THE EFFECT OF REMOTE WORK AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

L'EFFET DU TRAVAIL À DISTANCE ET DE L'ÉQUILIBRE TRAVAIL-VIE SUR LA MOTIVATION DES EMPLOYÉS : UNE REVUE DE LA LITTÉRATURE

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Abstract:

During the Covid-19 crisis the approach of remote work that represents a form of work organization through which the employee performs tasks, outside the premises of the company on a regular and voluntary basis, using information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet (OLLIVIER, 2019) was adopted as an order of work. While the advantages of the method were welcomed by the employees, the emergence of its negative sides also caused some disruption in the work-life balance of employees. The deterioration of the work-life balance has led to changes in the emotions, thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of employees.

The point where the changes were most apparent was in employee motivation. The emergence of factors that can affect employee motivation has led to certain difficulties in the workflows and in the achievement of the objectives of the institutions.

In this sense, the objective of this study is to analyse through a literature review the changes in work patterns, disruptions in work-life balance and work-life balance and the effects of both on employee motivation during Covid-19.

Key words: crisis; Remote work; Work-life balance; motivation; Covid-19.

Résumé :

Pendant la crise de la Covid-19, l'approche du travail à distance, qui représente une forme d'organisation du travail par laquelle le salarié effectue des tâches, en dehors des locaux de l'entreprise, de façon régulière et volontaire, en utilisant les technologies de l'information et de la communication, notamment Internet (OLLIVIER, 2019), a été adoptée comme un ordre de travail.

Si les avantages de la méthode ont été bien accueillis par les employés, l'apparition de ses aspects négatifs a également perturbé l'équilibre entre la vie professionnelle et la vie privée des employés. La détérioration de l'équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie privée a entraîné des changements dans les émotions, les pensées, les attitudes et les comportements des employés.

C'est au niveau de la motivation des employés que les changements ont été les plus évidents. L'apparition de facteurs susceptibles d'affecter la motivation des employés a entraîné certaines difficultés dans les flux de travail et dans la réalisation des objectifs des institutions.

Dans ce sens, l'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser, à travers une revue de la littérature, les changements dans les modes de travail, les perturbations dans l'équilibre travail-vie privée et l'équilibre travail-vie privée et les effets de ces deux éléments sur la motivation des employés au cours de la Covid-19.

Mots clés : crise ; travail à distance ; équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie privée ; motivation ; Covid-19.

Introduction

Spreading around the world, the Covid-19 virus has brought with it various changes regarding the practices of societies in different fields. The changes have caused upheavals in the economies of several societies, as well as in the work-life balance of individuals and their psychological state.

If the changes that occur are evaluated in areas such as corporate life, working conditions and practices, the effect of micro changes can be explained in a more understandable way. The working life of individuals has experienced a change in the daily work patterns of organizations and this has also led to the change in their daily lives. Many of those organizations have tried to prepare their employees to adapt to remote work, allow them to adjust to the conditions, and attempt to minimize the impact of the virus on employees by changing their business operations and work habits (Nowacki, Grabowska and Lis, 2021, 245).

Knowing that human being is in the center of all disciplines his work-life balance constitutes an important element for a good business approach, it is a concept that has emerged with the spread of globalization and the increase in labor force participation rates, the employees have faced changes in their work life balance with the Covid-19 pandemic that have caused the difficulty of maintaining balance between their work responsibilities and their personal lives

In this sense, a definition of work-life balance has been proposed as the ability of individuals to successfully balance their private life and work roles, and it has become important for the individual to decide where, when, and how to work by providing work flexibility in the context of the concept (Uddin, 2021,2)

The transformation of employee work patterns has been a major factor in changing the work balance between the office and home. It has been observed that creating elements that can provide work-life balance has become a difficult situation for employees. In particular, the difficulties created by the division between the quality time individuals spend in their private life and the time they spend in their professional life have psychologically revealed their negative sides. An example of this is the increasing occurrence of syndromes such as low motivation and burnout.

Therefore, working on some of the elements and changes that have emerged during the covid-19 period have become an essential situation in terms of the orientation of institutions and individuals.

In this sense, the objective of the study is to examine the effects of remote work and work-life balance on the motivation of employees through the various previous literature reviews

It is within this framework that this paper in the guise of a literature review attempts to answer a main question which is: "In which measure can remote working affect the work-life balance and, consequently, can influence the motivation of the workers?"

