Final Exam Project – Digital Literacy

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ICT Allows People Working From Home: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) is a broad subject and the concepts are evolving. It covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit, or receive information electronically in a digital form such as personal computers, digital television, email, or robots. With the development of technology at this time, people can develop a career in addition to carrying out the role at home. The use of ICT has become a powerful instrumental in facilitating employees to work from home. This has been widely applied in developed countries since the concept of working at home is very closely related to work-life balance. The results of this literature study show that ICT has a relationship with work-from-home practice. Also, several factors can be obtained and become considerations for ICT to be well-implemented when the business decided to carry out the practice of work-from-home..

Keywords: *Information, Communication, Technology, ICT, Work-at-home, Work-life balance*

Introduction

Working and being a career woman, or being a housewife to take care of the family is one of the dilemmas that is usually faced by a housewife. (Peters, 1968) the author of the book When Mothers Work: Loving Our Children Without Sacrificing Our Selves, and (McGraw, 2003) who discussed the topic Stay-at-Home Moms vs. Working, suggests mothers to make decisions that best meet their needs and expectations. For this case, it is not an easy way to decide because both are equally important. (Ahmad, Fakhr, & Ahmed, 2011) in their article also stated that there is nothing wrong for a woman to pursue a career. With the development of technology at this time, it is very possible for someone to develop his career in addition to carrying out his role as a mother at home.

CHARACTERISTICS	Total			Males			Females		
	Number	Share (%)	Incidence (%)	Number	Share (%)	Incidence (%)	Number	Share (%)	Incidence (%)
TOTAL	1,044,300	100.0	33.8	353,700	100.0	23.5	690,600	100.0	43.5
AGE GROUP (YEARS)									
15 – 24	308,800	29.6	60.8	156,100	44.1	59.3	152,700	22.1	62.5
25 – 29	26,500	2.5	10.6	8,200	2.3	6.7	18,300	2.6	14.3
30 – 39	75,500	7.2	12.5	6,000	1.7	2.1	69,500	10.1	21.9
40 – 49	104,100	10.0	16.6	10,900	3.1	3.6	93,200	13.5	29.2
50 – 59	146,900	14.1	26.2	30,500	8.6	10.9	116,400	16.9	41.2
60 & Over	382,400	36.6	70.5	141,900	40.1	57.4	240,500	34.8	81.4
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT									
Primary & Below	365,000	34.9	57.8	99,400	28.1	39.3	265,500	38.4	70.1
Lower Secondary	175,600	16.8	48.2	68,300	19.3	36.9	107,300	15.5	60.0
Secondary	266,300	25.5	39.4	101,100	28.6	32.2	165,200	23.9	45.5
Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)	91,600	8.8	27.1	38,700	11.0	20.1	52,900	7.7	36.5
Diploma & Professional Qualification	68,200	6.5	15.6	26,500	7.5	11.6	41,700	6.0	19.9
Degree	77,600	7.4	12.1	19,600	5.5	5.9	58,000	8.4	18.6

Figure 1. Profile of Economically Inactive Residents, June 2010
Source : (Manpower Research and Statistics Department, 2010)

MAIN REASON FOR ECONOMIC INACTIVITY	Total		Males		Females	
	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)
TOTAL	1,044,300	100.0	353,700	100.0	690,600	100.0
Family Responsibilities*	323,500	31.0	5,300	1.5	318,100	46.1
Schooling/Taking Courses/Training	288,700	27.6	144,400	40.8	144,300	20.9
Poor Health/Disabled/Too Old	204,600	19.6	68,600	19.4	136,000	19.7
Retired	158,800	15.2	98,200	27.8	60,700	8.8
Taking a Break	30,700	2.9	15,300	4.3	15,400	2.2
Awaiting NS Call-Up/Examination Results	14,200	1.4	11,900	3.4	2,300	0.3
Discouraged	10,900	1.0	6,100	1.7	4,800	0.7
Others	12,800	1.2	3,800	1.1	9,000	1.3

Figure 2 Economically Inactive Residents by Main Reason for Economic Inactivity, June 2010
Source : (Manpower Research and Statistics Department, 2010)

