

CHAPTER-VII

Findings and Discussions

The chapter first outlines the test outcomes pertaining to the first and second objectives of the study. It seeks to summarise the findings in regard to the association between remote work practices and employees' work-life balance. Additionally, it intends to assess the effect of remote working dimensions on the work-life balance of non-managerial women employees as a whole. The second objective then investigates the interaction effect of remote working on work-life balance in presence of required e-working facilities. This chapter thereafter presents the results of interviews conducted with managers from various organisations in Delhi/NCR and Bengaluru regarding the attributes of managing a remote workforce, the difficulties encountered and its affect on remote management practices.

Section 7.1 (objective 1 and 1a) summarises the findings to establish a link between remote working practices and work-life balance. In order to achieve this purpose, the individual links between various dimensions of remote working with work-life balance have also been examined. In addition, the difference in work-life balance of the employees has also been examined across different groups and demographic categories under. **Section 7.2** further discusses the findings derived from moderation analysis carried out to evaluate the impact of e-working facilities on the relationship between remote working and work-life balance of non-managerial women employees. Finally, **section 7.3** discusses the current findings of the first two quantitative objectives (1, 1a and 2).

Section 7.4 further presents the specific information from managerial interviews in order to give readers an understanding of the aspects of virtual team management and e-leadership in IT organisations and the accompanying practices of remote workforce supervision. **Section 7.5** then discusses the findings and insights gained by managers and their interview responses. Finally suggesting a framework through **figure 7.4** for inclusive remote work practices to be adopted by the modern managers across various organisations depending on the feasibility of their work performed and the job profile of the employees involved.

7.1 Results from quantitative findings (objective 1,1a and 2)

Results from correlation (**table 7.1**) showed that remote work effectiveness had the highest positive degree of association with work-life balance of non-managerial women employees, which means that, increase in effectiveness led to increase in their work-life balance and vice versa. The more an employee is effective at her work, the better she is able to manage her work-life aspects while working remotely and vice versa. Similarly, remote work trust and flexibility showed second highest positive correlation with work-life balance (**table 7.1**). This showed that trust and flexible hours from superiors allowed women employees to work without time and place barriers. Hence, increase in trust and flexibility while working remotely may lead to increase in effortless balancing of both work and personal activities. Finally, high level of association with e-wellbeing dimension of remote working displayed that being able to integrate work and life needs (for e.g., personal social wellbeing) properly during remote working led to significantly positive work-life balance of women employees in the organisation at non managerial levels.

Table 7.1: Showing correlation results for RW and WLB

RW Dimensions	Correlation Coefficients (WLB)	P value (two tailed)
Remote Working Trust & Flexibility (RWTF)	0.663	0.00
E-wellbeing (EWB)	0.641	0.00
Remote Working Effectiveness (RWE)	0.698	0.00

Source-Authors Compilation

Further, the first three hypothesis test if trust and flexibility, e-wellbeing and work effectiveness/productivity carries a significant impact on work-life balance. Therefore, in order to predict the work-life balance of non-managerial women employees during remote working based on these three remote working dimensions, the dependent variable work-life balance was regressed on the predicting variables of trust and flexibility, e-wellbeing and work effectiveness to test H_1 , H_2 and H_3 . **Table 7.2** below shows the summary of the findings.

Table 7.2: Summary of regression equation

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	B	t	P-value
H ₁	RWTF-WLB	0.236	6.510	0.00
H ₂	EWB-WLB	0.311	10.026	0.00
H ₃	RWE-WLB	0.330	10.461	0.00
Adjusted R	0.648			
F (3,442)	273.826			

Source: Authors compilation

Findings (table 7.2) revealed that one point increase in remote work trust and flexibility predicted 0.23 points increase in the work-life balance of non-managerial women employees. Although trust from supervisors and organisation plays an important role in shaping the employees flexible hours and autonomy to perform anytime anywhere remotely, e-wellbeing (0.311) and work effectiveness (0.330) predicts high changes in work-life balance in comparison to trust and flexibility. This shows that, the association between RWTF and WLB is strong ($r = 0.663$) and in the positive direction as compared to e-wellbeing ($r = 0.641$), but the variation caused by one unit change in trust and flexibility is lower to that of the variation caused by one unit change in e-wellbeing, while predicting work-life balance changes (table 7.2). This indicates, that e-wellbeing more strongly influences increase in the work-life balance of non-managerial employees than trust and flexibility during carrying out work tasks outside office premises via online platform rather than the traditional in person setup. Finally remote work effectiveness was the factor with the highest beta value of 0.33 points, showing the importance of performing effectively while remote working. Therefore, it is evident that if an employee is productive and able to meet all her work goals effectively without compromising the quality of her work, it gave her more positive work-life balance outcomes during remote working.

Hence, such outcomes reveal that the belief that remote working would help in creating an environment of trust and flexibility, enormous improvement in employee wellbeing and enhanced efficiency in conducting work-related tasks positively influences attitudes

towards managing the work-life balance aspects of women employees at non-managerial positions.

Moving further the results of independent samples t- test conducted to compare the work-life balance for permanent and contractual employees, married and unmarried categories and finally for the employees from Delhi/NCR and Bangaluru revealed that for the first two groups (married/unmarried), there were significant differences ($t(416.8) = 2.817$, $p = 0.005$) in the scores with mean score for married employees ($M = 45.425$) being more compared to unmarried employees ($M = 43.402$). The second two groups (permanent/contractual) on the other hand showed no significant differences ($t(444) = 1.716$, $p = 0.08$) in the scores, with mean score for permanent employees ($M = 44.719$) being higher than that of contractual employees ($M = 42.968$). However, the results for differences in the mean score for the third and final group (Delhi/NCR and Bangaluru) approached the significant level at 0.053 p value, but the null hypotheses could not be rejected at 95% of confidence intervals (CI: -0.02092 to 2.789922). **Table7.3** below summarises the result output for the same;

Table7.3 : Summary for independent samples T-test

	Groups	Mean	P value
Work life balance	Married	45.425	0.005
	Unmarried	43.402	
	Permanent	44.719	0.087
	Contractual	42.968	
	Delhi/NCR	45.139	0.053
	Bangaluru	43.754	

Source: Authors compilation

The differences observed inferred that only mean work-life balance scores of married and unmarried women differed significantly, showing that marital status has measurable impacts on the work-life balance of working women in remote setup. Whereas, no significant difference is observed in the work-life balance of permanent-contractual employees, indicating that employment status does not necessarily dictate work-life

balance outcomes in remote roles providing equal flexibility and support across employment types. Those from different geographical locations when functioning under remote working setup also observed no significant differences. Most probably predicting that quality of remote work-life balance is less about where employees work and more about what and how they work.

One way ANOVA (**table 7.4**) performed for two demographic groups with Department and Work Base of the women employees at non managerial levels showed insignificant scores for both the multi-level groups ($p = .110$; $p = .222$). F statistic is used to analyse the ANOVA results ($F = 1.564$); ($F = 1.433$). However, as both the results showed significant values higher to the set threshold limit for ANOVA, the hypotheses could not be accepted assuming there is no statistically significant difference observed between work-life balance of women employees from various departments working from different work bases. The reason for this could be because employees rated their responses for the questions on similar points mostly (**chapter 6, table 6.5**), showing unidentifiable difference in the rate of work-life balance among different groups. Attitude regarding their work-life balance level is seen to be much on the same side agreeing towards a positive work-life experiences during remote working. However, to predict the different levels of work-life balance among these groups, mean score results were further analysed;

Table 7.4: Summary for one way ANOVA results

Department	Groups	Mean	F statistic	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Accn & Fin	42.00	1.564	.110
	Admin	44.96		
	Eng	44.90		
	HR	43.73		
	IT/ITS	44.86		
	Operations	46.07		
	Marketing & sales	44.36		

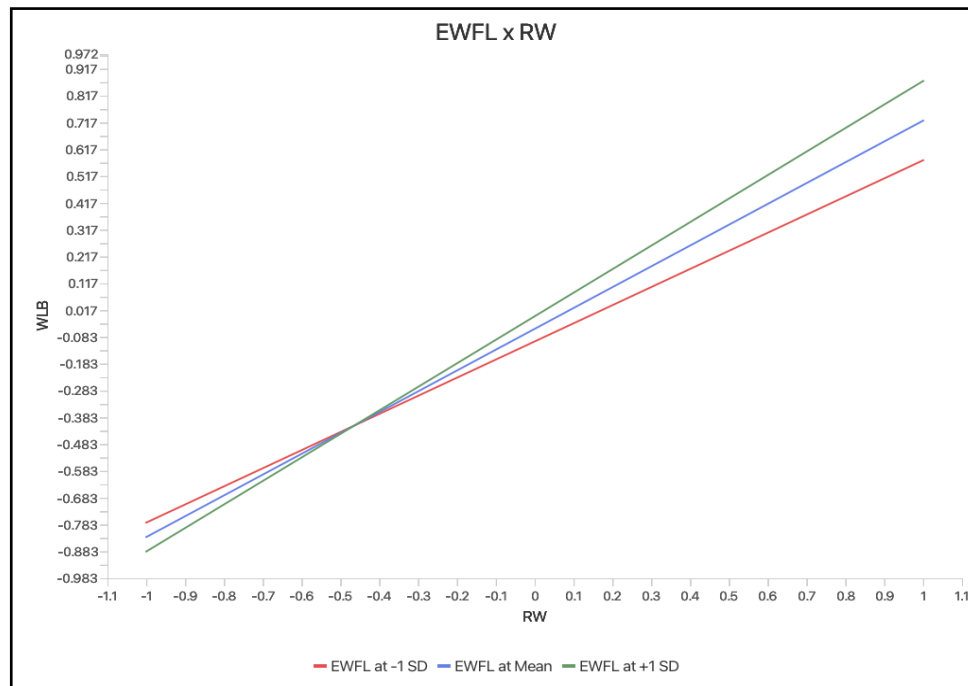
Workbase	Home Cafeterias	44.58	1.433	.222
	Staycations	42.59		
	Home & Staycations	46.41		
	Home & Cafeterias	39.75		
		34.00		

Sourec: Authors Compilation

Average of the ratings in **table 7.4** show that Operations department have the highest mean score for work-life balance followed by Admin, Engineering, IT and finally Marketing & Sales. The lowest mean score found was from Finance & Accounts department followed by the HR department. Additionally, results for difference in work-life balance of women working from different work bases revealed that, staycations accounted for highest work-life balance mean score accompanied by home offices and cafeterias. The mix work bases contributed to lower mean score for work-life balance outcomes of non-managerial women while working remotely.

