

What Makes Remote Teams Work: Exploring The Factors Behind Effective Virtual Collaboration

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the dynamics of team management in this context in depth, including how team interactions are formed and how team effectiveness is maintained in a virtual workspace. Using a qualitative approach, this study explore in-depth how team management is carried out in a remote work system, what challenges arise, and how team members interpret their experiences of working in a distributed manner. This research is expected to contribute not only to the theoretical aspects of human resource management but also to provide practical guidance for companies in building a more inclusive, collaborative, and adaptive remote work system to meet changing times. Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that have been carried out in this study, the following conclusions can be drawn: Teamwork is related to the existence of solidarity within team members who work together where they depend on each other for resources to achieve organizational goals. Teamwork is an association or group of individuals who depend on each other for tasks and shared responsibility for which the results of performance are very high compared to the results of work done by individuals.

Keywords: Team Interaction, Team Effectiveness, Remote Work.

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INTRODUCTION

Major changes in the world of work have occurred due to advances in information technology. One of the most significant forms of transformation is the emergence and spread of the concept of remote work. Although currently recognized as a modern work model, the idea of working from different locations is not new. Long before the modern industrial era, artists and craftspeople were accustomed to working independently in their studios. However, the term telecommuting formally became known in the 1970s, introduced by Jack Nilles, a NASA engineer, as a work model aimed at reducing transportation needs and increasing organizational efficiency (Nilles & Gray, 1975).

In this context, work-life balance is a crucial issue that can impact an individual's mental and physical health. Smith and Lewis (2020) emphasize that good work schedule management can help individuals feel more relaxed and avoid burnout due to work pressure. Furthermore, from an organizational perspective, this

work model can also reduce operational costs such as electricity, water, and office facilities. By eliminating the need for a physical workspace, companies can allocate resources to other strategic aspects.

However, behind these benefits, there are complex challenges that cannot be ignored. Remote work requires a different management approach than conventional work patterns. In this research framework, these challenges are grouped into four main interconnected factors: communication, leadership, technology, and work habits. These four factors form the bridge that shapes the quality of team interactions, which ultimately impacts team effectiveness in a remote work context. One of the biggest challenges in remote work is ensuring effective communication among team members. In a traditional work environment, face-to-face communication allows for nonverbal cues that enrich messages. However, in a virtual environment, communication relies heavily on digital media such as email, instant messaging apps, and video conferencing platforms.

The absence of spontaneous communication, such as small talk in the workspace, can also diminish the sense of team camaraderie. This often leads to alienation, misunderstandings, and even decreased work motivation. Therefore, organizations need to develop communication strategies that are rich in meaning and relevance in the virtual work context. Beyond communication, leadership is key in managing remote teams. Leadership styles based on direct control become less effective in this context. Bass and Riggio (2006), in their transformational leadership theory, emphasize that leaders who inspire, provide individual attention, and build trust are more effective in navigating the dynamics of virtual teamwork. A leader not only acts as a director but also as a facilitator, maintaining team spirit and rhythm. In practice, leaders in remote work systems need to be more sensitive to changes in team members' emotions and motivations. They must actively create spaces for social interaction, even virtually, such as through informal online meetings or open feedback systems. This is crucial for building a sense of belonging and avoiding the psychological isolation that often occurs in remote work.

Technology is the foundation that makes remote work possible. From communication tools to project management systems, everything is integrated into a single digital ecosystem. Lipnack and Stamps (2000) stated that the success of virtual teams depends heavily on the use of collaborative technology that supports real-time interaction, information sharing, and effective work documentation. However, having technology doesn't always mean being able to use it effectively. Digital literacy is a key requirement for every team member to be able to utilize available technology. Furthermore, the readiness of the organizational culture to adapt to technology is also crucial. Without a culture that supports innovation and experimentation, technology use will become merely symbolic without function.

Remote work also drives a transformation in work habits. Flexible working hours, unbound work locations, and demands for independent time management have become the new norm. In this environment, self-discipline becomes a crucial competency for every worker. However, without clear organizational structure and support, this flexibility can actually create confusion and decrease productivity (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). Work culture is also shifting. Previously, productivity was often measured by physical presence in the office. Now, work results and tangible

