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Management of Virtual Team Dynamics and Performance During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History Published Online: March 2026</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords Virtual teams Covid-19 UAE</p> <hr/> <p>JEL Codes I15, M15 & M54</p> <hr/> <p>Corresponding Author Email: U20200579@sharjah.ac.ae</p>	<p>Large number of organizations are adapting new technology apps to initiate communication among their employees and departments locally and globally. One of the main technologies used these days is virtual teams' technology. While there is large number of companies these days are working globally and rely on using remote work process or work-from-home process, a need araised to use such virtual teams technology especially with un-known or risk situations such as Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>This discussion is undertaken for evaluating a study that will help in finding out that how organizations are struggling with their commercial practices during the covid-19 situation, particularly in UAE. The study emphasizes the importance of establishing virtual teams that helps focusing on a particular project and certain ways in which it should be managed. Different strategies and techniques that have already been applied under this context will be acknowledged and discussed in the section of the literature review whereas applicable decisions will be obtained from the methodology and its analysis will be provided in detail. The questionnaire designed has been distributed to students and working employees. The results of the survey were predicted to help understand the transfer of the face-to-face teams to virtual teams during covid-19.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Until 2019, everything was functioning at its routine pace when suddenly an outbreak was reported in China. It was a deadly virus, which started spreading across the world. It began due to the infected raw meat of different animals being sold in Wuhan's meat market. However, the novel Coronavirus or Covid-19 started spreading all across the world and within three months, the whole world was shut down to curb the spread of this contagious virus. At this point, the world's economy started to collapse. Proceeding with necessary precautions had to be observed by everyone strictly and considering it as a responsibility was important to protect everyone equally (Kawohl & Nordt, 2020). However, an era as fast and advanced as the year 2020 cannot have commercial activities closed for so long. The control of the Covid-19 was indeed very critical and resuming businesses at this point meant an invitation for the general public to gather and come into contact which will eventually increase their probability of expanding the virus (Bump et al., 2021). Hence, as a solution, it was advised for different organizations to consider establishing a virtual network through which they can resume work and take benefit of technology and e-commerce platforms. Nearly every other organization was eager to adopt this approach and the concept of WFH (Work from Home) was witnessed extensively (Alketbi & Alshurideh, 2025). Similarly, the core purpose of this report is to understand the management of virtual teams, which were deployed by different businesses, and evaluate how their dynamics and performance contributed along with any important suggestions, which can be applied for improvements for the future (Savić, 2020; Adam et al., 2023). To obtain a better understanding of the context, a range of different pieces of literature, completed and compiled by well-known researchers, will be evaluated to reach an effective decision. This research attempts to answer these questions regarding the effects of covid-19 on virtual teams and how it changed people's decisions during and after the pandemic.

2. LITRETURE REVIEW

The concept of virtual teams is quite diverse which means that in the fast-paced and modernized era, continuous monitoring and management are necessary which was assisted through monthly or weekly meetings and conferences previously, but during the Covid-19

Pandemic, everything has shifted virtually. As working in this state of a pandemic is also necessary for maintaining the economic situation of the world. Understanding how the dynamics and performance of virtual teams in different industries are being controlled and encouraged is also important (Newman & Ford, 2021). Different ways which are beneficial for various industries and organizations today are further extracted from the researches of scholars and researchers in the form of an in-depth literature review is provided below.

2.1. Virtual team member management through proper communication during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

According to the findings of Ingham & Ulrich (2016), it has been evaluated that managing employees has always been a challenge for organizations, which is why a separate department, known as the HR (Human Resource) department is created to monitor and improve the performance of individuals. Physical and in-person contact is always important to manage the performance of employees, especially in the case of a team in which a bunch of individuals is working collectively (Edgley-Pyshorn & Huisman, 2011). Additionally, the challenge gets crucial when the team is situated virtually which is due to the underlying impacts of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic.