7.2 Moderation Analysis

A moderation analysis for objective two is performed, to find out the interaction effects of remote working (IV) on work-life balance (DV) as the availabilty of e-working facilities (MV) changes. The results significantly validated that, remote work positively influences work-life balance directly, also highlighting the critical moderating role of e-working facilities in this relationship. Particularly, on how availability of online working amenities facilitates hassle free digital transformation to virtual workforce. Simple slope analysis is used further (**figure 7.1**) with the affirmative evidence of moderation to see the steepness of these moderating effects at different levels.

Figure 7.1: showing slope analysis for moderating effect of EWFL on RW-WLB

The given diagram (**figure 7.1**) represents a moderation effect of available e-working facilities on the relationship between remote working and work-life balance. The three lines in the interaction plot suggest that, e-working facilities (EWFL) moderates the relationship between RW and WLB, with X axis representing the independent variable remote working (RW) and Y axis representing the dependent variable work-life balance (WLB). The red line here representing low EWFL, blue line average EWFL and green line representing high EWFL. Further the difference in steepness of the slope suggests that the strength of relationship changes depending on EWFL levels. The green line with steepest slope reveals that when there is increased availability of e working facilities the effect of remote work on work-life balance is stronger in a positive direction. Conversely, the red line with the least steep slope represents weak positive effect when EWFL is low. These reveals that, introduction and increased implementation of e-working facilities during remote working shall increase the positive impacts of remote working on the work-life balance of non-managerial women at work (WAW).

7.3 Discussing the findings of objective 1, 1a and 2

Recent calls have been made within the literature to consider the impacts on work-life balance due to increase in remote workers interest for continuing remote work in future (e.g., McKinsey Global Institute, 2021). Kumar and Alok (2022) reported that a significant proportion of Indian employees, ranging from 52% to 79%, expressed a preference for working from home after the epidemic. This is supported in the current study's demographic section where 91% of the participants were found (page no. 65-66) to be working from home after the pandemic have eased to a certain extent. One of the vital reasons for this work base popularity might be the gender effect of the respondents in the current study being only women, since it can provide them with more flexibility to balance their work and family roles (Juna et al., 2022).

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the preference for remote working practices among non-managerial women employees in Indian IT sector companies by integrating findings from previous studies. Hence, this section discusses the results of proposed hypotheses H₁ to H₉. Finally exploring the moderating effect of e-working facilities on the relationship between remote working and work-life balance in this era of digital transformation.

Support for H₁ H₂ and H₃ (relationship between WLB and RWTF, EWB, RWE) implies that non managerial women employees perceived increase work-life balance when working remotely. Employee's conscious behaviour regarding their work-life balance is strengthened by their belief that remote mode of working in the presence of mutually trusting environment between employees and their supervisors allowing to work under flexible conditions (H₁), facilitates positive e-work wellbeing (H₂) and enhances effectiveness (H₃). The empirical evidences revealed that the effectiveness score is the highest in association with the work-life balance followed by e-wellbeing and later with the trust and flexibility score of these women employees. Productive outcomes showed the highest association explaining the importance of employee effectiveness in her work during remote working to have a positive work-life balance in the long run. This means appropriate integration of personal and work demand holds vital importance in the area of

increased effectiveness associated with balancing work and life during remote working. Remote workers e-wellbeing caused almost similar variance in work-life balance indicating the significant role of physical/social wellbeing of employees in creating positive work-life balance effects. Charalampous et al. (2018) in their systematic review underlined that employees can benefit by functioning away from a traditional office environment because of their work characteristics, which required task- based concentration by individually, eliminating interruptions. Thus, not surprisingly indicating that being able to perform remotely, created more job satisfaction, increased organisational commitment. Eventually experiencing less stress linked to frequent office demands and commute (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Additionally, employees with positive wellbeing report good work-life balance most of the times in various studies (Allen et al., 2015; Ter Hoeven & Van Zoonen, 2015). Riyami et al., (2023) witnessed the ability to work from home (WFH) as one of the valuable assets that impacted employees' well-being.

Finally, trust and flexibility showed relatively lower variance in predicting the work-life balance of women employees during remote working (**table 7.2**) Possible reasons for this could be that, either women in non-managerial positions prioritised effectiveness and wellbeing over trust and flexibility during remote working, or due to statistical reason of trust and flexibility being key influencers of both effectiveness (Grant et al., 2013) and wellbeing (Hayman, 2010; Ray & Pana-Cryan, 2021), making the latter two dependent on the presence of trust and flexibility in a remote working scenario. To sum up, the available evidence supports these findings (see, eg., ; Cripe & Burleigh, 2022; Juna et al., 2022; Lapshun & Gómez, 2023; Misra et al., 2023; Olsen et al., 2023; Volfová et al., 2023), where the positive association of effectiveness, wellbeing, trust and flexibility is significant in the remote working context, implying acceptance of H₁ to H₃. The general findings are in accordance with the available studies that have reported remote working to play an important role in work-life balance of the employees (see, e.g., Anthonysamy, 2022; Alipour et al., 2020; Dubey & Tripathi, 2020). Similarly, studies have also witnessed women to be more inclined towards remote working (see, eg., ; Chowhan & Pike, 2022; Purang et al., 2024; Pillai & Prasad, 2022; Riyami et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2021). Therefore, in line with the existing findings the current study found support on the relationship between remote working practices with positive work-life balance affects.

Next, the independent samples t-tests (H_4 and H_{4a}) for variation in work-life balance of married and unmarried respondents revealed that, there exists a significant difference among the work-life balance outcome of married and unmarried women while working remotely. Moreover, married women employees displayed more work-life balance than female respondents, those unmarried in the remote working context. Probable reasons could be the changing scenario of men equally participating in the household work. As recent research on working women in India by Jasrotia and Meena (2021) found similar results, where 42.4% of women said that their husbands started helping them during the lockdown. Secondly, women were able to give proper attention to all the aspects of their work and non-work domains, creating positive WLB effects in the remote working context (Juna et al., 2022; Pensar & Rousi, 2023). Additionally, H_5 measured work-life balance differences among the two groups of permanent and contractual employees, where women employed full time perceived increase work-life balance in comparison to those working on a contractual basis, as per the descriptive statistic results. However, these differences observed is not statistically significant at 95% confidence interval, when tested for equality of means. Reason could be vast difference in the number of responses from permanent and contractual employees in the study, which made the difference barely detectable at p value $<.05$. Finally, the t-test for finding the mean differences among both the geographical area (Delhi/NCR and Bangaluru) from which the respondents operated (H_6) showed that although the difference approached significant levels, the hypotheses could not be accepted at 95% level of confidence. Such variability may be due to the context of job roles and specific functional structure followed throughout the IT sector organisations, this meant that, although working at two different cities, the women employees belonged to the same industry, somewhat involving similar functional structure and policies.

The next set of hypotheses H_6 and H_7 (ANOVA test) examined the difference in work-life balance score depending on the departments they belong to and from the surroundings they carried out their work remotely. The mean score comparison for departments witnessed Finance &Accounts and HR department to have low work-life balance scores relatively, compared to all the other departments. These results tend to mirror the general findings of various reports and studies published in regard to the increased work load of HR professionals after the COVID19 impact of virtual working prospects and rising use of

digital technologies at work. Hence changing the face of “traditional workforce” to “digital workforce” (Buchanan et al., 2016), making the HR department more responsible for rethinking the talent management approach, dynamic work regulatory policies and complexities while building work culture and employee engagement (NASSCOM et al., 2022). Also, the introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) systems leading to fast automation in the organisation up-to a large extent, adding to the need for adapting different skillsets (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry et al., 2024). Consequently, women are seen to express greater uncertainty about GenAI and are less likely to be comfortable working alongside it, compared to men (The Deloitte Global 2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, 2024). Several assumptions can be linked to the low work-life balance mean score for Finance & Accounts department employees in the study due to lack of full access provided to important documents and risk of cyber security threats impacting financial reporting when working from outside the office premises during the sudden transition to remote working/work from home due to the pandemic (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021; Obradović et al., 2023). On the other hand, there are other assumptions that accounting professionals had no difficulty in adapting the new working norms, rather had issues in getting accustomed to the technological changes for fulfilling the expectations to use latest technologies for performing financial transactions (Mutlu et al., 2022; Özyürek, 2012). However, organisations slowly got accustomed to such type of functioning in the later stages making it a new normal way of working under those occupations which had the characteristics to be performed even outside office premises (PwC, 2020). Specially finance being known to be one of the professions that can adapt to digital transformations efficiently (Lund et al., 2020).

