

# How Should Corporate Culture Change to Adjust to Work-from-home? A Systematic Literature Review Paper

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The unpredictable virus COVID-19 caused unprecedented damage in various countries and industries. During this pandemic, work-from-home (WFH) becomes a useful choice for many companies. This paper seeks to explore the positive and negative aspects caused by WFH to employees, and how corporate culture should change to respond to it. **Methods:** The author carried out a systematic literature review between January 2020 and February 2022 in Scopus to search for related papers regarding the relationship between corporate culture and WFH. 68 identified primary papers were assessed by titles and abstracts, and 8 articles were selected for further analysis in this study. **Results and Conclusion:** WFH has brought various changes to work under COVID-19. Both positive and negative had certain influences on employees. Positive influences include freedom, less stress, no commuting, balance between work and personal life and work productivity, while negative influences include lack of interactions, isolation, fatigue and increased workload. Some actions that can be taken by companies in terms of corporate culture - the ones mentioned in mostly of the selected articles are: to provide a supportive environment, to grant autonomy, delegation, independence and trust to employees, and to encourage reciprocity and interactions. **Limitations and Future Research Directions:** The limitation of this review is the scope - only two years' researches - from the start of the pandemic to current date, which is limited time and thus limited articles and data. There are not many related articles in Scopus, thus the conclusion drawn is limited. Moreover, the surveys of the articles were only conducted in a fraction number of industries - finance, IT - therefore, future research could consider exploring more industries. Moreover, only OCB model was used in the papers so that more models could be considered for future research.

## Keywords

Corporate culture; Work from home; Covid-19; Supportive environment.

## 1. Introduction

An unpredictable virus identified in Year 2019 which was later named COVID-19 spread wildly around the world. The World Health Organization had declared it a pandemic and it has caused unprecedented damage in various countries and industries. COVID-19 is emotionally challenging for many people in different aspects, including ways of how people work. Employers and employees all play a role either willingly or unwillingly to protect themselves while maintaining their routine work. During this pandemic, work-from-home (WFH) becomes a must-try choice for many companies. This period is expected to be 'the world's largest work-from-home experiment' (Banjo et al. 2020).

A study by (Dingel & Neiman 2020) estimated that more than one third of jobs in America 'can be performed entirely at home', and in China, according to iiMedia Research, the scale of online office enterprises and staff during the epidemic in China in Feb 2020 was 18 million companies and 300 million staff.

Some famous companies such as Google and Facebook are choosing WFH during the pandemic. Founder and CEO of Facebook (now 'Meta') Mark Zuckerberg said he intends to work from home till second half of 2022. His estimation is that roughly 60,000 employees, at least half of the company's total number, will be working remotely.

Company management are now facing noticeable challenges of reimagining culture. The rules and rituals of the office cannot be applied to WFH model, as these two have different characteristics. WFH is creating new code of how to work efficiently and is changing quickly the employees' working pattern.

The questions of this paper are divided into two parts:

- i) What are the positive and negative aspects brought by WFH to employees
- ii) How corporate culture should change to adjust to WFH

Despite being widely discussed, the literature regarding the relation between culture and WFH is limited. A systematic analysis of the literature is a good way to integrate the positive and negative aspects, also to find out corporate culture's reaction to WFH. To solve these questions can help companies better adjust to WFH model and help employees enjoy WFH under the pandemic period. This review refers to a Systematic Literature Review, which is to explore how should corporate culture change to adjust to WFH.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic literature review was carried out. This type of review is to collect a large amount of information on a certain subject in a designated field, a profession or a certain aspect, and then through reading, analysis, induction, and sorting out the latest progress, or suggestions or academic insights of the current topic to provide a comprehensive introduction and elaboration of it.

The criteria used by the author to select literature was as follows:

First, the author chose Scopus, one of the world's leading citation databases of peer-reviewed research output, as database, to search for English-language related articles. Second, the author limited the review of the literature published from January 2020 to February 2022, as the pandemic started in end of 2019. This period was considered appropriate for the review. Third, the keywords the author set up were (culture\*) and (work from home\*), which were used to quickly locate the most related and explicitly interested in the relations between culture and work from home. The initial number of papers were 629. Fourth, the author only selected studies that were only in Business Area, and this allowed the author to reduce the number of papers to 68 papers.

68 articles were found by searching in the database, all of which were evaluated by the title and abstract afterwards. 8 articles were selected that met the criteria, therefore were analyzed in this study.

The above-mentioned searching boundaries were set as search protocol, as shown in Figure 1.

