

Effective Management in the Remote Work Environment

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Abstract. The pandemic has forced companies, educational institutions, and workers worldwide to switch to remote work. Nevertheless, thanks to modern technologies, even those spheres that cannot exist online can quickly transfer their work to remote mode. Accordingly, such a not new phenomenon as the hybrid mode of work became increasingly widespread. Post-quarantine hybrid remote work models are relevant in studying the future of management organisations and implementing managing functions. Today, the research on the topic and the legislative field shows the imperfection of normative legal acts regarding interpreting the remote form of activity. This creates a basis for contradictions, determining the relevance of researching this topic. The study aims to determine the level of management efficiency and the problems of its providing in remote work mode. The efficiency level of the primary management functions of planning, organisation, motivation and control in remote work was defined by surveying employees of educational institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises. The methodology for assessing management effectiveness in remote work is proposed, and the main problems of ensuring such efficiency in the context of state and commercial companies are identified.

Keywords: remote work, hybrid remote work, management, efficiency, work environment.

1. Introduction

The modern world is transforming under the influence of global changes. These changes include reducing carbon emissions to stop the adverse effects of climate change, innovative breakthroughs, coping with epidemics, the struggle for natural and economic resources, etc. Accordingly, the content of people's work, organisation, planning, control over implementation, and motivation for work results in the new conditions will change. The management process in organisations acquires specific characteristics. Today, such concepts as “office work”, “remote work”, and “hybrid work” are used to describe a mode of work that combines traditional methods and criteria of management activities with the latest ones that are becoming increasingly important in management.

It is crucial to cite modern management as an activity built on management science's historical achievements. Over a 100-year evolutionary and sometimes revolutionary (the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era) path, management science has formed fundamental and applied knowledge based on such management basics as management principles, management functions and approaches, relationships and human behaviour, and computer and technical support for management decisions. Management is a type of activity that focuses on people and considers their objects and subjects of management activity. The management technologies' means and tools changed depending on the environment inside and outside the organisation. Therefore, nowadays, rising conditions in the organisation's environment have a corresponding impact on the choice of management technologies, focusing on those tools that provide the organisation with tremendous success and efficiency. Organisations' operating conditions are derived from global development trends and modern challenges. Consequently, modern management should consider them and focus on those management criteria that ensure resilience, adaptation, change, and achieve practical remote work.

All these factors and indicators determine the relevance of the research topic and enable the prospect of further related research. Enterprises, IT companies, and educational institutions are trying to implement elements of information and communication technologies (ICT) at qualitatively new levels following the needs of their employees. These needs are defined by the barriers and challenges in organising remote work modes emerging in response to the different crisis phenomena. Studying this topic now and in the future will allow closing the gaps in the literature and revive the scientific discussion regarding the practical and theoretical importance of the subject.

2. Literature Review

Due to the 2019–2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the issues surrounding understanding efficient management in a remote workforce context have become increasingly important. Due to quarantine restrictions, most institutions, organisations, and corporate structures not involved in physically manufacturing goods were compelled to transition to remote work mode. Although the shift to remote work during the coronavirus pandemic was abrupt, a study of the experience of managing remote work processes can help develop post-pandemic remote work to save time and personnel costs and boost the productivity of remote workers. The meaning of remote work in the scientific literature is defined as a type of employment in which the employer and employee are located far apart and communicate by email, fax, or Internet to transfer and receive technical duties, outcomes, labour, and payments (Rudenok et al., 2020). Remote work may be paired with other kinds of labour or be a permanent mode of employment (for instance, when an employee works some days in the office, performing part of the tasks, and some days, some tasks are fulfilled at home).

A special mention should be given to the studies of Delfino and van der Kolk (2021), Johnson and Suskewicz (2020), and Tursunbayeva et al. (2022). They are committed to enhancing the function of personnel management in circumstances where employees work remotely, particularly in the context of addressing issues with personnel management during the workday, which entails the creation of mechanisms for daily supervision of the effectiveness and timeliness of work tasks, compliance with

the work schedule, as well as the control of employees' emotional states. The scientific article (Songsangyos & Iamamporn, 2019) focuses on the problem of work-family conflict when working remotely. The authors emphasise that employers and personnel managers should work to provide comfortable working conditions for employees, including not only implementing flexible work schedules and providing opportunities to receive additional days off or hours for solving family matters but also providing the necessary equipment or access to the Internet. Galanti et al. (2021) conducted a detailed study of remote working and human resource management issues in such environments. Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the characteristics of remote work organisations during the coronavirus pandemic have been analysed. Attention is focused on the need to solve the problem of combining time and equipment with other family members engaged in remote work or online learning.

