Original Article

Dynamics of Remote Working: A Human Resource Management Headache and Test of Time

Normah Fadzai Mutongerwa[1], Hlalele Matebese[2]

[1]*Corresponding Author : missnormahk@gmail.com*

[1,2]*Independent Researcher, South Africa.*

Abstract - This study aimed to examine the dynamics of remote work in organizations. It selected and applied a qualitative research strategy through desktop research to meet this objective. It found that employers benefit more than the workforce from remote work, remote workers submit to connectivity issues to avoid returning to the office, remote work causes a gap and discrimination in organizations among diverse employees, and the current remote working setup presents HR challenges for remote and non-remote workers, and human resources were caught napping and faced with enormous challenges regarding remote work. This study concludes that remote work will continue to increase in popularity, posing significant challenges to the human resources fraternity. Additionally, the study significantly adds to the existing body of knowledge in human resources management related to remote employment.

Keywords - COVID-19, Human Resources, Human Resources Management, Remote Work, Work from Home.

1. Introduction

Remote work or work from home refers to work conducted from one's home rather than a traditional way of working from the office [1]. In today's rapidly changing work environment, organizations must play a crucial role in helping employees adapt to new working conditions, such as remote work. This course can often involve overcoming feelings of opacity and dread, which can be achieved through the development and implementation of new strategies throughout the organization [2]. Organizations that prioritize their employees' well-being and support them through times of change can create a more positive and productive work environment overall. Numerous studies in Human Resource Management (HRM) have realized that when faced with vulnerability or uncertainty, employees often experience feelings of frustration and anxiety [3]. The shift to remote work has posed challenges for Human Resources (HR) professionals and employees. However, it has also expanded the scope of HRM's duties. While some individuals may face difficulties adapting to this new environment, HR must be well-equipped to handle these changes and support their workforce through this transition. Therefore, contemporary HRM must develop effective strategies that can support employees in dealing with the difficulties of remote work and the uncertainties associated with it to ensure organizational success [2]. In this sense, this study identified a crucial knowledge gap in comprehending the challenges confronted by HR professionals in the rapidly, inevitably changing nature of work due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

It emphasizes the dilemma of determining the equitable distribution of benefits between employers and employees in light of technological advancements. These challenges triggered the problem statement for this study, questioning whether remote working benefits employees as they are susceptible to losing more than they gain. Moreover, the study argues that although remote working presents benefits, a balanced consideration of the advantages and disadvantages is critical to avert long-term detriments to the workforce. Proper management can potentially help employees navigate these challenges and adapt to changing circumstances. In this regard, HR managers have a crucial role in ensuring that employees are well-prepared to steer the inevitable dynamic shifts in the workplace and their community [2]. Remote working has been an adopted strategy for many enterprises worldwide, with many continuing and pursuing this approach post the Covid-19 pandemic. In this way, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated existing tendencies, relocating millions of employees globally to their home offices. Notably, some occupations were susceptible to being conducted from home before COVID-19. In the pre-pandemic era, only a handful of jobs were performed remotely, primarily in advanced economies. However, most jobs were undertaken from home due to the pandemic. As a result, several organizations continued to use the hybrid system for various reasons that benefited them. The notion of remote work has recently emerged, meaning that employees do their job obligations from the comfort of their homes rather than their offices, transforming their homes into workplaces via various modes of communication and information technology [1].

Organizations must adopt advanced HR practices encompassing technology-savvy systems to support remote employees. HR must possess expertise in technology to offer efficient assets and counsel to management. Failure to do so will result in inadequate support and advice for remote employees, posing a challenge to HR. As the world evolves, organizations must adapt to better support their employees and thrive, especially in remote working. Electronic HR Management (E-HRM) systems are a valuable tool for many companies in achieving these goals. According to [4], the implementation of electronic E-HRM practices significantly impacts the overall performance of an organization. Furthermore, the study showed that the correlation between E-HRM practices and operational performance is driven and influenced by organizational aptitude. This result suggests that companies that adopt E-HRM practices and promote skills within their organization are likely to see improvements in their overall performance.

1.1. Problem Statement

Remote work may appear beneficial to the workforce because it allows them to save money on travel and conduct activities at their own pace. However, [2] cautioned that although employees may save on transportation costs, these savings are frequently channeled toward establishing a comfortable and appropriate workspace at home. Moreover, another study found that decreased transportation expenses had no overall meaningful impact on the effects of remote work [5]. According to [6], remote working reduced cumulative commuting time among US workers by more than 60 million hours per workday, with around 35% of this time saved repurposed to work.

However, the problem statement for this study is that it is questionable whether remote working benefits employees as they tend to lose more than they gain. For example, when employees face problems with their network connection, this causes them to feel anxious and frightened that their superiors may force them to report to the office. This phenomenon potentially impairs their mental well-being. Consequently, the study argues that employees fear the consequences of not maintaining the status quo of working from home. Moreover, they tend to ignore adverse effects by pretending they are gaining more from this deal than employers; meanwhile, they are losing. For instance, according to a survey of IT employees in Bangalore [7], 67% of the workforce worked longer hours while working from home, resulting in increased productivity and benefitting employers at the expense of the workers.

2. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the disparities in organizational readiness for unplanned emergencies around the world. While businesses in the global north were able to utilize the 4IR technologies to maintain operations, remote work became a necessity for many. In contrast, the global south encountered hurdles in the swift adoption of the 4IR technologies due to limited access to modern and cost-effective resources. There remains a need to optimize the potential of remote work for economic and rural development in the global south for the purposes of enhancing business continuity.

Remote work had been a practice predating the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. However, its prevalence has significantly increased in various organizations globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, compelling entities to swiftly and strategically adjust their working arrangements. According to [8], findings from their study showed that respondents favored remote work due to its convenience and cost-effectiveness. Nonetheless, respondents acknowledged that working remotely led to feelings of isolation and extended working hours compared to the office. This was often driven by a desire to demonstrate productivity to line managers and employers, ultimately affecting their social lives.