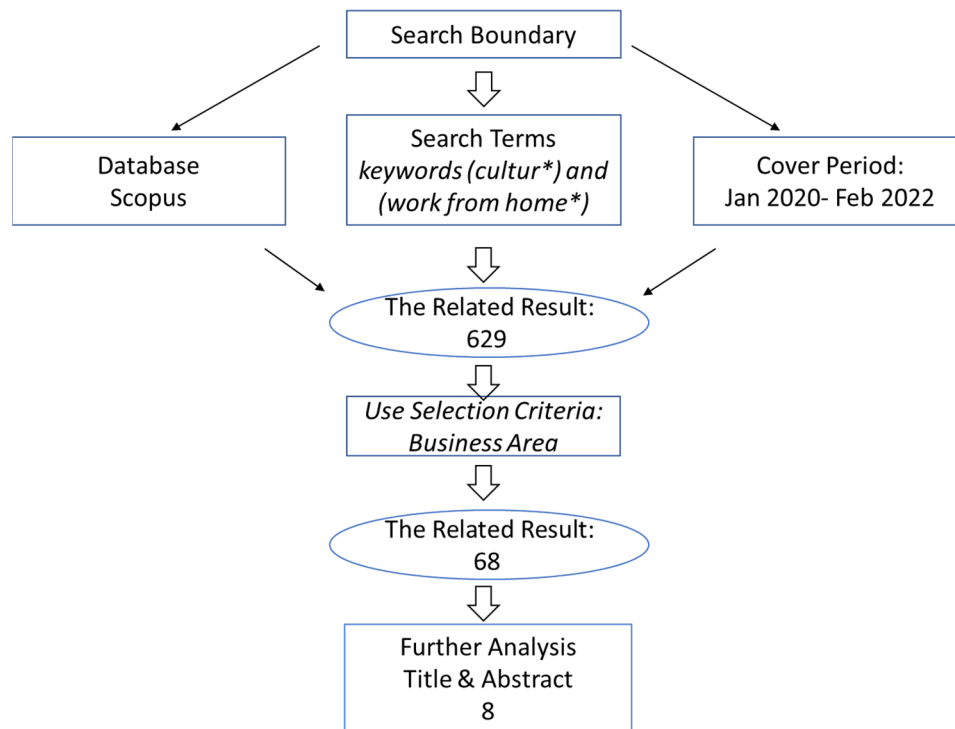


Figure 1. Searching protocol for the systematic literature review

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Summary of data extracted after critical appraisal of the studies

Title	Authors, Countries	Methods	Article Analysis
Work from Home During the Pandemic: The Impact of Organizational Factors on the Productivity of Employees in the IT Industry (Systla & Bhatta 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bhatta N.M.K</li> <li>• Systla Patanjali India</li> </ul>	This article conducted a sample consisted of 526 employees in IT industry. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were conducted, from respondents to designed questionnaire.	To ensure productivity of employees under WFH, the below organizational factors are necessary: employees need to be autonomous, empowered, independent, and companies provide a supportive environment. WFH induced a sense of fatigue after a few months.
A millennial manager skills model for the new remote work environment (Kerri, Marilyn & Stephen 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerri M. Camp</li> <li>• Stephen C. Bushardt</li> <li>• Marilyn Young the US</li> </ul>	A narrative review was the base of this study, as well as the author's expertise and experiences from companies.	The positive factors are flexibility, teamwork and balance between work and life. The negative factors are isolation and resonance of organization culture remotely. Companies should increase interpersonal communication, enhance trust, maintain strong corporate culture, delegation and resolve conflicts.
The moderating role of remote work in the relationship between organizational culture and OCB: case studies from the financial sector (Krajcsák & Kozák 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anita Kozák • Zoltán Krajcsák Hungary</li> </ul>	A research was conducted in organizations in finance industry. Case study was used: they went through materials from March 2020 when COVID-19 began in Hungary, including companies' documents and communications among management. A designed semi-structured interviews was conducted with managers and subordinates.	Dominant corporate culture decides the effects of WFH on OCB. Under WFH situation, very little changes were brought to OCB in companies with a dominant market culture. Civic virtue's dimension declined slightly. In companies with a dominant clan culture, only dimension of conscientiousness declined, while all other three ones grew. In companies with a dominant hierarchy culture, only dimension of courtesy increased, while all other ones dropped.

