

Management's Role in Telework Employee Engagement

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Abstract

This research paper breaks down the importance of management's role in employee engagement in the virtual work environment by analyzing previously conducted academic literature. The academic literature highlights the factors that contribute to employee success while working from home, which is more prominent due to the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. The contributing factors are: mentorship, technological support, communication, age (stage of life), and burnout. Throughout the research conducted for this paper, a major focal point in how employee engagement relies on the importance of management influence and involvement.

Keywords: engagement, virtual work environment, management

How can management keep their work from home employees engaged and motivated?

Remote work and telecommuting are increasingly common due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which started affecting the United States economy in early 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a global upset and the United States aimed to take some control of the virus spread by the shelter in place orders, which called for the closure of non-essential businesses. Businesses that were considered non-essential had to get creative if they wanted to survive the pandemic and in order to overcome the unique challenge presented at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work became increasingly popular. Even in 2022, there are several businesses who do not intend to bring employees back into the office, such as Twitter and Facebook (Choudhury, 2020). With the increase of remote workplaces, management and employee engagement have been impacted because of the limited or nonexistent in-person contact and collaboration. It is important to evaluate how employees and management are able to overcome the workplace challenges.

My interest in work from home benefits and challenges has dramatically increased since I became affected by the change to my work schedule in March of 2020. This change occurred due to the economic climate and the peak of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19. Previous to the pandemic, I was expected to go into the office five days a week, but now I am only in the office two days a week, while working from home the remaining three days. I am curious about work from home and management's role in setting their employees up for success.

I have reviewed several sources that dive into remote work and management's role in the virtual work environment. The case studies I have included in my research have been conducted to investigate the impact on employee engagement with a focus in mentorship, technological support, communication, age and stage of life, and burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. The case studies used in this research paper highlight what have been identified as the crucial points of remote work and management's role in employee engagement.

For reference, the term engagement for the sake of this research paper is defined as, “the individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work” (Megha, 2016, p. 80). Engagement in work is vital to our success in our roles and how we contribute to our employers’ goals and accomplishments. “Employee engagement has consistently been correlated with several important organisational outcomes that constitute a competitive advantage, such as enhanced commitment and performance, reduced absenteeism, enhanced organisational financial returns and organisational effectiveness and positive financial and customer metrics” (De Klerk et al., 2021, p. 3). Organizations benefit from investing in employee engagement because it impacts each and every aspect of the organization.

Another important factor to keep in mind throughout this research paper is how the case studies used in this research paper do not reference any difference between remote work and telecommuting. This research paper does, however, consider the difference of telecommuting and remote work. Parris (2018) explains the differences in remote work and telecommuting as “Remote work implies that the worker lives outside of the geographic area of the company’s main headquarters or office. Telecommuting and telework can mean that there may (or may not) be some on-site work being done by the worker” (para 4). As to not exclude or limit the scope of the research too much, both remote work and telecommuting have been included because although one refers to a completely off-site employee and one refers to a partially off-site employee, both are exposed to the challenges of employee engagement with working outside of the office.

Whether an employee works from home full-time, or splits their time in the office and at home, employees need to be able to maintain their engagement in their work and management can provide some aid in this area. Employers and management are responsible for the productivity of their employees. With the changes that have ensued from 2020 to today, 2022, employee engagement is still on the forefront of organization success. In order for employees to

continue to perform at their best, management needs to consider their role in employee engagement in the virtual work environment.

My research question, how management can keep their remote and telework employees engaged, has been useful to me with my own telework experience. My goal for the research is to incorporate the information I found into my current role. The global pandemic allowed for me to work from home three days a week since March of 2020 and I want to make sure that I am able to set myself up for success, especially since there is no definite plan to go back into the office full-time.

Literature Review

Over the past few years, more specifically starting in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted non-essential businesses and non-essential travel. Employers have had to limit the number of on-site employees and businesses have chosen to seek alternatives to in-office work stations, such as remote work or telecommuting. “The pandemic resulted in the highest number of simultaneous global shutdowns/lockdowns in history. By early April 2020, the restrictions impacted 3.9 billion people, including 90% of the population of the United States” (Hayes et al., 2021, p. 2). Since the beginning of 2020, humanity has been trying to adapt to a different way of life because of the global pandemic. The pandemic has caused concern for everyone’s health and while safety measures have been put into place to keep everyone healthy, some measures have been taken such social distancing and allowing employees to work from home. This research paper aims to explore how management needs to keep their remote or telecommuting employees engaged with their position and their team.