A study by [9] sought to understand the limitations and benefits of remote work during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study indicated that most of the global workforce was not able to work remotely. However, for those who could work from home, remote work presented a multitude of issues and challenges for employees and employers. Specifically, employers grappled with decisions related to effective remote coaching delivery and configuration of workspaces in an effort to prioritize employee safety while ensuring productivity. As for employees, they had to navigate the challenges associated with striking the optimal balance between work and home life, as well as adapting to the tools and skills necessary for effective remote work and collaboration.

A study by [10] found that at the time, many companies had recognized the benefits of remote work policies. One of the most significant economic advantages of this strategy is the reduction of expenses associated with maintaining office premises. By allowing employees to work from home, companies cut down on the need for physical office space, which translated into lower maintenance costs. Another significant advantage of remote work was the reduction of electricity and internet bills, as employees no longer consume these resources in a centralized office location. However, while the provision of equipment to employees accounted for the smallest proportion of cost savings, companies still provided their employees with the necessary resources to work effectively from home. Despite the cost savings associated with remote work, it also presented some challenges. One of the main difficulties was controlling employees, as it was hard to monitor their productivity and ensure that they were working efficiently. Additionally, effective communication and successful teamwork were reportedly harder to achieve when working remotely.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Roles and Challenges of HR in Remote Work

According to [2], work-from-home challenges threatened and prompted HR scholars and practitioners with unparalleled potential to rethink organizational, developmental, and leadership solutions and articulate the needs and concerns of remote workers, shaping HR into a new strategic direction to cater to workers in the 4IR occupations. The rationale is that organizations adopted remote work at a rapid pace, often without giving staff the training, assets, and resources they needed to flourish in this new environment [11]. Moreover, especially for businesses without previous experience, the accelerated adoption of remote working made it challenging for organizations to adequately train and prepare managers to coach in a virtual work environment [11] and for the workforce to operate remotely and independently, posing challenges and influencing modified roles for HR. Another angle supporting this finding, given that many organizations view remote working as a long-term application, the rapidly growing culture of remote work will inevitably spur the development of adaptable workspaces.

Notably, HR is uniquely positioned to deliver leadership suitable for remote work and aid organizations in implementing adaptable workforce strategies as agents of organizational change and professionals in uncertainty [4]. Nonetheless, this is not a spontaneous exercise; it requires HR to be adaptable and cognizant of current trends in the changing nature of work worldwide. In this sense, it is contended that to cope with the constantly changing scenery that confronts the field, HR theory must be more adaptable to current shifts and present-day obstacles, and HR must be highly technologically proficient to advise management accordingly [4].

For instance, some organizations were forced and pressured to change the strategic HR direction towards remote working, and others took the opportunity to enhance employees' skills. Thus, HR must help to ensure a revitalized emphasis on establishing individual and team resilience to cope with remote work; nevertheless, it is critical to highlight that resilience involves support, training, trial, and evolution [2]. To promote and maintain job-related well-being while working remotely, an organization's support through robust and effective HR initiatives and roles is crucial; while well-being is far beyond employees' control, organizations have a duty not to compromise the well-being of their employees. Implementing a remote work system, which may be considered ecologically benign, is thought to produce positive benefits for organizations given senior management support is offered, as well as sound and flexible organizational HR policies that address employees' welfare. A critical challenge in HRM is identifying strategies employees use to adapt, manage, and endure to prevail in remote work [2]. In this aspect, some employees might not be adjusting to remote work effectively and are more prone to anxiety and job dissatisfaction, negatively impacting their personal lives and making working from home more demanding than acceptable [3]. This sense is due to the assertion that the psychological well-being of employees impacts organizational phenomena and health in a changing and uncertain environment. Moreover, [3] underscored that the shift to remote working arrangements causes employees to feel more stressed and detached from social situations, which has a detrimental impact on their performance.

As a result, HR departments should address the rising stress levels among employees caused by remote work, exacerbated by merging personal and work lives. The purpose is to ensure that employees are satisfied with their jobs, stress-free for their well-being, and mentally fit to perform their jobs[12]. Resultantly, employee job satisfaction promotes work performance, and the most significant factor in determining this fulfillment is the conducive work environment[12], and remote work is no exception. As a result, one of the fundamental roles in the contemporary work environment is for HR to ensure that workers are comfortable with inevitable work approaches and that remote working does not affect their well-being and outputs or deliverables. Furthermore, HR professionals' responsibilities nowadays must encompass and guarantee that remote work does not adversely influence a company's productivity or employee welfare; it is merely a different work method.

3.2. Work-from-Home Challenges

As many individuals work remotely, it has become evident that this new way of working can bring challenges. One of the most noticeable challenges is that it can lead to longer work hours and increased stress levels, mainly because the line between personal and professional life can get blurred. Moreover, social interactions with colleagues and customers may become limited, adversely impacting collaboration, networking, and feedback opportunities. Furthermore, working from home requires reliable internet, appropriate tools of trade, and a quiet workspace, which may not be readily available to everyone. Therefore, it is imperative to address these challenges to ensure remote workers have the necessary resources to maintain productivity and well-being. Therefore, this study argues that employees feel pressured to be constantly connected and responsive to work emails and carry out their daily duties. The rationale is that they evade being instructed and recalled returning to their traditional office work environments. In essence, they should set boundaries, prioritize self-care, and stop feeling guilty about things they cannot control. Notably, when remote workers are called back into the office by employers, they may become disgruntled, causing undue work dissatisfaction among employees [13]. However, non-remote workers must not be overlooked or ignored by HR

practices that rigorously accommodate remote workers, as they are just as vital. As such, there are several rights employees are entitled to in their work environment, including equal opportunities, work-life balance, and health and safety.

Employers must establish comprehensive policies that ensure non-discriminatory practices are maintained and managed in the remote work system. This approach would address the growing concerns regarding discrimination, potential human rights violations, and potential breach of contract claims that may arise regarding remote work. As such, creating such policies is crucial to ensure that all employees, regardless of their background, are treated fairly and equally in the remote work environment. This practice will not only promote a positive workplace culture but also help mitigate any potential legal issues that may arise due to discrimination or other related challenges. One way HR can support employees not eligible for remote working is by covering their commute expenses. This initiative can be achieved by recommending to management and thus budgeting for this incentive. Additionally, measures should be developed and taken to prevent overworking and abusing of remote workers due to the fear of being compelled to return to the office workplace.