The same point of view is expressed in research papers (Bersin, 2016; Radulovic et al., 2022), where attention is given to the issues with remote work in a distracting environment. As a result, on the one hand, it calls for an efficient approach from managers to the organisation, and on the other hand, it requires a high level of self-discipline and self-management from the employees. Some primary disadvantages of remote work are the lack of personal supervision, restricted information access, social isolation, and distraction from work at home (Ingusci et al., 2022).

The research (Ozimek, 2020; Rudnicka et al., 2020) broadens the perspective on the difficulties of managing remote work under coronavirus conditions. The harmful impacts of flexible employment, which frequently result in overtime work, are the centre of attention. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of remote meeting etiquette and the need to increase time management efficiency.

The academic paper by Lenka (2021) has significantly contributed to studying management issues in the context of personnel working remotely. It supports one of the options for an efficient model of hybrid work, which entails the partial transfer of employees to a remote work mode to save time and resources for employees and their employers. This work can be effective in educational institutions, businesses, and IT companies.

It is essential to consider the research conducted by the company MacKinsi (Lund et al., 2020), which demonstrates that the best opportunities for remote employment are focused in various sectors. In the finance and insurance industries, three-quarters of the time is spent on tasks that may be completed remotely without sacrificing efficiency. The management, business services and information technology sector have a significant potential for remote work because employees spend more than half of their time on activities that could be effectively performed remotely. As indicated by different fields, including trade, education, and IT, multiple uses of remote work are possible. Studies on the features of remote work in Ukraine offer similar data where there are many openings for remote work in education, IT, and trade (Titarenko, 2020).

Researchers from Harvard University (Larson et al., 2020) highlight the following recommendations for improving remote work conditions to solve problems of organising remote work: establishment of daily structural inspections; application of several options of various communication technologies; organisation of engagement rules; offers of encouragement and emotional support. Communication and work organisation are essential in the case of remote work mode. Coordination of work styles is required, and short-term objectives should be periodically reviewed and modified as needed. It is crucial to find ways to include employees in work that they can accomplish to advance team goals if some of them cannot perform their usual duties. Building a culture of trust within the team is vital, as is changing the emphasis from roles and positions to performance. According to CIPD (n.d.), critical requirements for working remotely include providing employees with the necessary tools and information; coaching them on how to use online tools or conduct remote work; setting up daily virtual communications; holding regular one-on-one and team meetings; sharing knowledge, and motivating them to do so; regular contact; information exchange and employee communication encouragement;

attentive listening and topic clarification; relationship- and wellbeing-building.

In contrast to traditional methods of managing employees' work in the office, managing employees' schedules remotely requires more effective managerial strategies. This entails aid in setting up a remote workplace to provide chances for the use of computer equipment, the development of remote communication etiquette, the creation of systems to check adherence to the work schedule and the completion of tasks, etc. Nevertheless, despite numerous specialised publications on organising remote work in the professional, scientific literature, little focus is placed on examining the effectiveness of management, which somewhat undermines the validity of recommendations for enhancing personnel management under these conditions.

The research aims to evaluate management effectiveness and the challenges associated with ensuring it while employees work remotely. To achieve the aim of the research, the solution to the following tasks is provided:

- To identify the features of management in remote work.
- To develop a methodology for determining the level of management efficiency in remote work.
- To compare the level of management efficiency in remote work of higher education institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises of Ukraine.

3. Research Methods

The study of the efficiency of personnel management in the conditions of remote work was carried out using a questionnaire of employees of private and public educational institutions, IT companies and commercial enterprises, which according to various expert studies (Lund et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2020) are among the five areas of activity where more than 60% of employees have been transferred to remote work mode in the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic. Participation in the research was voluntary, anonymous and free of charge. The study involved 100 employees from 100 companies of each target group from different regions of Ukraine: employees of educational institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises. The research was conducted in May-July 2022 among respondents from Ukraine using a remote questionnaire exploiting the capabilities of the Google Forms service. The fact that most educational institutions in Ukraine typically have a state form of ownership makes it possible to draw conclusions about management efficiency in public companies and compare its level with private companies. This is related to the choice of employees of educational institutions as a target group for the study of management efficiency in remote work.

The questionnaire consists of nine questions (numbered x_1 , x_2 , x_3 , x_4 , x_5 , x_6 , x_7 , x_8 , x_9). They are formulated to assess the effectiveness of traditional management functions: planning, organisation, motivation and control.

