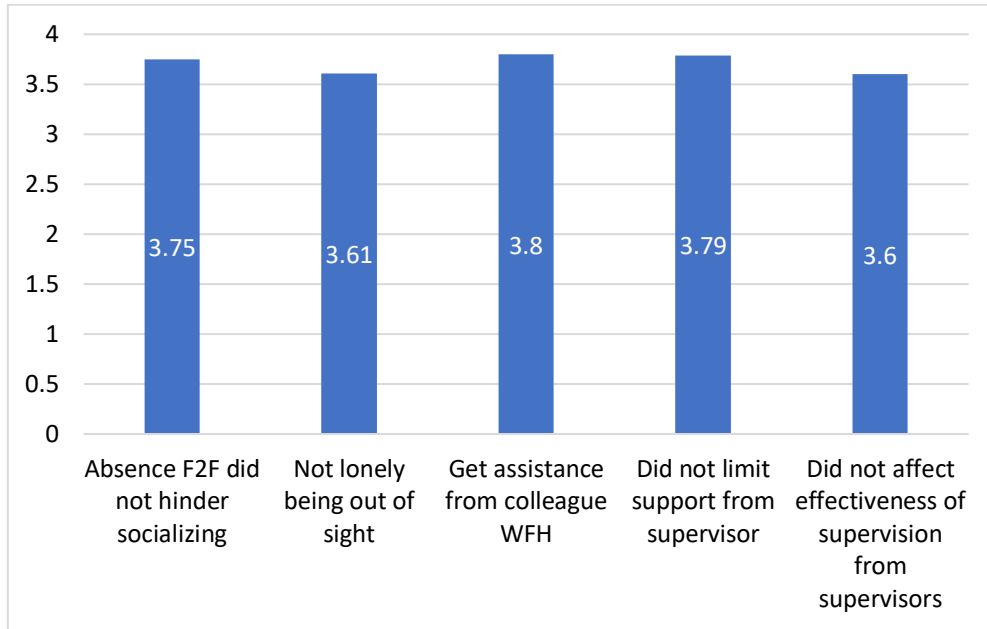

Figure 4: Mean for Feeling Isolated

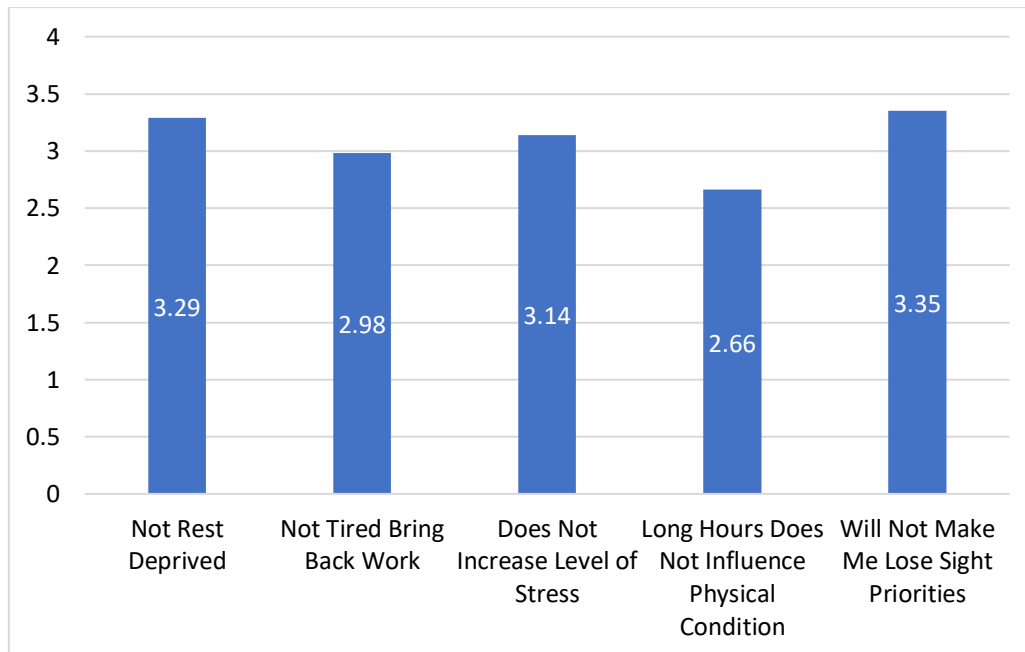## 4.6 Findings for Disrupt Work-Life Balance