Although employees view remote working as an advantage, it is worth noting that [2] highlights that employees tend to funnel their saved transportation budgets towards creating a conducive and occupiable workspace within their homes. Likewise, this study claims that remote employees are less likely to take yearly leaves than non-remote workers since they work from home and aim to generate money via leave days when they leave their organizations for various reasons. Other challenges linked with remote work include cybersecurity and insufficient electricity supply, which makes it difficult for firms to adopt remote work [14]. In this regard, Employees are under pressure to guarantee that their gadgets are charged to carry out their employers' tasks, regardless of the energy constraints they encounter. Other employees may feel compelled to purchase equipment such as Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) and inverters, among others, out of their wallets to avoid being summoned back to the office. As a result, this study asserts that employees are willing to spend their money to perpetuate the status quo of remote employment.

3.3. Benefits of Remote Working
Remote working has emerged as a crucial aspect of business continuity, enabling organizations to test out novel business models in terms of in remote or hybrid settings. On the other hand, remote working advantages individuals who maintain a healthy work-life balance [12]. This claim asserts that employees' obligations to work and personal life must be appropriately balanced, and neither must take precedence over the other. According to [15], survey evidence indicates that organizations that have adapted to remote working appear to have optimal management practices, such as focusing on objectives rather than overseeing resources. This practice offers employees the autonomy to work and produce without strict supervision. Many employers view remote working as advantageous in terms of saving resources such as electricity costs, which can enhance the financial health of their organizations [15], in addition to other remote work-related expenses they can save. Research indicates that employees working from home are more effective and have slightly higher job fulfillment than those working in an office [16].

Remote work appears to give employees more job supervision, which has been linked and associated with less mental fatigue and increased balance between life and work. Yet, this benefit may also be dependent on organizational requirements for email tracking [12]. According to [17], remote work can enhance efficiency and drive productivity because employees tend to work longer, uninterrupted hours. According to a recent study, employees generally believed their productivity was reduced by 60-70% working remotely, contrasted with operating as usual in office workplaces [18].

3.4. Marginalized Workforce
The potential for adopting remote work primarily centers on whether a job has assignments and responsibilities that could be completed without an employee being physically present [9]. This phenomenon causes a division among the workforce (remote and non-remote workers) in the enterprises they serve. In this study, the non-remote workers are regarded and referred to as a marginalized group. In a society where socioeconomic gaps are widening, unequal access to resources within and between organizational cultures and the workforce may lead to more challenging HRM problems [19]. For example, the gap between highly compensated professionals and low-paid service employees disadvantaged and marginalized by remote employment may broaden [20].

Consequently, remote employment has advantages and downsides for different types of workers. Domestic workers, taxi drivers, farm laborers, and security staff are among those who suffer as a result. This group of workers is the lowest paid and the most vulnerable to financial, physical, and emotional tribulation. In this regard, individuals must still use their hard-earned money to travel to work, get up every morning to go to work, and become emotionally exhausted when they reflect that others work from home while they must commute to work.

White-collar office workers, for instance, also known as mentally taxing workers, have benefited from remote work options in terms of health safety measures; meanwhile, blue-collar workers or those engaging in physically taxing work

such as consumer and business services, manufacturing, assembly, transportation, and related activities have had to maintain their physical presence at work, frequently placing their health at greater risk [21]. In another sense, women of colour and those with lesser levels of education are more likely to be excluded from remote work, and those who do transition towards remote work are more likely to be employed in lower-status positions like administrative support, which are frequently demanding and highly managed [22]. Notably, older workers typically feel less at ease with ICT changes involving remote work and are less self-sufficient while using new ICT compared to the younger workforce. The statistics presented in Figure 1 below illustrate the comparison of educational qualifications between individuals working remotely on a part-time basis versus those working remotely full-time. The data utilized in the analysis was sourced from Forbes Advisor [23]. However, the below graph was exclusively created by the study's authors using the data under discussion. It is essential to highlight that the graph is not an official representation from Forbes Advisor but an original work by the study's authors.
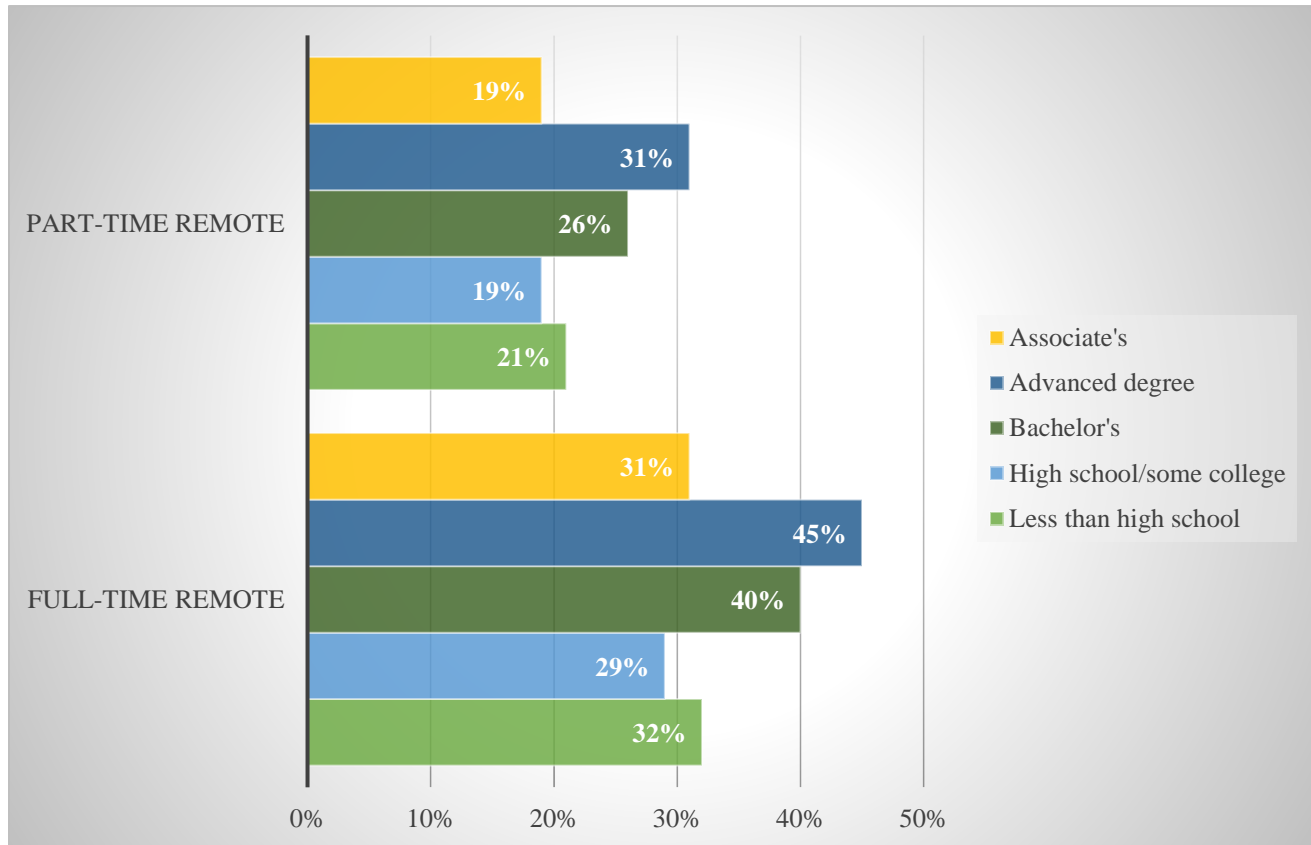

