Employee Experience While Working Remotely During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Thailand: A Qualitative Enquiry

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Abstract:
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought massive changes to all aspects of human society and the economy. Recent outbreaks in Thailand lasted for a longer duration and have been more severe than the previous commencing epidemic, as evidenced by the increased counts of cases, hospitalizations, and, unfortunately, fatalities. Thereby, social distancing - the most powerful strategy to prevent the coronavirus spread - was more strictly imposed, as officials implemented vaccination and other mitigation strategies. Consequently, remote working has become obligatory for every firm, alternating working in person in most situations. This paper aims to reflect unique perceptions of employee experience and initially identify some contributing factors regarding the remote working situation in Thailand during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby illuminating implications for both employees and employers in the possible long-term future of remote working. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants who served different roles in various industries, yet all experienced remote working during the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand. The subsequent analysis yielded four primary themes. First, the application of technology and its quality had a strong impact on employee experience, as this was the inevitable instrument to maintain all activities. Second, the discrepancy in role autonomy discriminated more distinctly the working pressure between managers and subordinates. Third, work-life balance was more difficult to achieve for people who have a family, with more blurs and complications. And finally, organizational changes were critical to employee experience, yet still limited and incomprehensible.

Keywords: remote work, work from home, employee experience, COVID-19, Thailand.

Introduction
Improving employee experience nowadays has become such an irreplaceable component in the profit chain of corporates. In the concept of service profit chain introduced by Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schlesinger (2016), it is stated that the quality of the internal environment would determine the quality of the external services to customers via the performances of employees. Therefore, to secure the best customer experience, it is critical for corporates to also optimize the employee experience. Employee experience can be defined as “a set of perceptions that employees have about their experiences at work in response to their interactions with the organization” (IBM & Globoforce, 2017). Maintaining and enhancing employee experience is not only the responsibility of the direct leaders or human resources departments but also the mission of the organization and the board of management itself - consideration needs to take place...
whenever a new vision, innovation, or radical organizational change takes place.

Thanks to information technology, the modern workforce nowadays has greater opportunities to work from multiple locations, including their homes. In today's world, working remotely no longer entails employees taking their work home, finishing it, and then returning to the physical office to submit it. Instead, it includes a variety of digital platforms that allow employees to remotely interact, discuss, and manage their working materials with distinctive features. Remote working can be defined as employment assisted, facilitated, or operated without commuting to any specific central workplace, with the involvement of technology. Regarding employees, working remotely offers more working time flexibility, thus increasing more “available” time for other activities such as entertainment, household chores, or even other paid work. Whereas for employers, these flexible working options can save organizational resources, as well as help them utilize more remote or outsourced talented employees.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus in early 2020 in Thailand, the condition where businesses had to operate through a “remote working” environment has happened more usually because of lockdown, social distancing restrictions, and isolation requests imposed by the government. The longest wave of the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2021, with the rapid spread of the Delta variety (and Omicron recently). It rendered remote working mandatory in such an unceasing period. The adoption of remote working thus was not a matter of convenience and innovation anymore, but a major part of the working population was required to learn and adapt to the COVID-19 burning platform.

Many studies have captured different aspects of working from home conditions during this turbulent stage. Aropah et al. (2020) explored factors affecting employee performance during work from home context towards the NPPA’s Government employees in Indonesia and delivered the results of two variables - transformational leadership and work environment - which had a positive significant impact on employee performance here. De Klerk et al. (2021) explored the impact of working exclusively from home on employee engagement and experience and introduced some beneficial/lagging factors towards people who had the new experience of working from home at the highest level in South Africa in 2020. Trougakos et al. (2020) investigated the psychological domain in their research, which addressed how COVID-19 health anxiety caused emotional suppression, thus decreasing the outcomes of work, family, and health goals for people who worked at least 20 hours per week in Canada. Regarding the technological perspective, Narayananurthy & Tortorella (2021) studied the impact of the COVID-19 outbreaks on employee performance in relation to industry 4.0 base technologies among people who performed as coordinators, supervisors, directors, and managers in Australia and confirmed the strong relationship between industry 4.0 technologies and the enhancement of employee performance to various extents. In Thailand, Chayomchai et al. (2020) investigated the incentives of integrating technology during the COVID-19 quarantine, explained the rationale from the Thai perspective, and addressed the factors affecting this behavioral intention. However, further examination of the overall situation of working from home in Thailand during COVID-19 remains warranted.

