

Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace

Module Assignment Submission

Student Name:	Linda Bera
Student Number:	2504322
Module No:	BMSK4015
Module Title:	Academic and Research Skills

Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

By the act of making this submission, the student declares that this is the work of the student named above. The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the student acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.

Attention is drawn to the plagiarism and unfair practice policies of both the University and of ILM.

Word count: 2905.

Contents

<u>1. Introduction</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>2. Employee</u>	<u>4</u>
2.1. Advantages for Employees	4
2.2. Disadvantages for Employees	5
2.3. Recommendations for Employees	5
<u>3. The Manager</u>	<u>7</u>
3.1. Advantages for Managers	7
3.2. Disadvantages for Managers	7
3.3. Recommendations for Managers	9
<u>4. The Company</u>	<u>11</u>
4.1. Impact for Companies	11
4.2. Recommendations for Companies	11
<u>5. Conclusion.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>6. Reflection using Gibbs' Reflection Cycle (1988)</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>7. References</u>	<u>14</u>

1. Introduction

In this report, we are going to discuss the way in which remote working affects the workplace through the lens of the employee, employer and its effects on the wider company. Remote management refers to leadership staff who supervise and support employees from a base of work outside the primary workplace, such as working from home (WFH), abroad or any other location. Companies use remote management to reduce office costs, allow leaders to manage multiple locations or teams and ensure sufficient oversight; particularly leveraging remote working to attract the expertise of highly regarded and experienced staff who might not otherwise be incentivised to relocate or join the team (Duchin and Sosyura 2026).

It is important to analyse management from different perspectives due to their different experiences in dealing with remote management; leaders are critical for their impact on employee performance and perceived trust, which can either produce or ameliorate challenges in the workplace and with employee efficacy. Thus, this report is going to discuss the advantages, disadvantages and evidence-based recommendations for the implementation or avoidance of remote management at three levels: the employee, the management staff and the company itself. It is important to note that these cannot be overly generalised or excessively separated as the dynamic of management provision should be specific and appropriate for the nature of workplace and the industry.

2. Employee

2.1. Advantages for Employees

The implementation of remote management for employees produces wide array of advantages. According to Hansson and Fried (2013), by working in a good atmosphere and having a good work-life balance with sufficient rest and flexible hours, employees demonstrate improved work efficacy, this in turn extends to the managers themselves. Quantitative secondary data from Ipsen *et al.* (2021) shows that 64% of employed agreed and feel that remote working saves money by reducing expenses traveling to work, culminating in a better work-life balance and a positive effect on their productivity due to lower extracurricular stressors.

Ipsen *et al.* (2021) also showed interruptions can be better controlled when WFH. Employees that were WFH also found that all these boons were beneficial to their mental health and wellbeing (Kitagawa *et al.* 2021), although it is worth noting that the review collated findings from four surveys across Japanese manufacturing companies, thus may have limited relatability to British firms and particularly those in different industries. The key descriptive statistics of the report by Kitagawa *et al.* (2021) are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: The Proportion of Workers Working From Home (taken from Kitagawa *et al.*, 2021).

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Sample	All employees	All employees (incl. subsidiaries)	All employees (excl. production line workers)	All employees (incl. subsidiaries)
Reference period	From April 1 to the date of reponse	From May 11 to the date of reponse	From May 11 to the date of reponse	From April 8 to the date of reponse
Survey period	May 20-26	May 20-June 3	June 17-26	April 23-May 7
Days spend WFH per week (%)				
5 days	8.1	22.5	18.4	21.2
3-4 days	14.9	9.9	31.4	17.0
1-2 days	25.0	19.6	41.0	18.7
None	52.0	48.0	9.2	43.1
Number of Observations	2877	3458	3989	12941
% of those who worked from home in early March	NA	35.2	20.1	10.7

A study by Nyashanu *et al.* (2020) indicated a lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), that caused professionals to experience anxiety and challenges enforcing social distancing and shielding. The effect of health anxiety on behaviour and even engagement with avoidant

management in the workplace needs to be considered as an advantage for WFH employees where this hurdle is eliminated – provided the manager is digitally responsive.

2.2. Disadvantages for Employees

Many employees struggle to find a comfortable work environment at home, with distractions such as children, postmen and both active and passive procrastination. It is a key finding that the home working environment generally lacks support to minimise procrastination while the office environment does a better job of reducing this perhaps due to proximity to management staff – though sometimes associated with higher rates of burnout (Mihaela *et al.* 2025).

Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2020) discussed how remote working during the pandemic presented numerous, significant disadvantages and challenges. They observed issues with boundaries between personal life and working hours which produced increased stress. Though the finding of increased stress when WFH when the lines of working hours blur, Kitagawa *et al.* (2021) note that it is still true that employees reported significantly better mental health and wellbeing despite this, perhaps due to the flexibility and reduced micromanagement.

Research in an Indian technology company by Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2020) found working hours increase and productivity decreased by 8%-19%, due to less efficient collaboration with managers and again likely the unmonitored procrastination. Employees stated a lack of communication with their managers which often led to feelings of isolation over time. They also reported higher incomes for employees that were more educated and therefore a threat to labour markets inequalities. They observed an increase in their weekly working hours, and they found it difficult to set boundaries between work and home life and it led to low job satisfaction. This finding is contradictory to the findings of Kitagawa *et al.* (2021) who found that their mental health is better despite this, perhaps there is a distinction to be made between job satisfaction and mental health or a cultural difference between the management style of Indian and Japanese employees and thus less proximity-associated stress. So, this further brings into question how this research relates to the British working population's relationship with management. Although Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2020) did not discuss other difficulties employees had whilst WFH, that might affect the evaluation.

2.3. Recommendations for Employees

Research by Kitagawa *et al.* (2021) suggests a hybrid approach should benefit mental health and wellbeing, while minimising opportunity for excess micromanagement and reducing burnout risk (Mihaela *et al.* 2025). Despite this, it is of key importance for employees to

communicate their needs of the workplace, do they believe they work better at home, in office or in a hybrid setting? Discussions with management about these factors are key to effective implementation. Although, a good manager would seek to find this out from their employees, they should also feel comfortable to have this discussions to find something that works for both parties.

Other key points include setting up a dedicated workplace at home with appropriate equipment, such as an appropriate desk and ergonomic chair to improve concentration and productivity (Kitagawa *et al.* 2021). This is especially true given that women suffer with poor ergonomics-associated injuries and pain at a three-fold rate compared to men; it has also been highlighted that a lack of ergonomics in home setup were not only associated with statistically significant differences in pain and injuries but also in productive output as a direct result (Du *et al.* 2022). It is also important to establish regular working hours and take scheduled breaks to maintain focus and to avoid burnout (Mihaela *et al.* 2025); using video communication platforms such as Zoom or teams are also helpful for employees to feel less isolated and stay connected with colleagues (Brynjolfsson *et al.* 2020).

3. The Manager

Effective management is crucial for departmental productivity. Their primary role is to effectively guide the operations of the department to meet expected outcomes for the function of the company. An effective manager will provide due recognition to employees and also guide those who are less aligned. Whilst leading the team managers share the credit with their employees as fit and maintain a healthy working environment.

3.1. Advantages for Managers

According to Hansson and Fried (2013), one advantage for managers in remote working is that there is less active labour to maintain a healthy working environment if more time is spent working at home, i.e. less time for direct confrontations – though they could simply go unnoticed for longer, they are less likely to cause a catastrophic incident and would be better documented through digital channels for HR resolutions.

Furthermore, there are less stressors on employees and management staff alike. As previously mentioned Ipsen *et al.* (2021) discusses how WFH produces a reduction in commuting and thus increased punctuality; the ability to control distractions at home has also been said to be easier, though this depends on the presence of children in the household. This is supplemented by findings published by Kitagawa *et al.* (2021) which highlight the significant positive impact of WFH on mental health. In a working environment where both employees and managers alike are less stressed and have better mental health then factors like employee retention and job satisfaction set the foundation for good work efficacy.

One seldom considered aspect is that, especially in times of pandemic, epidemic or population-level illness, there is a reduced risk of spread where WFH is more common. Employers would need to spend less on both PPE and infection prevention strategies (Nyashanu *et al.* 2020). It isn't unreasonable to suggest that this may reduce staff sickness, especially in the case of staff who may feel too unwell for a full office work day with a commute, but may be happy to work from their bed – this would pay dividends. Although it is at the employees discretion, given suggested increases in job satisfaction, employees may be more inclined to WFH in the case of mild illness because of a care for their job and their departments operations.

