

**EFFECTS OF TELECOMMUTING ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND
PRODUCTIVITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE OF NEW ERA**

PUBLICATION CORPORATION, NAMIBIA

A RESEARCH SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MANAGEMENT STRATEGY)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

(HELVY HELENA SHAANIKA)

(STUDENT NO: 200253352)

MAY 2022

**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR THOMAS BHEBHE (D.PHIL (MALAYSIA), MSC
LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE MGMT (LEEDS, UK), MED ADMIN (UZ), HRM
(NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE), BED ADMIN (UZ), CE (UZ), CERT IN
HIGHER EDUC MGMT (WITS UNIVERSITY, SA), CERT IN HRM (ISRAEL), FIPMZ.)**

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic brought global changes to all areas of life, including the world of work. One of the major changes was the embracement of the telecommuting concept. The employment field is highly regulated by contracts and policies and introducing changes can affect production. This study investigated the effects of telecommuting on employee motivation and productivity. The study involved 67 respondents. Mixed research study (Pragmatism) was used for the study with questionnaires and interviews being the main data collection instruments. The research findings showed that the majority of respondents are in favour of telecommuting as a Covid-19 pandemic mitigation strategy because it provides for social distancing and it gives work-life balance to employees. The study also found that telecommuting, also called working from home (WFH), raised staff morale and motivated employees. This increased productivity among employees. This research concluded that telecommuting is the best mitigating approach to pandemics such as the Covid-19. The study also concluded that while telecommuting motivates employees and increases production, it only works best for a certain category of employees whose daily duties are computer technology based. The study recommended that even in the absence of pandemics, organisations such as New Era Publication Corporation can still resort to telecommuting as one of the best corporate practices as it increases productivity and can help with cost cutting in times of financial crisis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page no
ABSTRACT	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ACRONYMS	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
DEDICATION.....	x
DECLARATION	xi
CHAPTER 1:.....	1
1.1. Introduction	1
This chapter offers an outline of the orientation of the study. The statement of the problem, the objectives, significance, and the ethical considerations are therefore covered in this chapter. The study primarily concentrated on New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC).....	1
1.2. Background of the study	1
1.3. Statement of the problem	3
1.4. Objectives of the study	4
1.5. Hypothesis of the study	4
1.6. Significance of the study	5
1.7. Limitations of the study	5

1.8. Delimitations of the study	6
CHAPTER 2.....	7
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1. Introduction	7
2.2. Meaning of Telecommuting	7
2.3. Meaning of Motivation	7
2.4. Meaning of Productivity	8
2.5. Meaning of Covid-19	8
2.6. Impact of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity	9
2.7. Challenges faced by telecommuters	12
2.8. Sustainability of telecommuting after the pandemic	15
2.9. Theoretical Framework	19
2.9.1 Theories of Motivation	19
2.9.2. Theory of Production	25
2.9.3. Theories of Working from Home	26
2.10. Conceptual Framework	27
2.12 Summary	29
CHAPTER 3.....	30
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	30
3.1. Introduction	30
3.2. Research Design	30
3.3. Population	31

3.4. Sample	31
3.5. Research Instruments	32
3.6. Validity	32
3.8. Reliability	33
3.9. Pilot Testing	33
3.10. Data Collection Procedures	33
3.11. Data analysis and presentation	34
3.12. Research ethics	34
3.13 Summary	35
CHAPTER 4	36
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	36
4.1. Introduction	36
4.2. Analyses of data	37
4.2.1.1 Response rate	38
4.2.1.2. Demographic Data	40
<i>4.2.2.1. Demographic information of the respondents</i>	40
Figure 4.3 Gender representation of the Respondents (<i>Source: Research data</i>)	41
<i>4.2.2.2: Age profiles of participants</i>	41
4.2.1.3. Departmental Distribution of the Respondent	44
4.2.1.4 Respondents' positions	45
4.2.1.5 The knowledge and effects of the WFH Policy	46
4.2.2 Qualitative data results and analysis	59

4.4. Summary	66
CHAPTER 5.....	67
CHAPTER SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS...	67
5.1 Introduction	67
5.2 Conclusions	67
5.3 Recommendations	68
5.4 Summary	69
APPENDICES	72
Appendix 1: Chi-Square calculation	72
Appendix 2: Request to carry out the study	78
Appendix 3: Acceptance letter from NEPC	79
Appendix 4: Questionnaire	80
Appendix 5: Interview guide	88
Appendix 6: Research letter	89
Appendix 7: Similarity Report	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Profile Distribution of respondents44

Table 4.2: Employee motivation57

Table 4.3: Hypothesis Test for the WFH Policy and employee motivation63

Table 4.5: Hypothesis Test for Telecommuting and employee motivation63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Maslow Hierarchy of needs	19
Figure 1.2: Herzberg's Motivators and Hygiene factors.....	22
Figure 2.1: The conceptual framework which was used in this study.....	29
Figure 3.1: The Research Onion	37
Figure 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate	41
Figure 4.2: Managers response rate.....	42
Figure 4.3: Gender representation of the Respondents... ..	43
Figure 4.4: Departmental Distribution of the respondents.....	47
Figure 4.5: Respondents positions	48
Figure 4.6: Knowledge of WFH policy and objective	51
Figure 4.7: Effect of WFH practice on employee's performance and productivity	52

ACRONYMS

A	Agree
D	Disagree
EU	European Union
ERG	Existence Relatedness Growth
Exco	Executive Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
N	Neutral
NEPC	New Era Publication Corporation
SA	Strongly Agree
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SARS-CoV-2	New coronavirus
SD	Strongly Disagree
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WFH	Working from Home
WHO	World Health Organisation
%	Percentage

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge everyone who played a role by supporting me to accomplish this academic journey.

First and foremost, I thank my Heavenly Father, who makes everything possible. This was not an easy one as I faced several challenges especially at the beginning of 2021 academic year, but He made it possible. Secondly, family: my husband, who in the first place encouraged me to register when I was not keen. He supported me with love, finances, encouragement and understanding. I could have struggled more in this journey but he was such a great pillar who helped me to unleash my capabilities and motivated me through it all. My son Angelo, I deprived you of attention when you needed me the most, but you endured. Thank you my boy. My dear friend and brother, Fidelis Dumbura you have been such a great help and teacher throughout this course. Thank you

Fourthly, my supervisor Professor Bhebhe who guided me throughout the research process. He pushed me to work harder and deliver this perfect document on time.

Finally, I would also like to thank my colleagues at NEPC who happily agreed to be respondents for this study. They availed me their time in their busy schedules to attend to my questionnaires. Thank you all for your great support.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my beloved mother Klaudia Tuyenikehafo Amutenya. I will forever be indebted to you. You sacrificed a lot for me and my siblings in making sure we all get a good education, despite all odd.

DECLARATION

I, Helvy Helena Shaanika, hereby declare that this study is my own work, that it is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof, has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior permission of the author, or The University of Namibia in that behalf. I, Helvy Helena Shaanika, grant The University of Namibia the right to reproduce this dissertation in whole or in part, in any manner or format, which The University of Namibia may deem fit.

Helvy Helena Shaanika



23/12/2021

Name of Student

Signature

Date

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers an outline of the orientation of the study. The statement of the problem, the objectives, significance, and the ethical considerations are therefore covered in this chapter. The study primarily concentrated on New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC)

1.1. Background of the study

The Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 shocked the world of work as companies were least prepared for the lock-downs that followed for the better part of 2020. Huge losses on goods and services were experienced, but more loss was on salaries given to employees that did not render any service. Data from the sectorial research conducted on the G3 economies made up of the USA, China and the European Union (EU), shows that imports and exports on some of the major sectors including clothing and vehicles fell by 20% and this was expected to worsen in a number of countries around the world (Stavros, 2020). China was affected in the worst way especially the country's trades and diplomatic relationships with several African countries, who some ended or suspended the connections. USA and the United Kingdom (UK) were the first countries to introduced travel bans against Chinese nationals and flights to or from that country were suspended (Besenyő & Kármán, 2020).

Africa was not spared as the bans and suspensions severely affected the continent's aviation industry. Severe financial losses totalling to \$4.4 billion were experienced. Such damages in revenues led to the closure of some of the airports and airlines. The World Bank estimates that economic losses due to Covid-19 stood between \$37billion

and \$79 billion by the end of 2020. In Southern Africa, Covid-19 caused havoc. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the first case was reported on 20 March 2020, and the death of a prominent journalist on 22 March 2020, marked the country's first Covid-19's death (Chitsamatanga, Wayne, & Sandro, 2021). As part of its response, the government immediately imposed a mandatory lockdown on all companies, except for those offering essential services for three consecutive months in 2021. This led to loss of income as employees could not report for work because their companies had not been generating any revenue. As a way of serving the situation, some companies made provisions for their workers to telecommute (Muzvidziwa-Chilunjika, Mutizwa, & Chilunjika, 2020) In South Africa, the government borrowed more than usual, yet a significant reduction was observed in tax revenue. Analyst forecast a contraction of 7.2% in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which represent a fiscal deficit of 12% and 81% Debt-to-GDP ratio by 2021, (Charl, Cerbone, & Van Zijl, 2020).

Namibia was no exemption to the global challenges brought by lockdowns. According to (Stephanus & Odada 2020), the country registered its first two cases of Covid-19 on 13 March 2020. This resulted in the adoption of the Telecommuting policy by the public sector including the central, local government, as wells as State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) (The Institute for Public Policy Research, 2020). Doyle (2020) defines telecommuting as an employment setup whereby employees do not have to sit within the working space as provided for by their employers. With telecommuting, employees sit away from the office space and use technology to interact with their employers as well as with their colleagues. Often this is referred to as working from home (WFH),

teleworking, mobile working or home working. In some cases, the strategy worked wonders but it also encountered numerous problems.

Green et al. (2020), suggested that the WFH policy is beneficial to the performance of the organisation and it has positive organisational outcomes, productivity, retention, and business continuity in times of disruption. Contrary to this, Paskov (2020), claims that telecommuting will have a negative impact on productivity. White (2020), highlighted that every company's situation is unique and employees in certain industries and facility types will be impacted differently by the new arrangements that come with the Covid-19 outbreak. The aforesaid disparities are therefore subject to this study.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Every company situation is unique and employees in various department of different organisation would be impacted differently by the new measures that aroused as a result of Covid-19 outbreak. This searcher therefore identifies a need to carry out a research in order to establish how telecommuting, as a preventative measure against Covid-19 would affect employees motivation and productivity. There are few literature focusing on telecommuting in general, without singling out a specific industry or organisation. Little studies focusing on how telecommuting affects employees' motivation and performance in Namibia's public institutions during the pandemic were also carried out, however, none of them focused on the media industry. It is therefore important to carry out a study such as this, that would expose the impact that the WFH policy has on employees' motivation and their productivity during Covid-19 pandemic, with special focus on New Era Publication Corporation (NEPC), which is a media house.

1.3. Objectives of the study

Main Objective:

To investigate the effects of telecommuting on employees motivation and productivity during the COVID 19 pandemic at NEPC Namibia.

Specific objectives

1.4.1 To assess the level of motivation among employees who telecommuted during COVID 19 pandemic.

1.4.2 To explore challenges faced by telecommuters at NEPC Namibia during the COVID 19 pandemic.

1.4.3 To establish if telecommuting was sustainable for productivity and business continuity at NEPC Namibia during the COVID 19 pandemic.

1.4. Hypothesis of the study

H_0 : WFH Policy has no effect on employee motivation and productivity during the Covid 19 pandemic.

H_1 : WFH Policy has effect on employee motivation and productivity during the COVID 19 pandemic.

H_0 2: There is a relationship between telecommuting and employee motivation during the COVID19 pandemic.

H₁ 2: There is a relationship between telecommuting and employee motivation during the COVID 19 pandemic.

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is significant to decision making practises for corporate organisations that may find themselves in limbo when it comes to the WFH practice. It will assist in giving direction to managers when confronted with situations on whether to allow or not to allow employees to work from home. A special focus has been taken on NEPC, and the researcher is confident that the subject organisation and the Ministry of Information Communication Technology as well as media houses whose day to day operations are similar to that of NEPC will benefit from this study. The research will also greatly add value to the researcher's academic and career progression.

1.6. Limitations of the study

The researcher was based 700km away from the NEPC headquarters, and as a result accessing the company was a challenge given that restrictions in movement as occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns which made travelling and face to face interactions difficult. In order to mitigate this limitation there was absolute care in the distribution of questionnaires, by sending them via e-mail to the intended respondents only. Telephonic interviews were also carried out with managers of NEPC.

1.7. Delimitations of the study

Although there are many institutions that embraced telecommuting as a way of mitigating the spread of Covid-19 in Namibia, this study was confined to NEPC. The study is for academic purpose only.

This chapter provides a detailed review of the effects of telecommuting on employees' well-being and productivity during the period of pandemic at NEPC. Furthermore, the chapter will also give definitions and meanings of key concepts related to telecommuting, productivity and Covid-19. The chapter will also present the research objectives, research questions, the theoretical and conceptual framework.

1.1 Meaning of Telecommuting

Telecommuting is defined as working from home (WFH) or working in a virtual office or home with a computer, mobile phone, or a video conferencing device (Chen, 2017). Also, telework telecommuting is being able to work from home, even when you are not at a computer, instead of having to be at a desk. It telecommuting employees can work from wherever they are, with internet connectivity. Telecommuting is the process of teleworking or telepresence.