Organizational culture and department morale can change during times of transitions, such as employees who are no longer onsite full-time, or at all. Shockley et al. (2021) explains the impact on employees by providing estimated numbers of pre-pandemic work from home employees, the estimates from April 2020, and the projected increase of remote workers.

Moreover, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic brought about a huge increase in remote work, with estimates that 12.3% of U.S. workers were fully remote before the pandemic, 47.7% were fully remote in April 2020, 41.8% were fully remote in October 2020, and 22.9% project being remote in 2025 (Shockley et al., 2021, p. 1466).

With such an abrupt change to work schedules and the influx of remote workers and telecommuters, comes the challenge of adjusting to new norms. While it can be tough to predict the future in terms of remote work and telecommuters, many employees have been working from home in some capacity for the majority of 2020 and beyond. The global pandemic has impacted management and the way that managers communication and connect with their employees. Management has had the challenge of tackling employee engagement in this virtual environment.

The global pandemic has certainly presented its fair share of challenges when it comes to adapting to work from home routines from the previous in-office schedules. According to Agovino (2021), the pandemic has impacted the typical office hours. Remote work schedules have allowed for employees to experience increased flexibility in the workplace.

The pandemic dealt what is likely a serious blow to the five-day, 9-to-5, in-office workweek that has underpinned work life for nearly a century. Flexibility had been seeping into the workplace, but now it's flooding the corporate world as companies have discovered that remote work didn't slash productivity and employees valued the arrangement (Agovino, 2021, p. 34)

The flexibility with full-time or even partial work from home employees has presented new opportunities for organizations and employees. Since the number of work from home employees has risen, so has the reality that many positions can be completed by remote workers. Many employees would rather have the added flexibility of being a remote worker and would take a pay-cut over having to go back into the office full-time. Agovino (2021) continues,

But even so, according to research from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 70 percent of employed Americans would prefer to work remotely on a full-time or part-time basis if given the option, and 35 percent would accept a salary reduction in return for that flexibility. Also according to SHRM's research, nearly 20 percent of employed Americans who would prefer to work from home in some capacity would start looking for a remote position elsewhere—and 7 percent would quit their job—if their employer did not give them the option to work remotely (p. 34)

Generally speaking, the pandemic has adjusted the typical work schedules. The shifts from in-office to remote work or telework were not all negative experiences for employees. The improvements of technology in the last decade have paved the way for remote work. While there are quite a variety of jobs that cannot be remote or telecommuting positions, there are several roles that can be performed off-site. Due to employees and management being located in different areas from work from home schedules, management has the challenge of how to keep their employees engaged and motivated. A few of the factors that case studies have identified as areas to focus on are: mentorship (Yarberry & Sims, 2021), technological support (Hirsch, 2017), communication (Fukumura et al., 2021), age and stage of life (Fukumura et al., 2021), and burnout (Hayes et al., 2021).

Work relationships, more specifically in 2020 at the start of the global pandemic, have shifted from in-person to the virtual work environment. The virtual work environment provides employee flexibility with creating their individually tailored daily work schedule, since employees will not have the daily commute times. Employees tend to feel a greater sense of accomplishment when their strengths are being utilized in their roles and they are able to contribute to the organization's goals (Kim et al., 2021). Employee engagement is individualized by differing motivational factors, which are determined by the employee's stage of life (Fukumura et al., 2021). Management is responsible for their team's engagement and

involvement in the organization and management is also responsible for the success or failures of their employees.

Mentorship

Employee engagement and involvement towards the organization's goals can feel differently due to the employee not being physically on-site, which is where mentorship can play a vital role in engagement. "Virtual mentoring is essential for providing emotional support, creating opportunities for dialogue, helping employees discover a balance between work and life, implementing a reward system, and enhancing an overall sense of well-being and belongingness for employees working in virtual/remote environments" (Yarberry & Sims, 2021, p. 237).

Mentorship is a beneficial approach for employees to connect with each other on a professional and personal level.

