

Examining First-time Remote Workers' Perceptions on Work From Home Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Future Potential of Hybrid Work Mode

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Abstract : The COVID-19 outbreak has forced many employees to extensively adopt remote work or, widely known as work from home (WFH) arrangements. During the last two years, both employers and employees have had the opportunity to be increasingly aware of the benefits and drawbacks of WFH. Likewise, it gained the attention of academics from various schools of thought who have been interested in the future of work practices and work-life balance. Additionally, employees might also have various demands regarding their work practices after the pandemic. This study explores the potential of hybrid ways of working in the post-pandemic period by comparing first-timers who (sometimes or always) worked from home during the pandemic with those who did not, in terms of the aspects of work-life balance, work-life interference, job performance and willingness to work from home after the pandemic. The quantitative research approach was adopted. Data were collected via an online questionnaire from employees working from home in Hong Kong during the pandemic. There were one thousand three hundred and twenty-eight responses, but only 1,235 respondents experienced working from home during the pandemic. The findings reveal that 72.2% never had or hardly experienced work from home prior to the pandemic. There were statistically significant differences between first-timers and non-first-timers in work-life balance and work-life interference. The study also found that first-timers who were always working from home during the pandemic would prefer having longer WFH after the pandemic than those who were sometimes working from home. These results would serve as a basis for policy development, enabling policymakers to design appropriate HR policies and amend them to meet the current context of actual employee needs.

Keywords : hybrid working mode, remote working, work from home, work-life balance, workplace

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