1.2 Meaning of Well-being

According to Chetty (2016), well-being is the quality of life. It is not just about the price "income" or how much money you have. It is about the quality of life, health, and happiness. It is the process that involves psychological, physical, and social well-being. It is the process that involves psychological, physical, and social well-being.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents literature review on the effects of telecommuting on employee motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic at NEPC. Furthermore, the chapter will also give definitions and meanings of key concepts such as telecommuting, motivation, productivity and Covid-19. The chapter will also present the literature review on the impact of telecommuting on employees' motivation, challenges faced by telecommuters, the theoretical and conceptual framework

2.2. Meaning of Telecommuting

Telecommuting is referred to as working from home (WFH) or working at a location close to home, such as a coffee shop, library, or at a co-working space. Manker (2021), also defined telecommuting as doing work from a place other than your office, using internet and telephones instead of having to travel to work. In telecommuting employees can work from wherever they are using internet connection. Telecommuting is also known as teleworking or remote working.

2.3. Meaning of Motivation

According to Cherry (2020), motivation is what inspires human beings to act. In daily usage, the term "motivation" is used to describe why people do things willingly and happily. It is the process that maintains goal-oriented behaviour. It involves the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate behaviour. Furthermore,

Chand (2021), specifies that motivation at a workplace is an act of inspiring the personnel/ workers/ employees with a zeal to work for the accomplishment of objectives of the organisations.

2.4. Meaning of Productivity

Productivity is primarily getting work done in the most efficient manner (Mailman, 2021). Furthermore, Todd (2021), defines workplace productivity as the effectiveness with which tasks are completed by a productive workforce, benefits such as profits and increased employee morale will be reaped.

Unlike other variables in this study, productivity is not only defined by activities and practices but it is also measured using a formula. The universal formula of productivity is $(\text{input}) / (\text{output})$, which is basically measuring of output resulting from a given input (Mokhtar, 2021). In other words, it measures the ratio of output against input. According to Mokhtar, productivity is influenced by many factors, including workers' skills, motivation, quality of workmanship, effort, innovation, the technology used and effectiveness of management.

2.5. Meaning of Covid-19

According to Ikwoche (2020), Covid-19 is SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), it is a pandemic which is made up of a group of viruses that are causative organisms (or vectors) for diseases in mammals. The virus attacks the respiratory tracts. Hence an infected person shows symptoms such as breathing difficulty, cough and

sneezing among other manifestations. This highly infectious virus can be fatal. WHO declared it a pandemic in 2020 as the world continued witnessing economic uncertainty. According to Worldometers (2021), Covid-19 infected 239,982,067 people and claimed 4,890,143 lives by the 13th October 2021. Because of this highly infectious disease the world of work embraced the WFH practice as a mitigation and prevention measure against infection at workplace (Asgari, 2020).

2.6. Impact of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity

There is a progressive relationship between telecommuting and employee productivity which can be described by various factors. Such factors include the time that telecommuting employees spent working while at home. They are likely to work more hours, unlike the office based employees they do not spend time commuting to work, but would rather spend an extra hour on work related activities.

Furthermore, teleworkers are likely not to be distracted by unbecoming counterproductive office activities such as office politics (Beauregard, Basile, & Canonico, 2019). The results of the study carried out by Thorstensson (2020), supports (Beauregard, Basile & Canonico), that working from home has an influence on employee productivity. This is further reflected in an experimental study carried out by Bloom et al. (2017) that found an increase of 13% in employees' performance, of which 9% was from working extra time on their shift period and 4% was attributed to working in a quieter environment when working from home. Furthermore, the rate of job attritions fell by over 50%.

According to (Shareena & Mohammand 2020), telecommuting consists of both positives and negatives. Among others, the WFH arrangement provides workers with adequate opportunity to concentrate on their work tasks. This is as opposed to the office contacts with co-workers which reduce commitment. In the absence of physically monitoring, workers have greater freedom and a sense of responsibility when they complete tasks. This increases flexibility among the employees with regards to their performance.

Moreover, the study by Rahman (2020), collaborates Blooms findings that majority of employees relate their increased level of productivity to WFH. Some teleworking employees according to (Fana, Milasi & Napierała 2020), are in favour of telework because it helps them to focus by keeping away distractive colleagues and controlling supervisors whose presence sometimes turn out to be a nuisance to subordinates. Conversely, the lack of meaningful conversations among co-workers and between employees and supervisors are believed to be among the shortcomings of telework.

Findings of the exploratory study by Purwanto et al. (2020), suggest that there are several advantages and disadvantages to the WFH concept. Among many advantages, WFH offers flexibility in completing work, as employees do not need to follow office hours which gives the working masses more free time. It also comes with the sense of

financial relief as employees save on transportation and fuel costs, it can minimize the level of stress experienced besides traffic jams from home to the office and vice versa.

Rahman (2020), has further noted that self-efficacy is the common concept mostly associated with productivity during telecommuting. Correspondingly, (Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying 2016), have also highlighted that self-efficacy significantly contributes to job performance.

However, WFH may have a negative impact and studies has proven that this practice can create a sense of isolation among the workers. While teleworking, employees have limited face-to-face interactions with their co-workers, and this may increase the sense of feeling out of touch with others in the workplace. Isolation among workers may negatively affect performance. (Beauregard, Basile, & Canonico, 2019).

(Beauregard, Basile, & Canonico), further added that telework is perceived to negatively affect the relationship between workers. It may negatively affect job satisfaction and ultimately the performance of the team. However, factors such as intensity of telework, communication with colleagues and task interdependence may help to reduce or eliminate the potential negative effects of telework on team functioning.

Successful teleworkers are characterised by attributes such as discipline, self-motivation and ability to work alone. Other features include tenacity, self-confidence, time-management skills and integrity.

2.7. Challenges faced by telecommuters

Findings on several studies have exposed a number of disadvantages that act as demotivation factors to telecommuting employees. Paskov (2020), noted that WFH comes with the lack of organisational readiness, inadequate technology, managerial willpower, and the potential sense of isolation can affect employees' morale while teleworking. Purwanto et al. (2020) further pointed out electricity and internet costs that are usually endured by employees and can cause data security problems.

The aforesaid, according to Purwanto can inflict financial pressure on employees who may also struggle to keep up with the purchase of data. This may result in poor performance when an employee fails to perform a task or to meet working deadlines. Rahman (2020), has also maintains that the lack of internet data and communication breakdown are among major challenges facing telecommuting employees.

(Daud, Turiman, Rahmat & Kasi 2021), also fortify Rahman's views that WFH disrupts employees' work-life-balance as employees find it difficult to achieve work-life balance. Hence the need to further investigate how working from home has affected employees' flexibility, work-life balance and work performance. The expectations on the employees to be 'online' and 'available' all the time, has been highlighted among

challenges faced by employees as employers may stick to exercising the traditional management of employees based on their presence and visibility.

Contrary to the study by (Daud, Turiman, Rahmat & Kasi; Beauregard, Basile & Canonico, 2019), suggested that the lower levels of work-life balance of teleworkers are found to cause higher job satisfaction and reduced intentions to resign from the organisation. Telework helps employees to save time, because it eliminates travelling time. While telecommuting, the boundaries between home and work are non-existent as homes are the common off-site work station. Rahman (2020), has however pointed out the boundary theory as an answer that would help solve challenges associated with working from home, as opposed to traditional working environment. The boundary theory suggests that individuals make and adhere to boundaries. Employees are therefore able to set boundaries between their personal time and their employers' time.

Furthermore, (Bonacini, Gallo & Scicchitano 2020), argued that WFH does not benefit all the telecommuters. Those at the losing end are mostly younger female and the less educated individuals living in rural areas. The aforesaid group are likely to be disadvantaged financially when engaging from home as they're likely to not complete their job. Young women with children as opposed to older female and men are likely to be more or less competent while acting from home where there are disturbances and children interference.

(Etheridge, Li, & Wang 2020), also suggests that the next average educational attainment is correlated with lower differences in educational achievement among the population, resulting in reduced income inequality. Furthermore, the diminished frequency of face-to-face interactions related to telework may reduce the strong bond between employees. Co-workers may perceive spatial distance as psychological distance (out of sight, out of mind) and teleworkers are also perceived by others to contribute less to the shared team objectives. In addition, according to (Bedran, Anto, Christy & Austin 2021), WFH is undermining the trust between workers and their employers, as employers are displacing confidence in their employees which can also lead to privacy infringement.

The main reason for this new mistrust is employers' idea of time theft that may arise while working from home, which has led to employers installing or contemplating on installing monitoring software on employees' computers while working from home. This method is referred to as "tattle ware," and the number of companies that use tattle ware has increased from 10 percent pre-Covid to 30 percent (Hymen, 2021). Additionally, variety of employers have contacted IT companies trying to find software to watch workers' reception (Bedran, Anto, Christy & Austin, 2021). Managers are reluctant to permit for the continuation of remote work arrangements as they fear losing managerial control and therefore the inability to closely monitor workers' productivity (Fana, Milasi & Napierała 2020).

Thornstenson (2020), has however concluded that, while influences of a number of the factors are either positive or negative, the influence of a number of the factors rely

upon the characteristics and attitude of the staff and therefore the circumstances. (Beauregard, Basile, & Canonico 2019), are of the opinion that telework appears to function more as a resource than as a requirement but it still depends on individual differences among workers. Workers with high levels of connectedness and people who are highly open were more likely to have positive gains on telework days, while those with a tilt towards rumination are less likely to experience gains. Workers in managerial positions were however an exception, as they claimed a rise within the workloads. This was also just like workers within the essential sectors, who experienced a greater workload that came with the lockdown period (Fana, Milasi, & Napierała, 2020).

2.8. Sustainability of telecommuting after the pandemic

The study by Rahman (2020), suggests that the model of a workplace setting is not always ideal. Employees are able to work remotely and deliver better than when they are based in the same office as their colleagues and supervisor, which is referred to as the workplace model. As a matter of fact, freelancers have used remote working conditions successfully over the years. Rahman (2020) has argued that there is no data to prove this. According to (Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, & Anuarsham 2020), performing from home has been related to several advantages including cost-efficiency, high levels of job satisfaction and it's believed to save lots of time on commuting to work. However, this new norm also creates a work-life conflict and ICT overabundance usage reception.

The study by (Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, & Anuarsham 2020), further shows that employees who work from home do have the advantage of being around their spouse more. This may help couples to bond and improve their communication with each other, once they are aware of each other's schedules. This study further recognised that WFH comes with increase performance because of flexibility. Employees have freedom to determine their own working time and place. In addition, (Bloom, Liang, Roberts & Ying 2017), maintain that numerous workers feel a robust, positive satisfaction thanks to the flexibleness that they get from WFH. Acting from home can increase performance thanks to the absence of distraction because the workers will have less break time and no contact with their co-workers. It is therefore easy to concentrate on the tasks when working out of the office where employees spend company time on unproductive activities or where it is less comfortable (Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, & Anuarsham, 2020).

On the contrary, Etheridge et al. (2020) suggests that WFH can result in difficulty when performing a job and this can cause lower mental well-being. The findings of a survey carried out on 1,182 institutions in China by (Wu & Bin (2021), reveals that SOEs' performance dropped by 50% during the Covid-19 pandemic. Daraba et al. (2021), also supported the latter, referring to the latest working arrangements due to Covid-19 pandemic as a turbulent era that calls for cross-boundary collaboration, public innovation and, perhaps most significantly, the event of improved and well thought of strong governance strategies that support adaptive and versatile adjustment for workers.

Additionally, other researchers argue that separating the workplace and the home causes negative outcomes. The absence of face to face communication between employees and supervisors may lead them to loss of the advantage of seeking help from colleagues (Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, & Anuarsham 2020). Based on (Yusof & Rahmat 2020), communication at the workplace helps build bonds among employees and employers. (Shareen & Mohammad 2020), identified the decreased control by workmates or the supervisors as a crucial drawback experienced during the work from home. The work avoidance is the result when someone's work is poorly monitored. Work from home is helpful when there are threats at the office but work should continue. Most of the IT companies included work from arrangement in their leave policy in order to extend productivity.

Furthermore, (Bonacini, Gallo & Scicchitano 2020), cites that WFH risks exacerbating pre-existing inequalities within the labour market, which may worsen if it remains unregulated. The study highlights the need to form policies that may alleviate inequalities like income support measures for brief term basis and human capital interventions (in the long run), to play a more important compensating role within the future.

Regardless of the aforesaid disadvantages, (Daraba, Wirawan, Salam, & Faisal 2021), conclude that the advantages of telework outweigh the shortcomings. Adequate support to telecommuting employees including ample and low cost internet access are very helpful in this regard. Human resources in this case must also begin to be improved, in

order to assist employees with the advancement of technology and to ensure that it is carried out well without obstacles.

Although not all organisations are able to embrace telecommuting due to the nature of their business, (Bonacini, Gallo & Scicchitano 2020), point out that there is a need to equip employees with the technological know-how of the new digital technologies. This norm may require new skills not just for workers but also for managers and entrepreneurs.

Besides, a successful telework programme is more a function of leadership than of technology, with a resourceful and progressive leadership mentality being required to style and implement telework schemes effectively. (Beauregard, Basile & Canonic 2019), therefore highlights that managers must be willing and able to relinquish traditional notions of how best to manage performance which is sometimes supported by direct supervision. The study suggests that managers should adopt new ways of motivating and monitoring their staff.

In addition, (Bonacini, Gallo & Scicchitano 2020), recommends establishments of childcare facilities and support to households with children. In line with (Arntz, Ben & Berlingier 2020), added that the consequences of WFH arrangements depend plenty on the presence of dependent children, and also the current situation is probably going to exacerbate these differences. For some workers, WFH during the lockdown may lead

to a negative experience with a possible increase in conflicts between work and family needs.