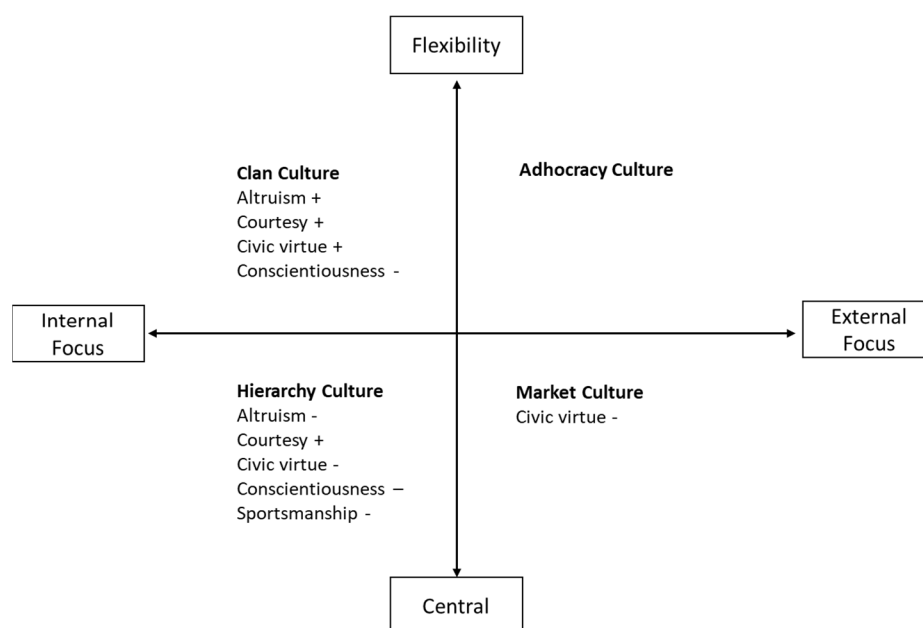
<p>Work-related helping and family functioning: A work-home resources perspective (Sherry, Remus, Xinxin, Arnold &amp; Liu 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherry S. Y.</li> <li>• Xinxin Li</li> <li>• Remus Ilies</li> <li>• Arnold B. Bakker</li> <li>• Liu X.Y.</li> </ul> <p>Singapore,China, Netherlands,South Africa</p>	<p>The study of 320 employees conducted was time-lagged and dual-source.</p>	<p>OCB-I enactment is related to exhaustion which interferes with employee's family lives, and also to personal career accomplishment which boosts family lives. Companies could cultivate supportive culture and encourage reciprocity in order to help employees control exhaustion and reduce negative impact on family functioning.</p>
<p>Work from home: understanding boundary management profiles using boundary-fit perspective (Kashive, Sharma &amp; Vandana2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neerja Kashive</li> <li>• Brijesh Sharma</li> <li>• Vandana Tandon</li> </ul> <p>India</p>	<p>The authors used K-mean clustering to do the cluster analysis. In order to find out different clusters which owns unique characteristics, they applied statistical package for social sciences 23, however, every cluster is different from others. To analyze how the clusters are different in terms of conflict between work and family, boundary management tactics conducted and positive family-to-work spillover effect, which were the three designed outcomes, variance test was used.</p>	<p>The results showed four distinct clusters: boundary-fit family guardians, boundary-fit fusion lovers, work warriors and dividers consistent (with previous) research. The four clusters are different from two outcomes: boundary management tactics and positive spillover. Boundary-fit fusion and dividers belonged to high control cluster profiles and showed low technique stress and higher use of boundary management strategies. Boundary-fit fusion lovers and boundary-fit family guardians owns high environmental influencers and indicated higher friendly family-to-work spillover.</p>
<p>Remuneration strategies related to Charles Handy's cultural typology: A case study in a small digital market business in remote work (Gabriel, Etienne &amp; Daisy 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Gabriel Guimaraes</li> <li>•Daisy Morais</li> <li>•Daisy Nascimento</li> <li>•Rebelatto</li> <li>•Etienne Cardoso</li> </ul> <p>Abdala Brazil</p>	<p>Qualitative and descriptive analysis were used in this study. A case study was conducted: a questionnaire was collected from the directors and other employees which was based in a validated protocol.</p>	<p>One action company can take is to ensure variable remuneration is correctly paid according to WFH's more autonomous method of working. Companies need to ensure positive and healthy climate, teamwork, collaboration, and trust among employees.</p>
<p>Learning to work from home: experience of Australian workers and organizational representatives during the first Covid-19 lockdowns (Samin, Iva, Christhina, Martin 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Samin Marzban</li> <li>•Iva Durakovic</li> <li>•Christhina Candido</li> <li>•Martin Mackey</li> </ul> <p>Australia</p>	<p>This study used two surveys respectively in Australian companies and knowledge workers, which 28 companies and 301 employees participated in. The authors used correlational and descriptive analyses.</p>	<p>Losses of productivity had been spotted by companies, as well as maintaining soft and healthy culture and workplace. Employees, however, cared more about social communications, Internet connection, and more workload due to WFH. Employees faced some difficulty in social interactions. The most significant reason that they missed office and wanted to go back is face-to-face communications.</p>
<p>Home-based telework: usefulness and facilitators (Andrea, Salomé, Amaya 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrea Ollo-López</li> <li>• Salomé Goñi-Legaz</li> <li>• Amaya Erro-Garcés</li> </ul> <p>Spain</p>	<p>The authors used various models to examine the influence of individual-level, organizational-level and country-level factors on WFH, combined micro and macro data from the Sixth European Working Conditions Survey.</p>	<p>Three kinds of employees use more WFH models: responsible for family, qualified at work, who live far from work. Factors that can facilitate WFH are: empowerment, lower power distance, individualism, advanced technology, improved WFH rules and femininity.</p>