The following question was proposed to determine the efficiency of implementing such a management function as “planning” of remote work:

x_1 – “Has your organisation developed a detailed remote work plan, which includes a daily schedule, a schedule of communications with the administration and clients, a list of work tasks, etc.?” This question has two options for response: “yes” and “no”. The answer “yes” means the effective performance of the planning function, and the answer “no” means the ineffective fulfilment of this function, forasmuch as the availability of a work plan is a necessary element for the effective organisation of remote work.

Three questions were put forth to ascertain the effectiveness of the “organisation” function of remote work, specifically:

x_2 – “Did your organisation help you create a workplace for remote work (provision of a personal computer and a headset; provision of office supplies; provision of access to the Internet)?” This question has three possible responses: “yes”, “no”, and “partially”. It is meant to represent how much the organisation and its administration are involved in setting up the remote workplace for its personnel.

The emphasis on the “partial” response is intended to achieve a higher level of reliability in assessing the efficiency of the “organisation” function because management, for example, can only provide and pay for an employee's access to the Internet with high bandwidth, which will reflect his partial participation in the organisation of the employee's workplace. Full participation and the answer “yes” involve providing the employee with computer equipment, which will relieve him of the need to share a computer with other family members and focus on the timely completion of work tasks.

x_3 – “Has your organisation drawn up a regulatory document (separate provision or another document) on organising the remote work?” This question has two possible answers: “yes” or “no”. It is intended to reflect management's effectiveness in organising employee online communication, making it impossible to make unnecessary calls and waste time on “empty” conversations in corporate chats.

x_4 – “Has your organisation developed a digital corporate platform for conducting online staff meetings, meetings, communications and displaying work tasks, their schedule and control dates?” The proposed question has three possible answers: “yes”, “no”, and “partially”. The answer “partially” is used because managers can only create a general corporate chat and hold online meetings in this chat. Nevertheless, it is much more effective to create a corporate panel in the form of a “work board”, where each employee will be able to see the work schedule, tasks, and the results of their implementation and will also be able to discuss each task in a separate chat, join the meetings of their structural unit, etc.

As for the questions that are aimed at determining the efficiency of the “motivation” function, two of them are offered in the questionnaire, which requires only “yes” and “no” answers:

x_5 – “Has your organisation introduced the additional monetary reward for overtime work in the process of remote work?” In our opinion, the monetary reward for overtime work should be mandatory in all organisations, regardless of the activity and ownership, as it reflects the management's respect towards its employees and concern for their motivation.

x_6 – “Has your organisation introduced an additional day off or other compensation to restore the moral and psycho-emotional state of the employee?” This issue is relevant because remote work increases the employee's psycho-emotional load. After all, it requires a combination of work and family affairs and eliminates the feeling of changing the situation at home/work, which creates an additional load on the mental conditions and often leads to stress.

Three questions are proposed in the questionnaire to determine the efficiency of the implementation of such a management function as “control”, with two possible answers “, yes” and “no”. The first question is intended to determine the presence of a mechanism for monitoring the employee's working hours. It is critical for determining the facts of overtime work as well as the facts of deterioration of the employee's working day planning:

x_7 – “Has your organisation developed a remote work time monitoring mechanism to carry out supervision over adherence to the eight-hour working day and forty-hour working week (or other time norms by the employment contract)?” The second question is aimed at determining the availability of control mechanisms for compliance with the work plan, which increases the level of efficiency in the process of organising the remote work because supervision over the work schedule reduces the number of unnecessary breaks, increases the level of information hygiene, decreases the number of unnecessary calls and conversations in corporate chats:

x_8 – “Has your organisation developed a mechanism for monitoring adherence to the work plan, the execution of work tasks and orders in remote work?” The third question is also essential, as it aims to identify mechanisms for controlling employees' psycho-emotional states, which can significantly deteriorate and reduce the level of motivation and labour efficiency in conditions of remote work and work in a distracting environment:

x_9 – “Has your organisation developed a mechanism for monitoring the employee's moral,

psychological and emotional state during remote work?” The answer “yes” was assigned 1 point, the answer “no” – zero points, and the answer “partially” – 0.5 points to systematise the answers of the respondents and determine the level of effectiveness of management functions in remote work.