In Singapore, a survey conducted by the (Manpower Research and Statistics Department, 2010) as shown in figure 1 depicted that there were 1,044,300 singapore residents who were in the

condition of economic inactivity (unemployed). 353,000 of them still in the productive age between 25 - 59 years and 43,5% of the total residents were women. According to the main reason for economic inactivity shown in the figure 2, Taking care of the family or family responsibilities is the main reason. In fact, at the time of the survey, data was obtained that the respondents still had the desire to work and have a career. (Jalote, 2013) through the article in TelePresenceOptions writes that the Singaporean government, through the IDA (Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore) made a pilot project on home-based work. The Singapore government supports and advises companies in Singapore to implement ICT in providing flexible working hours for their employees which later became the origin of working at home in singapore.

While in other developed countries, such as America and countries in Europe, the application of ICT that allows employees to work from home has been implemented by many companies (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The work from home initiative is one way to achieve a balance between personal life and work (work-life balance), where workers have the same time and quality for work and also for living as time for family and other social activities (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). work-life balance is believed to increase employee satisfaction placed on learning and growth perspective in the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Increased employee satisfaction is believed to improve the process, quality and productivity of company products and services (Internal business process perspective), so as to increase customer satisfaction (customer perspective), which in turn can support the increase in company profits in the financial perspective (Acharya, 2015)

However, (Crosbie & Moore, 2004) in their writings entitled Work–life Balance and Working from Home suggest that working from home is an embodiment of a flexible working hours initiative that gives employees many choices, but there must be a process, guidelines, and policies that govern these activities, so working from home can provide more benefits for employees as well as the company. Homeworking is one initiative that has been promoted as a way of improving the work–life balance. They examine the experience of homeworking drawing with completed ESRC study on homeworkers. It explores the question of whether working (or not) from home improves people's capacity to balance their work and life commitments. This paper is based on a literature study from previous studies that discusses the relationship between ICT and Work-at-home in many aspects. This paper will focus on explaining how home work implementation is possible with the help of information and communication technology.

Findings

Information Communication and Technology (ICT)

Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audiovisual systems, that enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information (Cardona, Kretschmer, & Strobel, 2013). The term ICT is also used to refer to the convergence of audiovisual and telephone networks with computer networks through a single cabling or link system.

There are large economic incentives to merge the telephone network with the computer network system using a single unified system of cabling, signal distribution, and management (Walsham, 1994). ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device, encompassing radio, television, cell phones, computer and network hardware, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and appliance with them such as video conferencing and distance learning (Peek, 2020).

ICT is a broad subject and the concepts are evolving. It covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit, or receive information electronically in a digital form such as personal computers, digital television, email, or robots (Tutor2u Limited, 2020). Theoretical differences between interpersonal-communication technologies and mass-communication technologies have been identified by (Acharya, 2015); (Mathur, 2017). Skills Framework for the Information Age is one of many models for describing and managing competencies for ICT professionals for the 21st century.

According to (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013) in the book of The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business, the role and application of information technology can encompass many fields, such as, education, health, banking, business and others. That is evidence of the rapid development of ICT which indirectly encourages humans to use it in all activities and aspects of life. The following are some examples of the application of Information Technology to optimize its resources:

In the field of education, learning technology continues to experience development along with the times. In the implementation of daily learning, Information and Communication Technology papers are often found in a combination of audio / data, video / data, audio / video,