However, as childcare facilities and faculty open again, parents could fully benefit from a better availability of WFH arrangements because the required technology has been adopted and firm culture has changed within the same direction. According to Mohanty (2021), economy and environment are on two sides of the identical coin when it involves telecommuting. This Covid-19 pandemic offers a painful opportunity to revamp our social and economic systems by transforming it into a more sustainable way of living. During this situation, an organisation should address the policies that provide emotional support and proper counselling when the worker is irregular or not performing well which can be a results of WFH and family influence while doing so.

Although majority of workers are in favour of telecommuting, workers mentioned the potential financial and social shortcomings of acting from home, which might require open discussions and re-negotiation of working conditions. The odd implications of WFH include financial costs incurred by teleworkers (Fana, Milasi, & Napierała, 2020).

2.9. Theoretical Framework

2.9.1 Theories of Motivation

Many competing theories attempting to elucidate the character of motivation all help to clarify the behaviour of certain people at certain times. Motivation theories associated

with this study show that there are many motives, which influence employees to behave and perform in any given organisation.

These different theories of motivation are usually divided into two contrasting approaches like content theories and process theories. Content theories try to explain specific motivation factors for individual at work, while process theories try to identify relationship among the variables of motivation (Mihnas, 2019). Work from home decreases in interpersonal contact, feelings of isolation, and a high chance of misunderstanding which can negatively affect employees' motivation during the pandemic. In order to reduce the motivation reduction of employees related to working virtually can be done by video conferencing and not just a text messages and such as emails (Wolor, Dewi, & Martono, 2020).

2.9.1.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

According to Shikalepo (2020), Abraham Maslow is credited and well-known for having developed a theory of human motivation called Hierarchy of Needs theory. This theory of motivation is predicated on assumptions that there is always something that somebody is trying to fulfil; once a requirement is fulfilled, it is not as compelling as an unfulfilled need; and, finally, needs are arranged into five categories that include physiological need, need for security, sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has received wide recognition, particularly among practicing managers. It is therefore intuitively logical and straightforward to grasp and a few research has validated it. (Mihnas, 2019).

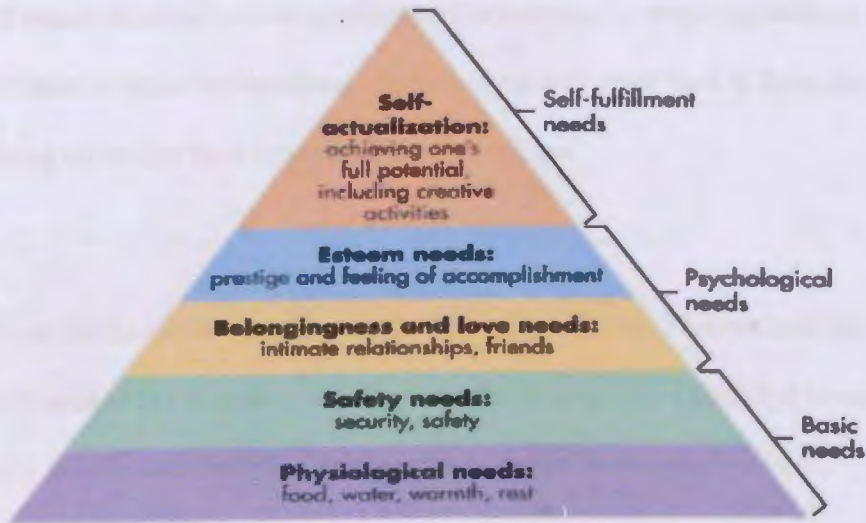


Figure 1.1 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs. Source: (www.slidesalad.com/, 2021)

The diagram shows that after carrying out research, Maslow found out that an employee who joins an organisation will not work hard until his basic needs such as shelter, food, water, clothing, sleep or rest are met. These are basic needs or physiological needs. This theory warns managers that they should have interest in knowing whether employees have accommodation, food, protective clothing or uniform and that they should work for stipulated hours which allows them time to rest if they are to be productive even when telecommuting.

Abraham Maslow goes on to advise that once physiological needs are in place, employees will then work hard and be productive expecting the employer to attend to a higher level set of needs called Safety and Security Needs. He explains that an employee needs a safe work environment if he/she is to be productive. An employee needs security

of tenure if he/she is to be productive. For instance, an employee will not be motivated if there is threat for dismissal. An employee will work hard if there are prospects of being on the job for a considerable length of time.

From Safety and Security Needs, the Hierarchy of Needs Theory states that an employee will need to be recognised as a team member. An employee must feel loved as a member of a family called NEPC. These are the Love and Belonging Needs.

The next hierarchical order of needs that motivate an employee to work hard are the Esteem Needs. An employee's self-esteem should be catered for by the organisation. When one is recognised for the good work through positive comments, when one is given a post of responsibility and when one is praised in front of workmates, this will be fulfilling the Esteem Needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory notes that the last and highest needs which motivate an employee are the Self-Actualisation Needs when one achieves his/her fullest potential in a manner which is self-fulfilling.

This same theory, has also been criticised for implying that people experience needs in the same order while failing to recognise cultural and individual differences. For instance, when the company employs a manager; such an individual may not be motivated by food and accommodation (Physiological Needs) nor the Love and Belonging nor Esteem Needs as he/she may already be self-actualised needing self-fulfilment. The Theory fails to acknowledge that needs can be influenced by different

factors and situations. In collectivist societies, for example, social needs may be considered more important than physiological needs (Steel, 2009).

In the case of NEPC, the Hierarchy of Needs Theory is important in that telecommuting should be structured in a manner which allows employees to rest and the employees' surety of tenure should be attended to. Only employees who feel they are loved and respected can telecommute and be productive.

2.9.1.2. Herzberg's Two Factor Motivation Theory

Invented by Frederick Herzberg (1923), the Herzberg's Two Factor Motivation Theory is viewed as one of the theories that have close links to the Maslow theory of needs. This theory categorised employees' work-related needs, named Two-Factor theory. In the context of Two-Factor theory, Herzberg categorised human needs into two main groups namely, the Hygiene factors and motivators.

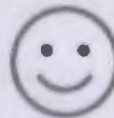
Herzberg's Motivators and Hygiene Factors

Herzberg's Motivators and Hygiene Factors



Satisfiers (Motivator Factors)

- ✓ Performance and achievement
- ✓ Recognition
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Opportunities for advancement
- ✓ Personal growth
- ✓ The work itself



Dissatisfiers (Hygiene Factors)

- Salary, wages & other benefits
- Working conditions
- Status
- The physical work itself
- Relationships with colleagues
- Relationships with supervisor
- Quality of supervisor
- Policies and rules

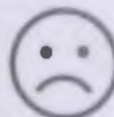


Figure 1.2 Herzberg's Motivators and Hygiene factors. Source: (www.slidesalad.com/, 2021)

Herzberg argues that there are certain factors that a business could introduce that may directly motivate employees to figure harder. These factors are called Motivators. While motivators encourage employees to figure harder, there are other factors that will demotivate an employee if not present. Such factors wouldn't in themselves actually motivate employees to figure harder. These are called Hygiene or Maintenance Factors (Mihnas, 2019). Hygiene factors need to remain in place so that the motivators are able to motivate an employee. For instance, while recognition (a motivator) can motivate an employee, that motivation will soon end if the salary is too low (Maintenance/Hygiene factor).

Employers need to motivate employees using motivators but for that motivation to be maintained at the right level, Maintenance factors should come into play. Furthermore, Herzberg pointed out the importance of Job enlargement, Job enrichment and Empowerment as factors that should be used to motivate employees. These are critical for NEPC as telecommuting can involve job enlargement and job enrichment. However, according to Mihnas this theory has been criticised because it is limited and it relies on self-reports, its reliability of methodology is questionable and it has no overall measure of satisfaction that was utilised.

2.9.1.3 Clayton Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation.

Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of Motivation of 1969 by has made a useful contribution to the theories of Motivation because it reduced Maslow's five categories to a few categories of human needs. Unlike satisfaction-progression hypothesis, ERG theory proves that a gaggle of needs may be satisfied at the identical time. Additionally, employees may seek satisfaction of lower needs if high level needs don't seem to be achieved, then derive satisfaction from an extra satisfaction of a lower need (Shikalepo 2021). This can be very relevant within the case of NEPC as employees required to telecommute are at different levels of motivation as they are of various grades.

2.9.2. Theory of Production

The most prominent theory of productivity identified in this study is the theory of the factors of production, which was authored by J. B. Say and F. Bastiat in the 18th century. These authors attributed the capacity to produce value on three factors of production such as labour, land and capital. In short, the theory says in order for production to take place, there must be labour, land (place where the production can be carried out) and capital. Similarly, for telecommuting to be productive and possible, NEPC will need the three means of production to be in place first. The theory of marginal productivity was later developed in the late 19th century. The marginal productivity theory intended to resolve logical contradictions in the theory of the factors of production. Similarly, to the factors of production theory, the marginal productivity

theory also acknowledges that the value of products is created by the three basic factors of production.

Furthermore, Madson (2007), highlights that productivity is treated as a systems concept. It is argued that the causal texture of the system's environment dictates the relevant productivity construct and measurement. Production theory is that the study of production, or the process of manufacturing outputs from the inputs. Production uses resources to form an honest or service that are suitable to be used or exchange in a very economic manner. This may include manufacturing, storing, shipping, and packaging. Some economists define production broadly as all economic activity aside from consumption (Shekhat, 2019).

According to Dorfman (2021), production theory involves a number of the foremost fundamental principles of economics, including the link between the costs of commodities and therefore the prices of the productive factors accustomed to produce them. It also encompasses the relationships between the costs of commodities and productive factors, on the one hand, and also the quantities of those commodities and productive factors that are produced or used, on the opposite.

2.9.3. Theories of Working from Home

2.9.3.1 The Boundary Theory

This study looked at various theories and how they are related to working from home or telecommuting. In addition, the theoretical framework identified was also used to determine if telecommuting is a sustainable practice especially to the Namibian media institutions. Given the motivation theories: Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory,

Herzberg's Two Factor Motivation Theory and the Theory of Productivity as presented above, this study is underpinned by the Boundary theory which has been identified as the suitable theoretical framework.

Boundary theory suggests that individuals manage the boundaries between work and personal life through processes of segmenting and/or integrating the domains (Rahman, 2020). The boundary theory is more suitable to flexible working arrangements where employees are required to set boundaries between their employers' and personal time when they are required to carry out their work and engage in their personal activities while telecommuting. With Covid-19 outbreak, WFH has become a new normal to Namibia and has been embraced to create a work-life balance in recent times. Majority of employees at NEPC have been interviewed to share their experiences on this new working conditions

2.10. Conceptual Framework

Teleworking has been viewed as a versatile work arrangement that permits social distancing at work place by allowing employees to carryout work from their residence or from other locations other than the office. Based on (Rahman 2020), 34% of business leaders have predicted that 50% of their full-time workers are going to be telecommuting by 2020. This prediction seems to be realised with the wide-reaching spread of Covid-19 which forced the globe into lockdown. This lockdown has resulted in the increasing use and reliance on the internet by various sectors of the

economy, including businesses, health, governance, media and education (Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). Digital platforms such as webinars, Google classroom and Zoom are now used to facilitate meetings, trainings, workshops and seminars. Social distancing and lockdown had compelled social events and meetings to be conducted through digital means such as video meetings, through virtual means and other digital platforms (Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). WFH was therefore viewed as the best alternative to shield the world economy from a total breakdown. The aforesaid is illustrated in figure 2.1, below.

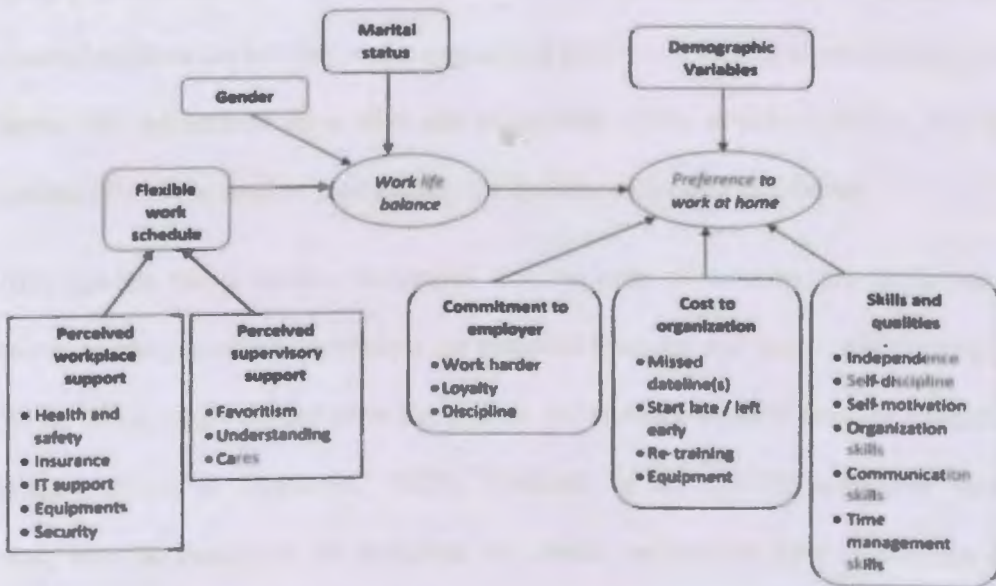


Figure 2.1. The proposed conceptual framework which was used in this study

Source: Asgari (2020)

2.12 Summary

This chapter defined the terms that confined the study to its proper perspective and drew consensus on the key terms which underpin the study. The theories related to motivation, production and telecommuting which anchor the study were also identified, justified and discussed. The supporting literature in this chapter proves that there is uncertainty regarding the impact that WFH has on employees working in the media industry in regard to their intensities of motivation and productivity. While some studies by Abdullah et al. (2020), Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020), Rahman (2020), as well as Shekhat (2019), concluded that WFH may have a positive influence on productivity, these researchers have not touched on the intensity of motivation for employees working from home. The researchers have also not extensively given evidence on how this new normal affects the level of productivity for the telecommuting employees.