3.2. Disadvantages for Managers

Managers had several challenges during the pandemic, particularly increased responsibilities and pressure, one disadvantage was long working hours because managers often had to be

available even out of work hours to act as first point of contact for emergencies. They would have to make difficult decisions, such as terminating employees due to poor performance, it become more challenging in a remote environment where personal relationships still existed.

One disadvantage is being able to reliably determine the truthfulness in an how much an employee reports to have worked and how this aligns with productivity. A study by Gibbs *et al.* (2023a) has shown a significant issue where employees report working more from home and yet their productivity is significantly reduced, as shown by graph 1 below.

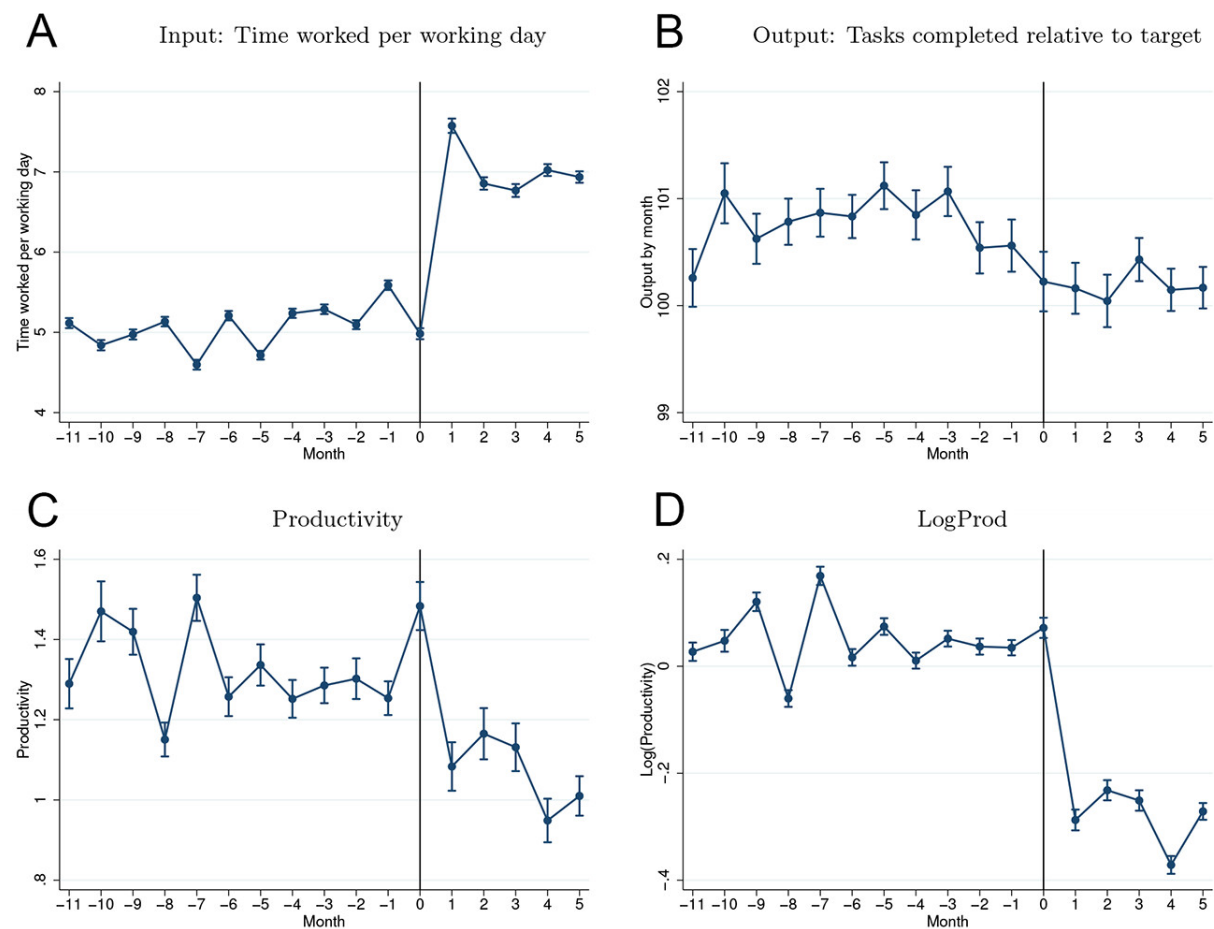


Figure 1: Average outcomes by month with outliers excluded (taken directly from Gibbs *et al.* 2023a). The vertical line (month 0) indicates the switch to working from home. The vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals based on clustered standard errors. Month: -11 = April 2019; 0 = March 2020; 5 = August 2020. (Gibbs *et al.* 2023a).