According to Stewart and Harrison (2016) mentorship is a developmental tool which organizations should invest in because it promotes professional growth for employees, enhances employee skills, and contributes to a healthy organizational culture. "A mentor can have a major impact on a protégé's professional career and this can encourage employee engagement which consequently increases employee retention and productivity" (Stewart & Harrison, 2016, p.14). Employees who are disengaged are likely to contribute to the high turnover rate. An example of this is the government and finance industries, which both have the highest turnover rates. Both industries also have the highest rate of disengaged employees. Stewart and Harrison (2016) mention the high turnover rates and high disengagement of employees in these industries can be counteracted by implementing mentorship programs. Mentors also can assist with keeping employees motivated and engaged in their position, because it allows for employees to check-in with each other and create a trusting relationship. Employees and mentors can also benefit because it allows for them to build each other up and to focus on self-empowerment (Montgomery, 2017). "Mentoring is a time-tested, cost-effective developmental tool an organization can implement to facilitate the sharing of skills, insight, knowledge, and

experiences” (Stewart & Harrison, 2016, p.14). Not only does mentorship encourage employee engagement, but it also increases learning opportunities which can be important for employee growth, advancement and organizational knowledge sharing (Stewart & Harrison, 2016).

Mentoring provides opportunities for career growth and it aids in employee retention for organizations. “Mentoring, based on multiple tenets of social learning theory, is a recognized human resource/career development activity that could be easily implemented in a virtual environment” (Yarberry & Sims, 2021, p. 240). Mentor relationships offer employees access to influential higher level employees in the organization, organizational influence, and reduces employee dissatisfaction.

Mentorship in a virtual environment can be a challenge, but research shows this transaction from in-person interactions to virtual interactions should be prioritized by employees and management to keep employees engaged and focused on their career development (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

Technological Support

In order for work from home employees be successful, employees should have available resources set in place by management and their organization to ensure that they have everything they need to complete their assigned tasks. “It’s also important for company leaders to use technology themselves and provide appropriate training to the entire workforce, says Kevin Eikenberry, founder of The Kevin Eikenberry Group and co-founder of the Remote Leadership Institute in Indianapolis” (Hirsch, 2017, p. 68). With the technological advances, there are many tools available to assist managements’ efforts to support their virtual teams. Some of those resources include: Slack, Zoom, World Time Buddy, Trello, Teamweek, Groove and Google Drive (Hirsch, 2017).

According to the research by Manko and Rosinski (2021), technological support goes beyond just supplying employees with the physical resources required for employees who have transitioned to work-from-home schedules. Part of technological support is training employees

to use Virtual Private Network, how to use online communication software and the importance of Information Technology support. “Key responsibilities of management- to summarize the various sources cited in this review- would include: providing the necessary equipment and training for remote work” (Manko & Rosinski, 2021, p. 45). The research suggests that organizations that fail to place importance on work-from-home training could find unengaged and frustrated employees (Manko & Rosinski, 2021).

Hirsch (2017) recommends weekly virtual meetings where the company arranges pairs of employees together in a virtual gathering to keep employees engaged and connected. Another strategy is regular weekly meetings at the beginning of the workweek to have the department aligned with the goals for the week. “Teleconferencing alone may not be adequate to keep remote workers connected. Managers should use webcams as well as other video platforms to ensure that remote workers can see their co-workers and vice versa” (Hirsch, 2017, p. 69). To establish a close to the workweek, management should arrange for employees to connect and review the work completed throughout the week (Hirsch, 2017). Each organization has different technological support needs for their work from home employees and there is a surplus of technological tools available to support work from home employees.

Communication

Communication can feel less personal with remote workers and telecommuters due to the limited contact with other employees. Shockley et al. (2021) has concluded that there is such a thing as communication overload. Excessive communication can contribute to employee burnout and decreased productivity. Though excessive communication is counteractive towards productivity, Shockley et al. (2021) confirms communication quality is more important than the quantity. Communication frequency will vary dependent on manager, employee, and organization, because there is no one solution or strategy that fits all business and employee needs (Hirsch, 2017).

Hirsch (2017) concluded that managers should check-in with their employees on a regular basis to ensure that work performance is at a reasonable level with the expected output and that any complications get hashed out and addressed. “Many organizations hold regularly scheduled team meetings using Web-based solutions to keep remote workers from feeling alienated and disconnected” (Hirsch, 2017, p.69). Hirsch (2017) mentions that the company GrooveHQ holds team meetings at the beginning and the end of the week to keep the team aligned with the priorities. The research does not mention the time allotted for the Monday meeting, but the Friday meeting is mentioned to be a 30-minute summary to end the week (Hirsch, 2017).