Fig. 1 Remote work education levels

The graphical representation above depicts the relationship between the level of education and the accessibility of remote work options for the workforce. The data indicates that individuals with higher education qualifications, such as advanced degrees or bachelor's degrees, are more likely to have the convenience of working remotely compared to those with lower educational qualifications. Specifically, 31% of workers with advanced degrees and 26% of individuals with bachelor's degrees have the option of part-time remote work. However, the figures also reveal that workers with less than a high school education have a relatively higher percentage of remote work options at 21% compared to those with associate, high school, or some college education levels, each at 19%.

This claim signifies that the availability of remote work options is not solely dependent on education levels, and other factors, such as job-related requirements and the nature of work, may play a crucial role in determining the feasibility of remote work opportunities. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, it is worth noting that this particular finding is contrary to the findings of [22] research. According to [22], individuals with lower levels of education are at a higher risk of being left out of remote work opportunities.

As for full-time remote work, recent research on full-time remote work reveals that 45% of workers who engage in this type of work hold advanced degrees, indicating that many remote jobs require a higher level of education.

Additionally, 40% of remote workers have bachelor's degrees, suggesting that this level of education is also highly valued in this field. Interestingly, 31% of remote workers possess an associate education level, indicating that this level of education is also a viable option for remote work. Furthermore, the study found that only 29% of workers who engage in full-time remote work hold high school or some college qualifications. This finding suggests that while formal education is essential in some remote work positions, it is not always necessary. Additionally, 32% of remote workers have less than a high school education, indicating that remote work is not limited to highly educated individuals. Notably, as previously mentioned above, this finding contradicts the [22] study. According to [22] research, individuals with less education are highly likely to be excluded from remote work prospects.

4. Materials and Methods

The study used a qualitative research approach utilizing a robust document analysis to assess the dynamics of remote work to gather new knowledge. Specifically, it selected and used a desktop or theoretical research approach to collect data to attain its goals. The data was collected and retrieved from existing HRM, work-from-home, and remote work literature, among other keywords used to collate data. This study used data from recently published articles, books, and internet sources that were not more than five (5) years old. Specifically, the current study selected and utilized a systematic literature review as it was deemed suitable for this research [24]. This approach enabled the researcher to carefully select, organize, and scrutinize research materials and documents to attain the study's objective. In this regard, researchers used a content analysis technique to analyze data relevant to the goal of this study. This technique was preferred because it allowed researchers to understand social reality in a unique yet systematic approach to exhaustively scan the contents of the existing literature review relevant to this study [24]. The data collection and analysis approach used in this study is depicted in Figure 2 below.
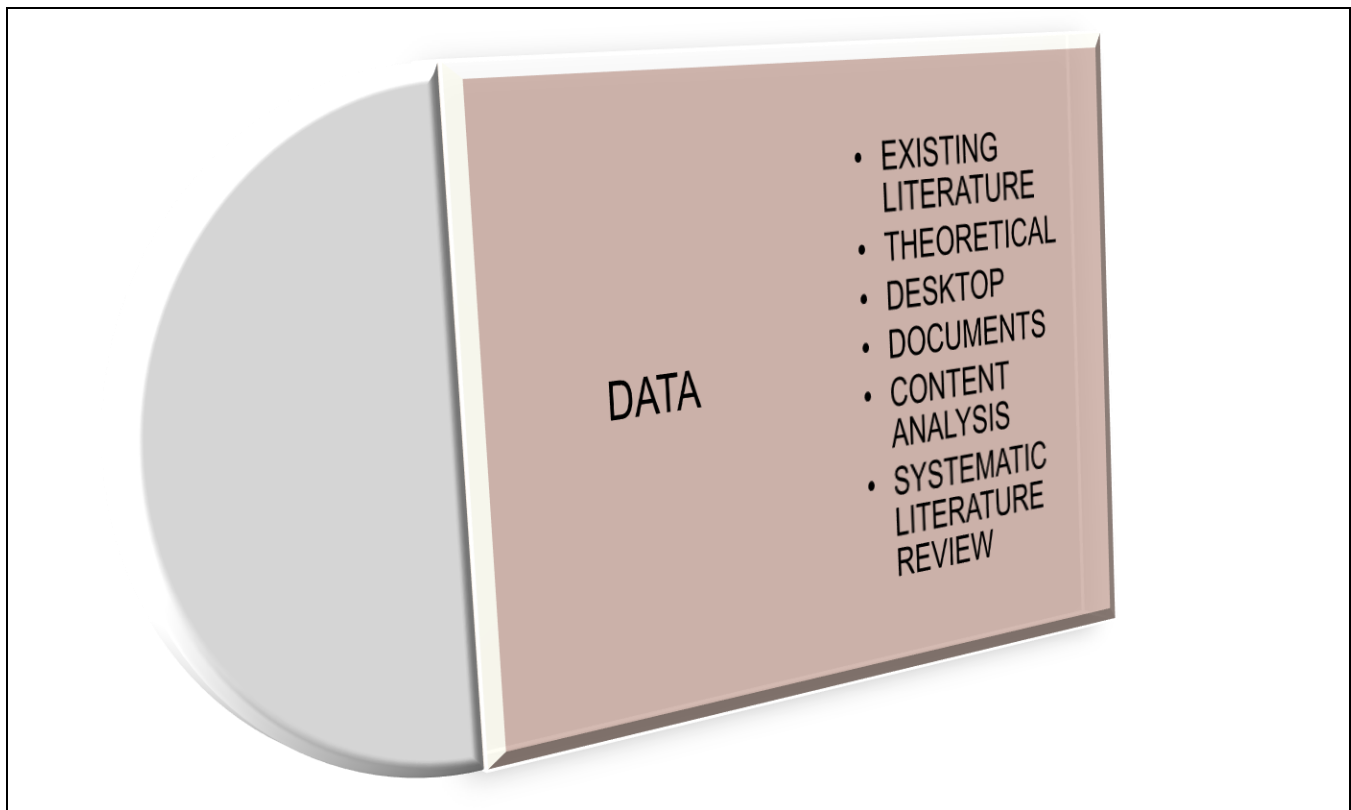

