

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