Moreover, the results from the next hypotheses (work base) indicated that women revealed increase work-life balance scores while working from staycations. Studies share diverse viewpoints on the origin and emergence of the word ‘Staycation’, where few trace back its existence to the 1940s, while other studies relate it to come into light after the economic recession of the United States in 2008 (Kou et al., 2024; Moon & Chan, 2022; Sharma, 2009). While in both these cases, the importance of this form of “Stay” and “Vacation” has received much attention from both the Western and Asian countries as a type of “new normal” activity after the COVID19 impacts (Huang et al., 2023). Consequently, work from home received the next highest mean score for positive work life balance outcomes during remote work setup, followed by cafeterias and other two groups working jointly

from two different locations, having the lowest mean scores respectively. Yet these outcomes did not show any statistically significant differences for both the tests (H_6 and H_7).

Further, the second objective measures the interaction effect between remote working and work-life balance moderated by availability of ICT facilities. The findings significantly endorsed the hypothesis H_8 . Insights emphasised the necessity of integrating (high speed internet, hardware/software devices) digital infrastructure in the remote working surrounding. Especially, when leveraging digital transformation for enhanced competitiveness and sustainable performance in the future, building a new normal era of working remotely or from anywhere with positive work-life balance prospects. Supporting the existing reports and survey, which showcased the importance of tech infrastructure and necessary hardware/software devices in the presence of high-speed connectivity for carrying out virtual jobs in the long run without affecting the work outcomes (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016). Sutarto et al., (2022) further suggested that using digital methods can increase organisational performance by easing the tracking, monitoring and measurement of remote workers' performance.

This discussion offers a relevant and valuable addition to the understanding of remote work, which has grown more common since the onset of COVID-19. Therefore, the present research aims to deepen the comprehension of remote workers' work-life balance scenarios under the new normal circumstances and offer fresh viewpoints to the HRD community, which shall play a crucial role in enhancing the personal/ professional well-being of virtual workforces. Overall, the study not only validates the proposed hypotheses. But, also provides nuanced understanding of the multifaceted interplay among these key factors of the vastly evolving landscape of the remote working culture in the Indian context.

7.4 Qualitative findings on remote/virtual workforce management

This objective investigates the difficulties associated with managing a remote workforce and the implications that it has on the productivity of managers, based on the overall attitude of managers towards adaption of virtual management practices in the era of modern management. The analysis underscores the information gathered from twenty qualitative in-depth interviews. To be more specific, it focuses on issues concerning work

situations, digital organisations, agile management (which refers to the newly evolving work environments, tech developments and its implications on shaping future workplaces) and perseverance (which means the ability to efficiently manage teams despite upcoming trends and challenges).

The themes produced while transcribing the interviews and generating keywords, explains the attitude of managers towards new era of management practices, challenges encountered and its affect on managerial functions. Leading them to exercise critical practices for productive outcomes. The following are a categorical description of codes that have emerged from the managerial interviews after transcription and analysis of frequently occurring words, leading to the development of a theory and the establishment of meaning through a specific theme, as stated by Saldana (2009).

Work situations

During the course of the interviews with managers, it was discovered that although the administration of employees online originally appeared to be difficult, it gradually got more manageable with the passage of time and the backing of their respective organisations. These organisations utilised a variety of approaches in order to assist managers in becoming capable of supervising teams who were located remotely. As a result of the unexpected emergence of COVID-19, working remotely became a requirement for social distance and it has now become the new normal for many organisations all over the world. Hence, the organisation that fosters a culture of strategic thinking among its personnel is better equipped to swiftly adjust to changes in the business environment situations (Aaltola, 2018).

Therefore, managers were firstly asked to provide feedback on where they primarily operated and what came to their mind when the term "home office" occurred to them. Moreover, the pandemic has not only led to the emergence of new work situations, but has also generated specific expectations from employees towards their supervisors, in order to smoothly adapt to the new working trend. This trend has also somewhere added to work-life balance challenges and managerial wellbeing.

From the interviews with managers, researchers were able to extract the following open code as “home office” “employee expectations” “work-life balance” and “wellbeing

assessment” i.e., about their workplaces, the expectations of their employees while functioning virtually, the affect of these on their work-life balance and finally assessing overall managerial wellbeing.

Home office

There is a growing body of empirical data, including personal experience, which implies that employment is no longer limited to a predetermined schedule that is carried out in a traditional office setup. This mainly applies to managers, professionals and other white-collar workers (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Hence, when interviewed about their views on their work spaces, managers were asked about their choice of location. Some managers stated that they liked to work from home on a regular basis, while others opted for both working from home and working from the office. Finally, a small number of managers opted to carry out their managerial responsibilities from anywhere. They believed that the advent of home offices had brought about a variety of changes in their work culture, as well as an increase in their flexibility, prospects for growth and overall productivity R1: *“it has made life better. We can make more time for family”*. They revealed that the best aspect of this work practice is that it allows for work to be carried out even during times of emergency through the use of virtual platforms, which eliminates the need to commute to the place of employment.

Employee expectations

Employees expected meaningful mentoring and good listening skills from their managers during remotely performing their tasks R1: *“employees look forward to introduction of modern IT technology and infrastructure to support new era work”*, R2: *“arrange social activities to increase frequent social interactions”*, R3: *“they want us to be available for coaching and other forms of help”*. Although the traditional expectations remained same for the managers, remote working gave rise to new ones including technology training and arranging social activities for employees like “temporary co-location events” in order to physically meet and socialise with their counterparts. Therefore, in order for a remote work practice to be successful, supervisors of employees who engage in remote management must acknowledge that remote work is a valid, beneficial and desirable activity. They must also support working remotely by making adequate investments in contemporary

technology, making themselves available for coaching and maintaining open lines of communication.

Work- life Boundaries

Prior research addresses the significance of supervisor support in facilitating work-life balance and enhancing individuals' overall quality of life. However, when it comes to managerial work-life balance, the studies lack evident findings as to what issues they encounter being at managerial positions.

Personal interviews have indicated that managers themselves occasionally struggle to completely detach from work even while on leave or holiday, R1: *“usually when meetings are planned out of office shift time and on weekends”*. This can be attributed to the lack of "right to disconnect" legislation (Lerouge & Trujillo Pons, 2022), or it may be a result of the constant availability to work around the clock. Managers cited that the new era of managerial function gave rise to certain situations like cross communication, unplanned and frequent virtual meetings, R2: *“too much time consumed in managing teams”*. Additionally, they reported that remote work blurred the boundaries between work and leisure, as they were expected to be available for work at any time and from any location R3: *“was working till late hours as well as odd hours once every week”*. Hence, shadowing their vacations and sliding into personal boundaries R4: *“it does not allow to have vacation. Work online meetings shadow vacation”*. However, few of the managers agreed upon the fact that modern era of distance management have positively impacted their lives. In contrast to the prevalence of virtual working cultures, some individuals also underlined the significance of the role that organisations play in preserving a healthy work-life balance R5: *“this depends on the type of organisation and management you are working with”*. Hence, organisational strategies can have a significant impact, in deciding upon certain policies supporting managerial work-life balance, especially when it comes to operational matters.

Wellbeing assessment

A common pattern observed during the interview is that; despite the fact that their workload and job expectations had only a marginal increase in comparison to the traditional style, it still led to fatigue because of overworking sometimes due to the increase

in management hours R1: *“it has at many times crossed the boundaries of office hours and lead to fatigue”*. This was similar to the situation that occurred with non-managerial employees, who in available studies have reported high involvement time in a virtual setup as a result of being exposed to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Managers found that the quality and their delivery timelines got impacted R2: *“yes, overall delivery timelines got affected due to remote management”*. Remote management undoubtedly added to few of the potential risks of team mentoring like R3: *“In a sense that since everyone is working from, people assume we are free always”* which led to burnouts, however few managers agreed that these risks are same at both places and self-managed teams might be a viable option for reducing too much workload on the managers only R4: *“Same as it is when you are working from home. Constant status tracking, regular and unplanned meetings, may impact negatively. Focus on self-managed teams will help”*.