Apparently, the application of remote working is significantly more widespread, and the Thai workforce’s adoption is divergent. This study provides an overview of employee experiences in Thailand in remote workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus unveiling some visible underlying factors likely related to their experience. From the consequent discussion and literature reference, the article suggests implications for the future of remote working regardless of the critical impacts made by the pandemic. Research activities were conducted to systematically capture some common observable phenomena linked to employee experience under remote working conditions during the peak of COVID-19 in Thailand, along with
some possible factors to be discussed accordingly.

**Literature Review**

Employee experience, indeed, is not a new concept, yet it is often overlooked when human resources management practices are considered. Many researchers have studied different crucial aspects of employee experience management in relation to other practices and the overall working conditions. Morgan (2017) indicated the three most significant drivers for employee experience, namely workplace, technology, and corporate culture. The “Cycle of Success” framework proposed by Heskett & Schlesinger (1991) signified the linkage between employee cycle and customer cycle for high service quality, with the antecedent and dominant construct being employee satisfaction. Besides, the common service marketing concept often refers to employee experience management to the roles of frontline service employees. Wirtz & Lovelock (2021) with that perceptive viewpoint generated a set of practices for managing people for service advantages, including leadership, service culture, training and development, empowerment, and motivation.

To secure employee satisfaction and yield effectiveness, both employee performance, and employee engagement are essential to management, which has significant interconnection with each other. Borman & Motowidlo (1997) divided employee performance into two sub-segments: “task performance” refers to the effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization’s technical core, and “contextual performance” refers to the performance that is not formally required as part of the job but that helps shape the social and psychological context of the organization. This division supported a more progressive norm in employee performance management and is more friendly to the concept of employee experience, through which managers do not only measure and evaluate but also influence employees’ activities, behaviors, and outcomes. Jankingthong & Rurkkhum (2012) generalized many theories to develop an overall framework of factors affecting employee performance in general, which consists of four pillars: transformational leadership, organizational justice, work engagement, and public service motivation. Whereas for employee engagement, Gallup (2020) stated the factors that managers can make direct influence to drive employee engagement, namely the clarity of roles, the opportunities to do their best and develop, strong co-worker relationships, and a common mission to achieve.

Remote work, or more particularly, work from home practice, has been studied even before the pandemic, with various aspects and figures to be considered for implementation and assessment. Grant et al. (2013) studied and framed up a more intricate set of factors, including e-working practices, role autonomy, productivity, measurement, and performance (as usual). Since “home” has been incorporated, it is essential that the work-life integration also needs to be examined, as the intervention of life issues under this context is more substantial (Schieman et al., 2021). Besides work-life balance, e-working practice is another determinant factor that distinguishes remote working and offline working, since electronic platforms alter the physical presence and interaction, thus reforming the working process and organizational behaviors. According to Narayanamurthy & Tortorella (2021), the effectiveness of e-working practices depends on four variables: (1) job instability and market insecurity; (2) home office environment; (3) virtual connection; (4) base technology. Each variable is determined by different stakeholders, including organizations, market situation, family, internet providers, etc. In Thailand, recent research by Chayomchai et al. (2020) indicated that the intention for technology use in working is also influenced by performance expectancy, effort expectancy (which resembles e-working practices), trust, and perceived risks. Even though the internet is extremely efficient for socializing and networking purposes, the incentive of using technology in working is not affected by surrounding society.
Remote working has been shown to correlate with many benefits, such as time-saving by no longer commuting to work (McNaughton et al., 2014); increase engagement (Anitha, 2014; Conradie & de Klerk, 2019); higher job satisfaction and engagement (Kazekami, 2020). However, it has also been found to correlate to challenges such as work-life blurring (Eddleston & Mulki, 2015); teamwork, and collaboration reduction (Boell et al., 2013). Remarkably, organizational support and culture cause two-way effects in coordinating, improving, or worsening the practices of working flexibly (Putnam et al., 2013). Since the alteration of the working environment is obvious, the tension and concerns from the employees could rise if the organizational culture does not support the transition (Perlow & Kelly, 2014).

