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Adaptation of Work from Home or Anywhere in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar

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Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, every country announced the lockdown, travel restrictions, social distancing, curfew and stop gathering the people to prevent the spreading virus. The national government of Myanmar announced the lockdown and curfew policy in the month start of April 2020. Because of that policy, all of the business industry has to change its operation method. This study aims to know about the impact and challenges of work from home or anywhere and this method can be adapted in the hospitality industry or not. This research conducted a qualitative method and data were collected by using purposive sampling, in-depth interviews with nine managers, and one employee from both of the destination Yangon and Mandalay hotels. The thematic method was used to analyze the data by coding the key information from the interview transcripts. This study finds that the people who work in work from home or anywhere they got the opportunity to learn new things and get extra leisure time not only that they also face the problem of cannot work well-like as the office and unbalancing work and live performance. The most challenging part of this working way is technology. So, the people who work in the hospitality industry are not easy to do work from home or anywhere like other organizations and still need to serve the customer with the human touch, warming and welcoming.

Keywords: Covid-19 Epidemic, Employee, Hospitality and Tourism Industry, Work from Home or Anywhere

Introduction

Because of the unexpected coronavirus epidemic, every business sector is struggling to rotate but mostly hard-hit to the tourism sector. According to the guidelines of WHO and UNWTO, all of the countries closed their borders, restricted the areas, prohibited to travel and cancel or postpone all of the events, social distancing to prevent the spreading virus. Therefore, the business which relevant to the hospitality and tourism industry loses the income and have to rest their operation, temporarily adjust the employee and

numerous employees become jobless, TravelDailyNews(2020). Regarding the (WTTC, 2020) results, due to this epidemic crisis, a 100.8 million job at risk and up to US\$ 2.7 trillion of GDP loss in the economy and the global unemployment rate is up to a 2.9% increase directly from the travel and tourism industry in this year. Some of the developing countries are now starting to grow and develop the hospitality and tourism sector but because of this epidemic, all of the plan and business have to suspend and postpone until the situation recover.

In the month start of April 2020, all of the regional government start to lock down some of the places, ban



to travel other regions, prohibited to gathering people, and both the employee from private and public sectors business come out with the new solution of work from home strategy due to the social distancing in Myanmar. All of the hospitality and tourism businesses have to suspend their operation and some of the hotel businesses only run for the long stay customer and few of them are changes their workplace to the quarantine facility center and few of them are temporarily closed. The UMTA envisage half of the employees in the hospitality and tourism industry can be jobless and some of the can-do remote work, laid-off, and so on. And also, they think the hospitality and tourism industry does not become the normality until 2023, THIIHA (2020).

The hospitality industry has to face several types of consequences during the epidemic needless to say every hotelier should emphasize the different types of problems with suitable solutions. Due to this epidemic crisis hotels such as Inya Lake Hotel, Pan Pacific and Park Royal had faced a critical situation. Their workplace industry suddenly changes to a quarantine center because of the staff member who got infected with the COVID-19 therefore all of the employees and guests have to stay 14 days at the hotel. Because of that issue, all of the hotel improves their health and safety procedure, limit the customer to come, strict the rules, and substitute the shift among the employee. But few of the hotels like Rose Wood Yangon, The Strand Hotel Yangon, IBIS Styles Yangon Stadium, and others are close to their business and all of the staff members have to do work from home, Myanmar Mix (2020).

In this epidemic period, technology improvement is one of the factors that help the organization to operate or touch with the customer and prevent the spreading virus and employees and consumer health and safety. Most of the events and museums are turn into the live station and all of the university and school turn into the online class. Telework, remote work arrangements, and various homework were already becoming more common before the pandemic, reflecting a range of motivations: including lower labor and infrastructure costs for employers, and more convenience and flexibility for the employee. Restricted the travel to

other places, curfew, social distancing such kinds of regulations announces to reduce the infected rates but it's mainly affected the income of the hospitality and tourism industry and employment condition. So, the relevant organization has to find out the solution to how the business can operate during the epidemic time not to reduce the employee rate.

In this pandemic period, most of the business organization allow to the employee to do work from anywhere and find out the good productivity come out but some of the business industry like hospitality industry didn't allow to do work from anywhere because of some private issues. But some of the departments like marketing, finance, and customer service can do work from anywhere but other departments cannot perform this process but kinds of work from anywhere process substitute the shift within the department members and doing the virtual meeting online. C-trip one of the OTA in china do the work from anywhere ways doing this epidemic period but the resulting outcome is more efficient than the work form office. So, working from anywhere can adapt to hospitality and tourism or not.