The decrease of productivity is shown clearly by changes in their productivity patterns during WFH. When employees sit at their desk for 8 hours daily, they record only 5.5 hours of the true work, which the study identifies as “...time in which they are actively using their software or programming tools, or in meetings or communications.” – (Gibbs *et al.* 2023a). This is set out on

figure 1 above and it provides visualisation of these qualitative data results. The company uses two systems: Sapience analytics and Internal Data Management Systems (IDMS) to quantify and track employees performance through key outcome variables: Input, Output and Productivity. The data output from these methods is presented as shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Summary Statistics for Outcome Variables (Taken directly from Gibbs *et al.* 2023a).

	Mean	Standard Deviation	1st Quartile	3rd Quartile	Observations
WFO (before March 2020):					
Input	5.08	2.03	3.78	6.35	47,387
Output	100.82	9.00	100.00	100.00	47,387
Productivity	1.36	2.99	.75	1.27	47,387
WFH (after March 2020):					
Input	7.04	2.75	5.38	8.90	22,862
Output	100.30	8.80	100.00	100.00	22,862
Productivity	1.11	2.41	.52	.88	22,862

Across both systems, Sapience in particular is used to identify what proportion of working time is ‘active’ based on motion, actions and so forth – with web surfing, social media usage and inactivity identified as non-working time. The accuracy and reliability of these technologies has been identified as robust and fit for purpose (Gibbs *et al.* 2023b).

3.3. Recommendations for Managers

Recommendations for employees WFH vary and should be applied for different sectors and during or outside of pandemic-like situations. WFH should ideally be optional (Bolisani *et al.* 2020) and roles should be hybrid on a synchronised and semi-flexible basis (Hansson and Fried 2013). This is to remove the obstacle of communication issues with both colleagues and managers as Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2020) highlighted, while also saving time and money through commute-associated expenses (Ipsen *et al.* 2021).

Managers should adopt several strategies to effectively manage the teams during the pandemic firstly by setting clear goals and expectations using frameworks such as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) objectives (Doran 1981), which can improve employee performance and accountability by a giving well outlined scope for expectations during a WFH scenario.

Having regular team meetings and one-to-one meetings, will help towards building trust and monitor their progress. However further research is needed to truly determine the role that team and one-to-one meetings have on work efficacy when WFH. To prevent feelings of isolation and disconnection as described by Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2020) managers should make conscious effort recognise employee achievements by giving praise for tasks well done, especially when they clearly meet the requirements of the SMART goals.

4. The Company

4.1. Impact for Companies

There advantages of remote management for the company are trickle-down effect from the benefits it has for managers and employees. The direct evidence for the utility of WFH is variable and at times, contradictory. Though WFH generally seems to be better for the employee (especially in factors such as mental health, stress and commuting costs) where well implemented and with supportive management (Hansson and Fried 2013; Ipsen *et al.* 2021; Kitagawa *et al.* 2021), the general evidence shows reduced 'productivity' across several studies – generally due to factors relating to procrastination, isolation and hampered communication (Brynjolfsson *et al.* 2020; Gibbs *et al.* 2023a; Mihaela *et al.* 2025)

Duly, we need to consider whether raw 'productivity' metric are truly the same as what is best for the employee, the manager and the company itself. The research does not elucidate whether these productivity metrics are more important to business success than employee-centric metrics such as job satisfaction, mental health and work quality. However, Soegoto *et al.* (2017) does conclude that it is in a company's best interest to maintain a healthy working environment with good employee satisfaction.

4.2. Recommendations for Companies

To improve company performance and foster a respectful and communicative environment for employees by clear language to set SMART goals and to enhance their engagement with work by implementation of effective WFH policy that supports management in assuring work quality and helps maintain job satisfaction for employees. This is likely through a hybrid working approach that is apt for the needs of the industry and the roles of the staff members. The policy should allow some degree of flexibility for the individual without compromising the operational capability of the department.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion is there is positive and negatives to WFH and remote management specifically. WFH saves money by reducing traveling expenses to work. It is also beneficial for the mental health and wellbeing of employees and management alike when implemented in a way that allows appropriate levels of supervision and minimises excess procrastination. The best way for this is through the use of software that flags adverse inactivity, which a manager can personally check on.