2.2. Use of modern and advanced technology for effective virtual team management during Covid-19.

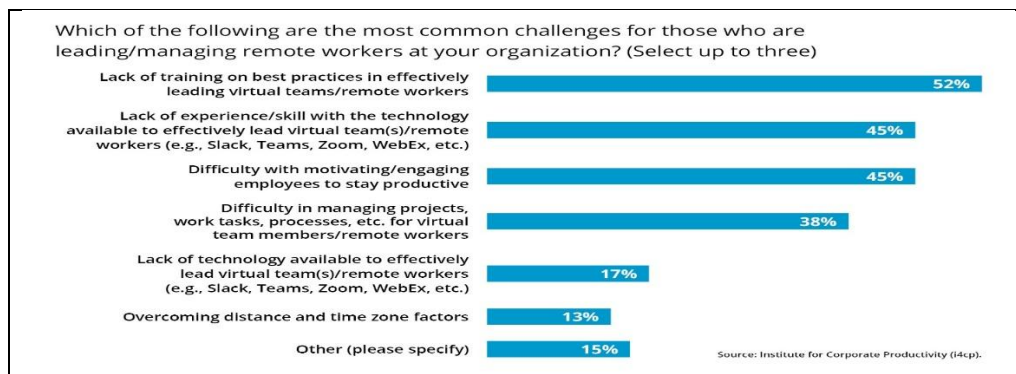
Gilson et al. (2015) has argued that in the modern era, management of teams is not a challenge anymore. It has been witnessed that the emergence of technology has increased efficiency in a range of different commercial activities. The easy availability of fast internet services such as broadband and wireless internet connectivity up to 4G and 5G has allowed for seamless interaction and communication between large distances. Similarly, it has been reported within the findings of Pandey & Pal (2020) that a majority of existing businesses were eager to offer their employees a laptop or a tablet pc along with high-speed internet connectivity so that they can remain connected and to keep the management updated regarding their performance. Evaluating from the perspective of UAE-based organizations, they have been quite succulent towards adopting modern technology. It is one of the fast-paced and well-synchronized economies having technical updates within its routine organizational operations. Hence, implementing a virtual team management strategy might not be difficult with the use of technology as the workforce in the region is well-prepared for its extensive and critical use. In education, for example, Román-Calderón et al. (2021) declared that Zoom technologies saw a spike in users from 10 million in December 2019 to more than 300 million by May 2020.

2.3. How known software application companies have assisted the managerial responsibilities for virtual teams.

Moving along with this discussion, the availability of software designers and programmers is indeed a mere benefit for various organizations and industries as a whole in these crucial pandemic times. Simultaneously, it became a window of opportunity for existing software companies, such as Skype and WhatsApp as they started making effective moves so that their services can be improved (Gil-Fernández et al., 2021). As clear communications and effective interactions are considered a basic need of the professional environment (Pattiasina et al., 2025), avoiding it during the pandemic was not an acceptable solution, and hence this aspect needed to be managed strategically. Hence, seeing some profitable opportunities, some businesses made a straightway towards the market for digital communication within which Zoom was considered a big name during the peak time of Covid-19. According to Chawla (2020), Zoom allowed video conferencing to multiple people at once. Such an option was not provided by their rivals such as WhatsApp or Skype. This initiative was taken as a significant option for the management of teams in an organization as regardless of wherever the team members were situated, Zoom allowed connecting all of them at the same time and then continuing with the plans they were willing to proceed with. Discussions through Zoom meetings become easy and convenient as everyone had an equal chance of active participation. Large number of companies adopted the Zoom approach to manage their teams and evaluate their performances (Lowenthal et al., 2020). Although an effective application was not associated with the video conferencing management, still it was much better than leaving all the operations within the hands of the team members without proper management. Arshad (2020) highlighted a fact that nearly every other organization in the UAE had relied on Zoom which started spreading across multiple industries including education as well, allowing teams and groups of students to work collectively on major projects of their semester and hence educational loss for students was covered in much smoother regards.