Research Objectives:

- RO1. To identify the positive impacts of the work from anywhere to the employee in the hospitality and tourism industry in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar
- RO2. To identify the negative impacts of the work from anywhere to the employee in the hospitality and tourism industry in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar
- RO3. To investigate the challenges to do work from anywhere in the hospitality and tourism industry in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar
- RO4. To investigate the work from anywhere can adapt in the future hospitality and tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar

Work from Home or Anywhere

Working from home or anywhere in this period is not only to keep the business running by remote operation, engaging with the customer, and maintaining to alive the economy but also protects the employee,



employer, and customer life from Covid-19 infection. Apart from this, working from anywhere can increase productivity and efficiency, save time and cost, increase customer satisfaction which obviously attracts more income to our business and greatly save the environment by minimizing pollution, carbon emission and maintain our ecological mindfulness as well. Due to the unexpected coronavirus epidemic, people daily life route is changes and all of the business workplaces has to change the remote work or telework or work from anywhere because of the social distancing and not allow to gather the people.

Telecommuting is one of the main components of working from anywhere that helps in the phase organizational revolution and workload instability as well as assists subcontracting non-organization particular jobs, Illegems (2001). The telecommuting can be adopted and improvised if there ought to be implementations on the flexibility preparations with related telework. Furthermore, in the workplace telecommuting enable employees' period and organization adaptably, Pe´rez (2002). Considering work-life balance, even though there will be less stress however it has been known that some of the employees have to endure overlapping between work and home daily lives so decreasing the invigorating outcomes at home, Pe´rez (2004). In the hospitality industry, the people working in this organization find difficulties to adapt work from anywhere concept.

Technology

Some of the developed countries like Japan substitute with AI technology instead of using people. Also, in the service industry, they substitute with AI technology and robot to serve the customer. In this epidemic situation technology becoming one of the biggest sectors and to support people can spend their time safely. The organization should provide relevant software and data like VPN, IP address and cloud computing for the employee can access from everywhere to do their duties and also set up the cybersecurity tool to prevent threats like hackers, Brin (2019).

Conferring to the (Timsal, 2016) how the use of newer technologies has allowed for flexibility surrounding space or time of work, although these newer technologies may hurt psychological detachment for employees working from home. The communication levels of employees are moderately higher when employees are working in an office environment as they can collaborate more effectively at a higher positive level.

Work-life

There have several welfares that working from anywhere has for the employees, this includes flexibility in working hours, work-life balance, and maybe suggest the performance level higher. That work-life balance is virtual to becoming a successful organization and will allow the higher levels of competitiveness to run through the business, nevertheless, there is no indication as to whether remote working admits the employees to have a progressive work-life balance, Grant (2013).

Grant (2013) investigates the positive aspects of remote working can be summarized as increased productivity, the ability to work flexibly and from different locations without the time restrictions of office-based hours, and in some cases reduced stress levels and greater well-being. Remote working and more flexible technology may have helped to improve job effectiveness, flexibility and to some extent well-being, however, the more negative issues also need to be explored in greater detail. Job effectiveness, well-being, and work-life balance are key factors when exploring the impact of remote technology on individuals, supervisors, and organizations. The outcomes displayed the differentiating factors between e-workers included access to technology, the ability to flexibly work, and individual abilities. Due to the over-working and lack of time for recovery is making disadvantages for the well-being. Trust and management style are found as a vital effect on e-worker efficiency.

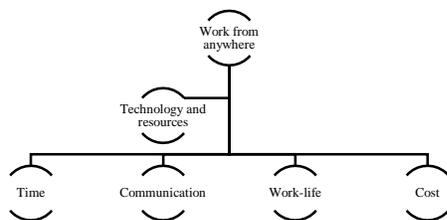
Sa´nchez (2005) to understand the influence of flexibility on the performance of a firm shall contribute to the management of the organization is



unclear and unsettled environments. The performance of the company which has a certain relationship with the use of teleworking, flextime, reorganization likewise teleworking companies have more flexible times, more working employees, and create sustainable competitive advantage. Morganson (2009) to observe the differences in work-life balance (WLB) support, job satisfaction, and inclusion as a function of work location. This study illustrates how work arrangements impact on the individual and organizational outcomes and comparing the two different workplaces. Results showed that the main office and home-based employee had similar levels of WLB support and job satisfaction. Main office workers are reported higher levels of WLB support than the satellite and client-based workers. Additionally, main office workers reported the highest levels of workplace inclusion. Sa´nchez (2007) to clarify about the workplace flexibility and innovation as the capacity to address changes in the association of the worker in the work environment. Concerning hierarchical co-activity, we characterize it as the joint exertion between firms in the graceful chain to play out the accompanying activities: product improvement, training, development of quality and control, technology transfer, and so on.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1. Conceptual model of work from anywhere