6. Reflection using Gibbs' Reflection Cycle (1988)

Description: what research taught us about the pandemic and what affected our lives. We had to work from home and set a quiet workplace to complete our daily working tasks.

Feelings: there was different feelings of emotions that had an affect on WFH because the issue was feeling isolated and it could lead to anxiety and mental well being if left untreated.

Evaluation: The good thing was there was flexible work hours and a good work-life balance and zoom calls was provided for employers not to feel isolated and to interact with their colleagues.

Analysis: It happened because of the pandemic that changed life experiences. We had frontline workers, work from home employees and employers that both equally endured pressures.

Conclusion: The only option left was to remain working at home during the pandemic.

Action plan: Make a questionnaire to find out what kind of WFH model is most appropriate for both employees and business operations. Use this to find a way to manage the department in the most effective way for both parties and also ensure it allows for an appropriate amount of engagement with management. Ask individuals how they feel about the action plan and ensure any reasonable adjustments are implemented.

7. References

- Bolisani E., Scarso E., Ipsen C., Kirchner K., John P. H. (2020). Working from home during COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and issues. *Manage. Mark.* 15458–476. 10.2478/mmcks-2020-0027
- Brynjolfsson, E., Horton, J.J., Ozimek, A., Rock, D., Sharma, & Tuye, H.Y. (2020). Covid-19 and remote work: An early look at US data (No. w27344). National Bureau of economic research.
- Chychun, V., Chaplynska, N., Shpatakova, O., Pankova, A., & Saienko, V. (2023). Effective management in the remote work environment.
- Du, Tanghuizi PhD; Iwakiri, Kazuyuki PhD; Sotoyama, Midori PhD; Tokizawa, Ken PhD. Computer and Furniture Affecting Musculoskeletal Problems and Work Performance in Work From Home During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 64(11):p 964-969, November 2022. | DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002622
- Duchin, R., & Sosyura, D. (2026). Remotely productive: The efficacy of remote work for executives. *The Review of Financial Studies*, hhag005. DOI: doi.org/10.1093/rfs/hhag005.
- Gibbs, M., Mengel, F. and Siemroth, C. (2023a). Work from home and productivity: Evidence from personnel and analytics data on information technology professionals. *Journal of Political Economy Microeconomics*, 1(1), pp.7-41.
- Gibbs, M., Mengel, F., & Siemroth, C. (2023b). Work from home and productivity: Evidence from personnel and analytics data on information technology professionals. *Journal of Political Economy Microeconomics*, 1(1), 7-41.
- Hansson, D. H., & Fried, J. (2013). *Remote: Office Not Required*. Random House.
- Ipsen, C., Van Veldhoven, M., Kirchner, K., & Hansen, J. P. (2021). Six key advantages and disadvantages of working from home in Europe during COVID-19. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(4), 1826.
- Kitagawa, R., Kuroda, S., Okudaira, H. and Owan, H., 2021. Working from home: Its effects on productivity and mental health. *Covid Economics*, 74(30), pp.142-171.
- Mihaela, R., Luminița, S. M., Melike, Z., & Dorina, R., 2025. Procrastination in Office and Remote Employees. *IN THE 21st CENTURY*, 325.
- Nyashanu, M., Pfende, F., & Ekpenyong, M. (2020). Exploring the challenges faced by frontline workers in health and social care amid the COVID-19 pandemic: experiences of

frontline workers in the English Midlands region, UK. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 34(5), 655–661. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2020.1792425>

Schiff, F. W. (1979). *Working at Home Can Save Gasoline*. *The Washington Post*.

Soegoto, E. S., & Narimawati, U. (2017). The contribution of stress management and good employee performance towards the success of a company. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 10(1).

Voronov, A. A., Sobolevskaya, T. G., Smirnova, E. V., Shugaeva, O. V., & Ponomarev, S. V. (2021, April). Managerial problems of enterprise development during the pandemic COVID-19. In *Institute of Scientific Communications Conference* (pp. 841-851). Cham: Springer International Publishing.