In line with the purpose of the study, we will discuss the benefits of telecommuting and the key factors that employers and managers need to ensure that their staff is productive in a virtual work environment and that work-life balance is maintained.

Through this research we aim to investigate the multifaceted aspects of remote working and its implications on employee motivation. We commence with a literature review to provide a foundational understanding of remote work trends. Following this, we delve into the advantages and disadvantages of remote working (2) to identify key drivers and challenges in this mode of work. Given the exceptional circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we then focus on exploring remote work during the pandemic era. Subsequently, we examine various remote working models to understand the diverse approaches employed by organizations. A conceptual framework for work-life balance is proposed , and it will guide the design and implementation of a work-life balance survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, we investigate the effects of remote work and work-life balance on employee motivation

This paper is literature research with a theory-based approach that focuses on the concept of work-life balance in remote working and its influence on the motivation of employees. The data used is related and relevant to the research topic in the form of literature review, scientific journal articles, textbooks and scientific articles. The results of the discussion are compiled in a synthesis.

1. Literature review of Remote Work

Remote working has been recommended by the World Health Organization to governments and organizations worldwide, as a new innovation for tackling the propagation of the virus, as well as a way of ensuring that work is carried out as usual.

The concept of home-based work was first suggested in the 1970s as telecommuting or telework, a new option for conducting work from various locations (office, home, or other) using technological assistance (van Meel 2011) Remote working is often presented as one of the major solutions for better reconciling private and professional life, in particular through a

reduction in travel time (Baruch, 2001) and greater flexibility and freedom in the way days are organized in order to better adapt to the temporality and needs of personal and family life (Nätti et al., 2011)

In this regard, telework has become a concept that expresses an order of work that is based on information and communication technologies. In the definitions of remote work, it is expressed as a method of work that allows employees to carry out their professional activities in outside areas with the help of the use of information and technologies (Al-Rfou, 2021, 96). It can also be summarized as an application that allows employees to work outside of traditional work environments

Research today reveals both positive and negative effects of remote work on employees and their employers. For example, in one of the studies, it was found that remote working was effective on employees' psychological health, affecting their job satisfaction and performance. Several outcomes of working from home have been found in empirical studies, like enhanced job effectiveness, higher job satisfaction, reduced turnover intentions and reduced stress levels (Vega et al. 2015; Contreras et al. 2020; Kossek et al. 2006; Fonner and Roloff 2010; Anderson et al. 2015).

In another study, the remote work method reveals a win-win situation for both the employer as well as the employee. It allows for less office space to be used for the employer, and provides a better work-life balance for the employee, while increasing job satisfaction and (Felstad, Henseke, 2017,197)

Working from home is a dual-edged sword (Schieman and Glavin 2017; Kim et al. 2019) that has a mitigated effect on work-life balance, welfare, and worker satisfaction. Working from home fosters job satisfaction (Cohen and Liani 2009; Chung 2018; Coenen and Kok 2014; Contreras et al. 2020).

2. Advantages and disadvantages of remote working

Remote work can be defined as "work performed away from the employer's premises, possibly at home, a distance enabled by the use of information and telecommunications technology" (Dockery & Bawa, 2018; Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Golden, 2012). According to (Blanpain et al,2001,5), it is "work performed by a teleworker (employee, self-employed, home-based   worker)primarily,   or   for   as significant portion, at one or more locations other than the traditional workplace, involving the use of telecommunications".

In another published study, remote work makes it easier for employers to find potential employees, reduces office costs, saves employees time and money, allows more time for family, and makes it easier to find a job in other cities. It has positive aspects for parties, employers and employees (Blumberga, Pylinskaya, 2019).

Remote working seems to have many advantages for employees such as more autonomy in work providing, among other things, higher flexibility and freedom in how to organize one's days (Schepp, 1990; Wilson and Greenhill, 2004; Greenhaus and Powell,2006; Eurofound, 2017). In addition, telecommuting would save time and money by reducing home-workplace traffic (Baruch, 2001; Eurofound, 2017).

In the framework of the research, the advantages and disadvantages of remote work are expressed in the table below (Ferreira, Pereira, Bianchi, Da Silva, 2021,6-7).