Fig. 2 Data collection and analysis approach

Source: (Authors)

5. Results

This section presents the study's findings, illustrated in Figure 3 below, corroborating analogous findings from earlier research in the same field. According to this study,
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these findings, as outlined below, are scenarios that are significant tests and headaches for HR professionals in the modern workplace.
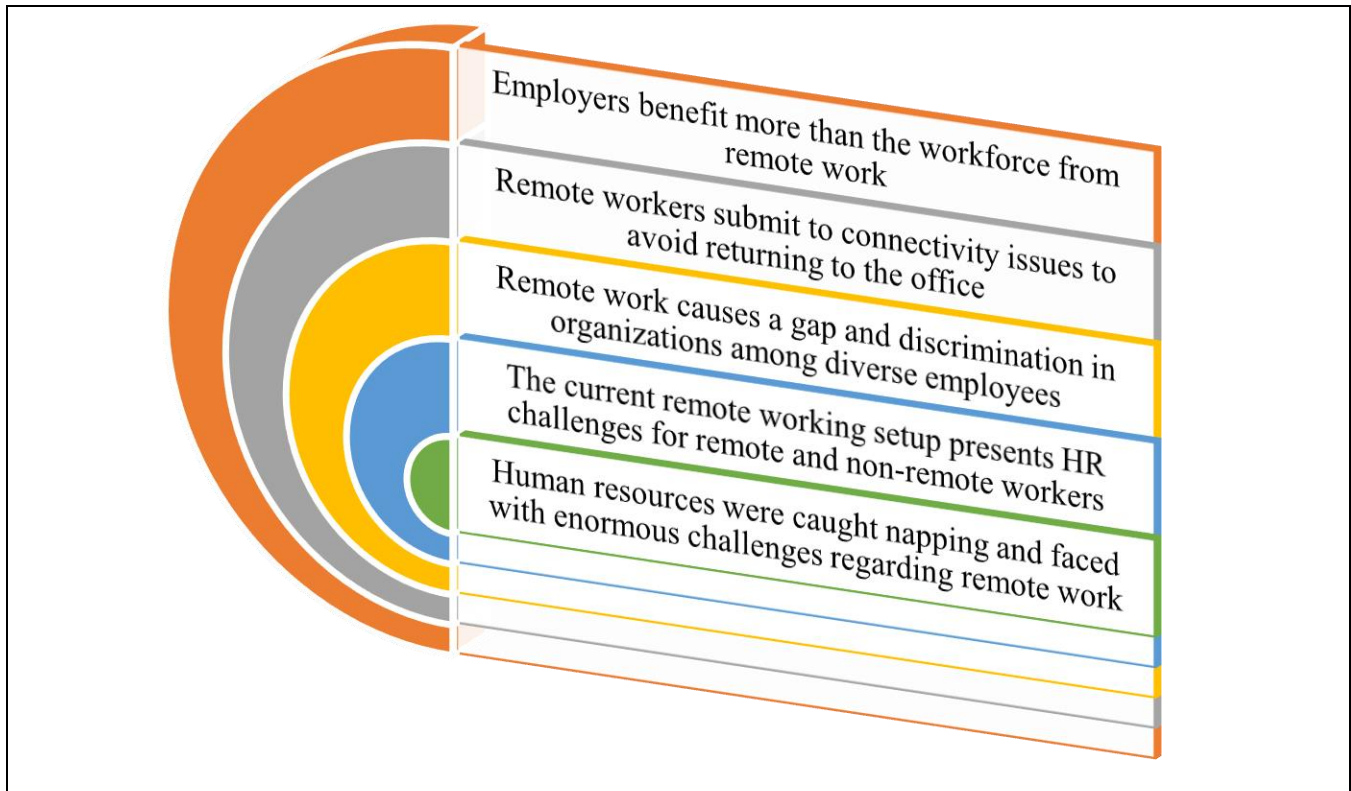
Fig. 3 Study results [Source: (Authors)]

5.1. Employers Benefit more than the Workforce from Remote Work

In line with this finding, [2] discovered that employees' travel expenses resulting from remote work are applied to employers' benefits since they utilize that money to furnish comfortable workstations at home. Similarly, [7] revealed that remote workers tend to work more hours, increasing productivity, which benefits businesses at the expense of and to the detriment of the workers. In the same train of thought, [17] posited that remote workers voluntarily and frequently work longer hours to elevate their productivity and profit the employers while disadvantaging themselves. On the contrary, [18] contends that remote labour decreases productivity. Despite this, this study argues that companies gain more from remote employment than employees.