Table 7.5: showing keyword analysis and open code generation for work situation

Keywords	Illustration	Sub-Themes
Growth opportunities, efficient teams, virtual connects, flexibility, better WLB, scattered diversity, less commute, working during emergency, anywhere remotely, from home, hybrid	it has made life better. We can make more time for family	Home office
Open communication, meaningful mentoring, frequent feedback, home office equipments, modern technology, available for coaching, quality feedbacks, frequent social interaction, listening skills, manage meetings	<i>employees look forward to introduction of modern IT technology and infrastructure to support new era work: arrange social activities to increase frequent social interactions: they want us to be available for coaching and other forms of help:</i>	Employee expectations
Cross communication, unplanned meetings, late hours, shadow vacation, time consuming, frequent virtual meetings, constant status tracking, odd hours, cross boundaries	<i>“usually when meetings are planned out of office shift time and on weekends: too much time consumed in managing teams: was working till late hours as well as odd hours once every week: it does not allow to have vacation. Work online meetings shadow vacation: this depends on the type of organisation and management you are working with</i>	Work life Boundaries

KRA affected, regular meetings, more time consuming, chasing the team, delivery timelines, lack of trust, team bonding, sense of belongingness, too much followups, quality of deliverables, daily status, fatigue	it has at many times crossed the boundaries of office hours and lead to fatigue: yes, overall delivery timelines got affected due to remote management: In a sense that since everyone is working from, people assume we are free always: Same as it is when you are working from home. Constant status tracking, regular and unplanned meetings, may impact negatively. Focus on self-managed teams will help	Wellbeing Assessment
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Source- Managerial interviews

Digital Organisation

During the interviews, the managers discussed the different ways in which technology has shown to be beneficial in effectively managing remote teams. Although the use of various information and communication technologies (ICTs) simplified managerial tasks and improved communication for remote locations R1: *“visibility on available tasks. Visibility on work load with team and team members. Status of tasks completed by team and team members. Work time spent. Monitoring the progress of project has become easy”*. It also resulted in occasional miscommunication due to the physical absence of the team in one location, leading to delays in completing tasks. The term ‘micromanagement’ emerged mostly from these interviews, which were conducted as a result of the introduction of employee monitoring software. Managers were concerned that this software could foster mistrust between employees and their leaders (them) in various situations. Consequently, they argued that closely controlling remote teams was never a viable choice for them R2: *“No... Micro managing employees is always harmful in a longer run”*. Instead, they believed that showing trust and granting autonomy to employees would yield superior outcomes R3: *“there has been few instances where we tried micro-management but it back fired as employees want us to trust them. Productivity is the key and if the work is done, it shouldn't matter where they are working from”*.

When analysing the benefits and drawbacks of using technology in remote management, two main categories of positive and negative roles of technology have emerged. The study also investigated different software that managers used for remote functions These

responses gathered from various interviews were analysed for keyword generation using MAXQDA software for identification of important key terms and generation of themes.

Software Preferences

Using technologies such as video conferencing (for example, Zoom and Skype), text messaging (for example, Slack and Microsoft Teams) and collaboration tools (for example, Slack, Google Hangouts, or Microsoft Yammer), telepresence systems have enabled employees to be resilient to virtual operations without heavily relying on their physical presence. This has enabled them to perform their collaborative activities and team meetings R1: *“yes, there are always some pros and cons in every phase. I am more on a Pros side because - In this advanced technological world, technology played a major role in bringing the scattered diversity under one roof via virtual meetings, virtual connects, defined set goals where individual knows what work to be completed each working day”*. Additionally, the processing of leave requests and the tracking of total working hours are both done automatically in today's world and eventually, employees will even be able to self-service their requests. Therefore, the manual method of recording time that was previously required of the clerk is no longer necessary.

Leading tech business houses realise the value of leveraging enterprise for virtual work and majority of the respondents used certain AI tools, talent acquisition and team management softwares R2: *“we have applications in places to manage people/resources from different domains”*. The keywords generated demonstrates which tools and softwares are utilised by the interviewees in their capacity of a supervisor or manager of virtual teams. The demographics predicted (table 5.9, pp 67-68) maximum number of response outcomes from engineering and IT departments which revealed that, those involved in managing of project teams were more exposed to the use of high-tech tools and softwares. Also, those functioning on the post of HR managers responded positively to the use of talent acquisition and management softwares.

While email and the telephone have been cited as the most common modes of online communication in the literature on telecommuting (Raghuram et al., 2019), the same is observed for the responsibilities of current managers, where e-mail was the primary mode of communication combined with collaboration tools like G-meet, Zoom and others mentioned below. Apart from this, there has not been much differentiation between the

different types of electronic devices that were used for work in past and are used now in the non-tech roles, the only major difference is the increase in frequency of using such tools while functioning from distance. Since, lack of necessary tools in few organisations negatively affected outcomes in remote teams as per managers R3: *“no did not have tools. Team monitoring, timelines, quality of deliverable got impacted”*. However, it may be suggested that as the volume of communication among virtual team’s spikes, this may be detrimental to performance. Since it may lead to an excessive amount of irrelevant information that distracts from the flow of information that is necessary. Due to the fact that an increase in communication frequency is likely to take the shape of large volume e-mails or messages via other virtual modes. This impact may become more severe as the level of virtuality increases. It is possible that categorising via these emails will result in an excessive amount of information R4: *“over communication and cross communications are the most important risks”*.

Positive Outcomes

"Brilliant machine advances will astound us, but they will only transform the lives of senior executives if managerial advances allow them to" cited by Larson and De Church (2020). This may be the distinguishing characteristic that differentiates individuals who succeed in the era of artificial intelligence from those who do not succeed. In addition, the digital transformation is causing markets to become more dynamic, which is putting pressure on employees to constantly adjust to changing conditions and increasing their desire for flexibility. The algorithmic surveillance has now been used to manage remote and flexible workforces. Organisations began these implementation mechanisms (like Inter Guard and GPS systems) to observe the remote workforce throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced millions of workers to work from home. These systems collected and analysed computer activity data, including snapshots, sign in times and actions, as well as measuring output and downtime. Similar to this, the interview results indicated that while an organisation's endorsement of remote working and the introduction of new IT technologies to facilitate remote work reduces the challenges of managing a geographically dispersed workforce R1: *“monitoring the progress of project has become easy”*, surveillance of the effects of remote working actually exacerbates these challenges at times R2: *“its difficult to gather the entire team for even a single download at times. It's easier to pass on the information when in office”*.

One of the ideas that has been put out, is that the utilisation of decentralised knowledge management methods is connected to the successful implementation of technological innovation activities (TIAs). Because of the proliferation of technical advancements and the administration of virtual teams, it is now essential to acquire knowledge of specific technological tools. R3: *“new techniques till adaptation is always a challenge. Once habituated and benefits are understood it becomes easier. Initially it's a stress and understanding has to be developed and then team has to be onboarded. For current generation adaptation is easy”*. Therefore, if properly implemented for different tasks at different levels, the intelligence speed and accuracy of such applications can promise outstanding results.

Negative Outcomes

Unscheduled interactions were one of the most significant challenges that interviewees had to face on a regular basis while participating in online mentoring. This meant that they were sometimes required to be available around the clock, to the point where it became difficult to differentiate between work and non-work hours. There is no doubt that virtual management has resulted in an increase in the number of hours that are dedicated to listening to and communicating job needs to the teams R1: *“many times this has laid to explaining the requirements multiple times to team”*. R2: *“it becomes quite stressful if there is no communication and the resources start working in SILOs”*. However, this has also been contingent on the nature of the work and the presence of employees at the same time. Moreover, when compared to roles that did not respond to the use of much technology, those that acquired and implemented a higher level of IT expertise required additional hours of education and mentorship.

Similarly, the algorithmic (technological) approach of work quality control is distinguished from tailored methods of informational (manual) managing by the fact that it functions at the culmination (ending) of a task rather than during the task. Managers disagreed to the accuracy of available task tracking softwares, claiming they did not provide them the real time data on how and when work is done, it only assisted in identifying the accomplished volume. R3: *“not really. We don't have visibility into the actual work done in a day. We only know how many hours was the employee active but not the amount or quality of work that was done in those hours”*. This is accomplished by

grading the work based on the final completion rather than the entire working pattern. Therefore, in order to ensure that technological advancements are effectively integrated and utilised within an organisation, ongoing modifications and advancements in the administrative and management systems are essential prerequisites.

Table 7.6: showing keyword analysis and open code generation for digital workforce

Keywords	Illustration	Sub-Themes
Web HR, Zoho recruit, JIRA, Zoho people, MS Teams, Avature, Chime, Webtime, internal, Emails, Google meet, Zoom, Desk Time, Oracle Taleo, MS Office packs, Infor Talent management, Oracle ERP, None.	yes, there are always some pros and cons in every phase. I am more on a Pros side because - In this advanced technological world, technology played a major role in bringing the scattered diversity under one roof via virtual meetings, virtual connects, defined set goals where individual knows what work to be completed each working day: we have applications in places to manage people/resources from different domains: no did not have tools. Team monitoring, timelines, quality of deliverable got impacted: over communication and cross communications are the most important risks	Software Preferences
Progress monitoring, checking status of task, distance visibility, meetings, confidential task performance, more accessibility, smooth functioning, increased reach, quick.	monitoring the progress of project has become easy: its difficult to gather the entire team for even a single download at times. It's easier to pass on the information when in office: new techniques till adaptation is always a challenge. Once habituated and benefits are understood it becomes easier. Initially it's a stress and understanding has to be developed and then team has to be onboarded. For current generation adaptation is easy	Positive Outcomes
Unscheduled interactions, stress, unexpected calls, SILO's, followups, timelines, micro managing, team work, quality of work, increased load of trainings, productivity issues.	many times this has laid to explaining the requirements multiple times to team: it becomes quite stressful if there is no communication and the resources start working in SILOs: not really. We don't have visibility into the actual work done in a day. We only know how many hours was the employee active but not the amount or quality of work that was done in those hours	Negative Outcomes

Source- Managerial interviews

Agile Management

The managers revealed about the situations which at times did hinder their productivity while managing virtual teams. The comments provided more insight into the sub-themes of lacking visibility creating challenges and those managerial tasks which were difficult to perform compared to other tasks. In addition, the managers were also queried on the training and skillset enhancement assistance they received from organisations to improve and sustain their managerial efficiency in this new era of remote workforce management.