Table N°1: Advantages and disadvantages of remote working

Advantages	Disadvantages
Accelerated growth	Employee feels isolated
Improved employee autonomy	Increased workload
reduce burnout	Time management problems
Availability of increased rates	Division of labour in some situations
Increased employee productivity	Slowing the resolution of complexities
	Division of labour in some situations

Source : Made by us

3. Exploring remote work in the Covid-19 era :

According to past and present conditions, there are various changes in the manner of working. One of these changes that is that people have switched to remote work.

Telework is slowly and continuously emerging as a working style that is extending its areas of application. Telework rates in Europe have been increasing over the years, from 5.4% to 9%.As rapidly changing work patterns become the rule, it has led to problems such as employees being unprepared and inexperienced (Tramontano, Grant, Clarke, 2021, 1). For example, based on studies in various countries, it has been concluded that job losses in the U.S. are three times higher in jobs that do not offer remote work opportunities than in jobs that lend themselves to remote work, and the factors that have a catalyzer effect in job losses are gender, ethnic group, and educational qualifications.

It was found that unequal benefits, highly skilled and highly compensated employees benefit from more remote work opportunities compared to other employees (Depalo, 2021, 5-6)

Several applications that allow reducing the degree of difficulties provided by remote work have appeared in the life of employees during the covid-19 period. For instance, we can observe that digital collaborations are being maintained through digital platforms in professions that are adapted to remote work. We notice that the productivity and efficiency growth rate in the applied business areas is higher than before the covid-19 period (Gupta, 2020,1-2)

There were some challenges to overcome in team functionality with the remote work as well. For example, the ability for team members to get instant help has been lost, and there were disconnections in the support and instant connection processes (Cook, Zschomler, Biggart, Carder, 2020, 263-264)

Based on research carried out in Canada, 41% of society has started to work remotely during the covid-19 period. It was observed that the transition to remote working in March and April 2020 did not result in job losses, with the lowest rates. It was concluded that there are few opportunities to work remotely due to lack of educational attainment, as well as for seasonal workers, part-time workers, non-immigrant and young workers (Gallacher, Hossain 2020)

According to the study, the acquisition of digital resources is established on the basis of the positive perception of the digital technologies used, and the capacity to integrate these tools in the accomplishment of work tasks, as well as the skills and expertise of the required tools, is a crucial element in the implementation of remote working (Faustine Mimosette, Mbiadjo Fandio, Henriette Stéphanie Nnomo, 2022)

The survey found that the concept of working from home is perceived positively by the workforce. The existence of variables of trust and expectation was mentioned as a reason for the acceptance of the concept. Based on the study, 100,000 tweets were viewed on Twitter and word clouds associated with remote work were created. The words good, breakup, hope, love, sharing, happiness, security, home, team, management, fun, and trust were identified in frequently written tweets (Akash Dutt Dubey,Shreya Tripathi,2020)

Based on research conducted in the United States, staff in occupational groups that have been adapted to work remotely are less impacted by the new work environment than those who are not adapted to work remotely. In the study, suggestions were made regarding the infrastructure development that can allow for remote working and which policies can be established internally (LP Béland, A Brodeur, T Wright, 2020)

Depending on the investigation, there were some structural considerations that made it easier for employees to work from a remote location. The most important variable affecting remote work was determined to be social isolation (Ward van Zoonen,Anu Sivunen,Kirsimarja Blomqvist ,Thomas Olsson ,Annina Ropponen ,Kaisa Henttonen,Matti Vartiainen,2021).

4. Remote working models

The Covid-19 pandemic, which turned the world upside down, also provoked changes in organizational work models, which resulted in various adaptations of the work concepts of the employees of the different institutions, as manifest in the following ways

Table N°2 : Models of remote working[1]

Remote working model	Characteristics	Opportunities
Remote working model not in the same time zone (Fully Remote asynchronous	• Remote work. • No time limit for communication and work • Employees only meet for meetings • Employees can live anywhere in the world.	• Business flexibility for employees • The privilege of always being served • Offered the service and schedules of employees or clients at any time of the time of day. • Employers can set a salary according to the standard of the country where the employees are located.
Remote working model in the same period (Full synchronous remote control	• Obligation to work within certain time zones as determined by the institution • Employees are required to be in the same geographical areas	• Ease of communication for employees working) • Organize individual meetings, • all employees have the opportunity to participate
Hybrid model	• The ability of some employees to be in the office The alternative to join remotely or at home for some employees • It is clear where employees work (office or home).	• Helps reduce operational costs • Multitude of options in selecting potential employees to hire

