

## Remote Working with Work-life Balance

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*Abstract*— By late of the year 2019 and early of the year 2020, the new Coronavirus, called “COVID-19”, rapid spread all over the world. So people should isolate in their home, to have social distancing to prevent the spreading of the COVID-19. All businesses then sudden turn to an adopted virtual organization, entirely digitized, by remote working from home. The employees work at home using communication tools to connect with a remote computer site. A flexible work arrangement means adjustment working time at their home for a better work-life balance. In contrast, work-family conflict occurs when there are tension and strain between the roles undertaken in the separate domains of work and family. The advantages of remote working such as cut the cost of travel from home to office and return home, saving time. This remote working also saves resources of the organization, including electrical and water consumption. The disadvantages of remote working are as follows. Remote workers will depend on using ICTs. Due to the amount of Internet usage will be increased, not as usual, while their computer may be outdated. So the organization should support the employees to work from home, for example, extra payment for Internet usage or give a net sim to the employees for work from home. Importantly, work from home may face work-family conflict. The successful to adopted remote working is not only by employees but also employer as well. The director or boss should understand the factors which impact to finish the tasks, have a good plan, provide availability and flexibility of work, and aimed at the outcome. There are various applications to support work from home. If the organizations should pay for the apps, they have to concerned about the difference in price, features, and it’s easy to use.

*Keywords- Remote work, virtual organization, work from home, work-life balance, work-family conflict*

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st Century an adoption of using the communication and information technology (ICT),

exceptionally smartphones or mobile devices and Internet technology, providing virtual organization which can work automatically and remotely from anywhere at any time. By late of the year 2019 and early of the year 2020, the new Coronavirus, called “COVID-19”, rapid spread all over the world. So people should isolate in their home, to have social distancing to prevent the spreading of the COVID-19. All businesses then sudden turn to an adopted virtual organization, entirely digitized, by remote working from home.

This paper focuses on investigating the use of ICT, especially mobile devices and Internet technology for work from home. Besides, the advantages and drawback of work from home. How to manage the work from home boundaries? Lead to reduce the work-family conflict (WFC) or appropriated work-life balance (WLB).

### II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Messenger [1] and Dagnino [2] describes three generations of telework as following. The first generation, which called “home office” during the 1970s and 1980s, was stationary by desktop computers and communicated via landline or fixed telephones in the workers’ homes. It was a substitute for work in the office so-called “telecommuting”.

The second generation, call the mobile office. Workers were enabled to work both in the office and home called “third spaces”. Telework at this stage was partly substituting for work in the office. The fast-growing of the Internet and World Wide Web access, also made it accessible on smaller and more powerful devices such as smartphones and tablets take telework to its third generation, called “virtual office”. Modern ICTs then enable workers to work from anywhere at any time due to mobile devices and wireless network access.

The employees work at home using communication tools, such as smartphone, videoconference, email or Line, to connect with a remote computer site. A flexible work arrangement means adjustment working time and locations for better work-life balance [3]. Davis and Francis [4] has defined work-life balance (WLB) as “an overall level of contentment resulting from an assessment of one’s degree

of success at meeting work and family role demands". Conversely, work-family conflict (WFC) occurs when there are tension and strain between the roles undertaken in the separate domains of work and family.

**Contents of Remote Working**

To achieve the full advantages of remote working, it should contain people, processes, and technology, as shown in figure 1.

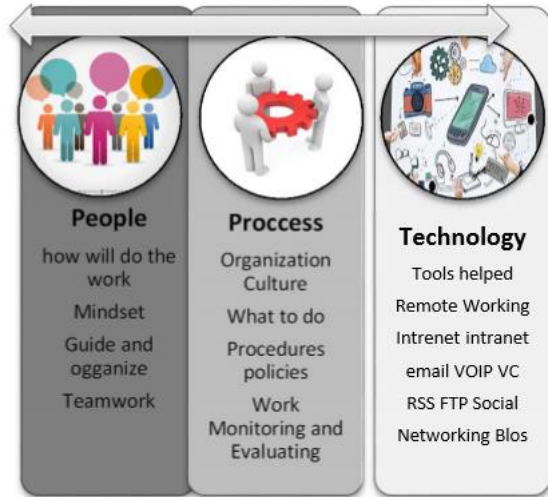


Figure 1 Content of remote working adopted from [5].

**The advantages of remote working**

Cut the cost of travel from home to office and return home, saving time and reduce pollution. The remote workers then have extra time or can manage a specific time for their tasks. According to CIPD's Survey 2012 stated that 56% of employers found that absence dropped. Due to remote workers can take care of themselves, then they likely to have fewer sick days than the regular workers.

**The drawback of remote working**

Some people need to contact their managers out of the schedule, and this also affects the tasks required. Remote workers will depend on 100 per cent on technology, so make sure that everyone can be easily reachable by using ICTs such as email, smartphone, etc. Some remote workers will be distracted when working from home by children around, TV shows. Also, they have unlimited access to websites and social media, which affect tasks and productivity. Importantly, in remote working, no team working, no knowledge sharing. So no one can improve his or her skills by learning from professionals or others [5].

In early 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has led to businesses all over the world, including Thailand, shifting to remote working to increase social distances. There are recommendations for work from home with work-life balancing as follows.