The following (1) was used to determine the efficiency level of management functions for each question specified in the questionnaire:

$$x_n = \frac{(\alpha_n \times 100\%) + (\beta_n \times 100\%) + (\gamma_n \times 100\%)}{\sigma} \quad (1)$$

where,

x_n – the level of efficiency in the implementation of management functions according to the n -th question in the questionnaire;

α_n – respondents’ answers “yes” to the n -th question;

β_n – respondents’ answers “no” to the n -th question;

γ_n – respondents’ answers “partially” to the n -th question;

σ – the number of respondents who participated in the questionnaire.

The numerical values are expressed as a percentage.

The overall efficiency level in the implementation of management functions is calculated using (2) as follows:

$$Y_{efficiency} = Y_{planning} + Y_{organisation} + Y_{motivation} + Y_{control}; \quad (2)$$

$$Y_{planning} = 25\% \times x_1; \quad (3)$$

$$Y_{organisation} = 25\% \times \left(\frac{x_2 + x_3 + x_4}{3} \right); \quad (4)$$

$$Y_{motivation} = 25\% \times \left(\frac{x_5 + x_6}{2} \right); \quad (5)$$

$$Y_{control} = 25\% \times \left(\frac{x_7 + x_8 + x_9}{3} \right). \quad (6)$$

The highest efficiency level of remote work personnel management is 100%. Since there are four management functions: planning, organisation, motivation and control, respectively, the highest level of efficiency of each function is 25%. To determine the efficiency level in implementing each of the management functions, the average efficiency value was found for each of the questions asked in the questionnaire, and 25% of the obtained value was calculated.

4. Results

The study of management efficiency in remote personnel work was conducted in Ukraine using survey methods for employees of educational institutions, IT and trading companies. The research focuses on assessing each management function's effectiveness separately to obtain detailed results that would identify the main drawbacks of remote work organisations (Table 1).

Table 1: Questionnaire results of personnel in educational institutions, IT companies and trading enterprises to determine the effectiveness of personnel management in a remote work environment

The efficiency level of management functions according to question n of the questionnaire	Educational institutions	IT companies	Trading enterprises	Educational institutions	IT companies	Trading enterprises	Educational institutions	IT companies	Trading enterprises	Educational institutions	IT companies	Trading enterprises
	The number of answers									Result, %		
	“Yes” = α = 1 point			“No” = β = 0 points			“Partially” = γ = 0.5 points					
Planning												
x_1	24	86	82	76	14	18	-	-	-	24.0	86.0	82.0
Organisation												
x_2	8	47	28	74	14	33	18	39	39	17.0	66.5	47.5
x_3	38	41	45	62	59	55	-	-	-	19.0	41.0	45.0
x_4	69	80	80	2	0	2	29	20	18	83.5	90.0	89.0
Motivation												
x_5	7	75	83	93	25	17	-	-	-	7.0	75.0	83.0
x_6	35	63	41	65	37	59	-	-	-	35.0	63.0	41.0
Control												
x_7	30	74	76	70	26	24	-	-	-	30.0	74.0	76.0
x_8	99	98	97	1	2	3	-	-	-	99.0	98.0	97.0
x_9	18	67	32	82	33	68	-	-	-	18.0	67.0	32.0

The efficiency level of implementation of all management functions in educational institutions is lower than in IT companies and trade enterprises in terms of remote work.

A lower level of capital investments and wages in education than in IT and trade may be one of the reasons for the low level of personnel management in remote workplace organisations (Figure 1).