2.4. Motivation and encouragement for virtual team management by understanding individual responsibility.

A study conducted by Holtz et al. (2020) highlighted that several factors can take the responsibility of managing virtual teams during the Covid-19 pandemic in quite easy, effective, and efficient regards. This reflects the consideration of motivating factors that can be useful in such a crucial time. Emphasizing the use of modern technology, the user can be initiated with the help of modern and updated gadgets such as cellular phones, laptops, and tablets. These gadgets are quite expensive and attractive simultaneously. Hence, providing such gadgets to the virtual team members from the organization can be a good initiative to attract and encourage them to work as required by the management. Lajčin & Porubčanová (2021) have further supported this aspect with the example of fringe benefits given to employees under routine organizational working. This includes giving the employees company-maintained vehicles, cellular phones, and laptops. Simultaneously, providing teams that are working from home with similar benefits or with an updated gadget that they are attracted to but cannot afford, could be a good start for motivating them positively. This approach became very popular shortly after the pandemic began and several companies made huge investments for improving their communication networks and their efficiency to respond to employee needs to motivate them positively towards organizational responsibilities in crucial times. However, many other challenges of using virtual teams technologies were mentioned which usually faced those who are leading and managing remote workers. A recent poll that has been uploaded on the web to trace significant answers related to the context is provided as follows:



Source: I4CP – Available at: <https://www.i4cp.com/coronavirus/the-massive-and-rapid-shift-to-remote-work-and-virtual-leadership>. Accessed date 12 December 2025.

2.5. Prioritizing individual leadership approach during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the critical analysis of virtual team management during the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was evaluated that the responsibilities assigned to individuals need to be understood and well-acknowledged so that motivation, dedication, and commitment to work effectively and efficiently are synchronized accordingly. At this point, the findings of Kilcullen et al. (2022) made it clear that self-management and active interaction are necessary which makes one capable of assisting other teammates effectively within their prescribed roles and eventually overall efficiency for completing the project collectively is enhanced. Thus, Kilcullen et al. (2022) analyzed that assigning individual leadership roles to assist the management of virtual teams can be a good and beneficial initiative. Considering a normal organization with non-virtual teams, it is the intention and desire of every member to achieve the role of being a leader. However, making an in-experienced person the leader is not what the management would want to go ahead with and it will eventually harm the operations of the entity. Yet, the Covid-19 Pandemic is a situation where Wang et al. (2021) highlighted the need to move practical teams to virtual teams where there is a high risk of managerial activities. The only way to achieve the desired level of success in tough times is through assigning leadership roles to every individual team member, assigning them with decision-making power, and giving them the authority to be able to raise their concern and express recommendations related to a particular context. Through this approach, an individual team member will develop the perception of being entrusted with critical responsibilities, and hence their adherence towards working for optimal results will be enhanced accordingly.

2.6. Highlighting the aspect of coming into communication with the superiors of an entity directly.

Continuing with the discussion provided in the above paragraph, the context is further supported by the findings of Saltman (2020) in which it is included another important element of virtual team member's motivation, especially contributing in huge organizations, where interaction with the management and superior personalities of the entity is rare. However, as the Covid-19 Pandemic has caused some serious losses to the economic as well as industrial operations and activities, it is the only concern of an organization to focus on re-establishment of the economy and recovering from the financial crisis present consistently for a long time. At this moment, conducting Zoom Video Conference to communicate and interact with the virtual teams to guide and assist them on the projects assigned is a beneficial move in terms of connecting them with the superiors of the entity. The higher authorities, such as the CEO and the directors of a company might not be familiar with virtual team members, but their interaction will be of key importance. The attraction and motivation for team members will develop a sense of association with the organization that people are communicating with them and when all the goals and objectives are discussed in the meetings. It helps to overcome the operational shortcomings caused due to Covid-19, which is acknowledged and worked upon with strategic implementation rather carefully and with complete commitment and dedication (Newman & Ford, 2021). It is also important to understand that out of all the main aspects highlighted by key people in the Zoom meetings, utilizing the modern and advanced technical communication networks completely, the management should focus on adopting and reflecting a transactional leadership approach. Certain traits of leadership are being applied as an initiative to encourage the rest of the virtual team members to lead the virtual team and assist one another to meet the management's and the external environment's expectations and provide successful results in the end.