The model above describes the kinds of features which influence the work. The most fundamental things for work from anywhere is technology and resources like laptop, wifi and relevant software. The organization should provide the essential software for the employee easily can access the work station and also should have supportive team to aid when the employee set up the

system in their belongings and manage careful not to be overlap workload.

The employee can avoid coming late to the work and traffic jam problem. They can adjust their time perfectly to be ontime. But they can face some issues about work-life. Most of the employee are facing the problem of unbalance work-life problem so if they do the work from anywhere, it can be good for their life or bad for their life.

Communication is vital thing in working industry and one the factors to be the better workplace and good team work. If the employee didn't get the clear communication or misunderstanding, it can make demolish the teamwork and create the worse working environment. So, the organization or relevant manager should contact with every employee to prevent from the misunderstanding problems and try not to miss the communication with the member to inhibit the loneliness. The employee can reduce overhead expense like fuel cost, transportation cost and other expenses.

Methodology

The researcher target the manager like General manager, HR manager, operation or duty manager and employee who work in the hotel industry in Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar about their opinion on impact and challenges of working from anywhere and that new way of working is suitable or can be extend in the future of the hotel industry or not. By using purposive sampling, the sample plan to collect the data of 9 managers and 1 employee from hotels. Due to the covid-19 situation the researcher didn't get easy to do interview. The researchers follow a qualitative research approach in this study and doing the in-depth interview with manager and employee can know their opinion. Only 16 open-ended semi-structure question constructed for the face to face interview with applicants and doing the interview between 24th June 2020 to 8th July 2020. Proper appointment date and time were fixed with hotel managers and employees, lasting for 30-45 minutes with open-ended questions were asked. All the interviews were analyzed by going through recordings and written Hand notes. The



thematic analysis method used by coding the key information from the interview transcript of the hotel manager and employee, using manual coding and then put each of the codes under the relevant themes or objectives of the research article.

Result and Discussions

The positive impacts of the work from anywhere to the employee

Figure 2. Positive Impacts of New Working Way

Positive impact of work from anywhere	Health and safety
	New Experience
	Save Cost and Time
	Opportunity to learn new things
	Prevent from losing business opportunity
	Can find extra job to increase income
	Ontime
	Get more Leisure Time
	Good for Employee Prospective

Because of the COVID-19 epidemic crisis, the relevant authority organization announced the guidelines regarding the world health organization related to social distancing and not allowed to gather a group of people so every organization has to change its procedures and all of the employees have to do work from their home. Therefore, this work from anywhere or home gave a new working way and gave experiences for both organization and employee. That supports the employee's health and safety during this epidemic and can reduce the anxiety level of family and themselves relevant to the epidemic. And also, it can be a chance to learn new things relevant to the working industry and knowledge. And get the opportunity to find the extra income job. When attending the meeting no need to worried about a traffic jam or late, they can attend the meeting on time without delay. For the people who can give enough time to the family this working way can be a chance to spend with them and built a good relationship with them.

The negative impacts of the work from anywhere to the employee

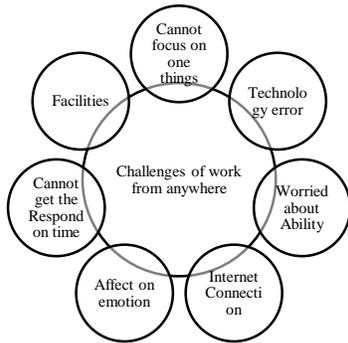
Figure 3. Negative Impacts of New Working Way

Communication lack	Cannot bring the data outside	Stressful
Misunderstanding about project	Workoverload	Problematic when connecting with Government office
Mix with Working time and Leisure time	Cannot Operate from Home	Don't know how to do

In this new working way not only have positive also have negative impacts. The data in the hospitality and tourism industry is replace vital and confidential regarding the rules and regulations and everyone cannot access only authorized persons can bring but not everything. Sometimes people who work from home can be mix with working time and leisure time and feel uncomfortable. And also, most of the government offices in Myanmar didn't use email and online things so it's hard to connect with them. Some of the operation functions cannot perform from home so have to come to the office at least one time a week. And also, some people are not familiar with the technology and rarely check the social media or online thus at that time have to call them until they pick up and have to explain everything again so can delay work and misunderstanding each other's or work.