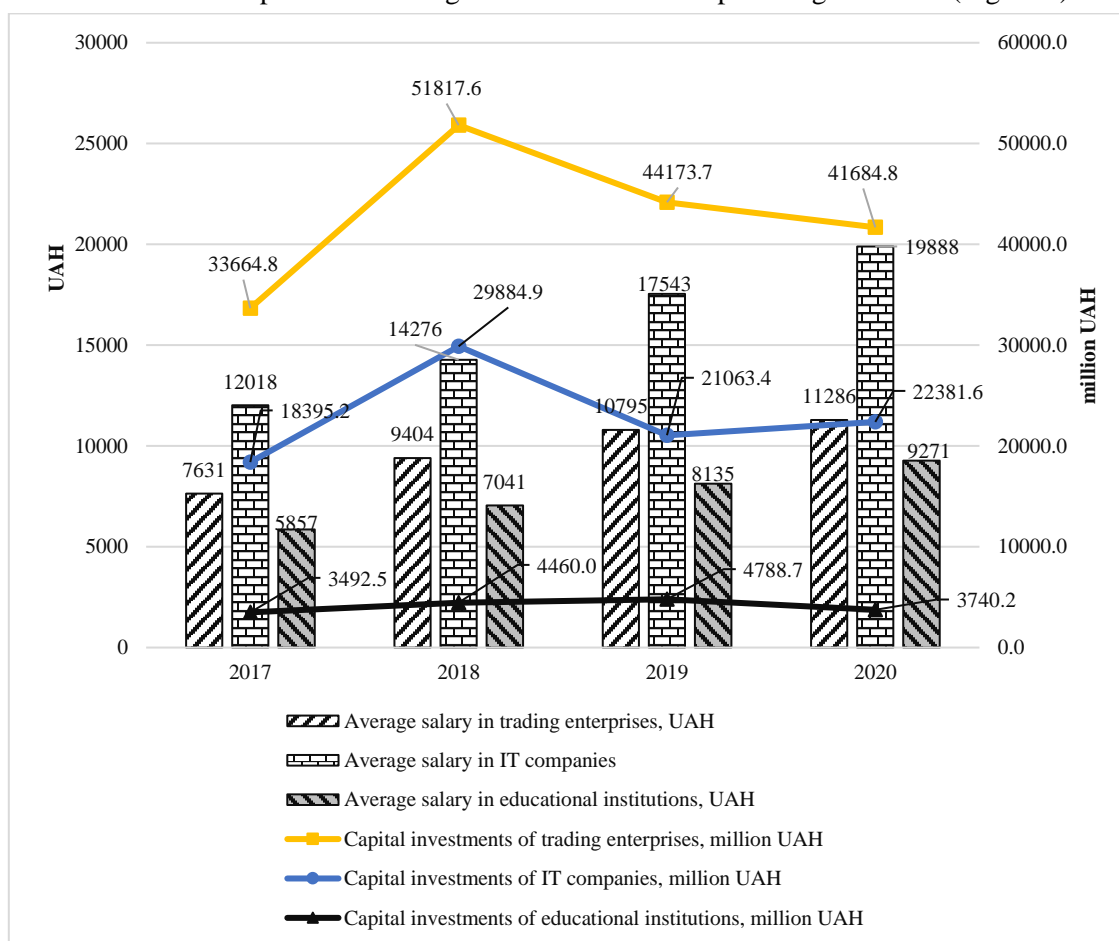


Figure 1: Dynamics of employees' average salaries in educational institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises, as well as capital investments in education, trade and IT in Ukraine in 2017–2020
 Note: Compiled by the author based on data State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2022a, 2022c).

A much lower level of capital investment in educational institutions significantly limits the ability of managers to create a remote workplace for employees, namely the provision of a personal computer or headset. The average wages in education, IT and trade show the financial capacity of organisations to provide the necessary equipment to remote workers.

The overall level of management effectiveness is calculated based on the respondents' answers to each of the nine questions proposed in the questionnaire (Figure 2).