Training and Skillsets

"Lifelong learning" is a need, which is a reflection of the fact that long-term learning is becoming increasingly crucial (Schwarzmueller et al., 2018). Significant studies that are currently available contain innovative concepts on the shifting nature of work showcasing a growing demand for managerial training in order to educate leaders for the digital age (Larson & DeChurch, 2020).

The implementation of remote and virtual work not only prompted the need for training and advancement opportunities for employees who were not in managerial roles, but it also had an impact on those who held leadership positions. In order to meet their team requirements, managers participated in trainings that allowed them to maintain an online connection with their teams. These trainings are identified and placed into the keyword analysis diagram that can be found below, which illustrates the different sort of trainings that were undergone for the purpose of functioning effectively. According to them, the assistance and support provided by the organisation helped them maintain their overall well-being and improve their performance. However, many managers cited that getting themselves updated seemed challenging all the time due to their busy schedules and they extended their up-skilling to non-working days at times R1: *"On working days it is not feasible to spare time but yes on weekends there is time to upgrade skills"*.

Researchers have found that having the right internal skills to encourage innovation makes it easier to understand and use outside knowledge, which leads to better overall performance. Although there were managers who were able to easily manage their time for their own up skilling, yet few of them had a difficult time doing so due to their high level of commitments and involvement in multiple tasks R2: *"to be honest, getting regular*

slot might be of difficult due to workload. an workshop / dedicated session will certainly of help". Their were managers who believed that the situation was sudden and training were still developed to fully support a new style of management R3: *"Not much... This situation itself is very new which no one was prepared for... Trainings are being developed"*. Whereas, few of them believed that they became accustomed with the situation with passing time R4: *"it was organically induced & inculcated and we got used to the working environment accordingly"*.

The managers mentioned that the most important skills they possessed for managing virtual teams were the ability to effectively communicate with their team members and listen to their questions, without any bias or preconceived notions about the subject matter that was being discussed. Secondly, what made virtual management effective was the potential to create a lively environment among the members of the team, as well as the ability to think creatively and independently in order to carry out their responsibilities under different circumstances. Not to be overlooked here, is the ability to effectively coordinate among their team and senior members regarding the tasks that have been allocated and the outcomes that are intended to be achieved. Certain major skillsets of managers such as; effective communication, listening skills, divergent thinking and coordination are revealed by the thorough analysis of all the interviews.

All these skills as mentioned by the managers can be very well be merged under the umbrella of communication, which is the essence of any efficiently performing team and their seniors R5: *"worked more on co-ordination and communication skills"*. The manager should therefore, maintain consistent communication with all members of the team, both individually and collectively, regarding the task assigned, the role that each member is expected to play in the completion of the team's mission, the manner in which the team goals are the path to the organisation's mission and the progress that is being made throughout the process. This is due to the fact that the leader's role as the communication centre is extremely important. Thereby, through the provision of guidance, training, resources, mentorship and the facilitation of bond-building, virtual leadership can enhance team collaboration.

Visibility

Researchers in this study have found that one of the biggest problems with virtuality is that it can be hard for teams to communicate with each other. People who work from home have a hard time getting to know their co-workers or bosses, sharing unspoken information and working together R1: *“Challenges may not have increased but the nature has changed. e.g. since people are no longer meeting physically it bit difficult to create the bonds within teams. On the other hand people love the flexibility of working online”*. The reason for this is that using lean communication tools makes it much harder to have any other conversations which is not regarded as important to the work.

Surprisingly, industrialised nations also have a deficiency in comprehending the necessary e-leadership abilities for effectively managing efficient virtual teams in difficult work circumstances because R2: *“while it has helped to execute work during the emergency situation, it has also confirmed that it can’t be a substitute to in person workplace culture. many times it has reduced the efficiency as co-ordination issues has gone up due remote workforce management”*. Therefore, the question of how e-leaders may construct efficient virtual teams is a significant challenge in leadership. Since, numerous organisations, particularly those in developing nations, have encountered an entirely new array of difficulties in administering their geographically dispersed teams as a result of inadequate infrastructure and strategies to foster a sense of belonging among employees. Managers responded that continuous online interaction became a necessity for minimising the visibility problems while supervising their teams. These issues were mainly created through physical distance, but resulted in side effects like hindering team work management, effective communication and much more as such.

Managerial Tasks

Monitoring team members' performance and devising appropriate procedures to identify and address cross-distance conflicts were enough challenges when all team members were physically present. However, resolving conflicts in virtual teams require an additional level of expertise. In addition, the leader establishes task objectives and role prerequisites that delegate individual members' accountability for mission completion. These steps and managerial duties became quite a bit complicated and time consuming due to the intervention of remote workforce culture R1: *“remote working has brought about a whole*

new set of challenges like managing employee engagement and sense of belongingness". Managers occasionally faced challenges in fulfilling specific responsibilities related to virtual management, as direct supervision and accountability from both the parties took a back seat due to lack of face to face communication R2: *"it affected the vision of assigned task, distract in achieving goal, on-time deliveries impacted and lack of coordination and team work in the team"*, managers witnessed that the distance created hindrance while performing managerial functions and negatively impacted overall productivity at times due to the shift in priorities R3: *"it has reduced the productivity as team co-ordination became more important than task itself"*. These challenges were identified through an analysis of the keywords as reported by managers. MAXQDA was used to highlight the phrases based on the frequency of certain words used by managers when discussing different situations in order to generate sub-themes.

Table 7.7: showing keyword analysis and open code generation for agile management

Keywords	Illustration	Sub-Themes
Coaching, certification, in house training, stakeholder management, organically induced, time management, professional certification, training workshops, leadership training, collaborative apps, Udemy courses, ERP systems, LinkedIn learning courses, performance management and effective communication, listening skills, divergent thinking, coordination, lack of time, unavailability of training.	On working days it is not feasible to spare time but yes on weekends there is time to upgrade skills: to be honest, getting regular slot might be of difficult due to workload. an workshop / dedicated session will certainly of help: Not much... This situation itself is very new which no one was prepared for... Trainings are being developed: it was organically induced & inculcated and we got used to the working environment accordingly: worked more on co-ordination and communication skills	Training and Skillsets
Continuous online interaction, lack of coordination, non-compliance, increased distance, managing time, supervision, team work management, distraction in achieving goal, unscheduled interaction, explaining requirements, internet shutdown.	Challenges may not have increased but the nature has changed. e.g. since people are no longer meeting physically it bit difficult to create the bonds within teams. On the other hand people love the flexibility of working online: while it has helped to execute work during the emergency situation, it has also confirmed that it can't be a substitute to in person workplace culture. many times it has reduced the efficiency as co-ordination issues has gone up due remote workforce management:	Visibility

Training employees, conflict resolution, task coordination, breaking of tasks, on time deliveries, technical assistance, effective team building, communication, employee engagement, followups.	remote working has brought about a whole new set of challenges like managing employee engagement and sense of belongingness: it affected the vision of assigned task, distract in achieving goal, on-time deliveries impacted and lack of coordination and team work in the team: it has reduced the productivity as team co-ordination became more important than task itself	Managerial Tasks
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Source- Managerial interviews

Perseverance

Despite of the sudden changes in managerial duties and style of leadership of virtual teams, managers showed endurance towards this work culture due to its positive sides that remote work has to offer. Managers when interviewed in regard to their attitude towards survival in this new normal era of managerial implications felt that things were difficult in the begging but later they got accustomed to it R1: *“new techniques till adaptation is always a challenge. Once habituated and benefits are understood it becomes easier. Initially it's a stress and understanding has to be developed and then team has to be onboarded.* They mainly preferred a transformational leadership style in most cases for leading the current generation and work responsibilities. As well as delegation to be the crucial aspect of allocating tasks for avoiding excessive workload. Finally, adding to the strategies initiated by them, which helped them survive and work productively in modern management times. The codes created within these three sub-themes are listed below in the form of a keyword analysis, providing a comprehensive visual representation of the most commonly occurring terms in the respondents perseverance evaluation.

Preferred Leadership

Managers stated in the interviews that they intended to adopt a transformational leadership style rather than a transactional one to effectively manage their teams in the current era of remote workforce management R1: *“transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership causes change in individuals as well as the whole team. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders”.*

Transformational leadership is characterised by traits such as idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). This kind of leadership makes it possible for individuals to achieve their maximum potential and enhance their performance to the fullest extent possible. Consequently, it is observed that majority of the managers favoured this particular type of management in contrast to the conventional method of leadership.