Figure 5: Mean for Disrupt Work-Life Balance

Based on Figure 5 above, it shows that 3.35 is the highest mean score in findings for disrupt work-life balance in which most of the respondents agreed that working long

hours during WFH will not make them lose sight of their priorities. Next, the second-highest mean score is 3.29, and it shows that WFH does not make most of the respondents rest deprived. The respondents show a positive result that WFH does not increase the level of their stress, in which the mean score is 3.14. There are two statements categorized as the lowest mean scores, which are 2.98 and 2.66 for statement not tired when they bring work back home and physical condition not influenced by working long hours respectively. Both of it show negative results as many of the respondents feel neutral and disagree with the statements.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

This study reveals that working from home does influence family values as the respondents' responses positively in the survey. They agreed that the communication between them and their spouse, as well as children, can be enhanced as they are able to spend their time with them when they are working from home. Thus, employees' relationships with spouses and children will be improved and maintain. Next, due to the flexibility that comes with working from home, the employees argued that it helps them in increasing their performance in works as they are free to do their tasks anywhere and anytime that convenience for them. Most of the respondents believe that their performance can be improved as no distraction appeared during working from home. Hence, it reflected in this study that working from home does increase an employee's performance. However, the employees disagree with the point of view that indicated working from home can cause the employees to feel isolated. This is because there is a presence of communication and interaction between them and their colleagues in which it is easy for them to discuss or seek help when they have a problem related to work. They also prove that they receive enough supervision from their superior even though they are not working in the same building. In consequence, employees do not feel isolated when working from home. Other than that, the respondents think that there is no negative relationship between work-life balance and working from home as they are working within the working hours even though they have flexible time and unlimited internet access. Although they have to work remotely, their productivity in terms of health condition and their priority not affected as they are still can maintain their fitness and manage their social life. It proves that working from home does not disrupt employees' work-life balance. Based on the findings presented, it can be concluded that most of the respondents agreed that working from home can develop more benefit than the bad circumstances. It proves that the employees still preferred to continue working from home even though they are allowed to go back to their workplace.

Campos (2020) emphasized that "*71% of Amazon professionals would prefer to continue working from home after the restrictions are lifted.*" Gallup found that almost 60 percent of Americans working from home would prefer to work remotely "*as much as*

possible after restrictions are lifted, with 40 percent saying they preferred to return to the workplace." (Cramer & Zaveri, 2020).

5.2 Recommendations & Implications

The findings in this study indicated that working from home has more benefits than the negative effects. It provides the implications for all companies as well as the employees in general. Firstly, companies can consider the implementation of working from home as an alternative to the standard working procedure in times where the norm is not possible. It can give the opportunity to the companies as well as the employees to run the business even though they are not allowed to work in the workplace. According to Singh (2020), "*WFH will give companies more flexibility to move according to business needs.*" As for the employees, they should prepare their physical and mental once they are requested to be working from home to avoid any unfortunate consequences that occur during that period.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

This study has emphasised on the advantages and disadvantages of working from home among Malaysian employees. Therefore, future researchers can look into investigating the topic in a broader sense which should look at the perspective from other countries that might yield a different result from this study. Other than that, this study can be expanded and conducted among unmarried respondents as the study only focus on employees who are married and have children only. As a result, the perspectives from single employees towards this topic can be analysed as well. Last but not least, future studies are suggested to implement a different approach in the collection of data such as qualitative research method in which an interview session is conducted. This method could help the researchers to collect more data based on the respondents' opinion regarding the research topic as they are given the opportunity to convey their own point of views.

References

Alsop, R. (2013, September 26). Why working from home could be bad for your health. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20130925-the-stress-of-working-from-home.

Arlinghaus, A., & Nachreiner, F. (2014). Health effects of supplemental work from home in the European Union. *Chronobiology International, 31*(10), 1100-1107. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3109/07420528.2014.957297.

Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and Family Research in the First Decade of the 21st Century. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*(3), 705-725. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00726.x.

Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015). Does Working From Home Work? Evidence from A Chinese Experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *130*(1), 165-218. Retrieved from https://nbloom.people.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj4746/f/wfh.pdf.