Among all the papers, Samin Marzban, Christhina Candido, Iva Durakovic and Martin Mackey's survey was the one clearly summarized positive and negative factors of WFH to employees. Based on their survey executed in Year 2020, the top five positive aspects of WFH from employees' view were no commuting (66%), more time with family (52%), ability to perform more focused work (46%), work-life balance (43%), less stress and time constraints (37%). The top five challenges for employees of WFH were isolation (percentage 47%), Internet (47%), increase workload (46%), furniture ergonomics (40%) and stress (39%). Also, the survey showed that 39% companies faced challenges in maintaining corporate culture.

Other papers also mentioned the relation between culture and WFH. For instance, Systla Patanjali and N. M. K. Bhatta concluded that 'Giving freedom, autonomy and empowerment to employees plays a vital role in the performance of employees. Ensuring that they experience a link between their performance and growth opportunities is a matter of a well-administered HR process. Ensuring the values of the organization and the employees are respected is a matter of communication of the organization's vision, mission and values and managers and organizations holding on to these values in the severest of testing times. Similarly, building pride in the organization also positively impacts productivity.'

Kerri M. Camp, Marilyn Young and Stephen C. Bushardt stated that the positive factors are flexibility, teamwork and balance between work and life. The negative factors are isolation and resonance of organization culture remotely. Companies should increase interpersonal communication, enhance trust, maintain strong corporate culture, delegation and resolve conflicts.

From Gabriel Guimaraes Morais's point of view, one action company could consider is to ensure variable remuneration to be correctly paid based on WFH's more autonomous method of working. Companies need to ensure positive and healthy climate, team-work, collaboration, and trust among employees. Andrea, Salomé, Amaya mentioned factors that can facilitate WFH are: empowerment, lower power distance, individualism (autonomy), advanced technology, improved WFH rules and femininity.



**Figure 2.** Relationship between organizational culture and OCB

Two of the selected paper used organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) to explore how corporate culture should change to achieve more under WFH model. Organ (1988) defines OCB as 'individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization'. There are five different types of organizational citizenship behavior: altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue. Krajcsák Z and Kozák A studied the relationship between organizational culture and OCB and the results are showed in the below chart.

Also, from Sherry S. Y and fellow authors' survey, the conclusion was companies could cultivate supportive culture and encourage reciprocity in order to help employees control exhaustion and reduce negative impact on family functioning.

## 4. Conclusion

Replying on the systematic literature review, our study revealed that WFH has brought various changes to work under COVID-19. Both positive and negative had certain influences on employees. Positive influences include freedom, less stress, no commuting, balance between work and personal life and work productivity, while negative influences include lack of interactions, isolation, fatigue, increased workload.

Corporate culture is facing challenges inevitably. Some actions that can be taken by companies - the ones mentioned in mostly of the selected articles are: to provide a supportive environment, to grant autonomy, delegation, independence and trust to employees, to encourage reciprocity and interactions.

## 5. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limitation of this review is the scope – only two years' research – from the start of the pandemic to current date, which is limited time, thus limited articles and data. There are not many related articles in Scopus, thus the conclusion drawn is limited. Future studies could consider longer time period and more source of paper. Moreover, the surveys of the current articles were only conducted in a fraction number of industries – finance, IT - therefore, future research could consider exploring more industries. Moreover, only OCB model was used when the papers discussed the relations between WFH and culture. More models could be used for future research.

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