and internet technology (Wagner, et al., 2005). The internet is a cheap communication tool which allows interaction between two or more people. The capabilities and characteristics of the internet enable the process of distance learning (E-Learning) to become more effective and efficient so that better results can be obtained.
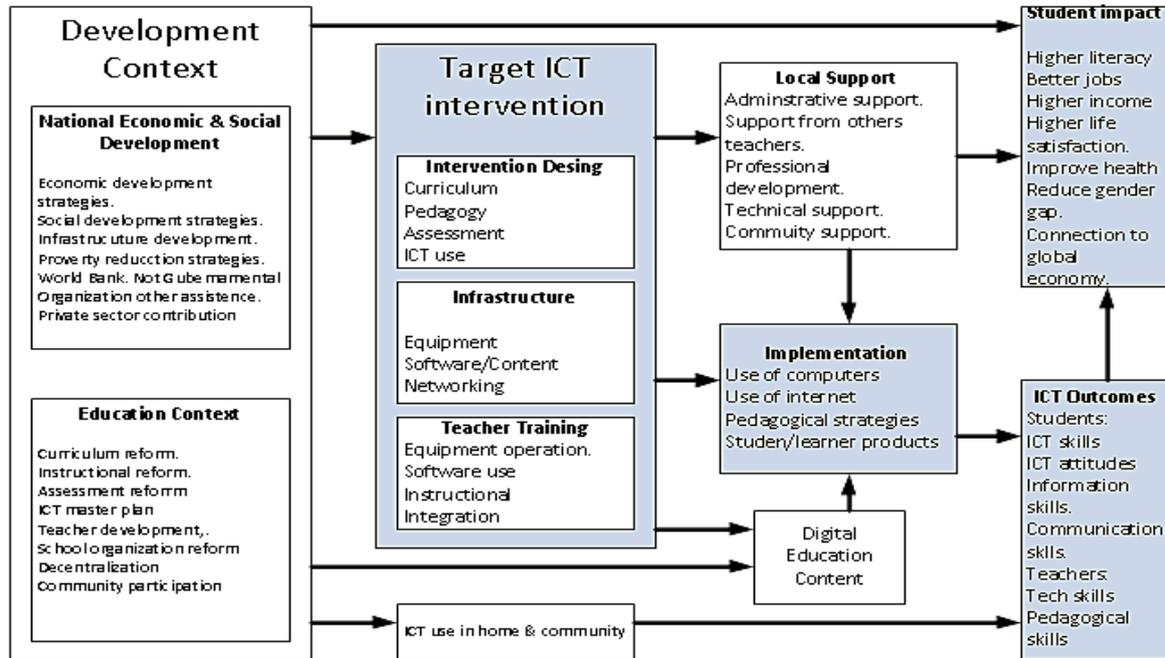

Figure 3. Adoption of ICT in education systems: A conceptual frameworks
Source : (Wagner, et al., 2005)

In addition, ITC is well-implemented in banking world. An example of the application of ITC is the application of banking transactions via the internet or known as Internet Banking. Some transactions that can be carried out through Internet Banking include money transfers, checking balances, bookkeeping, bill payments, and account information (Narteh, 2012). Even the with-
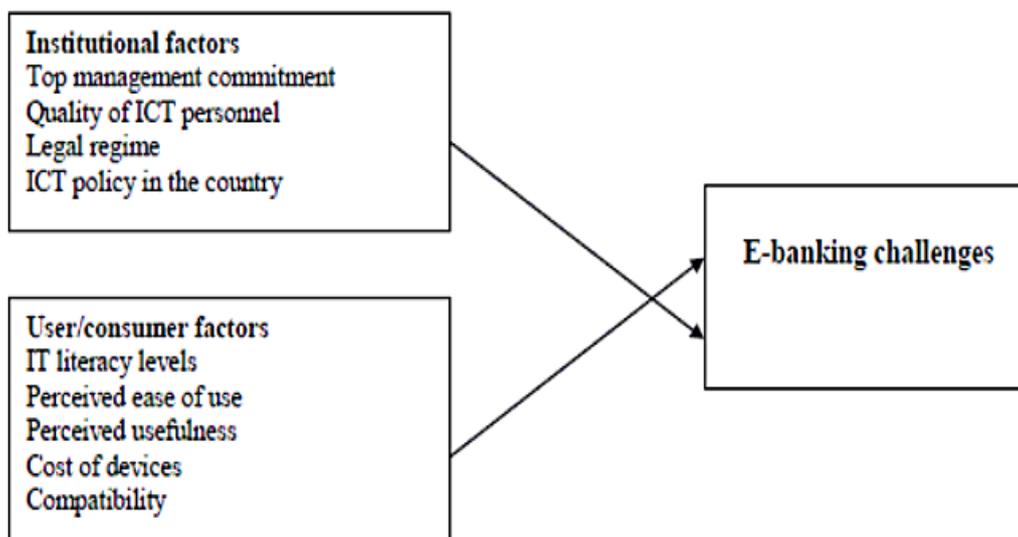

Figure 4. Factors affecting the marketing of e-banking services: A conceptual model
Source : (Narteh, 2012)

drawal of money, checking balances to interbank transfers through ATM machines is also the use of Information Technology in the banking sector.