Brynjolfsson, E., Horton, J. J., Ozimek, A., Rock, D., Sharma, G., & TuYe, H. Y. (2020). Covid-19 and remote work: An early look at us data (No. w27344). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/papers/w27344.pdf.

Brower, T. (2020, April 13). *Find a Balance Working from Home with Your Spouse, Without Driving Each Other Apart*. Retrieved from Fast Company: https://www.fastcompany.com/90489428/how-to-find-a-balance-working-from-home-with-your-spouse-without-driving-each-other-insane.

Brunelli, L. M. (2019, October 14). *Working from Home with a Toddler*. Retrieved from Very Well Family: https://www.verywellfamily.com/keep-toddler-busy-get-stuff-done-3542131.

Campos, G. (2020). *"Two-Thirds Want WFH to Continue after Lockdown."* AV Magazine, Retrieved from www.avinteractive.com/news/collaboration/64-of-professionals-prefer-working-from-home-even-after-the-restrictions-lift-29-04-2020.

Christensen, K. (2019). *The new era of home-based work: Directions and policies*. Routledge. [Google Books version]. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.my/books?id=cgaiDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PT9&ots=BS7KZ7c_EC&dq.

Church, N. F. (2015). Gauging Perceived Benefits from 'Working from Home' as a Job Benefit. *International Journal of Business and Economic Development*, *3*(3), 81-89. Retrieved from https://ijbed.org/cdn/article_file/content_80934_18-02-25-11-43-47.pdf.

Compton, J. (2020, March 24). *How Not to Kill Your Spouse When You're Both Working from Home*. Retrieved from https://www.today.com/health/working-home-your-spouse-due-coronavirus-here-s-how-keep-t176593.

Cramer, M., & Zaveri, M. (2020, May 31). *Working from Home Has Benefits Some Don't Want to Lose.* The New York Times. Retrieved from www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/business/pandemic-work-from-home-coronavirus.html.

Davis, R., & Cates, S. V. (2013). The dark side of working in a virtual world: An investigation of the relationship between workplace isolation and engagement among teleworkers. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies,* *1*(1), 9-13. Retrieved from https://purdueglobal.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.12264/26.

Evans, L. (2014, January 28). How Working at Home Can Be Harmful to Your Health. Retrieved from https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/231093.

Farrell, K. (2017). Working from home: A double edged sword, Home Renaissance Foundation Conference, November 16-17, 2017, Royal Society of Medicine in London. Retrieved from https://arrow.tudublin.ie/tfschcafcon/51/.

Felstead, A., & Henseke, G. (2017). Assessing the growth of remote working and its consequences for effort, well-being and work-life balance. New Technology, Work and Employment, 32(3), 195–212. https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12097.

Fitzgerald, L. (2020, May 13). *Tips for Working from Home with a Toddler*. Retrieved from Very Well Family: https://www.verywellfamily.com/tips-for-working-from-home-with-a-toddler-290525.

Fonner, K. L., & Stache, L. C. (2012). All in a day's work, at home: Teleworkers' management of micro role transitions and the work–home boundary. *New Technology, Work and Employment, 27*(3), 242-257. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-005X.2012.00290.x.

Fraser, J., Kinman, G., Breslin, G., Bell, N., Grant, C., Colville, T., ... Waites, B. (2020). *Easing lockdown: How employers and employees can prepare for the new normal at work*. Leicester, England: British Psychological Society. Retrieved from https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/en/publications/easing-lockdown-how-employers-and-employees-can-prepare-for-the-n.

Garg, A. K., & Rijst, J. v. (2015). The Benefits and Pitfalls of Employees Working from Home: Study of a Private Company in South Africa. *Corporate Board: Role, Duties & Composition, 11*(2), 36-49. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283024276.

Glen, S. (2014). Cronbach's Alpha: Simple Definition, Use and Interpretation. Retrieved from Statistics How To: https://www.statisticshowto.com/cronbachs-alpha-spss/.

Goforth, C. (2015). Using and Interpreting Cronbach's Alpha. Retrieved from University of Virginia Library: Research Data Services + Sciences: https://data.library.virginia.edu/using-and-interpreting-cronbachs-alpha/.