On the other hand, only a small number of managers chose for the transactional style of management and even fewer of them sought for a combination of the two styles in order to function as per the demand and requirement of the situation R2: *“it should be a perfect mix of both according to situation demand”*. A cross evaluation analysis of the demographic characteristics revealed that leaders who favoured this method either had higher levels of experience or very less experience. This indicated that managers who are either new generation managers or have gained many years of experience feel like both the leadership styles can be combined to avail better results.

Delegation

By not limiting the daily decision-making authority to simply managerial positions, disruptive technologies and current management practices have transformed the style of managerial activities that were performed in the past R1: *“power sharing and delegation of duties should always be encouraged in a working environment as it creates a healthy relationship among the team and enhances the skills of the team members to cope with the upcoming challenges”*. This has allowed for the organisation to embark on a process of rapid decision making R2: *“delegation in right perspective increases overall organisational productivity as it helps deliver more and frees the leadership for strategic thinking”*.

When summarising the managerial replies about power sharing in the management culture, it became evident that delegating routine organisational tasks is crucial for the growth of an organisation and for improving productivity. This process entails breaking down activities into smaller segments and allocating resources in order to enhance efficiency. Although it may be burdensome, it can also foster self-directed learning and personal development. Therefore, managers believed that power sharing and delegation of work can foster positive relationships and improve team proficiency. Nevertheless, effectively

managing and recruiting the appropriate individual might pose a significant challenge R3: *“it has got two sides... We get the benefit of employee involvement and ownership, without concentrating power in one person's hand. The downside is that it gets difficult to manage at times and steer the efforts in one direction to achieve the goal since the ownership is dissipated. Also, recruiting the right person who understands their responsibility well is a challenge”*. However, an organisational culture that grants employees the authority to make autonomous decisions is essential for cultivating future leaders R4: *“ i feel such a management culture is the need of the hour in organisations to build future leaders and empower each employee to make independent decisions which directly impact the company”*.

Managerial Strategies

In light of the findings that have been uncovered in the research literature, Lautsch et al., (2009) suggest that managers should acquire the knowledge necessary to monitor, stay connected with and expect efficiency from employees who work remotely.

Similarly, a number of significant findings are derived from interviews with managers regarding strategies for managing teams. Managers initially emphasised the importance of establishing personal connections whenever possible. They recognised the importance of conducting face-to-face meetings as a means to foster strong relationships and facilitate effective collaboration. Furthermore, supervisors stressed the importance of frequent communication with team members, exceeding the typical requirements of a traditional office environment R1: *“remain connected with team and explain them the requirements at each step”*. This proactive approach to communication helped ensure a clear awareness of the difficulties faced by their teams and quickly address them by considering the input of all team members collectively R2: *“time bound meetings. Conflict handling by improving communication. Keeping the ego aside understanding the challenges faced by the team and reaching out to other team members on how this can be handled, often planned online team bonding activities which is driven by my team itself”*.

Figure 7.8: Showing keyword analysis and open code generation for perseverance

Keywords	Illustration	Sub-Themes
Transformational, mixed, according to situation, independent decision, transactional.	transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership causes change in individuals as well as the whole team. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders: it should be a perfect mix of both according to situation demand:	Preferred Leadership
Organisational productivity, more learning, with ownership, frees leadership, need of the hour, efficiency, power sharing, corporate journey, BAU, single focus, opportunities, confidence, difference of opinion.	power sharing and delegation of duties should always be encouraged in a working environment as it creates a healthy relationship among the team and enhances the skills of the team members to cope with the upcoming challenges: delegation in right perspective increases overall organisational productivity as it helps deliver more and frees the leadership for strategic thinking: it has got two sides... We get the benefit of employee involvement and ownership, without concentrating power in one person's hand. The downside is that it gets difficult to manage at times and steer the efforts in one direction to achieve the goal since the ownership is dissipated. Also, recruiting the right person who understands their responsibility well is a challenge”: i feel such a management culture is the need of the hour in organisations to build future leaders and empower each employee to make independent decisions which directly impact the company	Delegation Culture
Time bound meetings, improving communication, self organised, define outcomes, scrum methodology, self managed teams, remain connected, quarterly targets, focus team discussion, good network, technology, highlight risks earlier, active coordination, latest style, agile methods, in person connect, clear expectations.	“remain connected with team and explain them the requirements at each step: time bound meetings. Conflict handling by improving communication. Keeping the ego aside understanding the challenges faced by the team and reaching out to other team members on how this can be handled, often planned online team bonding activities which is driven by my team itself	Managerial Strategies

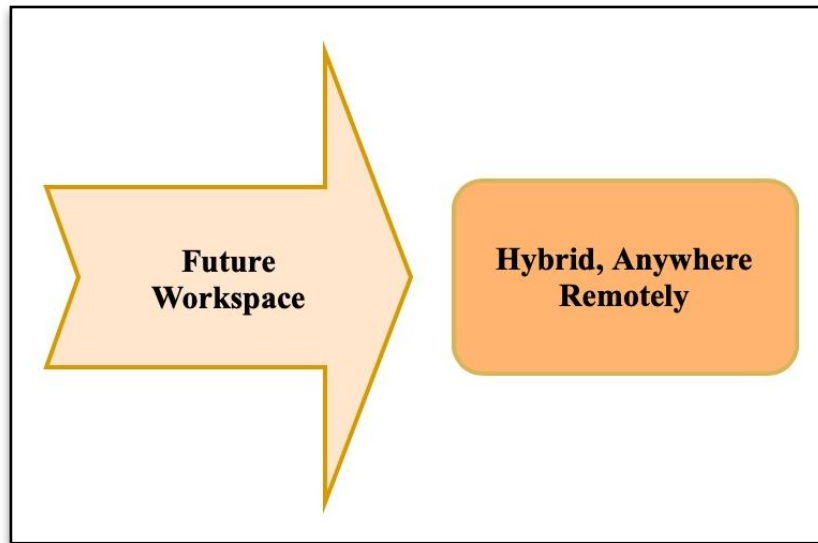
Source- Managerial interviews

Wishes for future

Additionally, managers while interviewing revealed that hybrid working and remote working were viable alternatives for performing their tasks from remote locations and these possibilities could be sustained by organisations in the future.

Workspace

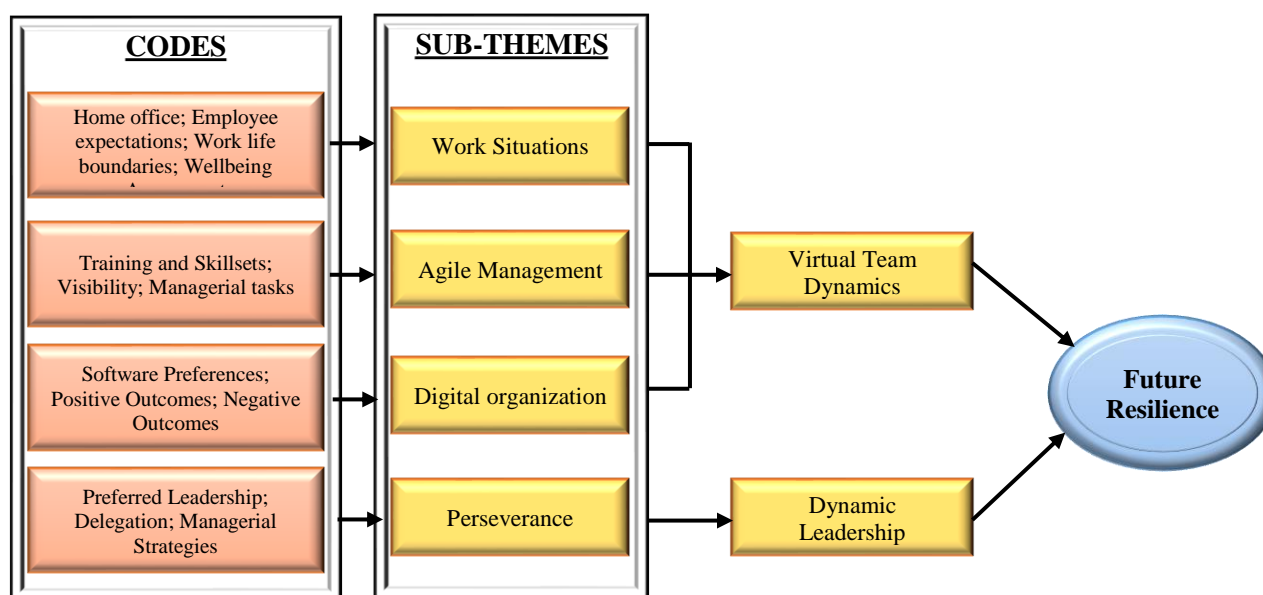
The managers gave mixed response about their ideal work environment for future which may enhance managerial productivity, majority of the managers indicated a preference for hybrid work arrangements R1: “remote working is more on reducing the productivity in long run so hybrid culture should be tried”. One of the biggest concerns that led managers to opt for hybrid form was the recent hike in number of moonlighting cases due to increased remote working R2: “hybrid culture is needed, otherwise everybody will be doing moonlighting which will decrease company's productivity”. However, this hybrid work culture, which is already being adopted by many corporations, is not considered practical by some managerial women who desired entirely remote working arrangements instead of the hybrid one. This kind of response initiated by them was because to the challenges faced by migrant employees or those from rural areas who were forced to stay close to their office premises in order to visit the workplace once or twice a week as a result of hybrid functioning R3: “hybrid is not a feasible solution for people from tier 2 and 3 cities... Remote working is the new normal and could be productive if used properly”. As a result of which financial burden of maintaining a lifestyle in metropolitan cities is created, despite not having to regularly visit the office still being away from their family members.