[1] A church consulting, 6 Models for Working Remotely to Consider for Your Organization's Future
February 2, 2021

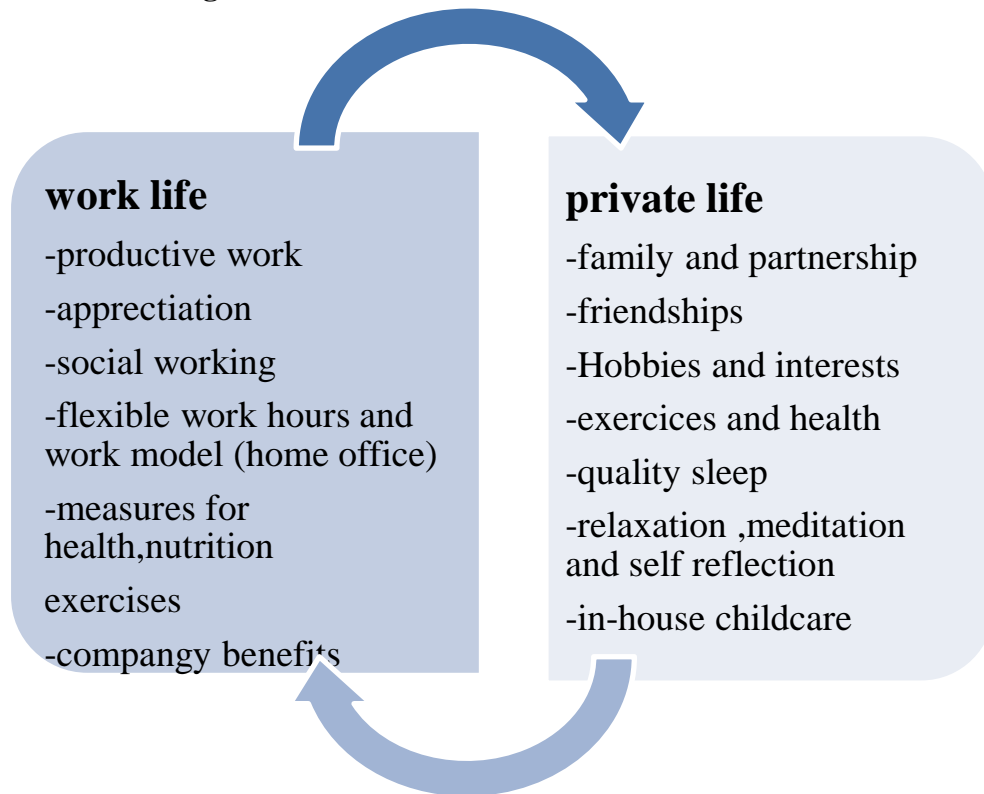|		
	• Offer the majority, but not all, employees the opportunity to work from to work from the office or home for a few days	
Partially remote work model	• Ability to coordinate between team • Reduction of operational costs	
Remote-First Work	• The rule is that most employees work remotely. • Emphasis on remote work • Few employees are in the office, • only being able to come to the office for meetings or operational meetings or needs	• Flexibility in working conditions • Reduction of office costs • Help to reconcile professional and private life • being
Office-First Work	• The rule is that most employees work from • the office • Allows remote working once a week or once a month	• Ease of integration of employees • Instant one-on-one conversation • Ability to instantly present solutions to problems

Source : https://www.achurchconsulting.com/blog/6-remote-work-models-to-consider-for-your-organizations-future/

5. Conceptual Framework for Work-Life Balance

While the concept of work-life balance is well known as a notion that emerged in the 1930s, the process of its prevalence was seen to spread worldwide in the 1970s in England and in the 1980s in the United States.Although it was a concept that first emerged in these countries, they began to adapt their work-life programs to their institutions to support employees

Work-life balance is being defined as the attainment of a balance between employees' family and personal life and their work life (Jyothi and Jyothi 2012).The work-life balance paradigm is built on the idea that work life and personal life are mutually complementary to each other in presenting perfection in one's life. In addition, men and women use work-flexibility in various manners, leading to varied results in terms of work-life balance in various manners, leading to varied results in terms of well-being and work-life balance (Chung and van der Lippe 2020; López-Igual and Rodríguez-Modroño 2020).