Business Field us inseparable from the role of ITC as well. This field is very closely related to buying and selling transactions, the use of Information Technology can also be used for electronic trading facilities or known as E-Commerce. This facility show us the distribution, purchase, sale, and other electronic services. E-commerce can involve electronic funds transfer, electronic data exchange, automated inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. It is becoming a part of E-Business, where the scope of E-Business is broader, not just commerce but also includes collaborating business partners, customer service, job vacancies, etc (Lee, 2015).
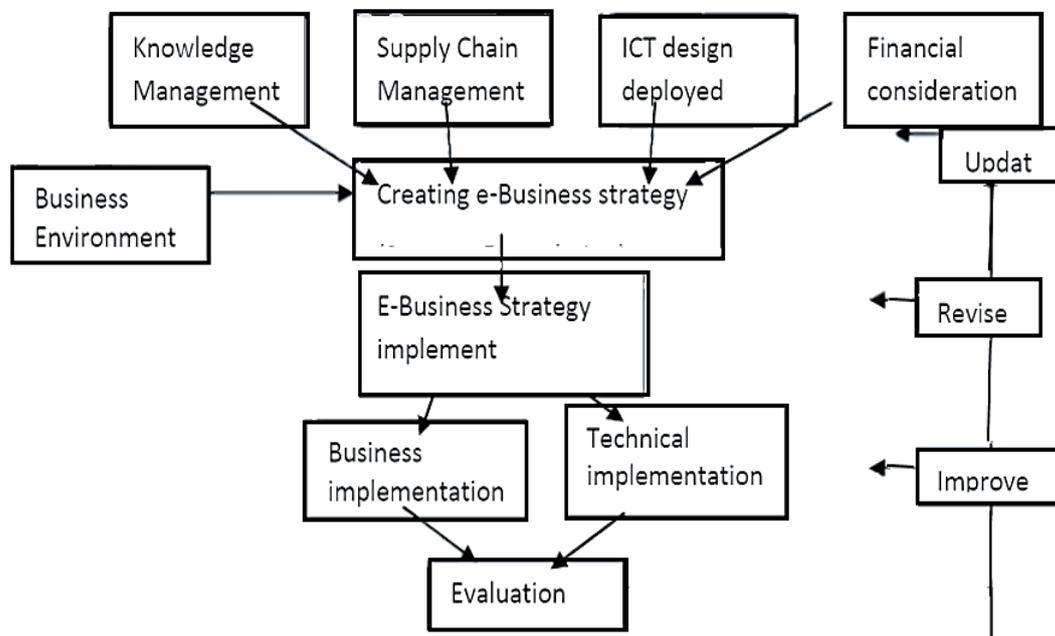

Figure 5. E-Business Strategy Formulation
Source : (Lee, 2015)

Lastly, application of ITC has been widely used by entrepreneurs. The need for time and cost efficiency causes every business actor feels the need to apply Information Technology in the work environment. Application of Information Technology causes changes to work habits. For example the application of Enterprice Resource Planning (ERP). The ERP is a software application that includes a management system in a company.

Work-From-Home

Work From Home (WFH) is a work concept where employees can do their work from home. Working from home also provides flexible working hours for employees (Hope, 2020). WFH work system does have high flexibility. Whether from home, from a cafe or restaurant in