Hale, T., Petherick, A., Phillips, T., & Webster, S. (2020). Variation in government responses to COVID-19. Blavatnik school of government working paper, 31. Retrieved from https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/BSG-WP-2020-032-v6.0.pdf.

Heid, M. (2018, July 9). Is Working Remotely Bad for Your Health? Retrieved from https://time.com/5333239/is-working-remotely-bad-for-you/.

Lane, K. (2019, March 23). *4 Ways to Build Communication Skills in Your Relationship, Because They're So Important*. Retrieved from Elite Daily: https://www.elitedaily.com/p/4-ways-to-build-communication-skills-in-your-relationship-because-theyre-so-important-16977930.

Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I., & Goštautaitė, B. (2019). Working from Home: Characteristics and Outcomes of Telework. *International Journal of Manpower, 40*(1), 87-101. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330325371.

Heng, T. B., San, O. T., & Lee, L. Y. (2012). The acceptance and effectiveness of telecommuting (work from home) in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Research in*

Business Management, *3*(3), 1-19. Retrieved from http://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:apjrbm&volume=3&issue=3&article=001.

Hraskova, D., & Rolkova, M. (2012). *Teleworking–a flexible conception of managing the enterprise.* In Proceedings of the 2nd International Scientific Conference "Whither Our Economies", Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania, 39. 1-322. Retrieved from https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/42526/1/MPRA_paper#page=40.

Kłopotek, M. (2017). The advantages and disadvantages of remote working from the perspective of young employees. *Scientific Quarterly "Organization and Management"*, 4(40), 39-49. Retrieved from http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/baztech/element/bwmeta1.element.baztech-ed42d0c6-5898-4b3b-a46e-f3ded21414c4.

Kurland, N. B., & Cooper, C. D. (2002). Manager control and employee isolation in telecommuting environments. *The Journal of High Technology Management Research*, *13*(1), 107-126. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1047831001000517?via%3Dihub.

Malik, A., Rosenberger, P. J., Fitzgerald, M., & Houlcroft, L. (2016). Factors affecting smart working: evidence from Australia. *International Journal of Manpower, 37*(6), 1042–1066. Retrieved from: https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJM-12-2015-0225/full/html.

Mat, N. F. C., Edinur, H. A., Razab, M. K. A. A., & Safuan, S. (2020). A single mass gathering resulted in massive transmission of COVID-19 infections in Malaysia with further international spread. *Journal of Travel Medicine.27*(3), 1-9. Retrieved from https://academic.oup.com/jtm/article/27/3/taaa059/5822105.

McQuaid, D. (2019, October 24). Remote and flexible working can lead to 'burnout' and promote an 'always-on' culture. *HRreview*. Retrieved from https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/remote-and-flexible-can-lead-to-burnout-and-promote-an-always-on-culture/121308.

Nurul, S. A., Noorliza, K, & Hasnanywati, H. (2013). Working from Home (WFH): Is Malaysia Ready for Digital Society?. In S.S. Khalid (Ed.), *Entrepreneurship Vision 2020: Innovation, Development Sustainability, and Economic Growth Proceedings of the 20th International Business Information Management Association Conference, IBIMA 2013*, 981-988. IBIMA. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312148047.

Nakrosiene, A., Buciuniene, I., & Gostautaite, B. (2019). Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework. *International Journal of Manpower, 1*, 1-16. Retrieved from https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJM-07-2017-0172/full/html.

Peters, P., Ligthart, P. E., Bardoel, A., & Poutsma, E. (2016). 'Fit'for telework'? Cross-cultural variance and task-control explanations in organizations' formal telework

practices. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *27*(21), 2582-2603. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09585192.2016.1232294.

Quoquab, F., Lim, C. S., & Malik, H. A. (2013). Malaysian employees' perception pertaining to telework. *Business and Management Quarterly Review (BMQR), 3*(1), 63-76. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Farzana_Quoquab/publication/277076265_Malaysian_employees'_perception_pertaining_to_telework/links/5560a7b708ae86c06b64a685.

Rahim, N. I. M., Rahman, A. A., & Lahad, N. A. (2018). The Overview for Implementing Work from Home (WFH) in Malaysia Higher Education Institution (HEI) Context. *International Journal of Innovative Computing, 8(*3), 17-21. Retrieved from https://ijic.utm.my/index.php/ijic/article/view/182/111.