Employees expect communication to be a valuable resource for them to effectively complete their work goals. Management should ensure that their employees understand the expectations of productivity in the virtual work environment. In order for employees to be productive, management should make sure their employees have the appropriate technological support required to efficiently complete the assigned tasks, such as ensuring that work from home employees have a designated work space to create a separation of work-life and home-life (Fukumura et al., 2021).

Age (Stage of Life)

The success of remote workers and telecommuters can be impacted by the age of employees and their stage of life. Remote work and telecommuting allow for employees to have flexibility with their work schedules, so it is really ideal for those who do not have the daily commute. It also gives organizations the ability to hire outside of their general region. Companies who can search for talent outside of the companies' geographical regions have access to a widened talent pool (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

Along with the benefit of non-daily commutes, employees of all ages have the advantage of an ideal work-life balance (Manoochchri & Pinkerton, 2003). Employees who have the ideal work schedule flexibility to take care of their family and not worry about the required in-person

office hours are more likely to have higher job satisfaction. Family matters should not be expected to fall the wayside because of work demands (Kowalski & Swanson, 2011).

Though the flexibility of work from home has been ideal for many, it is not for everyone, but the employees who thrive with the flexibility of work from home schedules have reported healthier work-life balance, causing them to be more engaged and productive (Fukumura et al., 2021). “The combination of a flexible schedule and reduced commute offered many benefits such as spending more time with family members” (Fukumura et al., 2021, p. 226). Work from home requires employees to create new patterns to their daily routine, which can cause added stress, especially with the heightened uncertainty with these adjustments being made during a global pandemic. “Using time management techniques, telecommuters can more effectively keep the temporal boundaries between work and family from blurring or falling down completely” (Kowalski & Swanson, 2011, p. 1271). Flexible work schedules have also been associated with higher productivity. (De Klerk et al., 2021).

Flexible working arrangements have been associated with improved employee health and well-being, improved management of work and family role conflicts, increased engagement, greater job autonomy and psychological resources and improved commitment. Similarly, remote work has been correlated with outcomes, such as higher productivity, as employees are willing to recommit part of the time saved by not having to commute, improved morale, fewer work interruptions, better ability to coordinate work and non-work commitments, greater job satisfaction and commitment, less role stress and work–family conflict and increased work–life balance (De Klerk et al., 2021, p. 2)

Kowalski and Swanson (2011) suggest the use of a planner to stay organized and to assist with work-life balance. Not only does the daily routine of work days change, but home-life in general will change with those who work from home. Though new daily routines were necessary with the lack of commute time, employees had the opportunity to customize their work schedule.

Management puts a significant amount of trust in their employees who work from home and the organization would benefit from all of their employees having that same level of trust in their colleagues (Kim et al., 2021). Management trust is important, but employee confidence in their own abilities is also beneficial for their own empowerment (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

Once employees had enough time to personalize their routine and work schedule, according to Fukumura et al. (2021), work from home employees started to feel more relaxed and had grown accustomed to their workday routines. There was more time to complete household duties and get outside for fresh air. Work from home also allows for individuals to customize their work space at home and create the kind of environment that will make them more focused and productive (Fukumura et al., 2021).

Burnout

Work from home has a tendency to cause some anxiety, partially because of the stress of the global pandemic, balancing family responsibilities, and creating space for an at-home office. Remote work does have the disadvantage of employees who are always home potentially experiencing more family conflict because being home for work hours may add to their at-home responsibilities, causing more at-home stress. Although work from home provides more flexibility for a balanced work-life and home-life, it can also add more stress due to feeling confined to one's house. Those employees who have the added stress of a poor work-life and home-life balance are far more likely to experience negative health outcomes (Kim et al., 2021).

Burnout can be caused by many external factors, but management should be able to recognize the signs and take action to improve employee health and performance. In order for burnout to be recognized, it should be defined. Hayes et al. (2021) explains the definition of work-related burnout.

Unsurprisingly, the quantitative, emotional, and mental demands that contribute to work stress are consistent with sources of work-related burnout. "Burnout" is a psychological syndrome that is the result of long-term, job-specific, physical and

emotional exhaustion from interpersonal stress that results in detachment, cynicism, reduced feelings of efficacy and accomplishment and may have significant impacts on job performance and satisfaction (Hayes et al., 2021, p. 3).