2.7. Extending trust on the virtual team members.

Perhaps, the most important evaluation from the findings of Zeuge et al. (2020), which remains persistent with this context, is the need for trust. Trust is the riskiest element for managing an organization, especially when its operations are widespread and its current market image is quite sensitive. However, in the Covid-19 Pandemic, Zeuge et al. (2020) has argued that there is no other option available for the management of a company except trusting its existing employees to establish a virtual team and work remotely. Additionally, to ensure that extending their trust becomes beneficial for the organization's future, it is important to support it with multiple attractions, such as fringe benefits, bonuses, and performance-related pay increments.

2.8. Focussing on general team management strategies above all to have beneficial results during Covid-19.

Other than the multiple factors of efficient virtual team management during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the overall approach through which a team is designed initially and trained by an organization is significant before any of the following factors can be applied practically. A

team would not be able to fulfil the regarded responsibilities and its performance will not meet the required levels regardless of all the relevant motivators applied and perks given. Hence, Gallego et al. (2021) found it advisable for different organizations to plan their team working and management strategies in an efficient way and look for ways in which modern team working tactics can be acknowledged by virtual teams, making them responsive to a critical situation and having the best delivered from their end. This will eventually minimize a significant proportion of the risk being invested when extending trust and reliance on virtual teams and satisfying results will be witnessed to overcome the issues caused during the initial Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period.

2.9. Reflect and learn virtual team management strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic from the industry.

Apart from interpreting and applying multiple virtual team management strategies, Hølge-Hazelton et al. (2021) encouraged infant organizations to focus on reflective learning. The giants in the industries are capable of testing multiple strategies simultaneously and then selecting one, which has been providing optimal results. However, this experimental work cannot be associated with the new organizations especially during Covid-19 when a majority of them are already facing sustainability issues. Hence, Hølge-Hazelton et al. (2021) suggested that it is beneficial to assess different strategies being applied by similar organizations in the industry and contrast them together to select one that is applicable within their virtual team operations and can meet their budget flexibility as well. UAE is a well-established economy where investment issues are witnessed rarely and making experiments to understand which strategy can apply to an organization might not be a big deal yet it is always beneficial to remain within the specified budget limits to remain prepared for even crucial times ahead.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part emphasized gathering relevant and reliable data for further scrutiny to provide effective results for the vivid users of this topic. The collection of the required data was done through a key research methodology in which data collection and data analysis approaches are highlighted and their purpose of being selected is elaborated as well. Complete details regarding the data collection process and information synthesis were included within the research methodology so that it clarifies any doubts that lead towards biased results within the potential users and they are acknowledged of the fact that the information they will be relying on is first-hand and authentic (Kumar, 2018). In addition, the study utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative research strategies to provide the desired answers to the research questions at hand. To collect the needed data from primary sources of information, a quantitative analytical technique was applied, using the questionnaire approach. Also, the questionnaire use contributed to the research aims by providing information related to the study's issue through a variety of tactics, which will be discussed in the next section. the questionnaire was chosen because it would help obtaining the information needed to offer the most accurate facts in the least period. Furthermore, using the survey method because it is cost-effective, particularly free online questionnaires. Furthermore, surveys are a practical technique of gathering data since they target specific groups of people, provide speedy responses, and most importantly, maintain user anonymity. Any data collecting technique, on the other hand, has constraints. One of the questionnaire's flaws is that responders cannot always be completely correct in their responses. Inconsistencies in how different persons perceive the questions might also be a concern. To add more, this study's results are based on a ten-question poll. The survey's focus is on investigating and discussing a set of issues related to virtual teams' management during covid-19. The questions in the survey were based on current impacts discovered through literature research to see if the same effect applies to UAE-based customers. The survey was carried out using Google Forms, and the link to it was sent via email and WhatsApp. Likert scale and multiple-choice questions were used to ask basic information inquiries. To protect the respondents' privacy, no secret or sensitive information was recorded. The participants were asked to respond to a Likert scale question, with 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating no opinion, 4 indicating agreement, and 5 indicating strong agreement.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Moving along with the discussion, it is important to analyze the results gained through the research that has been focussed on in the survey. The data analysis provided will assist the final decision to be taken for the benefit of the economy of the UAE and it will be regarded based on the similarity the answers have from different respondents (Jin et al., 2015). It must be acknowledged that the total number of results is small, which is much less, and relying on this number can be risky. More studies are needed and additional aspects also are needed to have a full picture about using virtual teams technologies. Also, one of the constraint to this research is the availability of time and having a positive aspect which can still encourage to rely on these figures of results while virtual working in the form of teams is the only solution available, regardless of the field or industry when facing such crises. In this section of the study, the data will be analyzed from the distributed questionnaire, and then the findings will be discussed in-depth using statistical analysis. Consumers who are living in the United Arab Emirates are the study's major data source. 70 responses were received and found potential to be used for analysis.