Although the above studies concluded that majority of workers are in favour of telecommuting, workers mentioned the potential financial and social shortcomings of WFH, which might require open discussions and re-negotiation of working conditions (Fana, Milasi, & Napierała, 2020). Abdullah et al. (2020), suggested that a study must be undertaken to enlighten the media industry on how motivation and performance levels of employees are affected by telecommuting. There is a further need to look at how telework is perceived among a selected gender or culture, unlike within the existing study where telecommuters are interviewed and examined together. The general perception can be positive, but factors that contribute to it may vary according to Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, and Anuarsham.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

According to the University of Witswatersland (2018), Research Methodology are specific procedures or techniques intended to identify, select, process and analyse information regarding a specific topic. During a research, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability. The methodology section answers two main questions: How was the information collected or generated? How was it analysed?

In order to gain a further insight into the effects that working from home has on employee motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic and to answer the proposed research questions, various research activities were carried out. This chapter has broadly outlined the approach taken in carrying out the study and justifies the types of research methods that are deemed most appropriate to collect data for this study. The section has further explored how the research was executed, starting with sourcing of data, analysing of the data, ethical considerations as well as limitations that manifested at the time of data collection.

3.2. Research Design

Research design is the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. The research design allows researchers to perfect the research methods that

are suitable for the study. It therefore guides the researcher to select the befitting, implementation, and analysis of a study (Mcornbes, 2021).

The aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given research in such a way that the eventual validity of the research findings are maximised (Arogundade, Temitope, & Sanjay, 2021). This study is an exploratory research that has employed a mixed methods design through content analysis and survey. Exploratory research is employed to realise familiarity with an existing phenomenon and acquire new insight into it in order to formulate a specific research problem (Arogundade, Temitope, & Sanjay, 2021). Quantitative research design method was accustomed to measure the employees' motivation, while employees' productivity was measured by employing a qualitative study. Both methods were used via a survey method by gathering primary data through a structured questionnaire. Thus, this study embraces the Mixed Method Research, which mixes elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches with a purpose to acquire breadth and depth of understanding and corroborations.

3.3. Population

A population is defined as a group of individuals of the same species living and interbreeding within a given area (MBA Team, 2020). The population of NEPC employees constitute of 67 fulltime employees. All employees were given a chance to participate in the study.

3.4. Sample

According to Zamboni (2018), a sample size is a count of individual samples or observations in any statistical setting, such as a scientific experiment or a public opinion survey.

Stratified sampling was used to group the 67 employees in four strata consisting of senior managers, middle managers, supervisors and lower ranked employees. Secondary sources of data was secured from Human Resource Officer. Both Qualitative and Quantitative data was obtained from employees, using questionnaires. In this study, all the employees took part and this was viewed as very important in achieving validity and reliability of the findings.

3.5. Research Instruments

Duke University (2020), defines Research Instruments as measurement tools designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. Primary data was collected through the use of structured-questionnaires and interviews

3.6. Validity

The extent to which the results really measure what they are supposed to measure by checking how well the results correspond to established theories and other measures of the same concept is what is called validity (Middleton, 2019). Face validity was used to test the hypothesis. This study made use of various recent literature. This assisted in a valid conceptualisation of the relevant items and constructs. In addition, the validity of the empirical study was ensured through the use of measuring instruments that are applicable to the research variables.

3.8. Reliability

Reliability proves the extent to which the results are often reproduced when the research is repeated under the identical conditions (Middleton, 2019). This can be done by checking the consistency of results across time, across different observers, and across parts of the test itself. Reliability regarding the literature review was addressed through the analysis and review of existing literature sources, theories and models relevant to the present study and related studies. The reliability of the empirical study was proven using measuring instruments that were proven reliable in previous studies.

3.9. Pilot Testing

A pilot survey is applied before the particular research to test the feasibility and validity of the methods and techniques that are chosen among the identical area but in a very smaller sample (Menon, 2021). The calculations for validity and reliability was made possible through a pilot study that was administered to a randomly selected group of ten individuals outside the population. This helped in refining the questionnaire in order to match the research objectives and to produce results that can be compared to the previous studies.

3.10. Data Collection Procedures

Firstly, the researcher carried out a pilot study by administering questionnaire to ten randomly selected employees of a related organisation called Namibia Media Holdings in order to improve the validity of the questionnaires. E-mails for appointments to

conduct the survey were sent out two weeks before the actual study. This included the request for authorisation to use employees' performance record for the qualitative study.

3.11. Data analysis and presentation

There are several computerised systems for data analysis, and for this research, Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used. The two software are user friendly and they are for free. SPSS is good for mixed methods as it enters different types of data.

For the quantitative data analysis, Chi-Square was used, the researcher also used descriptive statistics, and in order to summarise and categorise qualitative data from employees' records. Based on the aforesaid, the methodological triangulation was used as a data analysis strategy to increase credibility and validity of the quantitative results to determine the relationship between Telecommuting and employees' motivation as well as Telecommuting and employee productivity. Data points can be validated by increasing the confidence of the final results. The data collected was processed, analysed, interpreted and presented in such a manner that it is clear, precise and unambiguous. Data was further visually presented in frequency tables, bar charts, pie charts and theatrical explanations was given.

3.12. Research ethics

Among other ethical consideration this researcher to accorded confidentiality, respect, privacy and a choice of anonymity to participants.

Therefore, prior to the study, the researcher obtained an official clearance and permission to carry out the study, from the university and from NEPC. During the study, participants were given consent forms before the study commenced and they were assured of anonymity. The study did not include activities that could cause harm to the participants, offend them or cause damage to the institutions. Finally, information obtained during the study will be kept in a lockable safe for 3 to 5 years and thereafter destroyed by the researcher.

3.13 Summary

This chapter outlined the research strategy to be used in the study of investigating the effects of telecommuting on employee motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic at NEPC. The design of this study combined the qualitative and quantitative data. This study collected data through questionnaire for both quantitative and qualitative studies. The researcher was deliberate in ensuring validity; therefore, triangulation was employed to increase the confidence of the conclusion. The chapter also discussed efforts that were employed to protect participants on potential unethical issues.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This Chapter discusses the findings of the study, in attempt to answer the following objectives: to investigate the effects of telecommuting on employees motivation and productivity during the COVID 19 pandemic at NEPC Namibia; to assess the level of motivation among employees who telecommuted during COVID 19 pandemic; to explore challenges faced by telecommuters at NEPC Namibia during the COVID 19 pandemic; to establish if telecommuting was sustainable for productivity and business continuity at NEPC Namibia during the COVID 19 pandemic. The findings of this study were compared to the findings in the literature review; and has since answered the research question.

This research findings speak to the study carried out by (Liang, Roberts & Ying 2017), which claims that numerous workers feel a robust, positive satisfaction due to flexiblensness that they get from WFH. Also, the outcome of the research by (Abdullah, Rahmat, Zawawi, Khamsah, & Anuarsham, 2020) reveals that acting from home can increase performance, thanks to the absence of distractions because the workers will have less break time and no contact with their co-workers.

On the contrary, a study by (Etheridge et al. 2020), concludes that WFH can result in difficulty when performing a job and this can cause lower mental well-being. Furthermore, study findings of a survey carried out on 1,182 institutions in China by

Wu and Bin (2021), reveals that SOEs' performance dropped by 50% during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.2. Analyses of data

4.2.1 Quantitative Data

For the quantitative part, the data was analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel, using, simple descriptive statistics. The findings of the analysis regarding the gender representation, age, educational level, level of employment as well as departmental representation is indicated in figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 correspondingly. These were done using a questionnaire which was divided into four sections.

Part A encompassed the demographic information of the respondents, and Part B concentrated on the effects of the WFH Policy on employee motivation, and Part C aimed at collecting data in regard to the effects of WFH and employee motivation and Part D looks at productivity and possibilities of continuation of telecommuting at NEPC. To measure the respondents' feelings and experiences, a 5-Point Likert-type scale was designed. The 5-Point Likert-type scale was ranked, ranging from disagree, strongly disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Close ended questions were also used for the nominal scale where participants were only required to give a "yes" or "no" responses. This was deemed appropriate to the purpose of this research. These scales were further used to measure the opinions of the respondents on the knowledge of the WFH policy, the effects that WFH has on productivity and performance, the effect that WFH has on motivation, the effect of telecommuting on work-life balance, its effect on employee to employee as well as employee to supervisor relationship, stress management while telecommuting and finally to assess the future possibilities of WFH.

Responses on second section, were in regard to the knowledge of the WFH Policy and its effects on employee motivation and productivity, while a five-point Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire to measure the relationship between telecommuting and employee motivation and finally, narrative statements were used in SECTION D to presents findings on the relationship between telecommuting and productivity.

4.2.1.1 Response rate

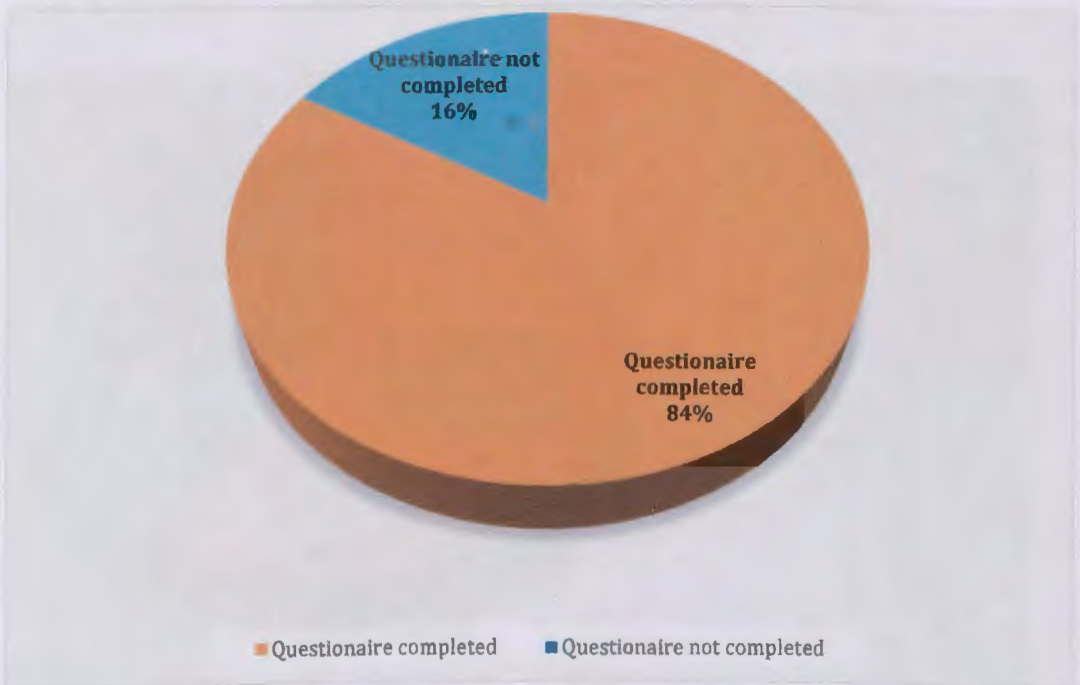


Figure 4.1: Employees' response rate

Figure 4.1 illustrates that the 67 (sixty-seven) employees of NEPC were served with questionnaires, and 56 (fifty-six) respondents completed and returned questionnaires and this accounted for 83.58%. The study initially included 10 managers of the sub-

divisions, however, in the end only 6 (60%) of the managers responded and returned back their questionnaires.

To avoid biasness, the response rate should be between 40% and 75% (Sataloff & Swetha, 2021). The response of this study is good and serves as a good representation for the targeted population.

Each respondent was asked 13 main questions (see Appendix 5) concerning telecommuting and productivity. A telephonic interview for managers only was also carried out. The managers' response rate is shown in figure 4.2 below. The average time given to respondents to complete and return questionnaires was two weeks.



Figure 4.2: Managers response rate (*Source: Research data*)

4.2.1.2. Demographic Data

The background information for the respondents in this study has been presented in a pie chart Figure 4.3. Table 4.1 below show the profile distribution in this regard.

4.2.2.1 Demographic information of the respondents

A total of fifty-six (56) respondents responded to the questionnaire. Thirty-one (31) were male, representing 55% of the respondents while 25 were females accounting for 45%. The gender was biased towards males with 55% due to the fact that some jobs in the print media industry are a bit heavy on muscles as such jobs are dominated by males, especially the distribution department where core activities are driving, loading and dispatching materials, which mostly attract male. It therefore accepted that this Pie Chart gives a true reflection of the gender situation at NEPC. Demographic information provides data regarding research participants and it enlightens the research on whether the participants in a particular study are a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes (Sataloff & Swetha, 2021).