5.2. Remote Workers Submit to Connectivity Issues to Avoid Returning to the Office

In support of this finding, remote workers are more likely to be dissatisfied when forced to return to the office by their employers [13]. For this reason, [16] claims that remote work translates to remote workers' increased job satisfaction. As a result, employees feel obligated to do whatever it takes not to return to the traditional way of working at the office. In this regard, some remote workers experience difficulties due to a lack of energy supply in their homes [14]; however, they find ways to stay connected to continue working and acknowledge connectivity issues as their own.

5.3. Remote Work Causes a Gap and Discrimination in Organizations among Diverse Employees

Parallel with this finding, a recent study discovered that remote work contributes to a pay gap between highly-paid and lowest-paid workers [20].

In a similar vein, [21] claims that remote work encourages discrimination between white-collar and blue-collar workers in terms of working conditions, favoring the former over the latter in the workplace. Therefore, this study contends that remote work stimulates and promotes disparities among workers with different skill sets and categories.

5.4. The Current Remote Working Setup Presents HR Challenges for Remote and Non-Remote Workers

In bolstering this finding, [19] found that in a modern work culture where socioeconomic gaps broaden, unequal treatment between remote and non-remote workforce may lead to more challenging HRM headaches [19]. Employees believe they owe it to their employers to perform more work working from home than reporting to the office. This issue forces them to work longer hours [7], affecting their work-life balance. As for non-remote workers, according to [22], women classified as non-remote employees are likely to be illiterate, vulnerable, and ineligible to work remotely, and

they typically undertake particular tasks in the workplace.

5.5. Human Resources were caught Napping and Faced with Enormous Challenges Regarding Remote Work

Other scholars also endorse this finding. For example, remote work appeared abruptly as a shock to HRM custodians as employees were not adequately or at all prepared to effectively manage or overcome the obstacles connected with remote working [11], posing a threat to productivity and employee well-being. In supporting this claim, other academics found that today, one of the biggest

challenges in HRM is figuring out how employees are sufficiently mentored, guided, and supported to blossom in remote working contexts.

5.6. Comparative Analysis

This section presents a comparative analysis of the study's findings with the existing research on work-from-home setups. The study corroborates the previous findings from a different perspective and contradicts those opposing its results.

Table 1. Positive Findings to the Current Findings

Author(s)	Findings	Current Study Findings	Comparative Analysis	Implications of the Findings
[7]	Remote workers tend to put in longer hours, resulting in increased productivity. However, this benefit favors the employers at employees' expense, subsequently detriment to employees' well-being.	Remote employment benefits organizations more than it benefits employees.	Both studies indicate that remote work advantages employers while disadvantaging employees. These findings signify that the benefits of remote work are not equitably shared between the two parties. Thus, there needs to be a balance regarding the benefits of remote working, a challenge HR needs to address.	Remote work arrangements primarily profit employers rather than employees. This assertion implies that remote working compacts are conducive to manipulating workers.
[14]	Some remote workers face challenges arising from inadequate power infrastructure at their residential premises.	Remote workers submit to connectivity issues to avoid returning to the office.	Both studies reported similar findings regarding remote workers' challenges, such as inadequate power supply and connectivity.	On the one hand, one of the studies indicates that many remote workers battle with insufficient power supply, which can disrupt their work and productivity. On the other hand, another study implies that poor internet connectivity, limited bandwidth, and slow network speeds are the order-of-the-day challenges remote workers face, making it problematic to stay connected to perform their jobs efficiently.
[20]	The pay gap between highly-paid and lowest-paid employees is partly influenced by remote	Remote work causes a gap and discrimination in organizations among diverse employees.	Both studies reported comparable results regarding the discrepancies in terms of the gaps that	The shift towards remote employment can create disparities that may impact employees'

	working.		materialized among employees due to adopting remote working.	productivity, satisfaction, dignity, and self-worth. Organizations need to identify and proactively address these discrepancies to ensure employees work diligently and efficiently. Neglecting these issues could severely impact the organization's performance, threatening its survival and existence.
[19]	In the contemporary work climate, manifested by the socioeconomic divide, the disparity in treatment between remote workers and their counterparts advances complex human resource management cases.	The current remote working setup presents HR challenges for remote and non-remote workers.	According to the similar findings of the two studies, remote work led to various contemporary HR challenges primarily influenced by the nature of remote working.	The findings imply that these challenges are unique to remote work and require a different approach to accommodating all employees to be effectively addressed by organizations through HR leadership.
[11]	The abrupt shift to remote work caught HRM experts unprepared, as the workforce was not equipped to handle the challenges associated with working from home.	Human resources were caught napping and faced with enormous challenges regarding remote work.	These two studies revealed similar findings in that remote working has brought to light complex and unforeseen challenges for HR departments worldwide, catching them off guard to deal with these issues.	The findings imply that organizations should implement efficient systems and mechanisms to oversee their remote workforce virtually. Currently, HR professionals are confronted with the challenge of adapting to the new and devising inventive strategies to support and engage their remote staff without prejudice towards non-remote workers.