While the global pandemic of 2020 caused a great deal of added stress by forcing many organizations to move their employees to some sort of work from home schedule, it also enabled many employees to have extra flexibility that they may not have otherwise (Hayes et al., 2021). Even so, all work from home employees should take the appropriate steps, such as limiting their work hours by creating a set schedule that will add value and reduce stress for their unique situation (Kowalski & Swanson, 2011).

The technological advances have allowed for certain employees to work from home, but it has also led to the increase in stress and eventually burnout. "The current research suggested there were personal mental health, time, and communication management issues for teams who are primarily interacting through technology" (Hayes et al., 2021, p. 10). Clearly, time management is a huge stress factor. Kowalski and Swanson (2011) have suggested the importance of having an individualized planner to create a health work-life balance which is essential to managing stress.

Literature Review Conclusion

This research paper's findings highlight the importance of management's role in employee engagement with the virtual work environment. The virtual work environment has its perks for employee engagement such as: the flexibility of work schedules (Fukumura et al., 2021), not having to commute five days a week, employee satisfaction, improved productivity and less office distractions (Kim et al., 2021). While the research has provided the advantages of remote work and telework, the research has also provided the disadvantages. It is important to note that the challenges in the virtual work environment, which add stress and may reduce employee engagement include: limited home office space (Kowalski & Swanson, 2011), blurred lines when it comes to vacation time and work-life balance with having access to work 24/7

(Kowalski & Swanson, 2011), and communication quality will likely suffer (Shockley et al., 2021). Despite the challenges the virtual work environments present for employees, management, and the organization, the technological advances have made work from home possible and efficient. Given the fact that the majority of remote workers or telecommuters had to make the quick adjustment to work from home, the pandemic definitely was an added stressor for an already stressful and short notice alteration to work schedules.

Management and employees need to work together to create a healthy virtual work environment to keep employees engaged. Since the COVID-19 pandemic caused an interruption to the global economy, the virtual work environment became a popular avenue for employees. The virtual work environment can be stressful on its own, but the global pandemic just heightened the stress on employees. Employees were faced with the transition from in-office life to the virtual work environment. Employees that have clear expectations from management are far more likely to have a healthy work-life balance (Fukumura et al., 2021).

Employees who work from home need to be able to manage themselves and should set realistic work-life boundaries. There will be days where employees may be more productive than others because life happens, so setting realistic expectations of them and setting realistic goals will help them create balance. In order to better serve themselves, work from home employees should be fluent with their time management skills and should even consider maintaining a planner to keep track of their work and home obligations (Kowalski & Swanson, 2011).

Methods

The methodology for this research paper is focused on case studies conducted on remote work and telecommuting. There has been an increase in studies conducted on remote work and telecommuting that provide a solid base on how management can work with their employees to keep them engaged, but the studies also lack the depth and participant variety. While the scopes

of the studies are limited, the studies still provide sufficient insight on work from home employee benefits and challenges pertaining to employee engagement.

Many of the case studies conducted their research by interviews and surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the research included in this paper was from sources that analyzed other case studies. The data and information collected were collected through Google Scholar and the Granite State College library.

Data and Limitations

The variables with using previously existing research is the time constraint of the research already conducted, along with the limited time frame of work from home availability. Due to the limitations of research on remote work and telecommuting, some sources are pre-pandemic, but they also provide the evidence that work from home advantages and disadvantages from a decade ago (2011) are still relevant to today's (2022) work-life roles. Technology improvements have aided in work from home ease, but the advances still have room for improvement.

Fukumura et al. (2021) case study used surveys to analyze the pros and cons of work from home in a healthcare setting. The survey was conducted via Qualtrics and it was open for nearly a month and half to professionals associated with Fukumura et al. (2021). Some of the responses were from professionals that were outside of the United States, but their responses were still relevant to the study because it was conducted during a time where the whole world was impacted by COVID-19, and yet it is important to note that countries handled the pandemic in different manners. Fukumura et al. (2021) sorted the data into themes that were observed throughout the responses by a few different coders with expertise in different fields of study to ensure that the themes were obvious to professionals with varying experience. The authors all were living through the experience of working from home, so it can be interpreted that the themes were very apparent due to their own situations. They concluded that individuals have

varying work from home needs because of each individual's unique home life, individual preferences and work obligations, which can provide insight into the various challenges presented with work from home (Fukumura et al., 2021).