Methodology

To fully address the research questions and gain extensive insights into employee experience during this unprecedented time, a qualitative approach was adopted to conduct this study. With the assumption of the diversified reaction and experience that employees would encounter, the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis was chosen for application. Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted to discover participants’ experiences in different aspects of remote working practices, then identify the underlying distinction and similarities. The inquired questions considered both personal and organizational perspectives to derive more objective results, yet still reflect participants’ perceptions exclusively. Due to the social distancing and lockdown restriction, all the interviews were carried out via online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. The record of each interview was transcribed and analyzed to capture the common findings among interviewees. The findings were referred to the literature review before being generalized and incorporated into the research.

To execute the research, 12 candidates were selected for interviews among a total of 15 contacts. The candidates were specifically targeted to earn their readiness and willingness to share information, as well as secure the diversity of qualitative interviews. First, all were asked some common questions related to their demographic backgrounds and the amount of experience in remote working conditions. Eventually, only 12 were selected based on the

![Figure 1. Interview Structure](image-url)
diversity of gender (relatively equal numbers of male and female candidates); marital and family status (both single and married with different numbers of children); job roles (fair numbers of managers and employees included); and industries (no duplicated and technology-incapable industry). On top of that, all participants had adequate experience in remote working conditions during the peak of the latest COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand in July 2021.

The interview protocol was divided into five sections: (1) Demographic Information; (2) Job roles; (3) Working Practices; (4) Work-life Balance; (5) Further Implications (Figure 3). All the interviews were conducted in English - which was used directly for the research. The summary of candidates’ data in the first two sections (demographic backgrounds and job roles) is presented in Table 1.

### Table 1. Personal Backgrounds of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Reference</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Job level</th>
<th>Job Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>HR Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Software engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Banking Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Finance and Planning Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Network Development and Liaison Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Regional Head Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Customer Service Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Head of IT Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Business Operation and Reporter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Finding Analysis

The main themes and their sub-themes are listed in Table 2. Following the qualitative approach, these findings might occur inter-correlation and cause-and-effect relationships. This is inevitable, yet each finding here is significant enough to be mentioned separately, as it could set the foundation for future research.

### Table 2. Main Themes and Corresponding Sub-Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. The application of technology and internet connection had strong impacts on employee experience | ● Technology played an essential role in operating all remote activities.  
                                                                                   ● A smoother transition was recognized among organizations that have digitalized working processes earlier.  
                                                                                   ● Internet connection issues were largely recognized, causing discomfort and frustration. |
| 2. Managers faced more pressure than normal employees                     | ● More tasks and responsibilities were expected towards managers/leaders.  
                                                                                   ● More concerns and discomfort were recognized among those who have little or no guidance/training. |
| 3. More difficulties in work-life balance for people who have family/children | ● The intervention of family cases was unavoidable.  
                                                                                   ● There were considerable differences between people having family/children and staying single. |
| 4 Organizational changes were still limited except for the working environment | ● There was hardly any change in performance assessment policy.  
                                                                                   ● Not many organizations could provide intangible or emotional support to their employees. |
The Application of Technology and Internet Connection Had a Strong Impact on Employee Experience

All participants acknowledged the massive significance of technology in terms of maintaining their workflows and performing their tasks. Technology was such an essential prerequisite for working remotely, especially for communication, as all the respondents had to use at least two different types of technology instruments for working purposes contacts. Zooms, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams became much more popular for group contacts and information sharing, besides traditional methods such as phone calls, email, LINE, or organizational working systems. Two of the most crucial traits to mention were rapid connectivity and adaptability. Participant A3, for example, stated,

“Technology has enhanced my working experience, as I can connect and present to my colleagues globally without leaving my home country. It also gives me more flexibility and independence in managing my tasks and meeting attendance.”

(A3, Male, Software engineer, 22-35)

The forced switch in working norms also led to contradictory experiences among employees whose organizations differed in technology adoption level. On one hand, positive feelings from participant A4 were

“I got no issue executing my tasks at home since it is still the same system, same touchpoints. Anything that needs a physical signature, I have my colleagues that work alternatively offline to submit for me.”