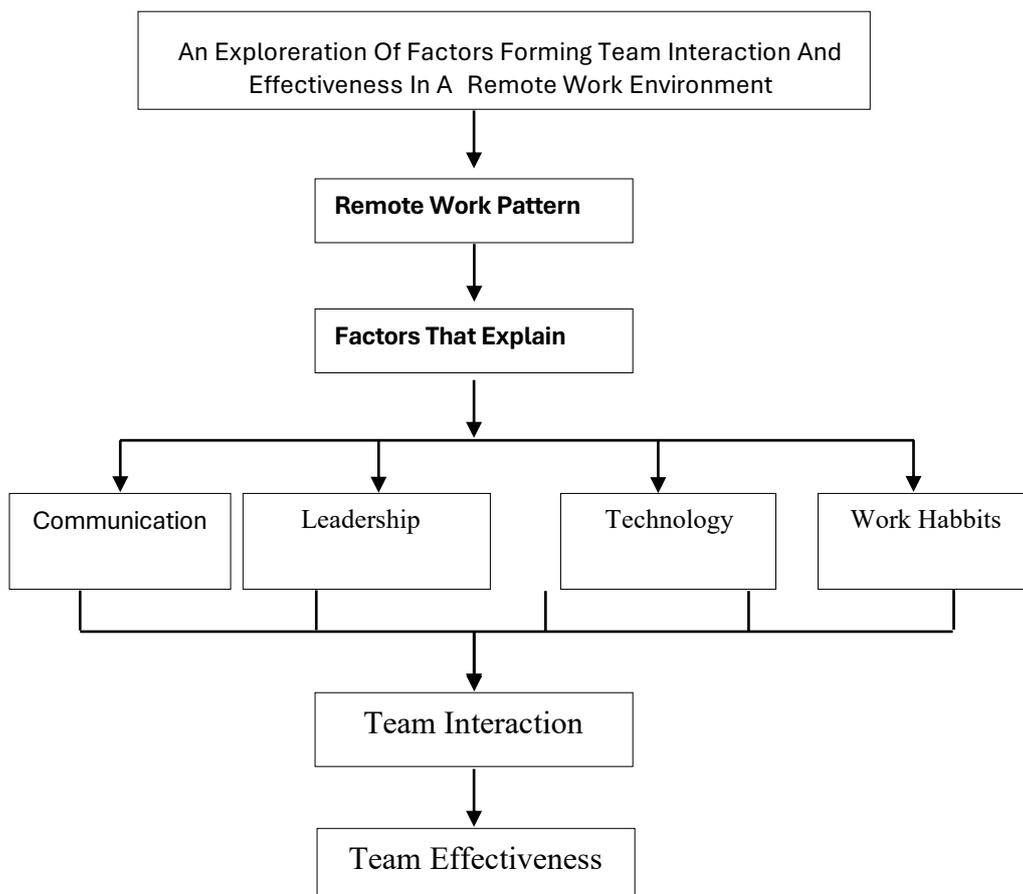
contributions are the primary indicators. Organizations that are unable to adapt these success indicators will have difficulty in assessing employee performance objectively.

This research is expected to contribute not only to the theoretical aspects of human resource management, but also to provide practical guidance for companies in building a more inclusive, collaborative, and adaptive remote work system to the changing times.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to explore the factors that shape team interactions and contribute to team effectiveness in the context of remote work at PT. Tohjiwa, Bali. In recent years, remote work patterns have become a popular choice in many organizations, including PT. Tohjiwa. However, the effective implementation of remote work depends heavily on the work patterns adopted and how the organization manages explanatory factors such as communication, leadership, technology, and work habits. These factors are believed to play a significant role in shaping the quality of team interactions that occur in virtual workspaces. Strong team interactions, ultimately, will be key to improving team effectiveness, especially in situations that require collaboration without physical presence.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exploring Factors that Shape Team Interaction and Effectiveness in a Remote Work Environment

Team interaction and effectiveness in a remote work environment are influenced by several factors. These factors include effective communication, supportive leadership, trust among team members, clear goals, and adequate organizational and technological support. Here's a more detailed explanation of these factors:

1. Effective Communication:

In a remote work environment, effective communication is key. Teams must ensure clear and frequent communication channels, whether through instant messaging platforms, video conferencing, or email. Utilizing online collaboration tools like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Google Workspace can help maintain coordination and organize information. Team members need to be aware of differing communication styles and learn to adapt to ensure messages are conveyed effectively.

2. Supportive Leadership

Leaders in remote teams need to be able to motivate, inspire, and support team members. They need to set an example in communicating, collaborating, and maintaining team morale. Leaders must ensure all team members have equal opportunities to participate and share their ideas, especially in virtual meetings. Regular and constructive feedback can help team members understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

3. Trust Among Team Members

Trust is a crucial foundation for effective teams, both in physical and remote work environments. Leaders need to create a safe and inclusive environment where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, and taking risks. Team members need to respect each other's differences in background, work styles, and personalities. Virtual team building activities, such as online gaming sessions or virtual social events, can help strengthen relationships among team members.

4. Clear Goals and Organizational Support

Each team member must clearly understand the team's goals and how their work contributes to achieving those goals. Organizations need to provide the necessary resources, such as software, training, and technical support, to enable team members to work effectively. Clear and measurable performance evaluation mechanisms are needed to provide feedback and ensure team members are on track.