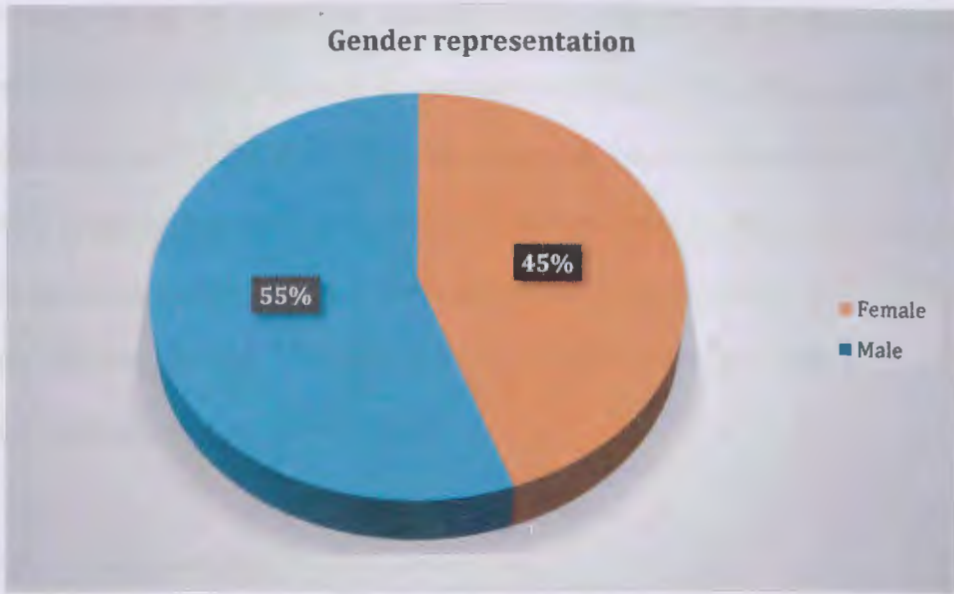


Figure 4.3 Gender representation of the Respondents (Source: Research data)

4.2.2.2 Age profiles of participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-27	1	1.8
28-33	21	37.5
34-43	20	35.7
44-54	11	19.3
Above 55	3	5.4
Total	56	100

Table 4.1: Age profile of the participants (Source: Research data)

The respondents specified their age ranges. From the above table (Table 4.1) it is evident that the majority of the respondents were those in the age range 28 to 40 years, and the

age range 34 to 43 years who represent 37.5% and 35.7 % of the respondents respectively. Together the two age groups represent 73.2 percent of the respondents. An organisation with 73.2% of its staff aged between 28 and 43 years can be described as having young employees. Young employees are techno-savvy. They enjoy the use of laptops and other technologies and they can find telecommuting easy to adapt and adopt. People between the ages of 44 and 54 years represent 5.4 percent, while the youngest age group accounts for 1.8 percent only.

4.2.2.3: Educational profiles of the participants

Qualification /Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 10-12	27	48.2
Certificate	2	3.6
Diploma	5	8.9
Under graduate degree	17	30.4
Masters	5	8.9
PhD	0	0
Total	56	100

Table 4.2 as explained above.

Table 4.2 indicates that the highest qualification held by the respondents was Masters’ degree, which represents 8.9% of the respondents while those who hold undergraduate degrees are 30.4% bringing the total of those who have university degrees to 41.3%. An organisation with 41.3% of its staff holding university degrees is a knowledge society

which should find it easy to telecommute and work using technology. The lowest qualification among all employees is Grade 10. This implies that there are no illiterates and introducing telecommuting to such a workforce should be easy and it can easily motivate them. Respondents with certificates are two (3.71%), those with diplomas are five (8.93%), undergraduate degree holders are 17 (30.4%) and none of the respondents holds a PhD.

Table 4.3: Participant's years of service at NEPC

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	11	19.6
6-10years	21	37.5
11-15 years	13	23.2
16-20 years	7	12.5
21-25 years	2	3.6
Over 25 years	2	3.6
Total	56	100

With regards to the number of years the respondents (Table 4.3) had rendered their service to NEPC, two (3.6%) had worked for over 25 years, two more respondents (3.6%) have worked between 21 to 25 years, seven (12.5%) have worked between 16 and 20 years, 13 (23.2%) have worked for 11 to 15 years, 21 respondents (37.5) worked for NEPC for a period between six and 10 years while 11 (19.6) worked for 0 to 5 years. The findings clearly show that 80.4% of the respondents have been with NEPC for over

5 years. These are employees who have knowledge of the organisational culture. They are experienced employees who know what to do but this can present problems as such employees can find it difficult to embrace change opting to do things the way they have always done them. The Table also entails that the respondents were knowledgeable and their individual experiences were enough to offer valuable responses that relate to the study.

4.2.1.3. Departmental Distribution of the Respondent

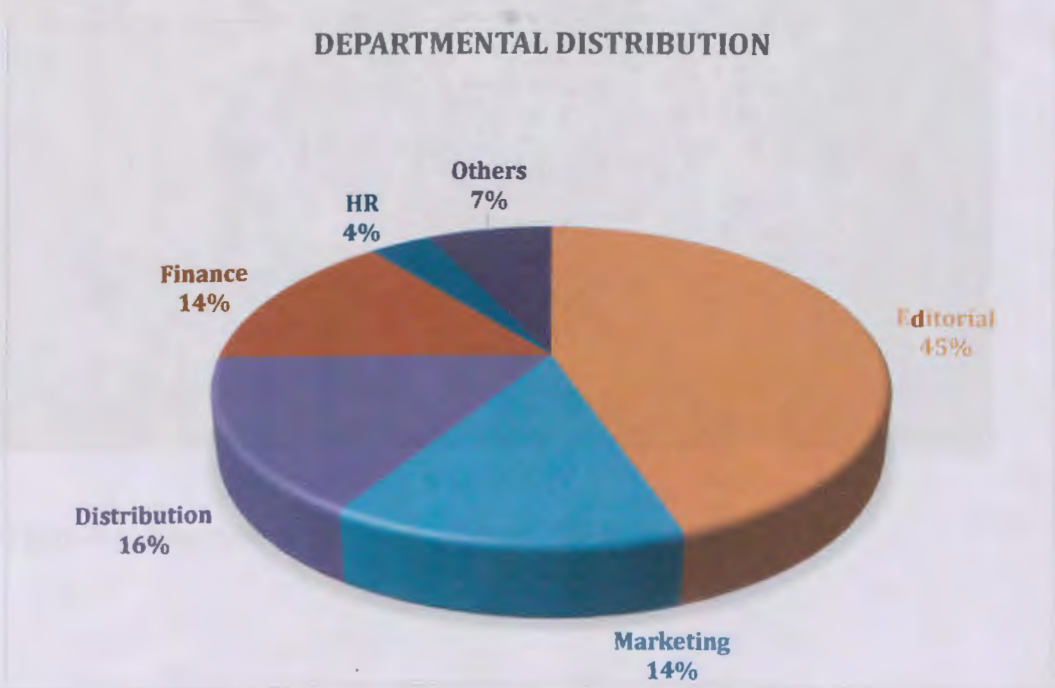


Figure 4.4. Departmental Distribution of the Respondent (Source: Research data)

All 56 employees were distributed between six departments, whereby majority 25 (45%) are from the Editorial Department. Marketing and Finance has eight respondents (14%)

each, Human Resources 2 (4%) and 4 (7%) are from other unspecified departments (Figure 4.4 above). The Pie Chart shows that the respondents came from all the Departments and this will go a long way in enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings because they will represent well balanced views across the organisation

4.2.1.4 Respondents' positions

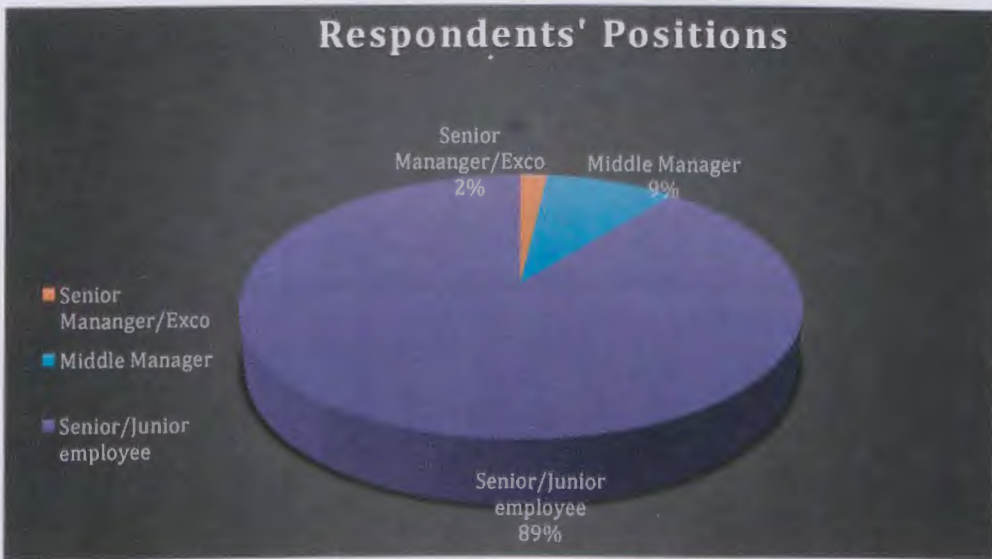


Figure 4.5. Respondents' positions. (Source: Research data)

Furthermore, in terms of their positions' occupation as reflected in (Figure 4.5), 50 respondents (89%) held Junior positions, five (9%) were in middle management positions while one respondent (2%) was in an executive position.

Based on the above sections of employees' profiles, it is clear, that these respondents were relatively fit and were professional enough to respond to questions related to their

experiences, activities and feelings while working from home. Having a group of respondents rich in experience was beneficial to the study since the respondents were well knowledgeable with the operations of NEPC, considering the fact that some have worked at NEPC for longer than 25 years. According to (Sataloff & Swetha, 2021) experienced employees are likely to give more objective information when a survey is being carried out as they are more knowledgeable and know the pros and cons of the organisation.

4.2.1.5 The knowledge and effects of the WFH Policy

According to (Chitsamatanga, Wayne, & Sandro, 2021) an organisation must have sets of policies and procedures in place and engage employees about them as they help employees to keep their actions within such sets.

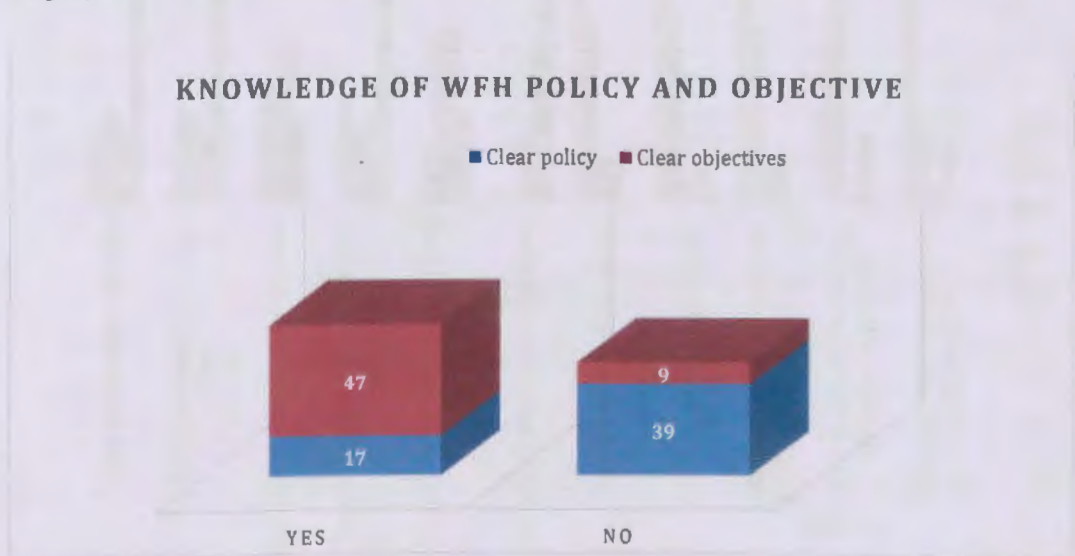


Figure 4.6 Knowledge of WFH policy and personal objective (Source: research data)

The respondents were requested to respond to whether the company's WFH policy was clear of which 30.36% said 'yes' and 69.64% replied 'no'. On the contrary 83.92% affirmed that their WFH objectives were clear and only 16.08% indicated that their personal WFH objectives were not clear. The aforesaid outcome is an indication that while employees knew what was expected of them as individuals, the company has no clear policy to guide employees when telecommuting. The above are shown in figure 4.6.