(A4, Female, Banking Staff, 22-35)

Participant A6, on the other hand, described a perplexing and unsettling experience.

“Switching everything immediately caused some mishandling, as many unprecedented cases happened when the instructions were not always clear and specific.”

(A6, Male, Network Development and Liaison Manager, 22-35)

However, internet connection problems were widely recognized, as they disrupted employee experience and reduced effectiveness. For example, participants A9 and A12 claimed that,

“Internet connection at my condominium is not as stable as at my office, and whenever a blackout or internet disruption occurs, I have to log in the system again”

(A9, Male, Customer Service Specialist, 22-35)

“The internet disruption made me, and my subordinates frustrated many times, it negatively affects our moods, emotions, and articulation ability as well”

(A12, Male, Business Operation and Reporter, 46-55)

These examples showed the irreplaceable role of technology applications in employee experience during this time. However, most of these experiences could not be managed by employees, increasing their passivity.

Managers Faced More Pressure than Normal Employees

The differences in working pressure between managers and their subordinates were easily recognized, regarding the fact that their responsibilities and expectations from employees radiated to overcome difficult circumstances. All managerial participants confessed their pressure and discomfort to many extents, particularly individuals whose work could not be operated by technology or supervised from a distance. Participants A1 and A7, for example, stated that

“Besides handling regular tasks, I had to set examples for my subordinates: being a role model of work-life balance by sharing my personal challenges; providing emotional support by listening to employees and showing sympathy to them; managing and resolving situational conflicts between work and non-work commitments.”

(A1, Female, Human Resources Manager, 46-55)

“My job requires me to visit regional countries biweekly, but due to the lockdown, I could not go anywhere. Sometimes I feel lost when having to monitor the system remotely and boost employees’
confidence and productivity together” (A7, Male, Regional Head Manager, 46-55).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, managers were having a hard time adjusting to managing employees without a “line of sight”. The remote working situation re-distributed the pressure among the workforce yet paved the way for each manager’s leadership style to be expressed as well. It was not only to maintain employee experience but also to show their leadership effectiveness and yield their performances.

More Difficulties in Work-Life Balance for People Who Have a Family or Children

Employees were thrust into unexpected situations by the combination of working and living in the same physical place, with more difficulties for work-life balance for those who simultaneously must manage both working and household or childcare tasks. The most prevalent reason for employees to encounter and sometimes deprioritize work tasks was the unavoidable intervention of family cases. Participants A8 and A12, for example, stated that,

“I have two children, one of them is only 2 years old and needs constant care. I could not hire any nanny to help me during the COVID-19 outbreaks, and I could not send them to school either. I need to address this burden since my husband is required to work offline during this time, thus I hardly have time to work during the daytime.” (A8, Female, Engineer, 36-45)

“No need for me to commute to my workplace, I only need to wake up 15 minutes before the working time starts. No need to do the makeup, wear uniforms, and I do not even need to leave my bed at all.” (A3, Female, Banking Staff, 22-35)

The work-from-home requirement, on the other hand, appeared to provide more value for persons who had distinct working areas at home or who were frequently away from home. According to participant A11,

“The separation is not rigid, as I enjoy working remotely and have more time for my family than before. I consider it as flexibility rather than a strain, and it is a win-win situation for me.

Besides, I have my working corner at home, so I can control my working status anytime.” (A11, Male, IT Manager, 46-55)

In addition, the work-life balance seemed to be more achievable for single people, as they could manage their time more independently with much fewer technical requirements than when they worked offline.

During normal working conditions, the work-life balance seemed to be a case-by-case issue, but under the coverage of work-from-home conditions, it became more widespread and required more systematical considerations from both employees and employers. That raised more responsibilities for employers to not only sympathize but also plan and execute changes to maintain employee engagement and satisfaction. This is linked to the final finding, which connects all three analyzed topics under a more general viewpoint.

Organizational Changes were Still Limited Except for the Working Environment

For such a radical change as complete work-from-home execution, relevant policies and support related to employee experience are supposed to change accordingly, particularly in firms that had never implemented any type of hybrid working previously. Most participants stated that their businesses rarely proposed any changes in employee performance evaluations. For instance, participant A7 reported,

“There have been several attempts to change the performance assessment system in my company, but none of them was successful and could reflect the real outcomes” (A7, Male, Regional Head Manager, 46-55).