accordance with the wishes of employees. This particular concept is very helpful to provide work-life balance to employees, and also help companies get work done (Bell, 2012).
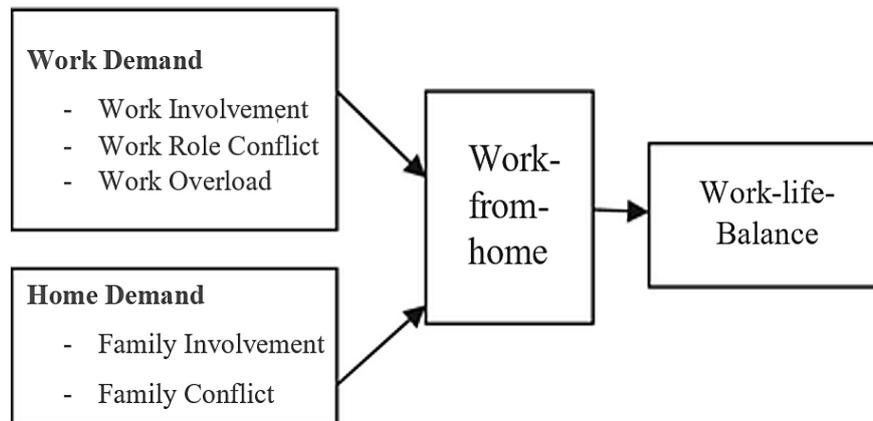

Figure 6. Current trends and organizational practices: Conceptual Model
Source : (Bell, 2012)

In a study conducted by (DeSanctis, 1984), it was found that for employees, working from home provides several benefits. Employees can save their daily costs such as food and transportation costs that must be incurred. Unlike the case, if you go to the office. even though they get transportation and food costs from the office, but usually by going out of the house, the temptation to buy food in certain restaurants makes the costs incurred more than a predetermined budget. On the other hand, Working from home does make employees more flexible and can determine what they want to work at what time (Hope, 2020).. The reason is, everyone has productive hours that are different from each other. Work hours are no longer fixed on the system at 8-5 or 9-6. Sitting position, clothes and meal times can be adjusted as desired. Finally, working from home would certainly be very beneficial for someone who is married. Moments to moments with family will be obtained as time goes by. Even so, employees must still limit the work and your family at home (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

In additon, home working can also offer a much-needed solution for businesses facing a manpower-crunch. Organisations can tap into a rich resource pool of economically inactive residents, some of whom may not be able to leave home for office-based work for various reasons, such as family care responsibilities. Home-based work will allow them to pursue a career while meeting their personal commitments. This work arrangement is also an ideal option to retain valuable and experienced employees who are considering leaving the organisation due to similar commitments. (Hope, 2020) in his article explained that home condition often different compare to the facilities or working atmosphere in the office. In order

to have a comfortable working condition, both companies and employees need to be aware of the following challenges that are often experienced;

First, interference from other people at home. When working at home, employees must find a comfortable workspace to minimize distractions. Second, the internet connection is not stable. In a work-from-home situation, it is a must to have a high, stable and uninterrupted internet network. Next, the working room air temperature. Often, hot weather is unavoidable and disrupts the concentration of employees, especially if employees do not use air conditioning like what is in the office. In addition, the unclear working time limit is a challenge. The online presence application is very useful to help companies and employees determine and respect working hours. The company can monitor the performance of each employee in a temporary situation when not meeting directly with superiors. What is important to note is that communication between teams is not optimal. In establishing coordination with the team without face-to-face communication often occurs misunderstandings between teams. Utilizing technology in the form of supporting applications when working from home, can solve related issues. The situation will be much better going forward. Employees need to communicate the things they want to do more planned, including the goals or results to be achieved.

ICT allows working from home

In a 2017 research article, Mapping ICT Use at Home and Telecommuting Practices:A Perspective, by Louis Leung and Renwen Zhang four questions were addressed. First, How widespread is the adoption of telecommuting in Hong Kong and who are the telecommuters? Secondly, In what way(s) can demographics, ICT use at home, permeability, and flexibility predict work-family conflict? Thirdly, In what way(s) do demographics, ICT use at home, permeability, flexibility, and work-family conflict predict technostress? Lastly, In what way(s) do demographics, ICT use at home, permeability, flexibility, work-family conflict, and technostress predict telecommuting (Leung & Zhang, 2017)? The study were collected from a telephone survey with a probability sample of 603 information workers aged 18 years and above. However, because seven respondents did not answer all the questions, and 87 respondents were self-employed, the final sample for analysis comprised 509 respondents. The participants, who were randomly chosen from the latest edition of the Hong Kong telephone directory, had jobs that required the use of a computer to accomplish the tasks of their works. Data was collected through questionare and telephone surveys.