Kim et al. (2021) examine previously conducted research on the correlation of management and their role in employee performance and motivation. There seems to be little information on telework positions and organizational benefits. With the COVID-19 pandemic, work from home has become more popular and there is an interest in weighing out the associated advantages and disadvantages pertaining to engagement. While Kim et al. (2021) did not directly conduct any surveys of their own, they did use previous studies to analyze and lay a foundation for future research on telework, management, and organizational performance. This research added the important element of supervisory roles and their impact on telework settings (Kim et al., 2021).

While Manoochehri and Pinkerton (2003) also did not directly conduct any surveys, they discussed the early findings of telecommuting. This source is dated in terms of the average age resource, but it was included to provide some insight for how long the opportunities and challenges of work from home have impacted businesses. Luckily with the technological improvements from 2003 to 2022, work from home environments is much more advanced and efficient. The conclusion focuses on how management needs to be adaptable for telecommuting and embrace the advancements that will come with the growth in information technology, remote work, and the US economy (Manoochehri & Pinkerton, 2003).

Even with the technological advances, there are still gaps in research on work from home studies. Narayanan et al. (2017) dig into the history of work from home methods and point some blanks of the current research that has been conducted up through 2017. Work from home has become increasingly desired and the virtual work environment has opened the doors for a competitive workforce for businesses. While Narayanan et al. (2017) evaluating previously conducted research can provide an opportunity to reflect on areas of improvement in future

research conducted on work from home environments, the observations and analysis are merely reiterating the opportunity for improvements on future research. The conclusion was outlining the need for different theoretical perspectives in regards to appropriate implementation of telework practices (Narayanan et al., 2017).

Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic on remote work, such as the source Shockley et al. (2021), tend to be open to collect data in a short time frame. During the four week observation, hypotheses by Shockley et al. (2021) were tested in a sample size of 471 full-time employees who had to make the transition from in-office to remote work with little time to prepare due to COVID-19 and state safety guidelines. With the research focus solely on communication, it was concluded that communication quality has a stronger link to employee performance over communication frequency. The authors did note that there was a relatively small sample size of participants in their study, but it does also introduce a sample for how research could be conducted in the future (Shockley et al., 2021).

It is always beneficial to have different source perspectives so Yarberry and Sims (2021) provide the significance of Human Resource Development for virtual teams. Virtual work environments are non-traditional and provide a unique set of challenges for each professional. Though only eight participants were examined in this case study, the participants professional experiences varied to provide insight into the assorted virtual work environments. In conclusion, organizations and HRD professionals will have to get innovative with their Human Resource responsibilities with the virtual workplace (Yarberry & Sims, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Research

For future studies, it would be beneficial to survey management and their team. Management may not realize how uninvolved they are with their employees as a result of the lack of in-person contact. It is important to consider management interactions and how the interactions vary across professions, which can also depend on the employee's role (Hirsch,

2017). Management may want to consider conducting their own surveys to their employees in order to gauge their employee's recommendations for improvements.

Research on remote work and telework are also limited on the long-term employee effects to employee engagement. The discussion of how work from home employees can feel isolated, which can impact mental health has not been addressed. Generally speaking, the limitations with remote work and telecommuting research comes from the fact that many organizations mainly have positive inflections of remote work. With the limited research and gaps in information on the long-term effects of work from home, it would be beneficial to consider how in-person behavior will be affected. There is also limited data on long-term productivity for remote workers. Remote work and telecommuting are not for everyone and research could improve on the motivational factors for each individual to observe the themes.

Conclusion

According to the research, management needs to have strong communication skills to lead their employees in the virtual work environment (Kim et al., 2021). While management's communication contributes to employee engagement, management and organizations should consider re-establishing the expectations of their virtual employees because depending on the employees' role, productivity measures will be different. It also is up to employees who work from home to be able to manage their work, anticipating that their workload is reasonable, but employees also need to be able to have realistic and healthy work-life boundaries (Fukumura et al., 2021).

Work from home trends became increasingly popular at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case studies presented in this research outlined the importance of management's role in telework employee engagement. Employee engagement depends on factors such as: mentorship, technological support, communication, age and stage of life, and burnout. Each

employee should be individualized because work from home and management are not a one-size-fits-all.

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