4.1. Demographic information.

As shown in figure 1, data reveal that males made up 7.1% of the respondents, while females made up 92.9 %.

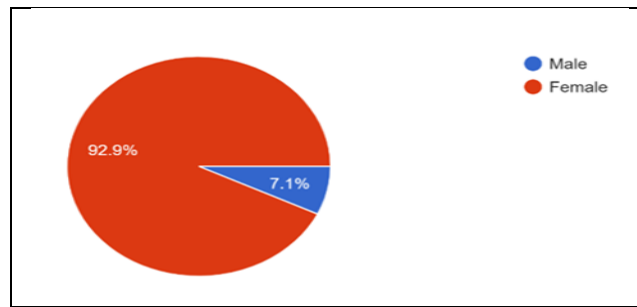


Figure 1. Sample gender.

The respondents were asked about their age groups in the second question, as seen in figure 2, the results show that 57.1% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30, which is the largest age group in this study, while 27.1% were between the ages of 31 and 40, which is the second-largest age group, and 8.6% were between the ages of 41 and 50. The remaining 7.1% of respondents were aged less than 20.

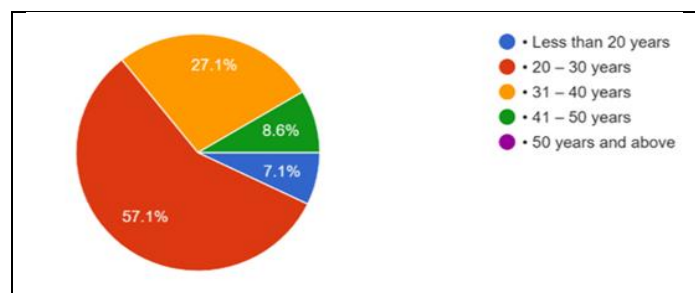


Figure 2. Sample age ranges.

4.2. Virtual teams use during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire was designed to ask about the effect of Covid 19 on virtual teams use during the pandemic. The questions were designed based on reviewing large number of previous studies to check if the outcomes of these studies were consistent with the findings of this study.

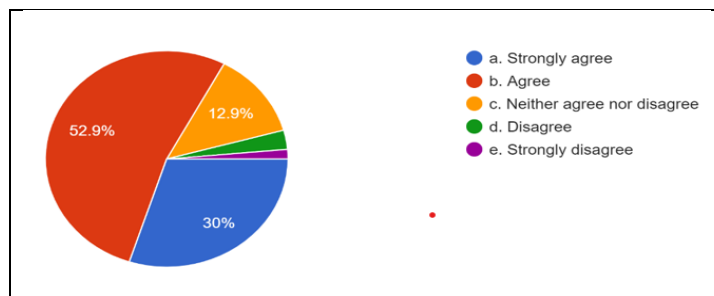


Figure 3. Virtual teams effect on communication with other people.

As seen in figure 3, 52.9% of respondents agreed, 30% of respondents strongly agreed, 12.9% of respondents were indifferent, 2 respondents disagreed, and the remaining 1 severely disagreed, according to the results. As an outcome, the majority of respondents felt that virtual teams affected their communication during covid-19. In next part, respondents were asked if virtual teams increased their communication during covid-19. Also, as seen in figure 4, the findings showed that 45.7% of respondents agreed, 21.4% of them strongly agreed, 18.6% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, 6 respondents disagreed, and just 4 of them strongly disagreed. As found, the majority of responses indicated that virtual teams increased their communication during covid-19.