Figure 7.2: keywords for future workspace

Source- Managerial interviews

7.5 Discussing the qualitative findings for objective 3

A qualitative method is initiated to study the third objective of this study, dealing with challenges faced in managing remotely dispersed teams and its effect on the managerial productivity. In order to explore the managerial attitude towards the adaption and experience of virtual management practices. The categorisation of the keywords into various codes for interpretation of the interviews reveal that the remote workforce management have changed work dynamics leading to adaption of "dynamic leadership" qualities in order to manage and function smoothly in the current "Virtual Team Dynamics" which is the future face of work (**figure 7.3**). This involves developing practices and policies that promote future resilience, enabling the establishment of an infrastructure capable of withstanding unforeseen contingencies, such as natural disasters like COVID-19 or market shifts due to innovation and shifting managerial paradigms. By enhancing the ability to respond, recover and adapt after such events, managers can effectively navigate these changes.

Figure 7.3: Model showing established qualitative study framework

Several studies predict that distant and hybrid working impose specific requirements on people managers. Undoubtedly, the shift towards more remote working will reveal any deficiencies in the managerial community's skills and abilities because a significant number of them may have little to no experience dealing with remote employees (; Gifford, 2022; Delany, 2021; Noto et al., 2023). Similarly, past evidence in the field of human resource development found that the organisations that adopted remote working best through the pandemic seem to be those with better management practices (Felstead, 2022), with the people managers being a crucial enabler of remote working. This highlighting the importance of developing people management capabilities (Depoo & Hyršlová, 2022). Present interviews therefore, revealed the introduction of new trainings at the workplace for self-development through different types of coaching and skill development programmes provided by companies in the form of on-the job training, leadership trainings and much more. Very few of them said they did not undergo trainings at all for performing their duties under this new era management of remote workforces. The reasons being either not able to make time for it or not in alignment with their roles. Moreover, distance did create visibility issues and while defining the responses, the themes created, catered to those problems revealed by managers while managing the team, then the tasks in which they faced problems mostly were coded. One of the major hurdles creating visibility issue is the frequent internet shutdown during team meetings. The managers mostly face challenges in task coordination and conflict resolution due to absence of face-to-face

interactions in remote working. Conflict management skills on the other hand have been found to be an essential element for managers in driving virtual team (VT) performance (Turesky et al., 2020). Hence, the lack of proper conflict management may have adversely affected the team performance in virtual setups. This challenge is similar with the findings of the study conducted by Mahtta (2022) and Anglani et al., (2023), where barriers for VT collaboration emerged as one of the vital themes. Although, there are studies which have found coordination and collaboration to be more feasible due to remote working and availability of ICT tools in the lockdown era (Henry et al., 2021; Pirzadeh & Lingard, 2021). However, such studies took into account the perception of non-managerial employees and in an emergency situation (COVID19), where carrying out job functions was the priority, excluding all other aspects of professional wellbeing. Moreover, the wellbeing effects of remote supervision on managers through managerial perception are also noted. Interviews separately outlined the negative wellbeing (personal-professional) effects of remote management like; too much follow ups and team monitoring which in turn affected their KRA's (Key Responsibility Area), delivery timelines and quality of deliverables. Also leading to issue of team bonding at times, due to lack of trust. The role of trust therefore cannot be denied in creating successful team bondings, because studies in past agree with the fact upon trust being a crucial construct for any type of team, it is proved to be the most important and difficult to achieve element in situations of physical dispersion of team members (Caputo et al., 2022; Mutha & Srivastava, 2021; Yang & Lin, 2023).

Despite of such challenges, the managers were found working from remote setups, especially their homes due to reasons like; less commute, career opportunities by being able to continue her work during emergency situations as well, meanwhile having a better work-life balance option in hand. This new culture led to a certain increase in employee expectations from their managers such as being more available for coaching, open communication, introducing modern technology and most probably being a meaningful mentor. These findings have already been supported by Chaudhary et al., (2022) and Castellano et al., (2021), where they mention the competencies of a successful e- leader to be a good coach, e- communicator, e- tech enabler and e- change adapting manager.

Nevertheless, the remote workforce management also brought in new challenges into managing the work-life boundaries of managers like; long hours, unplanned meetings,

untimely interactions due to 24*7 accessibility to work device and significantly shadowing vacations. These issues seemed more pressing as women managers had to now deal with added responsibility of the new era monitoring expectations apart from the already existing work and home duties. Similar results were also highlighted by Szulc et al., (2021), revealing that ability of employees to work past working hours can pose difficulties for managers who cannot monitor it, nor create boundaries in order to achieve a healthy WLB, reporting long working hours of managers at times (Sharma, 2023). However, the problems did not seem to be coming in the way of current managers because of their competencies to cope with it by planning effective strategies to handle all such issues in the form of conducting time bound meetings, quarterly targets, using agile methods, conflict handling and many more as such. One of the reasons for this could be their accumulated experiences by now in handling the remote teams after almost a year or two of functioning with the virtual teams. The responses gathered shows that managerial productivity may be judged by how well managers functioned despite of challenges encountered and delivered efficient outcomes at the later stages.

Digital organisation/virtual teams in majority of the studies have been found to be related to projects and project managers (Cripe & Burleigh, 2022; Wu, 2021). Working on fulfilling this limitation the current study included respondents from different roles and departments. Finally, the findings from such responses on role of technology in digital workforce management are presented both positively and negatively by the participants. They felt technology and tools always proved to be helpful in many critical managerial tasks, even though it prompted certain difficulties and added to the techno stress outcomes. Apart from the initial stress and challenges they faced due to vast introduction of tech software in managerial roles, it also led to regular trainings, follow ups and micro management issues. The reasons for these responses probably catered to the demographic divide of managers in the current study which mostly included mid-career managers showing traditional views on management in the first place. However, few interviewees never thought increased exposure to tech and software to be an issue at all. Recent studies have seen the maximum application of digital tools by the HR managers for the purpose of hiring and managing the human capital of companies (Mahtta et al., 2022; Misra et al., 2023). These evidences align with the demographic findings of the current study, by observing that other people management roles except IT, project managers and HR do not

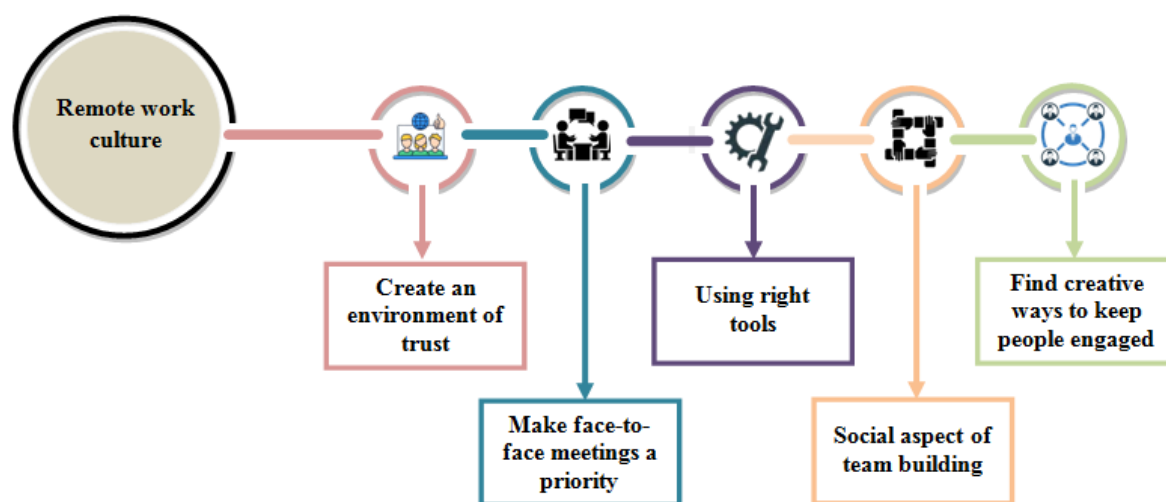
involve much applicability of digital tools for supervision and collaboration, instead relying heavily on the communication channels to work with the team and their seniors.

Lastly, the thoughts of managers on their preferred style of leadership and future work place revealed that transformational style could be a best match for future management practices but the best way to decide upon the style of leadership suited, is to work according to the demand and requirements of the situations. Proper delegation of duties might help in load sharing and quick task completion when working remotely. Consequently, trust, communication, cooperation and delegation of skills have been regarded very significant when combined with a preference for transformational leadership. Hence, it should be noted that not all leadership techniques provide the same results (Castellano et al., 2021; Mutha & Srivastava, 2021) considering the evolving circumstances, from a remote working paradigm to a mixed working model.