Raghuram, S., Garud, R., Wiensenfeld, B., & Gupta, V. (2001). Factors Contributing to Virtual Work Adjustment. *Journal of Management Development*, *27*(3), 383-405. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283024276.

Rego, K. R. (2017). The Experience of Female Telecommuters Regarding Work-Life Balance: A Qualitative Case Study (Publication No. 10608280) [Doctoral Dissertation, Northcentral University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Retrieved from https://search-proquestcom.ezaccess.library.uitm.edu.my/pqdtglobal/docview/1957416063/D0D5C5368AE74724PQ/1?accountid=42518.

Schall, M. A. (2019). The Relationship Between Remote Work and Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Roles of Perceived Autonomy, Work-Family Conflict, and Telecommuting Intensity. [Master's Thesis, San Jose State University]. SJSU Scholar Works. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/5017/.

Singh, R., Kumar, M. A., & Varghese, S. T. (2017). Impact of Working Remotely on Productivity and Professionalism. *Journal of Business and Management 19*(5), 17-19. Retrieved from http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol19-issue5/Version- 2/C1905021719.pdf.

Singh, S. (2020, April 5). Companies see work-from-home as a viable long-term option if regulatory issues can be addressed. Retrieved from https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/companies-see-work-from-home-as-a-viable-long-term-option-if-regulatory-issues-can-be-addressed/articleshow/74985839.cms.

Song, Y., & Gao, J. (2019). Does Telework Stress Employees Out? A Study on Working at Home and Subjective Well-Being for Wage/Salary Workers. *Journal of Happiness Studies,* 1-20.Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-019-00196-6.

Taber, K. S. (2018). The Use of Cronbach's Alpha When Developing and Reporting Research Instruments in Science Education. *Research in Science Education, 48*(6), 1273-1296. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317777374.

Taskin, L., & Bridoux, F. (2010). Telework: a challenge to knowledge transfer in organizations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *21*(13), 2503-2520. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09585192.2010.516600.

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making Sense of Cronbach's Alpha. International Journal of Medical Education, 2011(2), 53-55. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4205511/.

Teh, B. H., Hooi, P. C., Loh, Y. L., San Ong, T., & Hong, Y. H. (2013). Enhancing the implementation of telecommuting (work from home) in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science*, *9*(7), 1-11. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280561704.

Troup, C., & Rose, J. (2012). Working from Home: Do Formal or Informal Telework Arrangements Provide Better Work-Family Outcomes?. *Community, Work & Family*, *15*(4), 471-486. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263343538.

Tremblay, D. G., & Thomsin, L. (2012). Telework and mobile working: analysis of its benefits and drawbacks. *International Journal of Work Innovation, 1*(1), 100-113. Retrieved from https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1504/IJWI.2012.047995.

Tumin, S. A. (2020). How common is working from home. KRI Discussion paper, 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.krinstitute.org/assets/contentMS/img/template/editor/DP_WFHv4_updated.pdf.

Vozza, S. (2018, April 6). This is How You Should be Prioritizing Your Work and Life. Retrieved from Fast Company: https://www.fastcompany.com/40552870/this-is-how-you-should-be-prioritizing-your-work-and-life.

Waters, E. (2018). The Stress of Working from Home and How to Fix it. Psych Central. Retrieved from https://psychcentral.com/lib/the-stress-of-working-from-home-and-how-to-fix-it/.

Ward, M. (2020, March 10). How to Keep Your Relationship Intact if You're Forced to Work from Home Because of the Coronavirus Outbreak. Retrieved from Business Insider: https://www.businessinsider.com/does-working-from-home-hurt-a-relationship-what-experts-say-2020-2.

Wilton, R. D., Paez, A., & Scott, D. M. (2011). Why do You Care What Other People Think? A Qualitative Investigation of Social Influence and Telecommuting. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 45*(4), 269-282. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0965856411000103.

Yancy, C. W. (2020). COVID-19 and African Americans. *JAMA* (Opinion Paper). Retrieved from https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2764789.

Yusof, A. N. A., & Rahmat, N. H. (2020). Communication Barriers at the Workplace: A Case Study. European Journal of Education Studies., Vol 7(10), pp 228-240. Retrieved from https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejes/article/view/3299.