The studies presented above accentuated the criticality of overcoming the challenges associated with remote work to ensure that it is an evenhanded and sustainable practice for all employees. However, HR personnel alone cannot address these issues. The entire management hierarchy of an organization, in conjunction with trade unions, should work in unison with HR to tackle these obstacles effectively and ensure optimal outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Table 2. Negative findings of the current study

Author(s)	Findings	Current Study Findings	Comparative Analysis	Implications of the Findings
[12]	Working from home benefits remote workers by maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life.	Remote employment benefits organizations more than it benefits employees.	The results suggest that remote work has various benefits and drawbacks, affecting workers and organizations.	On the one hand, remote work provides employees with flexibility, less commuting time, and a comfortable work environment. On the other hand, it allows employers to save office expenses and boost productivity. However, remote work also has downsides, such as an imbalanced work-life, leading to burnout and less job satisfaction. Therefore, HR professionals should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of remote work before integrating it into their long-term strategy.
[23]	The feasibility of remote work opportunities may not be determined solely by an employee's level of education.	Remote work causes a gap and discrimination in organizations among diverse employees.	The two studies present contrasting results relating to remote working. While the previous research suggests that an employee's education level may not affect the feasibility of remote work, the current study highlights that remote work exacerbates the gap and discrimination among diverse employees. These findings suggest that although remote work can offer various benefits and disadvantages, it is imperative for HR to closely examine its impact on diverse employees and ensure equal opportunities for all.	While remote work has its benefits and drawbacks, it is imperative for HR to consider the potential impacts of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Organizations should strive to provide equal opportunities for all employees to participate in remote work programs, regardless of their background or circumstances.

| [4] | HR is uniquely positioned to deliver leadership suitable for remote work and aid organizations in implementing adaptable workforce strategies as agents of organizational change and professionals in uncertainty. | Human resources were caught napping and faced with enormous challenges regarding remote work. | The two studies produced opposing results concerning HR involvement in remote work. On the one hand, a prior study found that HR is capable of spearheading leadership practices that align with remote work and facilitate the creation of adaptable workforce strategies. However, the current study revealed that HR was unprepared for remote work and faced significant obstacles. Thus, HR should be proactive in addressing the obstacles faced by remote workers and devising practical programs to support them and ensure their sensation. | By adopting a suitable approach, HR can capitalize on the advantages of remote work and elevate their overall productivity and success. |

The concept of remote work has been a subject of debate among involved stakeholders in the employment relations realm. Notwithstanding, HR professionals are accountable and tasked to develop and implement efficacious strategies that cater to employees' needs while ensuring employers' interests are not compromised. On this basis, striking a balance is crucial for the sound functioning of any organization, as it promotes a healthy work environment that fosters labor peace and harmony while also contributing to the economy of individual countries.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to critically explore the challenges HR faces when dealing with remote work. The focus of this research is twofold. On the one hand, it acknowledges the significance of implementing remote work through strong HR best practices. On the other hand, it cautions HR to consider the needs of remote workers and not infringe on the rights of marginalized individuals. Globally, HR experts must meet non-remote workers halfway by compensating them for transportation costs, as the masses are semi- and low-skilled workers who do not make as much as their counterparts who conduct remote work and are considered the most highly skilled workers. For instance, [23] opines that remote work is less common among employees with lower educational qualifications. This group typically earns a lower income and has fewer financial resources compared to highly skilled workers with advanced degrees. Similarly, increased remote work would significantly impact the careers of highly skilled individuals because knowledge-intensive jobs are particularly conducive to remote work [25]. Therefore, the organizations boast a diverse workforce that contributes varied skills, knowledge, and experience to its success. As a result, they must exercise caution in how they treat the various employees without unwittingly favoring one group over another.

Hence, they must be wary of not provoking employee friction by focusing on one group at the expense of another; consequently, HR must support, assist, and advise leadership and management in this respect. The idea is to strike a balance by adjusting to remote work while recognizing and appreciating other employees. Due to this change, organizations save money as they no longer rent space for remote working staff and further save costs on electricity bills [15], allowing them to aid non-remote personnel with travel expenses. However, employers who cannot afford these expenses may be exempted and are not required to do so because this is only an incentive to assist the most disadvantaged individuals in the organization. In another sense, businesses must assist remote workers experiencing connectivity challenges by ensuring their information

technology (IT) departments rescue workers faced with these issues. This view is a principal concern since employees strive to make up for time lost due to connectivity. Thus, some employees may purchase a backup source of energy when experiencing power outage issues because they feel guilty and responsible for lost time, and employers will believe they are not productive when they work from home.

This claim highlights an additional component of time management. Thus, HR must assist employees in acquiring time management training for remote working, as most of them work during their lunch break to complete their daily tasks for the same reasons indicated above. In terms of leave days, the plight for HR is that employees do not rest as they do not take them, impacting their health and family quality time. On the other hand, employers become indebted to their employees and are liable to pay out a large sum of money when employees quit their jobs because remote workers are tempted and often do not take annual leave to cash out on it when they quit their jobs. Figure 3 below demonstrates remote work challenges.
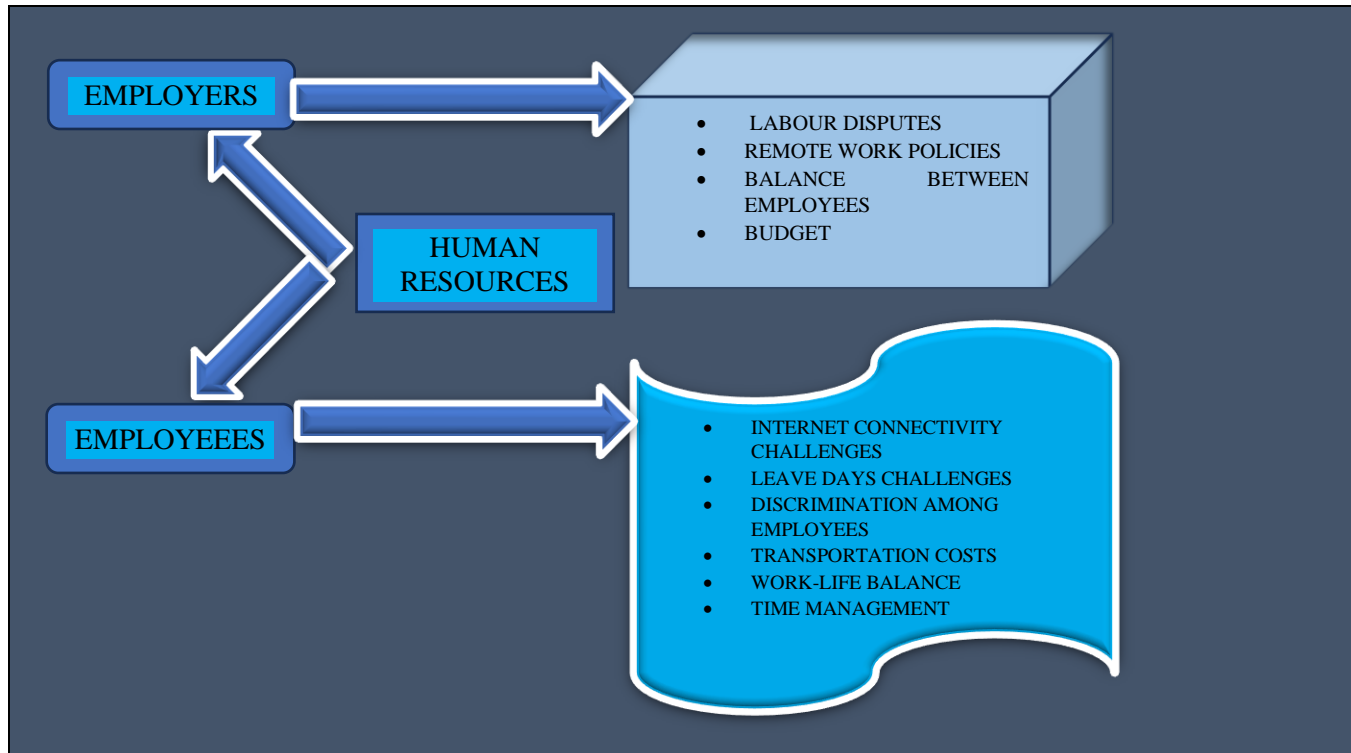