The responses from all the managers in combination depicted that there were no such negative implications on managerial functions which cannot be catered upon, rather this work practice elevated their productivity to certain extent at times when handled properly. These conclusions were seen to be supported by a very recent survey conducted by Zoom together with Reworked INSIGHTS, which revealed that 83% of employees reported higher productivity in hybrid/remote work environments worldwide compared to traditional office settings, it found leaders claiming to become much more flexible in future with an increased implementation of AI tools and remote technologies (Navigating the Future of Work: Global Perspectives on Hybrid Models and Technology, 2024). On the other hand, managers mostly preferred a hybrid form of working next to total remote working for reasons such as increased moonlighting practices by employees when functioning regularly at remote locations and difficulties in communicating all necessary commands in absence of face-to-face meetings which in turn could lead to trust issues between them and their teams. Though very few women managers found hybrid to not be a feasible option for employees belonging to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities as this could overshadow the actual benefits of remote working has to offer in the form of less commute, lesser rental expenses and residing with the family members at their hometowns rather than migrating to Tier 1 cities mostly in search of work and career opportunities.

The theory of future resilience in managing upcoming changes in work practices and employee expectations suggests a framework required for effective remote workforce management in the long run. Below conceptual framework (**figure 7.4**) explains the same in support of the findings gathered from interviews and builds upon by adapting to the idea from the managerial strategies reported. Therefore, for any remote environment to be successful and smoothly functioning, there needs to be trust among the team and managers/supervisors. An environment of trust allows the team to meet targets effectively. Remote setups involve working from a distance, making assignment and completion of tasks complex, so prioritising face-to-face meetings helps to create a conducive environment for discussion and problem solving. Functioning with the right tools and technologies plays a pivotal role in performing remotely, virtual teams often lack team bonding and collaboration in this work culture. Therefore, managers and team leaders should look closely into the social aspect of team building when far from the office, finally finding ways to keep the employees engaged so they don't feel isolated or monotonous while performing from their own spaces.

Figure 7.4: Framework for effective remote work management



7.6 From the Researchers Lens (Observations)

This particular section indulges into practical learnings of the researcher via different reputed social platforms, ground level exposures and includes the interactive feedbacks of industry professionals along with the women respondents.

7.6.1 The Journey of Working Women

Women in the industry highlighted that though organisations provided necessary tools and training to employees as revealed by managerial responses, there were either delays in decision to provide the required tools and settings or it was not enough to carry on smooth functioning of the remote employees. Women at managerial (middle or low) level still face difficulties in functioning, overburdened with responsibilities making it tough for climbing the ladder of senior leadership. Difficulties doesn't stop here many countries even lack inclusive pay structure for all genders. As per the 2025 Insight report, male workers earn a salary premium of 39% when transitioning from minimal preparation profession to positions demanding some preparation, whereas female participants just get a 19% hike. Earning just 15% at the highest end of the job complexity range in case of specialised occupations. Due to this, Southern Asia still holds the lowest position in sharing pay laws with European and American countries and even Eastern Asia, where equitable wage policies are implemented unlike that of India, Nepal and Bangladesh (WEF, 2025). Moreover, every search results on LinkedIn for individuals at managerial/ leadership position in the IT sector, out of 25 people, 22 still appear to be men and 3 women. Probable reason might be their absence from a social platform, showing the lack of interest in digital media or their extra burdened work life aspects not allowing them to be actively involved on a professional job seeking/giving platform, or else there are no women at senior managerial positions yet to be seen in the search.

Combined demographic observations from both managerial and non-managerial positions showed that few women worked at managerial positions at a young age, whereas women belonging to the higher age categories and around a decade of work experiences still serve at non-managerial positions. Surprisingly, women while answering this observation said that, they willingly did not take promotions as it led to additional duties and work overload, few said they preferred not shifting their jobs or organisations, valuing work-life balance instead of a rise in salary and position. This trend revealed that work experience might not be the only deciding factor in promoting women at workplace, rather it just represented the number of years women worked at a similar position or organisation. However, evolving market trends demand skillful and trained individuals fostering growth and continuous learning, which seemed to be difficult for women due to their dual responsibilities.

Presence of current available policies, innovations, and relaxation fail short for many women who still undergo the problems of glass ceiling and unequal treatment at workplace. However, to be treated equally at the workplace the women will first need to be a part of that job or get hired. Therefore, women felt that staying away from any kind of unhealthy work environment not fostering equality and diversity might give them peace of mind, while many thought that this work revolution might at least help them survive in the job market if not equally compete with their male colleagues. Further as witnessed, few senior level management do not necessarily entertain the transformational leadership style in their companies in practical settings rather run the operations with age old traditions of centralised decision making, causing delays in all the work and functioning of the organisation. Though, these was not the case in all the organisations specially in the large scale companies due to the presence of sophisticated HRM policies (Galetic & Klindzic, 2020) which encouraged inclusivity and diversity on serious grounds, working towards achieving positive WLB outcomes of their employees during remote working as well.

A generalised observation from different sectors included shared stories from women doing commendable jobs in the aviation industry. Although, no matter they shared their success stories, it equally highlighted their struggles through out for achieving the positions they had got today. This included mostly the work-life balance issues, single parenting while some being single mothers and some the only daughters or sole bread earners for their families (i.e., single mothers and single girl child). They found their jobs to be challenging and most of them who had children's struggled their lives up in the air letting them join the ground office management. No doubt this choice also had its own share of struggles with time management and organisational commitment due to the nature of aviation industry. Still they reported family help to be a strong pillar in their journey to achieve this position so far. Making it to the list of those few women who dare to dream and then live the dream. Finally, women also need to hold more parliamentary representations because "countries with greater female political representation consistently implement policies that support gender equal labour markets" (Roy, 2025). These policies don't just benefit women they rather increase workforce participation, boost productivity and fuel economic expansion.

7.6.2 Policies to get Women at Work (WAW)

There have been several policies to get women back at work after their career breaks as well as to educate and train them to be future-ready. Few of the examples are Perna foundation by Emcure Pharmaceuticals, an internal skill development initiative within Emcure for empowering women. The Women Leadership Program (WLP) by Tech Mahindra to address the diversity ratios in leadership roles. Next is the 'She Sparks', Adobe women returnee internship program for women employees at career breaks wanting to rejoin the workforce. Similarly, the 'Springboard' by Microsoft is a diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiative focused on offering women at break an opportunity for exploring suitable career prospects and providing on-the-job training as they transition back to the workforce. The 'Rekindle' initiative by Amazon India to provide a launchpad to women on break (12 months or more) by offering opportunities and support to professionally re-integrate themselves and resume their corporate career. Then, the 'Second Career' by Tata also known as 'Second Career Inspiring Possibilities' (Tata SCIP), which acts as a platform for women getting back into the job market after a break. It holds an onboarding methodology that makes the process faster and more efficient by offering multiple career options with the choice to select either part-time or full-time employment. The 'Digipivot' initiative is a Google sponsored program for up-skilling women making them future ready in the digital marketing domain. Finally, the HCL's 'She Powers Progress' celebrates women in tech showcasing where we are and where we are going by way of conversations, and success stories of women breaking barriers in tech, championing equity and inclusion and using AI to solve real-world problems, all while balancing career and family.

Few other such initiatives by different organisations are as follows;

- Accenture return to work / career reboot program
- Winspire Propel and Winspire Rise by Larsen & Turbo
- IBM's Tech Re-entry program
- Google Next Innings Program
- Infosys Restart Program
- SimpliLearn Back To Work Program
- TCS Rebegin Program
- Recharge Paypal flagship program

- R- Shakti, Reliance Second Career Program

There have been all remote policies adopted by companies round the world (Broom, 2023; Choudhury, 2020), citing the need and significance for an all remote culture specially women. In a global survey conducted in regard to the future of jobs, identified public policies having the potential to enhance talent availability, 50% of the employees firstly responding to fundings and provisions for reskilling and upskilling and next to introducing changes to the labour laws in relation to remote work with 36% (Noordende, 2025).

There is a current upsurge among working individuals seeking remote working opportunities via different websites and social media platforms, it has been observed that this caters mostly to working women looking for such remote jobs. Leading to social media influencers and content creators for suggesting various websites in their videos and contents for engaging with this vast group of target population and increasing traffic to their channels or profile views. These has somewhere led to rise in fraudulent activities and scammers offering fake work from home opportunities in exchange of money or personal details. However, some of the genuine companies offering such job avenues and hiring remotely were identified and are listed below for guiding the working women to choose their type of jobs in case looking for future remote opportunity;

- <https://about.gitlab.com/jobs/>
- <https://www.crossover.com/about>
- <https://chainlinklabs.com/careers>
- <https://www.invisible.co/join-us>
- <https://www.oysterhr.com/careers>
- <https://www.invisionapp.com/inside-design/category/remote-work/>
- <https://www.fluentu.com/learn/remote-jobs-at-fluentu-join-our-team/>
- <https://www.flexjobs.com/lp/remote-jobs>

Naukri.com and LinkedIn are no more the only source of finding jobs specially with certain specific characteristics like that of remote nature. Similar websites offering remote jobs and freelancing opportunities round the world include the following,

- <https://solidgigs.com>
- <https://justremote.co>
- <https://dynamitejobs.com>
- <https://remotive.io/>
- <https://wellfound.com>
- <https://www.themuse.com/>
- <https://www.toptal.com/>
- <https://workew.com/>
- <https://himalayas.app/>
- <https://jooble.org>
- Workingnomads.com
- Remote.co
- <https://remote.com/en-in/>