It is also described in studies as the capacity of employees to successfully balance both the required work roles and the roles they have in their personal lives (Uddin, 2021). In some research, it is claimed to be a balance between time spent on work and time spent on personal life (Wolor, Solikhah, Fidhyallah, Lestari, 2020, 445).

Figure N°1: a successful work-life balance

work life

-productive work

-apprectiation

-social working

-flexible work hours and work model (home office)

-measures for health,nutrition

exercises

-compangy benefits

private life

-family and partnership

-friendships

-Hobbies and interests

-exercices and health

-quality sleep

-relaxation ,meditation and self reflection

-in-house childcare

Source : https://www.ionos.fr/startupguide/productivite/work-life-balance/

Under the right conditions, private and professional life complements each other in a profitable way.

6. **Work-Life Balance Survey during the covid-19**

The pre-pandemic period, the variety of variables that can affect work-life balance has increased in the post-pandemic period. Although the issue of work-life balance has been on the agenda for over 20 years, when evaluated with remote work, the flexibility of corporate applications, the ability of individuals to decide when and where they can work, have given individuals more autonomy to maintain their work-life balance (Anderson, Kelliher, 2020)

The autonomy obtained allows employees to maintain their work-life balance with personal programs. In this regard, there are some studies that have been conducted which provide

various suggestions for working people to achieve work-life balance. One of the studies focused on eight factors that can be helpful in balancing such as effectively managing stress, having adequate sleep patterns, ensuring the continuation of physical activities, placing importance on healthy eating, increasing motivation for individual rewards, directing the individual to activities that increase the level of challenge, create a positive individual identity and organization time (Amin, 2008), (Griffiths, Dsouza, 2020).

In a research study conducted with executives working in Switzerland, it was found that the pandemic had a negative impact on work-life balance (Vinberg, Danielsson, 2020). According to (Kumar, Mokashi, 2020) in their research, the support of counselors and the proactive work attitude of employees are the variables used in the research to explain work-life balance. A significant relationship was found between employees' proactive work behavior and work-life balance. It was determined that consultant support helps employees maintain proactive work-life balance in an effective and efficient way.

Research in Finland and the Netherlands shows that Finnish mothers have more difficulty in maintaining a work-life balance than Dutch mothers. The reason for this is that most Dutch mothers work part-time, while most Finnish mothers work full-time (Yerkes, André, Remery, Salin, Hakovirta, Gerven, 2020). In the research of (Gigauri, 2020) it was determined that employees working late into the day and including weekends in work hours is a factor that disrupts work-life balance. Therefore, it was determined as a result of the study that the lack of a work-life gap causes increased stress for those individuals. The study conducted by (Campo, Avolio, and Carlier, 2021) showed no correlation between remote work and work performance or work-life balance. At the same time, it was concluded that there was a positive relationship between work performance and family support behavior, and work-life balance. In a study of university students in Malaysia, it was concluded that closures during the Covid-19 period had a negative effect on work-life balance and happiness of students (Wan Mohd Yunus, Badri, Panatik, Mukhtar, 2021)

Currently, 40%[2] of employees feel that they are unable to combine telecommuting with work-life balance. More striking is that business leaders also understand the importance of this balance, especially in terms of productivity.

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[2] According to a study conducted by Targus and carried out by One Poll among 7,000 male and female employees aged 18-55 in seven countries: UK, France, Netherlands, Spain, South Africa, Sweden and Finland.
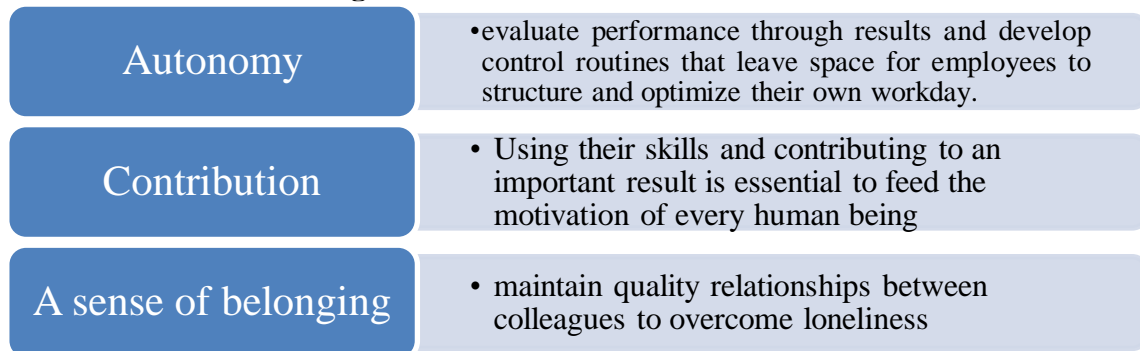
7. The effect of remote work and work-life balance on employee motivation