The challenges of doing work from anywhere in the HTM industry

Figure 4. Challenges of New Working Ways



These are some challenges when doing work from home as for the people who stay with family or friends, they cannot focus well on work. Sometimes when they need some information relevant to work or they cannot get the response on time like doing in the office and have to wait therefore that can cause the delay in work. All of the employees are used to perform with team and colleagues and when they suddenly change, they are working away from home, they start to feel loneliness, depression, and worried relevant to their ability. The common problems for work from anywhere are technology error, internet connection, and didn't have enough facilities.

Future adaptation of the work from anywhere in HTM industry in the post-COVID-19

Figure 5. Adapt Work from Anywhere

Can Adapt work from anywhere
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule and Regulations • AI Technology and Virtual Reality (VR) Functions • Need Human or Personal Touch • Upgrade Secure System • Give the training releevant with app • Need Skillful IT worker • Teamwork and Communication • Responsibility • Not possible to give service from home

The hospitality industry is having to serve the customer warmly and welcoming needs human touch so cannot give the service from online and solve every complaint. And Myanmar is one of the developing countries and still needs to improve in every sector. In the technology industry need too many things to develop compare with neighbor country Thailand. If the hospitality wants to adapt this working way, they need to more things to do like give the training to all

of the employee relevant with specific app and technology, need skillful IT worker, have good teamwork and good communication, and have to declare new rules and regulations and the employees' responsibility can be higher than normal.

Conclusion and Implications

During this epidemic work from home or anywhere is one of the effective ways to operate or survive. All of the hospitality sectors have to stop or moderate operating their business and all of the employees have to do remotely and reducing the working hours during this crisis. These new working ways gave them liberty to spend their time with family members and friends. Also, the ones who want to learn new things or do other interesting things can study online or in class and can waste their time doing what they want. Another thing is they don't need to spend on other extra costs like fuels, meals or others. But most of the people didn't like doing work from home or anywhere. They know this is the best way to do during this epidemic but they face too many problems when doing this working way. Main problem for them is cannot take out information data from the organization because of the rule and regulation of the hotel and most of the department cannot do work from home except authorizing the person or managerial level even though they still need to come to the workplace at least once a week. The main issue for working from home or anywhere is technology. In Myanmar, technology is not high-tech like other Asia countries and still needs to develop and some of the people are not familiar with using technology and when So, that make cannot move on the new working ways.

The hospitality industry needs to give human touch and empathy to the customer but these days all of the industry is changing with replacing technology in human place. Therefore, the hospitality sector is also developing like other industries and apply with smart technology but that doesn't mean end to the human touch. Hence, for the operation department like front desk, housekeeping, guest relationship, and food and beverage sector they still need manpower to serve the customer. They cannot solve the customer



complaints from home online because they need to recognize and empathy with both organization and the customer side to solve that problem. But for the back office like the finance and sales and marketing department- they don't need to meet with customers directly so they can do work from home. So, this new working way is more suitable for the back office of the hotel. But nobody knows exactly about the future and they can predict that's why no one cannot say this working way can be adapted in the future.

Recommendations

These are some recommendation who want to do work from anywhere and who want to apply these new working ways in their organization:

In work from anywhere, approach technology is situated as one of the main things to perform well this new working way and should have advanced technology like laptops and relevant software systems. That one can support the people who work at home or anywhere to complete the job without interference.

In this work, people need high speed internet connection to do the work easily and efficiently. Sometimes the job is not finished as planned due to the system breakdown or sever problems so that makes delay doing work and wasting time.

The people who work from home should separate the work and personal life so they should draw the daily schedule and operate according to that schedule not to be mixed up. If not, it can create trouble to go forward. The people who have a family or pet should separate the responsibility equally and help each other.

Find the place which can concentrate well on work and comfort not choosing which can only stay comfortable. That comfortable place doesn't mean you can focus on the work there has a lot of places that stay comfortable but cannot focus on other things.

The organization should provide the relevant rules and regulations, software, and training program for all of the employees which relevant to the new technology software system to perform well work from anywhere or home method.

Some of the organizations provide online training programs during this epidemic so this one can be one of the opportunities for the employee to improve their

skill and knowledge and for the organization when they operate again no need to worried about employee ability and prevent losing the skillful worker.

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