



ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENT IN SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study collated research findings about alternative work arrangements employed by different sectors around the world. The study revealed the advantages and benefits that employees could enjoy while they were working from home. Also, the study revealed the other side or the disadvantages and the problems encountered by employees based on their experiences in working from home. This study also revealed that there were best practice and success stories in adapting the new working set-up during the pandemic. Finally, there were issues, concerns, and challenges that were identified in implementing alternative work arrangement.

Keywords: *advantages, alternative work arrangement, best practices, disadvantages, issues*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a game-changing disturbance in industries and in education. It brought unprecedented changes in the educational landscape both locally and internationally. The presence of digital technology gave way for learning beyond the four corners of the classroom. Schwab (2016) emphasized that the transformation in education affected how people communicate, how teachers teach, how learners learn, how education experts adapt, and how classroom evolved into a whole new perspective.

The 4th Industrial Revolution is characterized by the integration of digital tools in delivering education. This revolution prompted education institutions to adapt and morph its

processes and systems in order to cope with the changing instructional delivery format. The notable changes include the creation of open university system for higher education, open high school for secondary education, online education, distance learning, transnational programs, borderless programs, other forms of learning beyond the traditional face-to-face interaction (Times Higher Education, 2019). In these forms of teaching and learning, teachers' functions and works are entirely different with that of teachers in the classroom.

The occurrence of global pandemic accelerated the changes in the education sector. Because of this unprecedented factor, it brought greater, urgent, and decisive efforts of government officials around the world to act immediately in order for students to continue learning despite the pandemic (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The Philippines is not excused when the global pandemic hit. The Department of Education (DepEd) bravely introduced different forms of distance learning such as the modular learning modality, TV- and Radio-based instruction, online learning, and blended learning i.e. the combination of two or more learning modalities to ensure learning continues.

Unfortunately, months after the initial implementation of distance learning modalities, the DepED was haunted by several reports of suicide cases among students and learners citing the apparent negative effects of a new learning modality which most teachers and students were not familiar with (Cervantes, 2020).

The Philippine government has doubts about how education should continue amid the pandemic. However, the DepEd has affirmed the greater advantages of continuity of learning. Included in the basic education learning continuity plan of DepEd was how teachers would work outside their normal teaching routines and responsibilities. Hence, alternative work arrangement.

Alternative work arrangement in the Philippines refers to work arrangement by the Civil Service Commission that government agencies such as DepEd may adopt during the time of pandemic. These arrangements may be in the form of work-from-home, skeleton workforce, four-day workweek, staggered working hours, or other appropriate flexible schedule of the agency subject to prevailing community quarantine and the nature of work or job performed by the employee (DepEd Order 11, 2020)

With the prevailing factors from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the exigency of teachers' service during the pandemic, and the considerate attention to teachers' and learners' mental health, this study aimed at identifying the advantages, best practices and success stories, and issues, concerns, and challenges in implementing the alternative work arrangements in the Philippines.

With this end-view in mind, this study is conceptualized to bring into light relevant findings that the DepEd could take into considerations in the formulation, enhancement, or modification of policies to better serve and address the need of its clientele.

II. RESULTS

Alternative Work Arrangement

Alternative work arrangement (AWA) has become prevalent in all sectors. In this study, alternative work arrangement among teachers is described in terms of its advantages, disadvantages, best practices, and success stories, and issues, concerns, and challenges.

Advantages and Benefits. Teachers believed that while they were on alternative work arrangement, they could still be 'productive' (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2020). Teachers also agreed that alternative work arrangement was contributory factor to the growing balance of family and work life (Tacadao, 2020). Just like in other countries where alternative

work arrangement was practiced, Mohamed (2018) enumerated the advantages of AWA which included increased employees' satisfaction, decreased absenteeism, and increased productivity and efficiency in work. Other advantages included job security when working from home (Alipour, et al, 2021), reduced job loss (Casele & Posel, 2021), reduction in working hours (Schall, et al, 2020). Working from home also lessened the possibility of sedentary lifestyle as most of the employees time was devoted for online meetings and work-related activities (McDowell, 2020) and it gave employees balance between work and family (Syazwani, et al, 2020). In addition, work from home set-up gave employees more freedom in doing their work (Nur Afifah, et al, 2020) and allowed employees to have longer duration of sleep (Hallman, et al, 2020).

Disadvantages and Problems Encountered. Adopting alternative work arrangement was believed to have additional personal cost for employees. For teachers, the crucial tools and equipment such as computer, laptop, or gadgets and internet connectivity needed in performing their tasks were not provided by the employer but rather they personally provided for themselves (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2020). Not only in the Philippines but also other countries have also experienced the downfall of implementing alternative work arrangement. Mohammed (2018) listed the disadvantages of AWA such as arguments on monitoring employees' performance at a distance, employees' feeling of isolation, poor communication, occur of misunderstanding, and increased employees' illness and fatigue. In Malaysia, workers admitted that the alternative work arrangement is a set-up uncommon and unusual to be done (Alifuddin & Ibrahim, 2021). Other disadvantages of working from home included lack of trust of employee's efficiency (Jackowska & Luring, 2021), reduced common work culture such as ad-hoc conversation (Waizenegger, et al, 2020), social isolation (Prihadi, 2020), and negative impact on employment relations due to lack of face to face meetings (Osman, et al, 2020).

Best Practices and Success Stories. To ensure that the employees successfully accomplish their tasks, there are things needed such as open communication, organizational culture, exceptional trust and support mechanism, and teacher collaboration (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2020). Duru and Shimawua (2017) found that mapping out program for provisions of good work environment even when working from home can increase productivity and promote safety and health of workers.

Issues, Concerns, and Challenges. One concern of the majority of government employees while on alternative work arrangement during the pandemic was about better internet connectivity to effectively accomplish their jobs (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2020). Tacadao (2020) also mentioned the issues to be addressed such as support tools, communication, and health and safety while implementing off-site work arrangements. Meanwhile, working from home revealed issues on gender equality that women have increased demands of household work (Yaish, et al, 2021); women had hard time doing domestic work (Bhattacharjee, 2020); women carried more burdens and responsibilities (Meyer, 2021); and women shared greater domestic responsibilities (Yerkes, 2021). Moreover, working from home raised concerns on the well-being of employees such that working from home gave less time for active physical lifestyle (Fukushima, 2021), made them feel more distressed and exhausted (Pluut & Wonders, 2020), and caused great deal of work conflict and work fatigue (Palumbo, 2020). Also, work from home made employees concerned of social isolation, job insecurity, financial dilemma, and family problem (Malik, et al, 2020). In addition, issues concerning well-being were identified such as parenting stress (Limbers, 2020), technostress (Molino, 2020), emotional exhaustion (Bhumika, 2020), emotional vulnerabilities (Lee, 2021), risk of too much screen exposure (Majumdar, et al, 2020), depression (Sheikh, 2020), and anxiety (Akyildiz & Durna, 2020).

III. SYNTHESIS

Understanding the current set-up of working due to the changes brought by the global pandemic brings greater knowledge by looking into the alternative work arrangement and its advantages and benefits, disadvantages and problems encountered, best practices and success stories, and issues, concerns, and challenges. With the great deal of studies examined, this study hopes that teachers should take advantage of the benefits of alternative work arrangement, work out the loopholes and downfall of this kind of work format, adapt best practices and strategies to successfully carry responsibilities, and take into considerations the issues and concerns that may challenge the attainment of goals and objectives as well as the productivity of an individual.

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