This study filled the gap, which focused mostly on Western telework literature, that telecommuting penetration among information workers in Hong Kong has ballooned to 31%. Second, it also found that the control over what passes through the work-home boundary by individual workers determines the effects of ICT use on their work and family lives. Third, those who had high flexibility but low permeability will experience the lowest levels of work-family conflict. Fourth, to alleviate technostress, corporations should have flexible policies that allow employees to arrange their work and family concerns autonomously. It indicates that ICT enables people to work at home not merely happened in developed countries, such as the United States, Canada, and England as shown by (Bailey & Kurland, 2002)., Working at home must be provided access to the applications they need to perform their roles, which typically requires a review of application delivery and end-user computing approaches to ensure that applications can be delivered reliability and securely outside the business (Ross, 2013).

In another research article by (Graaf & Rietveld , 2007), ICT was hypothesized to assist the substitution between working at home and out-of-home. The paper focuses on the relation between commuting time, ICT and working at home. To do so, the researcher develop a theoretical framework where preferences for working at home and out-of-home enter the utility. With the use of the theoretical labor supply model and the wage equation, they specify a demand system based on the translog utility function, taking working at home, working out-of-home and leisure time directly into account . As the main results of this article the researcher found several points. First, working at home and out-of-home act as (slightly imperfect) substitutes, conditional on individual characteristics. Secondly, changes in commuting time and ICT availability have small absolute effects on working at home and out-ofhome, respectively. Therefore, working at home and out-of-home seems to be more determined by individual characteristics than by (changes in) commuting time and ICT availability. It seems like, age and education, and to a lesser extent sex and job characteristics turn out to be important (Felstead & Henseke, 2017).

Although the results are intuitive (at least for the case of The Netherlands), some further research is yet warranted. The fact that some workers are physically prevented to work at home – because of the nature of their job – can still be accounted for by sector dummies. However, more explicit modeling of the behavior of firms is called for in order to explain why some firms within the same sector allow their employees to work at home and others do not. Another barrier to working at home is that some workers who are able and willing to work at home do

not have the required workspace available at home (Jones, 2010). Therefore, further research is needed to incorporate residential constraints.

In another study by (Laegran, 2008) in the article Domesticating home anchored work: Negotiating flexibility when bringing ICT based work home in rural communities, discovered the implementation of ICT in rural communities toward work at home. The article is based on a study comprising qualitative interviews with people living in rural areas in Norway and Scotland conducted in 2004 and 2005. Scotland as well as Norway has a strong popular and political concern on regional and rural development, as they both see the migration flow going from rural remote to urban and central areas. In Norway policy on telecommunications have been closely linked to regional policies with a technological determinist as well as optimist view that telecommunications would benefit the countryside (Walsham, 1994); (Staples, 2001).

The article identified that although working from home is common in rural areas. However, ICT based knowledge related work is still seen as more "out of place" in rural homes. This reflects the classic dualism of a working class and rural based "dirty hands" notion of work and abstract knowledge based work, which normally would take place in an office in town (Limburg & Jackson, 2007). When this form of work is taken to the homes, in particular during daytime, community norms about accessibility, interaction and where to be at a certain time have to be renegotiated. The paper has shown how the ICT based home anchored worker imbues more problematic negotiations than the current popular flexibility model may suggest. In line with critical studies, this research has shown that combining the requirements of professional work and those of the family may be challenging.

More research confirmed another point of view regarding the implementation of ICT toward work from home. According to Niels Gadeyne, Marijke Verbruggen, Joni Delanoeije and Rein De Cooman in their article, All wired, all tired? Work-related ICT-use outside work hours and work-to-home conflict: The role of integration preference, integration norms and work demands. In that particular study, they posit that the moderating role of integration preference in itself depends on the work environment because the context can alter people's sense of control and autonomy and may therefore affect the influence of a preference-behavior alignment.