Moreover, the importance of the emotional support that organizations could provide also emerged as a considerable theme. Nevertheless, adverse opinions appeared among employees regarding the execution and capability.
Participants A8 and A9 stated, from different points of view,

“My company provided many surveys to us when we worked from home, especially to those who initially had that experience. The survey related to many aspects such as difficulties, emotions, suggestions, and things that the company can support. I feel like they talked to me even more than before, which made me grateful and appreciated.” (A9, Male, Customer Service Specialist, 22-35)

“I think personal issues cannot be solved by the organization. Having a job at this time is indeed so valuable for me, and if I raise any issue about how they should care more about us or complain about anything, I’m afraid they might ask me to resign.” (A8, Female, Engineer, 36-45)

Discussion

The COVID-19 waves in Thailand, along with the Thai government’s related policies, have driven the operation of every organization across the country, leading to the adjustment in employees’ task performance, and later employee experience. Although the repercussions of remote working varied depending on the type of employee, no one was immune to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the study presented some initial explorations of employee experience in general, employee performance and engagement in particular, along with relevant associating factors.

Technology was undeniably the foundation to maintain the smooth transition between offline and online working practices. The COVID-19 pandemic has promoted technology diffusion forcefully among all types of businesses, which the study by Morgan (2017) reflected. It also separated the ones which adopted technology and digitalization sooner and at higher levels from those which only executed this transformation compulsorily. When the social distancing requirements and work-from-home encouragement were imposed, the first-mentioned group could transit smoothly among different types of working without much struggle, while the other group took a longer time to get familiar with remote working and complete a new sufficient working process. The findings are consistent with other preceding studies (Narayananurthy & Tortorella, 2021) and strengthen accordant practices in Thailand also from the research of Chayomchai et al (2020). E-working space and relevant technical support conditions indeed are the key drivers for operating remote organizations. However, an unstable internet connection can reduce the effectiveness of these practices, which is ironically experienced by all participants.

The relationship between remote working conditions and the increasing pressure faced among managers could be derived easily. Managerial positions already had to deal with higher roles and responsibilities in general, and nowadays, they are required to equip a different skill set to manage their teams without being face-to-face. The unexpected outbreak of Coronavirus pushed most managers to this route abruptly with little or no guidance or training. Consequently, many among them were undergoing an uncomfortable and doubtful period. Following the results from Grant et al., (2013) and Eddleston & Mulki (2015), the COVID-19 pandemic and its related consequences have widened the discrepancy in responsibilities, which implies possible risks for work pressure, anxiety, depression, and need for mental healthcare for this group.

Having a healthy work-life balance could deliver many benefits, including increased productivity, fewer transportation expenses, and lower absenteeism. Employees had a tough time combining work and personal responsibilities under normal circumstances, but the massive change brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic made it considerably more challenging, as many unanticipated problems developed. The benefits for employees when having more time for their family members were appreciated, yet the conflicts, inconvenience, and burdens could directly affect employee experience (Eddleston & Mulki, 2015; Morgan, 2017; Schieman et al., 2021).
Finally, the primary role of organizational changes was proved in how organizations coordinated and accompanied their employees through this challenging period. It was clearly seen that during this time, task achievement should outweigh real working time when assessing employee performance, as tracking work performance based on real-time availability might not be efficient and consume a lot of unnecessary resources. Conversely, it was also expressed that organizations lack enough flexible and effective tools to formulate new assessment systems regarding the changing conditions. The earlier studies from Putnam et al (2013) and Perlow & Kelly (2014) also examined this issue with similar conclusions. However, referring to the second finding, it was more related to leadership style to provide emotional support to employees, and transformational leadership needs to be applied appropriately. This finding strongly supports studies from Jankingthong & Rurkkhum (2012) and Gallup (2020). This also expands the application of theories developed by Wirtz & Lovelock (2021) to non-frontline employees and even non-service ones. Besides, this reaffirms the role of transformational leadership towards employee engagement, or in another way, providing more diversified organizational support to employees, notably when employees' commitment to work and organizational goals is harmed by a lack of physical interaction.