4.2.1.6 The effect of WFH policy and employee performance

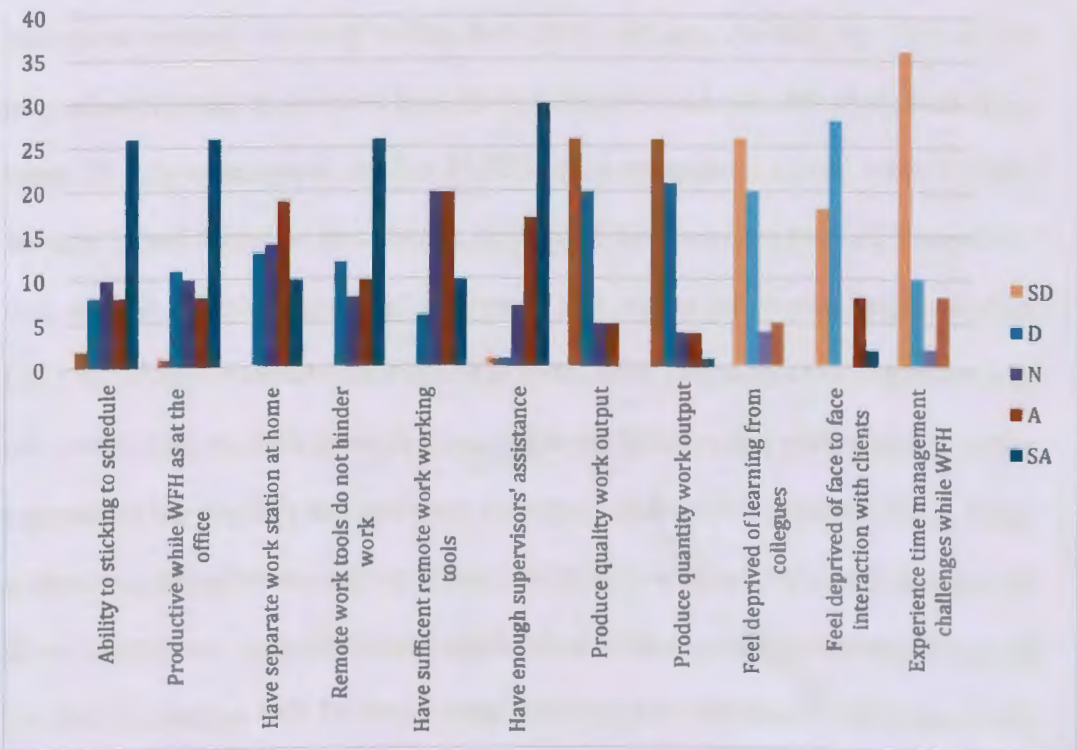


Figure 4.7 Effect of WFH practice on employee's performance

On the question whether respondents are able to stick to a work schedule while WFH, 50% strongly agreed, 14.29% agreed, 17.85% were neutral, 14.29% disagreed and 3.57% strongly disagreed. The aforesaid responses show that majority of employees at NEPC are able to stick to their work while telecommuting. 60% of the respondents further agreed that they are as productive while telecommuting as they are at the office, while 17.85% opted for a neutral box, and 22.15% disagreed. The aforesaid shows that majority of employees at NEPC are as productive while telecommuting as they are in the office setting. Furthermore, 0% of the employees strongly disagreed, 23.23% disagreed that they had separate and suitable space for work at home, 25% were neutral, 33.92% strongly agreed and 17.85% agreed. This also means that most of the employees had spaces suitable for work within their home settings. At least 10. 71% of the respondents felt that they did not have all the tools they needed to effectively work from home, 35.72% were neutral, another 35.72% of the respondents agreed, while 17.85% strongly agreed. Based on these results, majority of the employees have necessary tools they needed for telecommuting. The result also shows an overwhelming number (35.72%) of employees were neutral which means quite a big number of employees was not content with the tools given to them. This can be taken that while majority of the respondents felt that they had necessary tools they needed while telecommuting. There is however a considerable number of respondents who were not too sure if they had all the necessary tools, hence the neutral option. None of the respondents strongly disagreed that the tools such as VPN (Virtual Private Network) and other remote work access and communication tools in their possession do not hinder their work, 21.42% agreed,

14.29% were neutral, 17.85 agreed and 46.44% disagreed. These results indicate that many employees' remote work tools were hindering their work while telecommuting.

Only 1.85%, disagreed and another 1.85% strongly disagreed that they were getting enough help from their supervisors, 12.5% were neutral, 30.3%, and 53.5% respectively agreed and strongly agreed that they were getting assistance from their supervisors while telecommuting. This shows that majority of supervisors at NEPC, do render necessary assistance to their subordinates while WFH. The quality of work output is affected by working from home. On quality work output, and quantity output, respondents scored the same, whereby 46.42% strongly disagree, 37.5% disagree, 8.04% are neutral, another 8.04% agree and none strongly disagree that quality work output, and quantity output was affected by WFH. The above outcome shows that telecommuting does not hinder the quality nor the quantity of employees' work output.

These statistics are also not too different from the statement that WFH deprived respondents of the opportunity to learn from friends and workmates whereby 46.42% strongly disagree, 35.71% disagree, 10.71% are neutral, another 7.16% agree. Which can be concluded that most employees are able to learn from one another, even while telecommuting. These findings are contrary to the perspective of Beauregard, Basile and Canonico (2019), that suggests that co-workers may perceive spatial distance as psychological distance (out of sight, out of mind) and teleworkers may be perceived by others to contribute less to the shared team objectives.

Furthermore, 32.15% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 50% disagreed, 0% were neutral, 14.28% agreed and 3.57 strongly agreed that working from home makes it difficult for them to interact with clients/sources as they will always need face to face enquiries with service providers. These results indicate that majority of employees do not feel deprived of access to their clients while telecommuting. At least 64.28% strongly disagree, 17.85% disagree, 3.57 is neutral, 14.30% agree and none of the respondents strongly agreed that they find it difficult to manage time when telecommuting and that often work spills into their private time such as lunch, or vice versa. The aforesaid responses shown that majority of respondents are able to manage their time while telecommuting. ???

4.2.1.7 The Effects of WFH policy on Employee motivation

Respondents were requested here to indicate by putting a cross on a five-point scale. These experiences were divided into two categories such as: The effect of WFH policy on employee motivation and the effect of WFH practice on employee motivation

The table below shows the outcome of the survey. The keys used were: **SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.** The results are presented in percentage (%)

	SD	D	N	A	SA
--	----	---	---	---	----

a) Effect of the WFH Policy on employee motivation

a) I am aware of our company's working from home policy	20	71	5	4	0
b) I feel that the work from home policy is clear.	53	27	9	11	0

c) My working from home objectives are clear.	0	13	10	27	50
d) Our company's WFH policy supports interaction between colleagues	53	27	9	11	0
e) Our company's WFH policy compels my supervisor to give me necessary support.	53	30	5	10	2
f) I'm happy with our WFH arrangement	0	13	0	30	57
g) I take regular breaks	0	4	0	36	60
h) It is easy to "turn off work mode" at the end of the day	0	14	4	34	48

b) The effect of WFH practice on employee motivation

	SD	D	N	A	SA
a) I feel motivated working without supervision alone	2	13	2	33	50
b) WFH makes me excel in my work	2	14	13	17	54
c) WFH is boring	35	36	13	14	2
d) In order to be motivated, I need my good work to be recognised. WFH makes it difficult for my superiors to recognize my good work.	11	21	27	23	18
e) There is no love and belonging when an employee is WFH	6	21	20	23	30

f) Theory says an ordinary employee does not want to work, WFH does not inspire an employee to work hard	50	37	0	9	4
--	----	----	---	---	---

Table 4.4. The Effect of WFH Policy and practice on Employee motivation

The table above represents the findings from the study on how telecommuting as a practice affects employees' motivation. The detailed findings are presented below.

The effect of the WFH policy on employee's motivation was also tested using a Likert scale. To the statement that "I feel that the WFH policy is clear": none of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 20% strongly disagree, 71% disagreed, 5% were neutral and only 4% agreed with the statement. To the question if WFH policy was clear: 53% strongly disagreed, 27% disagreed, 9% were neutral, 11% agreed, and none of the respondents strongly agreed.

Furthermore, the study also showed that 53% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 27% disagreed, 9% were neutral, 11% agreed, and none of the respondents strongly agreed that the company's WFH policy supports interaction between colleagues. Furthermore, 53% strongly disagreed, 30% disagreed, 5% were neutral, 10% agreed, and 2% of the respondents strongly agreed that the company's WFH policy compels my supervisor to give me necessary support. Company's WFH policy compels my supervisor to give me necessary support. At least 57% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, and

13% disagreed, that they were happy with the WFH arrangement and none of the respondents were neutral or strongly disagreed. Based on the table above at least 80% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they have any knowledge of the WFH policy.

4.2.1.8 The effects of WFH practice on employee motivation

Respondents were asked to show their level of motivation, using a five-level Likert Scale. To a statement that they feel motivated working without supervision, 2% strongly disagreed, 13% disagreed, 2% is neutral, 33% agreed and 50% strongly agreed. This shows that majority of employees at NEPC feel motivated even when working without supervision on site. Moreover 2% strongly disagreed, 14% disagreed, 13% is neutral, 17% agreed and 54% strongly agreed that WFH makes them excel in their work. These responses show that majority of the respondents work better while telecommuting then when they are office-based. Furthermore, 2% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 13% is neutral, 35% disagreed and 36% strongly disagreed that WFH was boring. Based on the findings, a majority of employees responded that they enjoy working from home. In order to be motivated, 18% of the respondents chose to strongly agree, that they needed their good work to be recognised as WFH makes it difficult for their superiors to recognize their good work, 23% agreed, 27% is neutral, 21% disagreed and 11% strongly disagreed. The above outcome however shows that there is no clear outcome on employees' need to have their work recognised while telecommuting. Steel (2009), relates to the Maslow Hierarchy of need that only employees who feel they are loved and respected can telecommute and be productive. Maslow's theory correlates with the

results which indicate that 6% of respondents at NEPC strongly disagreed, 21% disagreed, 20% is neutral, 23% agreed and 30% strongly agreed with the statement that there is love and sense of belonging when an employee is WFH. Furthermore, 50% of respondents strongly disagreed, 37% disagreed, 0% is neutral, 9% agreed and 4% strongly agree with the theory that believes that ordinary employees do not want to work and that WFH does not inspire an employee to work hard. The above means that NEPC employees do not need to be in an office setting to feel inspired or to work harder. ???

4.2.1.9. Telecommuting and work-life balance

Participants were asked to respond to questions with regards to work-life balance. To a statement that telecommuting deprives respondents from enjoying their private life: 10.71% responded that that they agreed, 64.29% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed, none of the respondents were neutral and none strongly agreed. This shows only a few of the respondents felt that WFH was interfering with their private lives. Furthermore, 10.71% responded that that they disagreed, 64.29% agreed and 25% strongly agreed, and again none of the respondents were neutral and none strongly agreed to the statement: "My family does not disturb me, they understand that I am at work when I am working from home." This shows that most employees were able to work without disturbances from family members and when it comes to the issue of parenting while telecommuting, 7.14% of the respondents agreed that their roles as parents disturb them from concentrating on work while telecommuting. Another 7.14% were neutral 64.29% disagreed and 21.43% strongly disagreed. None of the respondents strongly agreed to

the aforesaid statement. These also shows that parenting had no effect on telecommuting employees' performances. Respondents were further asked to respond to the statement stating that it was easy to separate home and work roles while WFH to which 46.20% strongly agreed, 35.70% agreed, 3.70% were neutral, 10.70 disagreed and another 3.70% of responded stated that they strongly disagreed. The aforementioned results indicate that the respondents' house shores do not interfere with their employment duties. Moreover, on the statement that individual employees can connect with their direct manager well while WFH as if they were in the office, none of them strongly disagreed, 12.5% disagreed, and 21.43% were neutral 30.29 agreed and 35.78 strongly agreed. This once more shows that employees are able to access their supervisors even when telecommuting. Similarly, none of them strongly disagreed that they were happy with how they frequently connect with their line manager while telecommuting, 26.79% disagreed, 26.79% were neutral 35.71% agreed and 10.71% strongly agreed. The above results show that, while majority of employees were happy with the frequency in which they communicate with their supervisor, the number of the ones that are not happy or not sure is also quite significant.

4.2.1.9 Quality of remote interaction with colleagues

The researcher wanted to assess the quality of relationships between telecommuting employees and their colleagues as well as relationships and the effectiveness of communication with their supervisors. Responses were assessed using a five level Likert-scale. The results are presented in a form of a bar chart. Respondents were asked to react to the statement that they felt that they can easily reach out to their colleagues,

to which none strongly disagreed, 10.71% selected agree, none of them were neutral, 35.71% agreed and 53.58% strongly agreed. This shows that majority of employees do easily reach out to one another. In addition, none of the respondents strongly disagreed that they felt that their colleagues were keeping necessary contact with them, 10.71% disagreed about this statement, 3.57% were neutral, 32.14%, agreed, and 53.58% strongly agreed this means that telecommuting employees were keeping good contacts with one another. Furthermore, 39.30%, strongly disagreed, 35.70% disagreed, 12.5% were neutral, another 12.5% agreed and not strongly agreed that they sometimes feel isolated from their colleagues when WFH. On the statement that they were happy with how frequently they interact with their colleagues, 0% strongly disagreed, 10.71% disagreed, 0% were neutral, 35.71% agreed and 53.58 strongly agreed. This can only round up that there is good employee to employee communication at NEPC during telecommuting. To the statement that WFH causes stress, 53.58% strongly disagree, 26.79% disagree, 8.92% are neutral, 10.71% agree and 0% strongly disagree. This means that employees cannot associate WFH with stress. The research findings further show that 0% strongly disagree, 8.92% disagree, 10.71% were neutral, 26.79 agreed and 53.58 strongly agreed that it was easy to manage stress when WFH.

4.2.1.10. Stress management among the telecommuting employees

When it comes to assessing stress management of telecommuting employees, 53.58% strongly disagreed, 26.79% disagreed, 8.92% were neutral, 10.71% agreed and none strongly agreed that stress can easily build up when WFH. These results also show that majority of employees do not believe that stress can build up while telecommuting.