5. Other Supporting Factors

The availability of stable and easy-to-use technology is crucial in a remote work environment. Team members need to have good time management skills to maintain

productivity and maintain a work-life balance. Organizations need to prioritize team member well-being by providing mental health programs and other support.

Leadership that inspires followers to transcend their own self-interest, that is capable of having an extraordinary impact on followers This type of leader provides individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, and has charisma. Transformational leaders pay attention to the concerns and development needs of individual followers; they change followers' awareness of issues by helping them see problems in new ways and they are able to excite, arouse, and inspire followers to exert extra effort to achieve group goals.

Work flexibility refers not only to variations in work time and place, but also to the division of labor, leave (such as maternity leave), part-time work, and work duration. Flexible working hours offer ease of planning, rather than reducing working hours. Thus, flexibility in work can be summarized as the ability of employees to control the duration of their work hours and their work location. This ability should be offered by companies because various perceived benefits indicate that flexible working hours have a different form than regular working hours. The difference is in the hours and time of work, meaning that workers can do their work on time, whenever and wherever they want. Time flexibility in the workforce is also a form of a company's plan for its employees without intending to reduce their working hours. This is done so that employees can work whenever they want while still meeting the minimum working hours determined by the company. Flexible working hours in practice have several benefits that are very helpful for both employees and companies. The advantage received by employees by implementing a flexible working hours system is that employees can control their working hours more freely so that it does not interfere with their personal life, thus workers can achieve a balance between work and personal life. In this study, the researcher will use the term "remote working," and will base it on a theory that uses the terms telecommuting and telework as the preferred terminology. With the rapid development of technology, companies must implement new strategies that reflect the current workforce characteristics. These characteristics include improving working conditions, employee relationships, productivity, and employee job satisfaction.

However, although remote work is considered more effective and flexible in balancing work and life, it still presents challenges, including the following:

1. Fostering spontaneous and informal conversations within the team
2. Maintaining a mentoring program between leaders and team members
3. Continuing face-to-face tasks
4. Integrating new team members
5. Maintaining company/team culture
6. Maintaining team cohesion
7. Socializing with coworkers
8. Avoiding too many meetings
9. Preventing feelings of isolation
10. Availability of ergonomic work facilities
11. Availability of network connectivity
12. Availability of quality computers/laptops

Communication is the process of conveying ideas, hopes, and messages through specific symbols that convey meaning, carried out by a messenger to a recipient.

To maximize teamwork, you need to keep task groups small, ensure performance standards and objectives are clear and acceptable, achieve some initial success, and follow practical guidelines. Maximizing teamwork performance requires cohesiveness. Cohesiveness is characterized by strong relationships among team members who feel interdependent in the sequence of tasks, interdependent on desired outcomes, and a strong sense of commitment as part of a team. Effective communication is essential. In the context of globalization and remote work, it is also important to consider the factors that influence the performance of virtual work teams. Successful work teams typically have a culture of continuous evaluation and regular feedback. Research shows that teams that consistently evaluate their performance and provide feedback to their members are able to identify areas for improvement and boost overall performance. This process also helps teams stay focused on shared goals and improve the quality of work (Sari, D. R., & Dewi, 2018). Regular evaluations provide teams with an opportunity to measure progress and adjust their approach as needed. By providing constructive feedback, team members can better understand their strengths and areas for improvement, allowing them to focus on those improvements. This creates a cycle of continuous improvement that supports overall team performance. A culture of positive evaluation and constructive feedback also contributes to stronger team cohesion.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that have been conducted in this study, the following conclusions can be obtained: Teamwork is related to the existence of solidarity within team members who work together where they depend on each other for resources to achieve organizational goals. Teamwork is an association or group of individuals who depend on each other for tasks and are jointly responsible for which the results of performance are very high compared to the results of work done in individuals. Successful work teams generally have a high level of collaboration between their members. This level of collaboration is achieved through open communication and mutual respect between team members. With flexible working hours, employees can set their working hours according to their wishes, usually occurs for employees who have children to take care of. With flexible time arrangements, employees can set priorities between office work and obligations at home so that a balance can be achieved. This work system can also increase employee work motivation, because workers can set their own work style.

Team effectiveness indicators are benchmarks that show how well a team achieves its goals, the quality of its work processes, and the satisfaction of its members. The main indicators include the achievement of team goals and objectives, the quality and quantity of work results, the timeliness of task completion, the effectiveness of communication between members, and the level of satisfaction and engagement of team members. Team Effectiveness Indicators Based on Results and Performance are the first Goal Achievement which means the team is considered effective if it succeeds in achieving the goals or targets that have been set, the second is the quality and quantity of work results, namely output measures such as the

number of cases completed, reports received, or products produced as indicators of team performance, and the last is timeliness, namely the completion of tasks or projects according to the specified schedule, indicating team efficiency.

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