**Future Implications**

It is still unclear to correctly claim when the COVID-19 pandemic will be over, regarding the emergence of new and unpredictable variants. That leads the constraints on employee experience to remain, forcing everyone to adapt and adjust themselves. Based on the research findings, there are some recommendations for employees to practice at home, as well as for employers to better their staff’s experience, in consideration of the long-term potential of remote/hybrid working applications.

**Separate Work Life from Home Life as Much as Possible**

As mentioned above, the ability to establish a good work-life balance is the key for employees to increase their performance and engagement to work. The more people can separate their work from their personal lives, the more time and concentration they could have for their work. Some suggestions for employees to equip themselves might include:

- Setting up a private space where there is likely the least distraction and making it resemble your regular working environment in the office.
- Creating a smart working schedule, listing tasks, and timeline for each activity (including household chores). People should consider and prepare beforehand carefully to get work done without disruption.
- Balancing appropriately between working and break time. Working from home does not mean you can relax anytime, but to some extent that also does not include you having to stay in working mode 24/7.

**Situational Leadership Needs to Take Place**

Hersey & Blanchard (1969) posited that in situational leadership the most effective leaders are those that can adapt their leadership style to the situation and look at cues that might contribute to getting the job done. The limitations of direct communication when working from home require leaders to be more flexible among different leadership styles, especially when the level of supporting behaviors decreases considerably. Directing leadership style might be a relevant suggestion during this stage, yet managers can modify their leadership styles when the motivation among employees is higher. In addition, managers always need to express their confidence and trustworthiness and be ready to come up with solutions for any circumstance that hinders employee experience.

Furthermore, more frequent discussions, possibly monthly or bi-weekly, between managers and employees should be held. The topics should pertain to employees’ lives and
challenges that they may be experiencing, both technically (work matters) and psychologically (such as over-work, work, and home boundaries, or stress levels). The goals of these interactive activities are to express concerns and sympathy from the organizational perspective, as well as to provide additional support timely to employees. If the employees feel that whatever they encounter is being backed fully by their employers, they will feel more motivated to work harder and dedicate their time and effort.

Promoting Technological and Digital Applications

To increase the efficiency of technology platforms, organizations should proceed with their digitalization as soon as possible, instead of rushing to transform under certain circumstances like the outbreak of COVID-19. Investing in technological advancements will allow organizations to adapt more quickly to new changes, as it will bring a high level of flexibility in communication allowing employees, co-workers, and managers to connect easily. As employees connect and communicate no matter where they are, this also enables teamwork, mutual understanding, and bonding between the employees. If an organization understands these benefits, it could recognize some forms of competence that enhance innovation, and the remote working scheme will run smoothly. Finally, taking hybrid working in both online and offline environments early could help reduce passivity when organizations must comply with the work-from-home condition.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

In the context of the COVID-19 lockdown regulations, the work-from-home experience could be influenced by additional non-mentioned triggers. Following a qualitative approach, this research might exclude some distinctive factors for specific industries and job roles, as well as not related to the psychological aspects of employees. The data were collected during the peak of the third COVID-19 wave in Thailand in July 2021, more than one year after the first lockdown restriction was imposed. On one hand, employees had already gotten used to working remotely for several short-term, on and off times. Thus, the implementation of organizations seemed not to be overly passive anymore, showing more adaptations taking place. On the other hand, by that time, people were fatigued due to the unpredictable outcomes of the current wave, as the lockdown had been executed for several months. The fear of a rising number of cases and fatalities, and the overload situation in hospitals could exhaust people more detrimentally, along with the work and work-home balance pressure. Moreover, the Thai government nowadays has changed its attitude toward the COVID-19 situation, which requires long-term strategies from organizations in this field.

As a result, similar studies using various new and more compact methodologies are advised. Researchers can concentrate on a single industry, considering more industrial characteristics and market conditions to analyze the changes in employee experience accordingly. Future studies can also link employee experience to other implicit aspects, such as employee performance and satisfaction, the choice of remote working (voluntary, forced, or alternative), the influence of family life (family income, dependents), and physical activities and mental well-being. Furthermore, a larger scope of study with a quantitative approach and a higher number of interviewees should be examined to derive greater credibility.

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