Balancing the two major components of our lives, work and personal life can be a source of scheduling and role conflicts. However, it is crucial to maintain a balance between both, otherwise, we risk sacrificing some of our physical and mental health. Among others, with time and distance, many employees' motivation and commitment to their company wanes. CEOs are becoming concerned about the potential impact on the effectiveness of their workforce and their motivation so they are seeking concrete ways to address the situation.

It's crucial to understand exactly what we mean by work motivation which refers to psychological strength, where the individual determines their behavior within an organization, the level of persistence in overcoming problems, and self-determination towards the dimension of their work (Tentama & Pranungsari, 2016). Motivation defines a stage that takes into account the direction and persistence of an individual to achieve their goals (Kocman & Weber, 2018).

Positive elements that can balance the scales are always considered factors that increase employee motivation. Thus, in order to increase the motivation of employees, leaders who must put their responsibilities into practice during in order to allow both increase the motivation of employees and help the organization to increase the competitiveness of other competitors

In this regard and in order to attempt the different components of work motivation that can help insuring the work –life balance among other factors and in such a new way of working as the remote working it is crucial to have an open communication environment. In order to have an open communication environment, it is considered that the leaders within the institutions play a key role. They should try to show supportive behavior towards the employees, offer guidance such as coaching sessions, have a close relationship and avoid disconnection, and empower the employee. (Virtanen, 2020, 9-12). In addition to the above, meeting the basic psychological needs of employees such as autonomy, competitiveness.. In work orders that shift to remote work also has an impact on the motivation of employees (Orsini, Rodriques, 2020). In summary, the good thing is that many measures can be implemented to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, managers must be aware of the basic conditions which influence the motivation of their employees and how those conditions may differ in a telecommuting situation.

Figure N°2: a successful work-life balance

Autonomy	• evaluate performance through results and develop control routines that leave space for employees to structure and optimize their own workday.
Contribution	• Using their skills and contributing to an important result is essential to feed the motivation of every human being
A sense of belonging	• maintain quality relationships between colleagues to overcome loneliness

Source : Made by us

While motivation is intrinsic to everyone, a company can activate three levers to motivate its employees: autonomy, contribution, and a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

With the shift in work environments from the office to the home, it involved the wide use of technological tools and their applications in employees' lives in order to accomplish their work. Organizations have invested a lot of resources to develop technological infrastructures to determine the needs of the employees and to follow the new situation.

The new working methods brought by the new circumstances have also made visible the positive and negative aspects on the work-life balance of the employees. Remote working has played an important role in increasing productivity and experiencing flexibility (Hermann, Paris, 2020).The positive aspects reflected on the work-life balance, such as the reduction of transportation costs, the disappearance of time spent on the way to work, the encouragement of employees and institutions to use advanced technological tools and applications, flexibility, the existence of employee-created programs instead of programs instead of commitment to corporate programs, and the increase in individual autonomy have been noticed..

However, there are also negative aspects. Among the difficulties of remote working in particular, the level of perceived stress and the level of experienced burnout have led to changes in the psychological state of employees. It has been observed that employees whose working arrangements are not suitable for remote work experience higher levels of stress than other employees (Hayes, Priestley, Ray, 2020).Beside that some aspects negatively affect work-life balance, such as the difficulty of setting a limit between work time and quality time spent with family, and difficulties in reaching people who can solve problems immediately when employees encounter a work-related problem. All of these situations, along with their

influence on work-life balance also show effects on employee motivation that can be avoid if the recommendation below are followed.

Last but not least, fulfilled employees will promote the company's prosperity, both internally and externally. The company's determination and dynamism in evaluating its employees and their work will always be a guarantee of success for the company.

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