Testing the hypothesis, they examine three-way interactions between two types of work-related ICT-use outside work hours (i.e., smartphone use and PC/laptop use), integration preference and two characteristics of the work environment (i.e., organizational integration norms and

work demands) on time- and strain-based work-to-home conflict. Analyses are performed on a survey sample of 467 working parents in Belgium. Findings indicate that only work-related PC/laptop use – and not smartphone use – outside work hours is positively related to work-to-home conflict. This effect is buffered for people who have a preference to integrate work and personal life, but only when their work environment is characterized by low organizational integration norms and/or low work demands.

This indicates that for employees with integration preferences, work-related ICT-use outside work hours may not complicate – and could even facilitate – finding work-home compatibility; yet, this effect depends on organizational factors as well. The result of study indicate that organizations should be cautious with stimulating employees to take work home and to use ICT for work outside work hours, either via the job design or via their norms and expectations. It may help organizations to better understand the impact of expectations regarding staying connected to work while being at home. (Gadeyne, Verbruggen, Delanoeije, & Cooman, 2018).

In other hand, Francesco Miele and Lia Tirabeni in the article of Digital technologies and power dynamics in the organization: A conceptual review of remote working and wearable technologies at work, examine the kinds of control practices that emerge with the introduction of digital technologies, and how these technologies are employed to shape power within workplaces. They present a comparative conceptual review of work practices by contrasting remote work and the use of workplace wearables. After that, they trace forms of power and control that have been enacted with the adoption of these work-related technologies and associated practices. As the finding of their comparatife conceptual review, it shows that the prevailing literature focuses on the practices enacted by management in order to control workers and exert power over them.

Finally they propose to have a more comprehensive approach. In support of the view, they show how the concept of appropriation emerges from science and technology studies, and argue that such a concept would be useful for exploring how workers use and incorporate digital technologies into their daily lives, thus reshaping power in organizations (Miele & Tirabeni, 2020). By doing so, people can use ICTs in unexpected ways, contributing to the realization of some interests of powerful actors while finding creative ways to affirm and reaffirm their own identity and freedom at the same time (Choudhury , Larson, & Foroughi, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Improving the quality of life requires humans to carry out various activities by optimizing their resources. Consciously, we see that many activities carried out by humans have been supported by Information and Communication Technology. ICT both directly and indirectly has changed the way we live, the way we learn, the way we work and the way we relate. The development of ICT at this time is very possible for people to work from home. It can provide many benefits such as giving more flexible time for an employee to do activities with the family.

Based on several research results, we can conclude that ICT enables people to work at home and it was not merely happened in developed countries. However in order for the business well-delivered, the employees who are working at home must be provided access to the applications in order to perform their roles (Leung & Zhang, 2017); (Ross, 2013). Secondly, ICT not merely as the predeterminant factors toward the work-at-home. Work-at-home seems to be more determined by individual characteristics (Graaf & Rietveld , 2007); (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). When the business decided to implement Work-at-home they should consider the individual characters as the important factor. At last, Implementing ICT toward work-at-home for any business need to consider for the demografic. Rural area is a challenging one in applying the work-at-home. when this form of work is taken to the homes, in particular during daytime, community norms about accessibility, interaction and where to be at a certain time have to be renegotiated (Laegran, 2008).

Work-from-home is an alternative form of work arrangement that involves an employee working primarily from home, rather than in a conventional office setting. ICT plays an important role by providing the infrastructure and tools that connect home-based workers to their offices and clients. This innovative way of working has been adopted by savvy businesses which recognise the cost savings and improved productivity amongst a myriad of other benefits to be gained. ICT offers the infrastructure and tools to make home-based work a reality in today's tech-reliant work environment. ICT enables home-based employees to efficiently complete work tasks and also effectively communicate with colleagues and clients.

Further research is needed to analyze whether companies can implement this initiative. Utilizing ICT in enabling working at home will require cooperation between infrastructure providers, the companies where workers and employees work, as well as the government. Ultimately, implementing home-based work is a joint effort those parties. When everyone

shares the same vision and goal for organisational success, then a work-from-home arrangement can be effectively integrated into the corporate culture. Government need to show their responsibility in encouraging, supporting and facilitating this home working initiative. Therefore, it will increase the contribution of inactive residents, and even will be able to reduce social problems in big cities such as congestion and overcrowding.

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