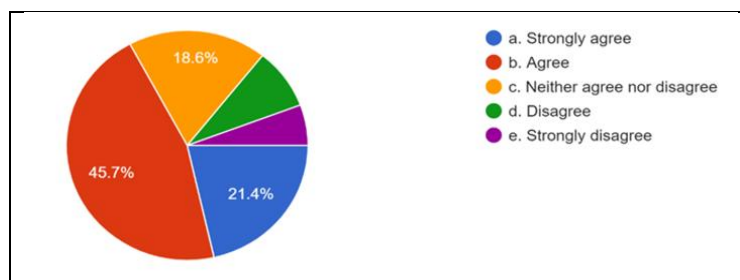


Figure 4. Virtual teams use to communication with other people increase.

4.3. Virtual teams effect on respondents’ study, work, and entertainment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Respondents were asked if using virtual teams affected their study, work, and entertainment during Covid-19 pandemic. As shown in figure 5, the findings showed that 54.3% of people agree, while 20% of people strongly agreed, 20% of people are neutral, 3 respondents disagreed, and just 1 respondent severely disagreed. Results showed that virtual teams had an impact on the majority of responders’ study, work, and entertainment.

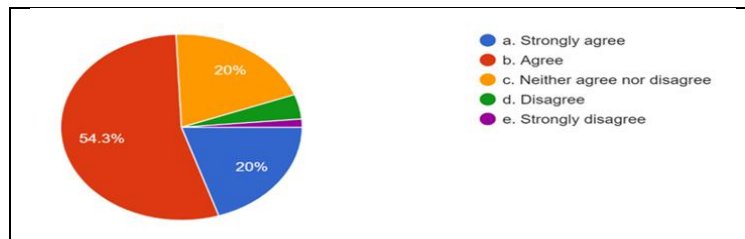


Figure 5. Virtual teams use effect on study, work and entertainment.

Additionally, as shown in figure 6, respondents were asked if they became more socialized by using virtual teams during Covid0-19. The findings showed that the majority of respondents agreed that they had become more interacting with others using virtual teams and the minority disagreed.

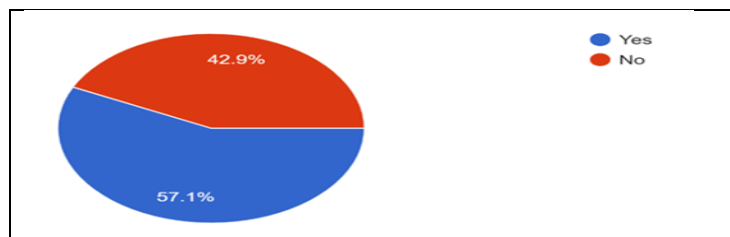


Figure 6. Feeling more socialized using Virtual teams.

Respondents were asked also if using virtual teams affected their decisions for education, work, and entertainment during Covid 19 Pandemic?. As seen in figure 7, The finding's showed that 22.9% of respondents highly agree, 41.1% of respondents agree, 27% of respondents are neutral, 4 sample units disagree, and 2 people strongly disagree. As denoted in the literature review mentioned previously and as evidenced by the findings, the covid 19 pandemic affected people’s decisions related to education, jobs, and entertainment.

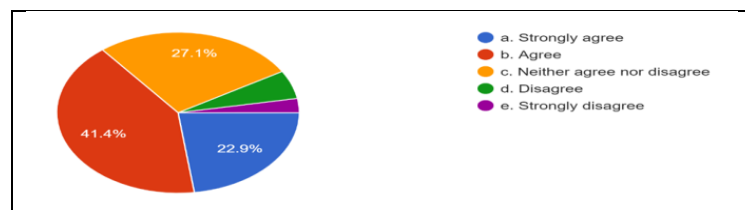


Figure 7. Virtuall teams effect on decision for education, work and entertainment.

4.4. Teams effect on respondents’ communication during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The responders were asked if using virtual teams affected the way they communicate with others. As seen in figure 8, 58.6% of study respondents agreed, 22.9% of respondents strongly agreed, while 10% of respondents were neutral, 5 respondents disagreed, and just 1 respondent strongly disagreed. Accordingly, as seen in figure 8, results showed, that the majority of respondents had changed the way they interact with others during covid-19.