Fig. 3 Remote work challenges [Source: (Authors)]

HR challenges are presented and displayed in Figure 1 above, related to employee and employer issues.

7. Recommendations
- To address connectivity issues and other IT concerns associated with remote work, IT departments should ensure that their infrastructure is efficient and that staff have access to remote work-operable tools.
- The HR department must create concrete plans to source funds and allocate budgets for the transportation expenses of marginalized employees who commute to work. This practice is particularly crucial in cases where some employees do remote work while others do not for various reasons within the same organization. Failure to act on this matter will undoubtedly result in negative consequences for the company and perceived unfairness to its other employees.
- HR must train and prompt management to ensure that employees take their annual leaves to avoid employees having too many days, setting the business under financial strain to pay employees a substantial amount of money when they leave the organization.
- Governments must adopt non-discriminatory labour laws for both remote and non-remote employees to prevent potential labour issues. This exercise will ensure fairness and equality in the workplace.
- It is critical to address the potential risks of remote work through social dialogue involving organized labour, governments, and employers to ensure a peaceful and sustainable work environment. This approach must

consider the unique dynamics of each country and foster constructive solutions.

- HR must stay abreast of best practices for managing remote work to guarantee a seamless transition and enhance employee working conditions.

- Organizations must prioritize the establishment of a secure and encouraging workplace where employees can freely express their concerns regarding remote work. Any retaliation or mistreatment towards the employees for bringing up valid issues is unacceptable. HR and the organization should take their feedback seriously as it can highlight the areas that require immediate attention and improvement.

- Both employees and employers must recognize that remote work should not disadvantage either party. Employees should fulfil their obligations as outlined in their employment contract by being productive.

- Employers must not view remote work as a favour and use it as an opportunity to mistreat or harass employees. Both parties must consent that working conditions must not be altered or changed to the detriment of either party and should collaborate with an understanding that the transition from office to remote work is merely a change in the workplace.

- As HR adopts new policies for embracing remote workers, it must ensure that non-remote workers are not left behind and feel less important than remote workers. This practice may promote division between the two groups, compromising collaboration and productivity. Furthermore, it may result in labour disputes, generating workplace challenges for HR and the organization.

- A call is made to HR scholars, academics, professionals, specialists, government, employers, and all other relevant stakeholders to assist HR with some ideas to deal with the challenges presented in this study.

- Future studies are recommended to adopt different angles and strategies regarding the research method selected and used in this study.

8. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that today, HR has more and different issues than traditional HR. Additionally, remote work is here to stay, yet it presents more challenges and brainteasers for the HR sector. Notably, employers and employees are entangled in the fray, as demonstrated in Figure 2 of this study. This study also concludes that HR was not ready for remote work when it began. However, the study concedes that efforts are underway to address the difficulties associated with remote work. In organizations that, in particular, are still lagging behind in terms of balancing and addressing HR-related concerns, there is still much work to be executed.

There is certainly room for improvement, and it is the responsibility of HR to make sure that both remote and non-remote employees feel valued and have fulfilling careers because not all occupations can be performed remotely. However, HR cannot resolve all these issues on its own. Thus, this study contributes enormously to the existing body of knowledge within its domain. Finally, the study concludes that remote work is a headache and a test of time for contemporary HRM.

This research study will make significant and positive developments in the academic world through its unique and similar state-of-the-art findings. The researchers conducted their study with an advanced and different approach from the state-of-the-art strategies, utilizing only recently published credible journals to ensure current and relevant data to bolster its relevance in the challenging modern nature of work. This approach will enable interested parties to make well-informed decisions applicable and practical in the contemporary world of work characterized by technological advancements. As a result, this study's valuable insights and direction will benefit future researchers and organizations within its domain. One of the most noteworthy contributions of this study is its recommendations, which aid organizations in preparing and reviewing their HR or Employment Relations (ER) legislation. This technique could potentially reduce costly labour disputes and high turnover rates. The study provides effective and pragmatic solutions to common challenges faced by remote workers concerning benefiting organizations that operate remotely.

Despite its theoretical approach, the study has backed up its arguments with thorough statistical analysis that has enhanced and supported its findings. Moreover, the study offers a practical tool, the remote work challenges framework, which HR, ER, and other relevant stakeholders can use to resolve their remote work issues efficiently. Overall, this research study is a significant contribution to the economy. Its findings offer practical solutions that can achieve better results in comparison to state-of-the-art techniques. Undoubtedly, it will make a valuable and noteworthy contribution to the academic world and provide practical solutions for organizations facing remote work challenges.

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