Furthermore, none of the employees strongly disagreed, 10.71% disagreed, 5.36% were neutral 30.31% agreed and 53.58% strongly agreed that they are able to create hard line between work and home while WFH. This shows that employees are able to confine themselves and not mix work with house shores at particular times. To the statement that "I'm happy with my ability to work from home," 0% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 12.5 disagreed, 0% were neutral, 30.50% agreed and 57% strongly agreed. This means that majority of employees are happy with their ability to telecommute. None of the employees strongly disagreed, 3.57% disagreed, none was neutral, 35.71% agreed and 60.72% of the respondents strongly agreed that they take regular breaks while WFH. This shows that majority of employees do take breaks regularly while telecommuting. Finally, none of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 14.29% agreed, 3.57% were neutral, 33.93% agreed and 48.21% strongly agreed that it was easy to "turn off work mode" at the end of the day. This means that it was easy for majority of employees to switch off from the work mode once the knock off time comes.

4.3 Hypothesis testing

This study revealed that WFH Policy and employee motivation are indeed dependent on one another, this also applies to telecommuting and employee motivation that are also found to be dependent variables.

Table 4.3 Hypothesis Test for the WFH Policy and employee motivation

<i>Step 1</i>	H0: WFH Policy and employee motivation are independent. H1: H0 if false
---------------	--

Step 2	Test Statistic = $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Step 3	5% Level of Significance = 0.05 Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1) = (8-1)(5-1) = 5 * 4 = 28 Reject H0 if $\chi^2 \geq 41.34$
Step 4	Chi squared calculation = 524.77 (Calculation Table attached as Annexure 1)
Step 5	We reject H0 because 524.77 > 41.34. At a significance level of 5%= 0.05 there is statistically significant evidence that H0 is false or that the WFH Policy and employee motivation are not independent (therefore, they are dependent or related), p < 0.005.

Table 4.4 Hypothesis Test for Telecommuting and employee motivation

Step 1	H0: Telecommuting and employee motivation are independent. H1: H0 if false
Step 2	Test Statistic = $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Step 3	5% Level of Significance = 0.05 Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1) = (6-1)(5-1) = 5 * 4 = 20 Reject H0 if $\chi^2 \geq 31.41$
Step 4	Chi squared calculation = 101.69 (Calculation Table attached as Annexure 1)
Step 5	We reject H0 because 101.69 > 31.41. At a significance level of 5%= 0.05 there is statistically significant evidence that H0 is false or that Telecommuting and employee motivation are not independent (therefore, they are dependent or related), p < 0.005.

4.2.2 Qualitative data results and analysis

The study was based on the following objectives: To explore challenges faced by telecommuters at NEPC, to establish if telecommuting is sustainable for productivity and business continuity at NEPC with the main objective of investigating the effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity at NEPC. The effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation was already dealt with on the previous topic. It will therefore not form part of the qualitative discussions.

In order to explore the views, involvements, opinions and inspirations of the respondents the effects of telecommuting on employee productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher carried out telephonic interviews with managers. The purpose of the two sections was predominantly suitable for exploring delicate topics, were respondents would not have properly expressed themselves if they were confined to a Likert-scale or if they were given to choose between the "Yes and No" options provided in the questionnaire. They were given an opportunity to further express their views in their own words through an interview. This allowed respondents to give further responses with additional details. An interview guide was created for interviews with managers only. The findings from the qualitative research are presented below:

4.2.2.1. Telecommuting and productivity

The qualitative details of this study, basically focused on the effects of telecommuting on employees' productivity and future possibilities or continuation of the WFH practice at NEPC.

Respondents identified a lack or shortage of resources, such as internet data, portable computers: such as laptops and tablets, transport and VPN as the tools that hinder productivity for employees while telecommuting. The issue of data was mostly raised by journalists while production staff who are also part of the editorial department expressed the need of computers with equipped specialised programs that would allow them to work from home. Similarly, sales and marketing staff expressed the need for data and airtime for calls that would enable them to easily reach out to clients. Human resources staff on the other hand pointed out the need for employees to have access to VPN while telecommuting. As for the distribution department, none of the employees felt that more was needed to be done for employees to improve productivity while telecommuting.

Employees further pointed out that productivity is also affected by the inadequate platforms for communication between employees and their supervisors or line managers. The respondents indicated that this can be addressed by holding frequent group online meetings via Zoom or Microsoft Teams in order to share ideas and common concerns with the staff members at departmental levels, as opposed to frequent

direct communication between individuals. Respondents further countered that there was a need for the company to have an open door policy and for managers to abide by such policy, in order for them to be easily accessible by their subordinates. The attitude of some of the supervisors when called by their subordinates, was also pointed out among the counterproductive issues. Employees claim that some of the supervisors' reactions when called during working hours give an impression to employees as if their 'me times' has been disturbed, while some do not pick up their phones or return the calls on time.

Apart from direct challenges from the workplace, some respondent singled out disturbances from family members, especially their children, as they are sometimes forced to also stay at home due to lockdowns that comes as a global mitigation against Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, to disturbances from children, a few respondents claimed that the comfort of WFH also comes with temptations including the urges to take a nap, indulging into alcohol or socialising with family members or visiting friends during working hours. According to the respondents, these sometimes cause them not to fully focus on a task at hand, and this affects productivity in return.

For the distribution team productivity is measured by employees' ability to deliver the newspaper at various outlets within a specific time. Some of the employees at the distribution department claim not to have been affected by WFH because their jobs already do not require them to be office bound. As for sales and marketing, productivity

is measured by the ability to reach sales target and engage a certain number of clients in a day. For editorial department, productivity is measured by the ability to produce at least three or more qualities, well researched and well written stories in a day as well as the ability to reach deadlines, while at production, productivity is measured by the ability to finish the layout of the newspaper on time and to meet the printing deadlines. As for editorial, journalists claim that they are already well equipped with most of the tools required for telecommuting, except shortage of data, while the production team said they would need necessary software to WFH.

Supervisors on the other hand responded that while the general productivity of employees has declined during WFH, it is difficult to attribute this to telecommuting, but rather to the lockdown and negative global economic trends caused by Covid-19. This was mainly the views of managers and supervisors at sales and marketing. As for the editorial department, it was pointed out that WFH has not affected journalists' performance. Journalists who were considered as high performers continued doing so while telecommuting. There is however a common concern about a slight decline on the quality of some of the employees work, as some supervisors believe that employees concentrate more on the quantity in order to reach their daily target while neglecting quality. This speaks to the point raised earlier about employees who engage in personal activities at the expense of their professional duties.

4.2.2.2 Future possibilities of WFH

While majority of respondents indicated that they are as productive while telecommuting as they are when office based, there are also some that said they were even more productive while telecommuting as the home environment give them a sense of peace and comfort. However, there were also a few respondents that claim to be more productive while office based as the office environment is quiet and has less distractions and it psychological compels them to focus on the tasks. This shows that most of the employees are more productive while working from home, but there are also a few others who cannot cope with the distractions that comes while WFH. According to the respondents, WFH gives them a sense of safety from the Covid-19 pandemic as they have control over issues such as social distancing and sanitising while telecommuting, which is not necessary the case when working from the office.

Moreover, some respondents said that they were equipped with all the necessary tools and there was no need for them to go back to the formal office settings as they were more comfortable and more productive when telecommuting. However, there are also employees that responded that while they were happy with the WFH arrangement, they were not comfortable enough as they were not well equipped with the tools especially the suitable software as well as enough data and airtime on their mobile phones. Most of respondents said that they are positive about the future of WFH as the practice has a positive impact on productivity, provided that they are well equipped with tools that will allow them to be productive. The aforesaid proposals by the respondents in this study were harmonised with Turin and Arif (2020), who maintains that in a technological era

such as the current one, working from home (WFH) is now a reality and telecommuting can assist employees and making sure business operations continue amid a crisis like the Covid-19 epidemic. With the blessings of technology, businesses should be more than equipped to handle any adversity.

There were also respondents that were happy with the WFH arrangements, but they feel that employees should alternate by WFH for two days or a week and another one at the office. This means that some employees felt that telecommuting was good but it should not be a permanent arrangement but they should rather work in shifts and alternate, even post the pandemic.

This study contributes or validates that while there are a few negative aspects associated with the practice, positivity surpasses the negativity associated WFH, especially during the times of crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Rebolledo, Vega and Belmar (2021), point out better labour performance and productivity, job satisfaction increment, labour creativity increment (creative performance), worker's safety increment, work/personal life balance, IT specific skills developing and community benefits, among the positives of WFH. The latter has also pointed out that facilitation of business operations is vital in times of pandemics which this researcher reckons that they are among the most important benefits of WFH in a day of the current global crises.

4.4. Discussion

While the world is tilting towards this new normal, there are conflicting views among scholars about whether telework works best as a moderate (one or two days a week) or a high-intensity (half the working week or more) activity, (Beauregard, Basile, & Canonico, 2019). This study has however found that employees are motivated by the WFH practice which was adopted to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. These findings are evident as production at NEPC increased during the WFH periods.

These findings are in harmony with the study carried out by Thorstensson (2020), which concluded that working from home has an influence on productivity of the employees. Thorstensson's conclusion has also been backed by an experimental study carried out by Bloom et al. (2017), who found an increase of 13% in employees' productivity of which 9% was from working extra time on their shift period and 4% for working in a quieter environment while telecommuting. The rate of job attritions also fell by 50%.

However, it was the finding of this study that the WFH policy at NEPC is not clear although employees knew what was expected of them as individuals due to their experience on the job. NEPC did well in laying down work objectives for individual workers, however there was a clear indication that the company's working from home policy was hurriedly formulated and distributed among workers including senior employees without consultation. This affected its adoption. Respondents responded that

WFH policy affected productivity. The absence of the WFH policy in an organisation can demotivate employees (April, 2021).

4.5. Summary

This chapter presented the responses to investigations and presented the results of the study. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to understand the effects of telecommuting on employee motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic at NEPC. Conclusions were connected to the research analysis in addition to the fact that they were also coordinated with the main research objective, which was to investigate the effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity at NEPC. The conceptual framework helped the researcher to understand the topic at hand while, the survey findings permitted the researcher to see this from NEPC's point of view. Finally, the analysis formed a link between the concepts and the empirical findings. After conducting this study, it can be concluded that most of the employees at NEPC are happy with the WFH arrangement. It was however discovered through data analysis that the WFH policy at NEPC is somewhat not clear which has affected employees' levels of motivation at the company.

The next chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and areas for future studies based on the results and the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER 5: CHAPTER SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an analysis of the outcomes and repercussions of this study, permissible to consider the implications for effective change. As mentioned in Chapter One, the main objective of the study was to investigate the effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity at NEPC and the specific objectives were to explore challenges faced by telecommuters at NEPC and to establish if telecommuting is sustainable for productivity and business continuity at NEPC.

5.2 Conclusions

This study scrutinises the need for more organisational effort by NEPC to consider telecommuting and this is necessitated by the effects it has on employees' motivation and productivity, during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition this study also tried to find if telecommuting should be embraced in the future.

In the first part, the researcher summarised the findings from the research literature and from the current study to establish the knowledge or understanding as well as the effects of the WFH Policy on individual employees at NEPC. The research also tried to understand the consequence of WFH on employee motivation and productivity as well as its impact on employee to employee relationship as well as on employee-supervisor

relationship and finally its effect on employees' work-life balance and stress management.

In the second part, the researcher revisits the commentaries and proposals from individual that were provided for in the questionnaire to establish the effect of telecommuting on employees productivity as well as the future possibilities of telecommuting. This last part also concludes the thesis.

5.3 Recommendations

The study came up with the following recommendations:

- The NEPC WFH policy needs to be revised in consultations with employees. This is due to the fact that employees including some of the senior managers are not aware of the existence of the policy. There is therefore a need to draft a policy that fits various departments and functions of the organisation.
- To make the WFH policy more effective, there is a need to avail the required tools such as laptops, bandwidth and communication gadgets such as mobile phones which enhance communication among employees and their managers.
- WFH leads to increased motivation, there is need to train staff about the WFH and to educate them about its advantages.
- NEPC needs to come up with mandatory departmental virtual diary meetings for all departments in order to mitigate the sense of isolation among the employees and promote a good manager-employee working relationship

- Managers need to be more accessible to their subordinates, by responding to their calls and e-mails at their earliest possible time.
- Given that if adequate gadgets are availed to employees, there will be increased production during WFH periods, this study recommends that WFH should not only be for pandemic periods but can be a normal facet of the work place where certain categories of employees can have 2 or 3 days per week of WFH.

5.4 Summary

Telecommuting became popular with the outbreak of Covid-19 in Namibia but there was no policy to govern telecommuting in state owned entities. This was also supported by a study carried out by April (2021), who concluded that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, working from home could easily be viewed as a luxury and if one would have advocated for it in developing nations such as Namibia, it was sure to be rejected. However, in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak, Namibia joined the world in embracing WFH. Given this new situation, societies, organisations and workplaces across the world sought to embrace “the new normal” (including the “future of work” and the “role of the office”) in which WFH became the norm and people now continue teleworking in pure or hybrid forms post-Covid-19 (Ipsen, van Veldhoven, Kirchner, & Hansen, 2021).

This study has indeed confirmed the above findings by the aforesaid researcher as this telecommuting was also a new norm to NEPC. This explains why the organisation has

not yet set up a working WFH policy that is well communicated and known to all employees.

This study found out that that employees of NEPC were able to keep being productive and deliver while working from home. Respondents agreed that majority of the employees have necessary tools they need for telecommuting.

While NEPC employees showed a sense of positivity towards WFH as a practice, there seemed to be shortcomings as far as the WFH policy is concerned. The absence of a clear guiding policy showed that employees were not aware of what is expected of them, and the tools that they should use or entitled to while working from home.