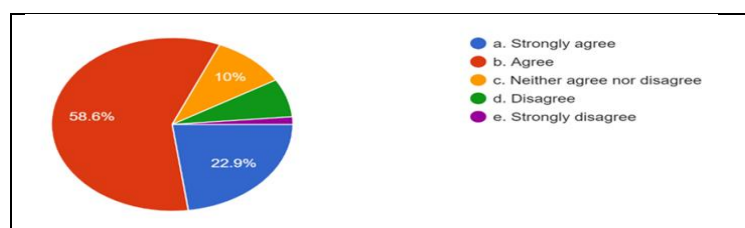


Figure 8. Virtual teams’ effects on the way of communication with others.

Additionally, the respondents were asked if they preferred to communicate with others virtually during Covid-19 Pandemic. As seen in figure 9, results revealed that 52.9% of respondents agreed, 22.9% of respondents strongly agreed, 12.9% neither, 15 neutral, 7.1% strongly

disagreed, and just 3% disagreed, implying that the covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the majority of people's preference of contacting others using virtual teams' approach.

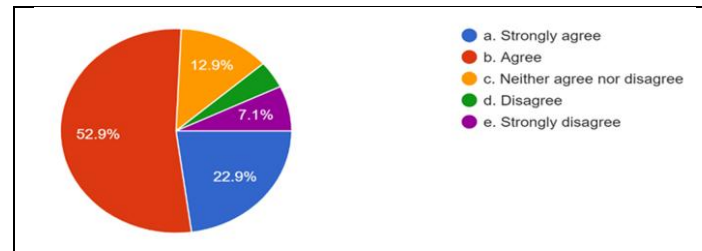


Figure 9. The preference of communication with others virtually.

When the respondents also asked if the study sample would prefer all meetings to be virtually rather than face-to-face because of the covid-19 pandemic, the findings, as seen in figure 10, revealed that 34.3% of respondents agreed, 18.6% disagreed, 12.9% strongly agreed, and 10% strongly disagreed. Accordingly, most respondents, as revealed by some of previous studies' results, had chosen to meet other people online rather than meet them physically. However, 24.3% of responders were neither agree nor disagree with their meeting virtually.

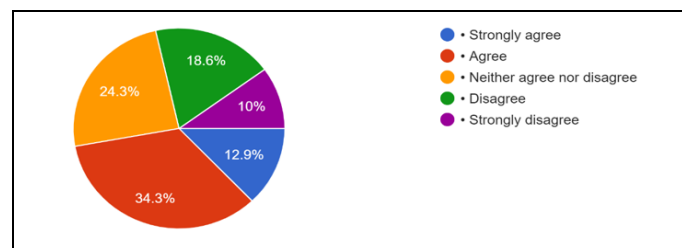


Figure 10. The preference of meetings virtually or Face-to-Face.

5. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

It has been witnessed that the Covid-19 Pandemic has been very harsh on the world's economy and the way of doing business. At this point, having an opportunity to resume business in any form, including using hypothetical and virtual working in teams, can be considered as a sign of relief. This study added some significant benefits within this aspect of team management as it has control over some of the modern technical tools that can make team working and management easier and convenient. Thus, organizations should continue utilizing their digital tools effectively to manage virtual teams during high-risk situations such as the Covid-19 crises. Perhaps, this study is very significant and provided some ideas about how teamwork and team management can use virtual communication as a tool of enhancing organisations' performances especially when the global economy and commercial practices are suffering due to the presence of high-risk situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic. As other studies, this study has not exempt of limitations, the initial limitation has been mentioned earlier due to the unavailability of having enough time for scholars who conducted this work, the research cannot be conducted extensively, and hence reliance is only extended to the limited results available, which can be a significant risk. Moreover, the study has been conducted online which means that the results are collected digitally. This can have multiple drawbacks including the inability of a questionnaire to reach the designated participants personally to get more information and data about the topic at hand.

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