**1. Setting the workspace zone**

Setting a workspace zone that is separate from other parts of the house will help to concentrate on the job. If the

house does not have a dedicated workspace, try to find an area or corner of the room and use objects to separate them into a separate workspace. Also, tell the family members not to disturb in this workspace zone.

**2. Cut distractions environment**

Even though there are various noises, like the sound of TV that parents are watching. Wearing light music headphone will help to concentrate on the work. Besides, tell the family members not come into the work zone or call to talk during working hours. So there will not be a work-family conflict.

**3. Strictly with the working plan**

Work from home requires a lot of discipline. By in front of the computer at home at the same time every day. Clear work plan, including relaxation breaks. It is an excellent way to maintain a schedule like being work at the office.

**4. Prepare to communicate with the team**

Working at home may cause loneliness and stress. Using videoconference services like Zoom or group chat line with colleagues to support and exchange ideas on work. Furthermore, better communication while remote can help maintain your relationship with your colleagues, managers, and direct reports.

**5. Leave when you are off the clock**

The disadvantage of working from home is that the workspace and personal space are not separate. Which causes people to get stress from work. So after working hours away from the computer, including all the things that remind of work. Then go to do other activities, to reduce stress and restore energy, prepare to work in the next day [6][7].

**Application for work from home**

The situation of the crisis of COVID-19 that is severe in many countries, making the concept of working from home return to popular again. As it is one of the guidelines for "Social Distancing" to reduce the infection of COVID-19. According to buffer.com, stated that the freedom to work from anywhere, about 84% of these people preferred work from home. There are various applications to support work from home. Some useful applications are recommending as follows.

Line application is the number one popular app that everyone has loaded onto the smartphone or PC. Line is useful for discussing, tracking tasks, or notes, which are usually in the form of "group lines".

Zoom provides a full range of videoconference services. It is a tool for communication for various businesses. Especially the service called Zoom Meetings and Chat, which has both video and voice calling services. Zoom helps make video conferencing and voice calls more convenient and easier. In the free service model, it supports the work of a small team.

Once finished the work, the Dropbox application is recommending for sending information to the leader or staff. This application is a cloud-based data management service that is very convenient. It has a file-sharing feature for others to view or download for free up to 2TB of file storage.

Google Drive is beneficial for people who have to work remotely. Due to various features work better than similar drives in Dropbox and works well even on Mac computers. Its limitation is users need to be online while using Google Drive and Google docs. Google Drive also allows users and colleagues to work on the same document or spreadsheet calculation program in real-time, let all members see the changes able to comment on a document.

Office 365 is another essential application that needs to be loaded. It can work across platforms by supporting both Microsoft Windows and Macintosh operating system. The Office 365 suite includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote, Access, and Publisher, say as an ordinary program. It is a full-featured Office service with many services and capabilities. Office 365 Home is available for up to 6 users [8][9].

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The employees work at home using communication tools to connect with a remote computer site. A flexible work arrangement means adjustment working time at their home for a better work-life balance. In contrast, work-family conflict occurs when there are tension and strain between the roles undertaken in the separate domains of work and family. Remote working should contain people, processes, and technology. The advantages of remote working such as cut the cost of travel from home to office and return home, saving time. This remote working also conserves resources of the organization, including electrical and water consumption. The disadvantages of remote working are as follows. Remote workers will depend on using ICTs. Due to the amount of Internet usage will be increased, not as usual. While their computer may be outdated. So the organization should support the employees to work from home, for example, extra payment for Internet usage or give a net sim to the employees for work from home, allow them to borrow some computer and equipment. Importantly, work from home may face work-family conflict. There are five tips to manage the unavoidable stress of this situation and balance competing priorities as follows. 1) Setting the workspace zone 2) Cut distractions environment 3) Strictly with the working plan 4) Prepare to communicate with the team 5) Leave when you are off the clock. The successful to adopted remote working is not only by employees but also employer as well. The director or boss should understand the factors which impact to finish the tasks, have a well plan, provide availability and flexibility of work, and aimed at the outcome. Some employees may prefer to work strictly during office hours. In contradict, the others may manage their time as convenience. Then the milestones is used to tracking that the tasks will finished on schedule time.

In early of the year 2020, the situation of the pandemic of COVID-19 attempts to increase social distancing. There are various applications to support work from home. Some useful applications are recommending as follows. 1) The application for communication with colleagues via cloud services such as Line and email 2) The application for

communication with colleagues via videoconference such as Zoom, Microsoft Team, and Google Team 3) The application for storage via cloud service including Dropbox, One Drive, and Google Drive 4) The application for office work such as Microsoft Office 365 and Google Doc. Usually, Google supports educational institutions with Google for education or G Suite with no charge. So the educational institutions have all applications available to use, including Google Doc, Gmail, Google Drive, Google Teams, etc. Some organizations preferred to use Microsoft Suite, which they are familiar with the applications such as Microsoft Office 365, One Drive, Microsoft Teams, etc. Recently, some company offer their software with no charge or at a special rate to support work from home policy during the pandemic of COVID-19. If the organizations should pay for the applications, they have to concerned about the difference in price, features, and it's easy to use. This pandemic makes the opportunity for nearly all businesses to a sudden change to work online as a virtual organization or digital organization. But after this pandemic resolved, the organizations may have to pay for the cost to adopted remote working. Then remote working will be supplemental or substitutional for work in the office.

For further study, the exploration of the virtual university should be concerned. A comparison of various applications to point out the cost and profits of each product should be presented.

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