The study further discovered that there is a positive relationship between WFH and employee motivation. This was supported by the fact that respondents agreed that employees at NEPC were productive while telecommuting. These positive responses gave a total of 84% of respondents who believed that they have a greater sense of motivation while telecommuting. In addition, the virtual or remote support that employees were getting from their supervisors while WFH is also another motivating factor and this study shows that there is a positive relationship between telecommuting and motivation. Based on the survey respondents agreed that they were getting assistance from their supervisors while telecommuting. The survey therefore concluded that supervisors at NEPC do render assistance to their subordinates even when they are working from home and that caused employees to be motivated. The aforementioned was also supported by positive responses towards the quality and quantity of work output. The above outcome shows that telecommuting does not hinder the quality nor the quantity of employees' work output as well as employee to employee relationship,

and all these contributes staff motivation. Over and above achieving social distancing which protects workers and their families from the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, WFH was viewed by respondents as having several advantages which include the ease of parenting for mothers with children and it allows for flexibility between switching from home tasks to work duties as and when necessary. Management viewed WFH as saving on travel costs, it avoids disruptive unionism which takes place when employees are at one place and it makes it easy for the work output of individual employees to be assessed and quantified as there is limited group work and it saves time which is sometimes wasted due to gossips and arguments when employees meet at one work place.

The above findings can be used to conclude that telecommuting has a positive effect on employee motivation and productivity. It will be however more effective and work for the organisation if policy are put in place and employees are sensitised about its advantages.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Chi-Square calculation

Chi Squared Calculations

The effect of WFH and employee motivation

	S D	S D	S D	SD	SD	Tota l	SD	D	N	A	SA	Tota l
a) I feel motivated working without supervision alone	2	13	2	33	50	100	4.5 0	15.3 3	12.5 0	28.1 7	39.50	100
b) WFH makes me excel in my work	2	14	13	17	54	100	4.5 0	15.3 3	12.5 0	28.1 7	39.50	100
c)WFH is boring	2	14	13	36	35	100	4.5 0	15.3 3	12.5 0	28.1 7	39.50	100
d)In order to be motivated, I need my good work to be recognised. WFH makes it difficult for my superiors to recognize my good work.	11	21	27	23	18	100	4.5 0	15.3 3	12.5 0	28.1 7	39.50	100
e) There is no love and belonging when an	6	21	20	23	30	100	4.5 0	15.3 3	12.5 0	28.1 7	39.50	100

employee is WFH													
f) Theory says an ordinary employee does not want to work, WFH does not inspire an employee to work hard	4	9	0	37	50		4.5	15.3	12.5	28.1	39.50	100	
						100	0	3	0	7			
Total	27	92	75	16	23	600	27	92	75	169		237	

O	E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
2	4.50	6.25	1.39
2	4.50	6.25	1.39
2	4.50	6.25	1.39
11	4.50	42.25	9.39
6	4.50	2.25	0.50
4	4.50	0.25	0.06
13	15.33	5.44	0.36
14	15.33	1.78	0.12
14	15.33	1.78	0.12
21	15.33	32.11	2.09
21	15.33	32.11	2.09
9	15.33	40.11	2.62

2	12.50	110.25	8.82
13	12.50	0.25	0.02
13	12.50	0.25	0.02
27	12.50	210.25	16.82
20	12.50	56.25	4.50
0	12.50	156.25	12.50
75	75.00	-	-
33	28.17	23.36	0.83
17	28.17	124.69	4.43
36	28.17	61.36	2.18
23	28.17	26.69	0.95
23	28.17	26.69	0.95
37	28.17	78.03	2.77
50	39.50	110.25	2.79
54	39.50	210.25	5.32
35	39.50	20.25	0.51
18	39.50	462.25	11.70
30	39.50	90.25	2.28
50	39.50	110.25	2.79
		Chi squared =	101.69

Effect of the WFH Policy on employee motivation

	Observed					Total	Expected					Total
	SD	D	N	A	SA		SD	D	N	A	SA	
a) I am aware of our company's working from home policy	0	4	5	71	20	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
b) I feel that the work from home policy is clear.	53	27	9	11	0	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
c) My working from home objectives are clear.	0	13	10	27	50	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
d) Our company's WFH policy supports interaction between colleagues	53	27	9	11	0	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
e) Our company's WFH policy compels my supervisor to give me necessary support.	53	30	5	10	2	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
f) I'm happy with our WFH policy	0	13	0	30	57	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
g) I take regular breaks	0	4	0	36	60	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
h) It is easy to "turn off work mode" at the end of the day	0	14	4	34	48	100	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	100
Total	159	132	42	230	237	800	19.88	16.50	5.25	28.75	29.63	800

O	E	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2/E$
0	19.88	395.02	19.88
53	19.88	1,097.27	55.21
53	19.88	1,097.27	55.21
0	19.88	395.02	19.88
0	19.88	395.02	19.88
0	19.88	395.02	19.88
4	16.50	156.25	9.47
27	16.50	110.25	6.68
13	16.50	12.25	0.74
27	16.50	110.25	6.68
30	16.50	182.25	11.05
13	16.50	12.25	0.74
4	16.50	156.25	9.47
14	16.50	6.25	0.38
5	5.25	0.06	0.01
9	5.25	14.06	2.68
10	5.25	22.56	4.30
9	5.25	14.06	2.68
5	5.25	0.06	0.01
0	5.25	27.56	5.25
0	5.25	27.56	5.25
4	5.25	1.56	0.30
71	28.75	1,785.06	62.09
11	28.75	315.06	10.96
27	28.75	3.06	0.11
11	28.75	315.06	10.96
10	28.75	351.56	12.23
30	28.75	1.56	0.05
36	28.75	52.56	1.83

34	28.75	27.56	0.96
20	29.63	92.64	3.13
0	29.63	877.64	29.63
50	29.63	415.14	14.01
0	29.63	877.64	29.63
2	29.63	763.14	25.76
57	29.63	749.39	25.30
60	29.63	922.64	31.14
48	29.63	337.64	11.40
		Chi squared	524.77

Appendix 2: Request to carry out the study

Dear Mr. Maletsky,

I hope this email finds you well.

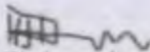
I am excited to let you know that I am finally approaching the completion of my studies towards the MBA in Management Strategy at Unam (Namibia Business School). As part of the academic fulfillments towards the aforesaid qualification, I am required to carry out an academic research. I have chosen NEPC to be the subject institution for my research.

The topic for my thesis is:

An investigation into the Effects of Telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic: a case of New Era Publication Corporation

I would therefore like to request for your permission to carry out my study at NEPC. Research activities include a survey (short questionnaires) with the employees and content analysis on employees performance records. I can assure you that this study is purely for academic purpose and all acquired information obtained from individuals will be treated with confidentiality. I will however avail my thesis to NEPC once it is approved by my University's High Degree Committee if the company would like me to do so.

I will highly appreciate your positive response.



Kind regards,

Helvy Shaaika

helvyh@gmail.com

Appendix 3: Acceptance letter from NEPC



New Era Publication Corporation

Tel: +264 61 208 0800 • Fax: +264 61 220 583 • Private Bag 13364 Windhoek, Namibia
Email: ceo@nepc.com.na • www.nepc.com.na

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

08 November 2021

Ms Hetvy Sharrika
C/O New Era Publication Corporation
Windhoek

Dear Ms Sharrika,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT NEPC

My writing has reference to the above matter.

Congratulations with the progress on your studies. Permission is herewith granted to you to conduct research at the NEPC under the topic: **An investigation into the effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity during the Covid-19 pandemic: a case of New Era Publication Corporation.**

Additionally, we would like to let you know that the Corporation's management will be interested about the outcome and recommendations of your research.

Yours Sincerely,

**Christof Maletsky
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

All official correspondence to be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 4: Questionnaire



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEPC EMPLOYEES

My name is Helvy Shaanika. I am a student studying for an MBA degree in Management Strategy with the University of Namibia. As part of the academic fulfilments towards the aforesaid qualification, I am required to carry out an academic research. The topic for my study is: *An Investigation into the Effects of Telecommuting, on Employees' Motivation and Productivity during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case of New Era Publication Corporation*. I kindly request you to respond to the questions below. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You should **not** write your name on this questionnaire. Your responses will be treated as strictly confidential and data from this research will be used for academic purposes only.

Please answer from Section A to H only if you are **not** part of management.

Please answer from Section A to I if you are a manager

Mark (X) in the appropriate box which represents your answer

Senior Manager/Exco	Middle Manager/ Supervisor	Senior/Junior Employee

SECTION B

7. KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKING FROM HOME POLICY

7.1

	yes	no
a) Are the Working From Home (WFH) policies at NEPC clear?		
b) Are your Working From Home work objectives clear?		

7.2. What communication channels work best for you? (You may choose (X) one or more options)

a) Phone calls	
b) Live chats (zoom, MS teams, WhatsApp etc.)	
c) Emails	
d) Others (please specify)	

SECTION C

Key:

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

8. THE EFFECTS OF THE WFH POLICY ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

	SD	D	N	SA	A
a) I am aware of our company's working from home policy					
b) I feel that the work from home policy is clear.					
c) My working from home objectives are clear.					
d) Our company's WFH policy supports interaction between colleagues					
e) Our company's WFH policy compels my supervisor to give me necessary support.					
f) I'm happy with our WFH arrangement					
g) I take regular breaks					
h) It is easy to "turn off work mode" at the end of the day					

SECTION D

9. EFFECTS OF TELECOMMUTING ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

9.1

	S	D	N	S	A
a) I feel motivated working without supervision alone					
b) WFH makes me excel in my work					
c) WFH is boring					
d) In order to be motivated, I need my good work to be recognised. WFH makes it difficult for my superiors to recognize my good work.					
e) There is no love and belonging when an employee is WFH					
f) Theory says an ordinary employee does not want to work, WFH does not inspire an employee to work hard					

--

SECTION F

11. QUALITY OF REMOTE INTERACTION WITH COLLEAGUES

11.1

	S D	D	N	A	S A
a) I feel that I can easily reach out to my colleagues.					
b) I feel that my colleagues keep necessary contact with me					
c) I sometimes feel isolated from my colleagues					
d) I am happy with how frequently I interact with my colleagues.					

11.2 How can your interaction with your colleagues be improved during WFH periods?

--

SECTION G

12. STRESS MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF REMOTE WELL-BEING AMONG THE TELECOMMUTING EMPLOYEES

12. 1.

	S D	D	N	A	S A
a) I feel that the work from home policy is clear.					
b) Working from home gives rise to stress					

<p>c) How do you need to feel safe from contracting Covid-19 if you were to return to work from your office?</p>		
<p>d) What is your biggest difficulty in WFH?</p>		
<p>e) How can your employer improve your work from home experience?</p>		
<p>g) What alternative do you have for the WFH arrangement during the Covid-19 pandemic?</p>		

-END-

THANK YOU

Appendix 5: Interview guide

Interviews Pad : *for managers only*

Topic: An Investigation into the Effects of Telecommuting, on Employees' Motivation and Productivity during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case of New Era Publication Corporation.

TELECOMMUTING AND CONTINUITY

a) Would you prefer telecommuting post Covid-19?

Why/why not?

b) Would you advise another organization to consider telecommuting?

Why/why not?

c) In future, what changes would you like to see on the existing practice/policy of your company?

Appendix 6: Research letter



21 September 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN



Re: MBA Management Strategy, Student – Ms. Helvy Helen Shwanika, Student Number 200253352

As part of our Masters Programme, students are expected to submit a research report after completion of their course-work. They need to explore in detail, some concepts and issues pertaining management strategies. To do that effectively, they need to conduct interviews and obtain practical examples.

Ms. Shwanika has chosen your organization to approach for information. It is against this background that I wish to kindly request you to assist Ms. Shwanika with the information she requires. Accept our assurance that the data will be used for academic purposes only. A copy of the completed document will be available at the Namibia Business School for perusal. Her research synopsis indicates that her topic touches on "An investigation into the effects of telecommuting on employees' motivation and productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic: A case study on new era publication corporation".

Your kind assistance is highly appreciated.

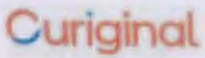
Yours sincerely

 
Greenfield Mwanetshe, Dr
Senior Research Coordinator
Namibia Business School
University of Namibia
Tel: +266 61 413 500
Fax: +266 61 413 512
Email: research@nbs.unam.na

NAMIBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
NBS
2021-09-21
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA
Inspiring Minds & Shaping the Future

100 Windhoek University Road, Windhoek 9000 • 06-0000-00000000 • 06-0000-00000000 • 06-0000-00000000 • www.unam.na
Tel: +266 61 21 0000 • Fax: +266 61 21 127 02 • E-mail: info@unam.na

Appendix 7: Similarity Report



Document Information

Analyzed document:	FINAL EXAM THESIS FOR HELVY SHAANIKA (4).docx (D126371049)
Submitted:	2022-01-28T10:58:00.0000000
Submitted by:	
Submitter email:	helvyh@gmail.com
Similarity:	2%
Analysis address:	msukigg.unsram@analysis.orkund.com

Sources included in the report

SA	The impact of reward systems on organizational performance. 171032. Mufaro X Hungwe1(2).docx		1
	Document The impact of reward systems on organizational performance. 171032. Mufaro X Hungwe1(2).docx (D120578088)		
SA	Gladys Kiptoo - Research Project - Nov 2021.docx		4
	Document Gladys Kiptoo - Research Project - Nov 2021.docx (D118599304)		