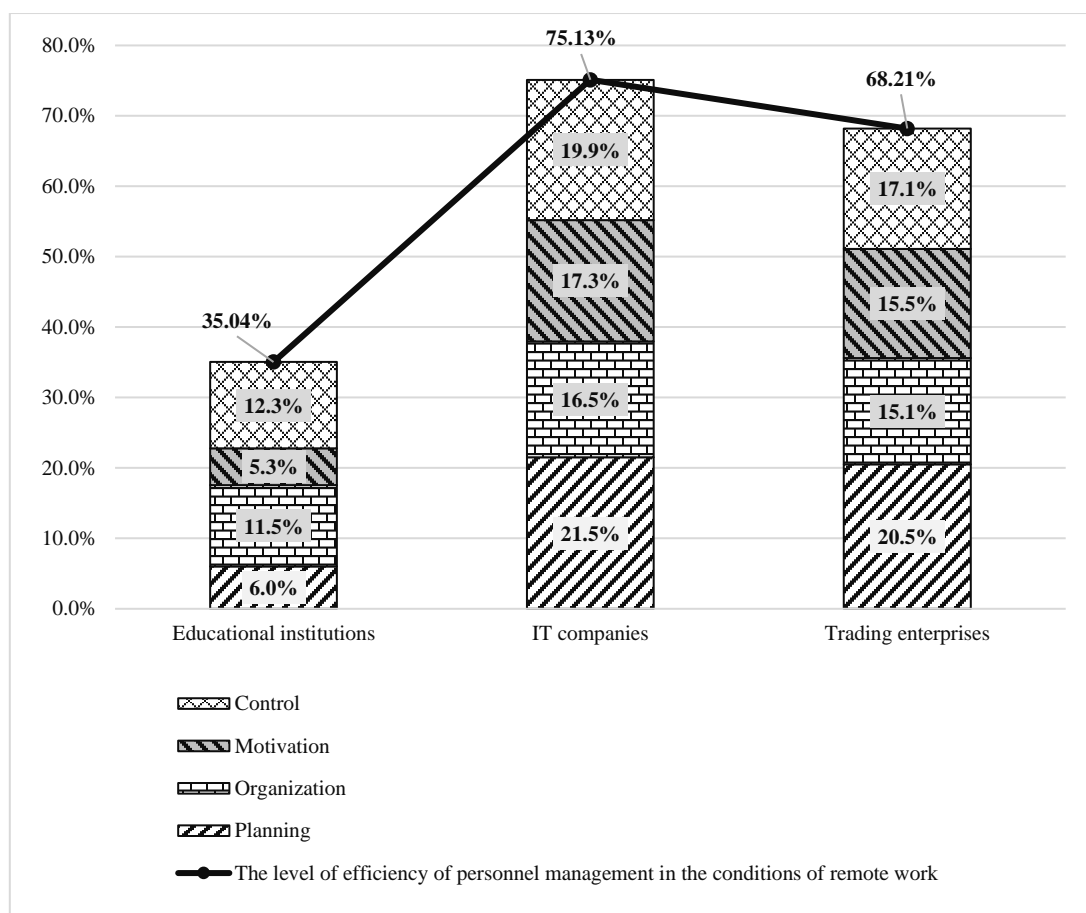


Figure 2: The level of efficiency of personnel management in the conditions of remote work
 Note: Compiled by the author based on the results of the questionnaire.

The ability to calculate the effectiveness of the implementation of each management function during remote work makes it possible to compare such effectiveness between different target respondent groups. It allows focusing on the need to take measures to improve the effectiveness of a particular management function in educational institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises.

5. Discussion

This study examined the effectiveness of management in remote work conditions of educational institutions, IT companies and trade enterprises based on a questionnaire of their employees to determine the efficiency of each management function: planning, organisation, motivation and control. The study's results demonstrate the difference in approaches to planning the working schedule of remote workers in educational institutions that work within the framework of state academic standards and in private IT companies and trading enterprises whose activities aim to serve a large number of customers. Educational institutions, as public institutions, have a predetermined academic schedule, but remote work requires relatively different approaches to planning the employees' work. To support the psycho-emotional state of teachers/lecturers, it is crucial to minimise communication with students and management in various social networks or specialised platforms after the working day.

The lowest level of management efficiency is observed in educational institutions because bureaucratic and financial constraints (see Figure 1) do not contribute to the establishment of additional overtime pay, which also correlates with research by Schmitt et al. (2021). Instead, in commercial business structures of IT companies and trade enterprises, monetary compensation for overtime work is used as a motivational tool for personnel management.

According to Figure 2, the highest efficiency is in planning and control management functions in IT companies and trade enterprises. The advantage of remote work is saving money on office rent, utilities and other related costs. Saved funds can be invested in purchasing computer equipment for employees, increasing the efficiency of the organisation's functions and motivation. Increasing monetary compensation for overtime work, as well as providing additional weekends, will motivate employees of IT companies and trade enterprises.

The questionnaire results prove that it is necessary to significantly increase the effectiveness of each management function in higher education institutions in remote work. It is practically impossible to increase the organisation's level of remote work by providing personal computer equipment, headsets and Internet access due to the low level of financial capacity of educational institutions (see Figure 1). Regardless, this can be done by improving the planning of remote work and developing statutes regulating the work of teachers/lecturers and students/students in compliance with the schedules of sending control tasks and their checking. Sending tasks after the end of the working day and asking specific questions in social networks by pupils/students or their parents significantly increases the level of psycho-emotional stress on teachers/lecturers, which ultimately reduces the effectiveness of their work. It is also worth paying attention to monitoring the observance of the eight-hour working day because the psycho-emotional load on teachers/lecturers significantly increases during remote work. The irregular working schedule, which provides for the first half of the working day (lectures, practical classes in educational institutions) and the second half (research activities), is not working anymore. Completing the necessary electronic forms, conducting online lectures, meetings, checking assignments, etc., significantly tightens the work schedule of employees of educational institutions. It requires adequate planning, organisation, motivation and control.

Comparing survey results and statistical data on capital investment in educational institutions, IT companies, and trading enterprises supported the notion that management effectiveness increases with financial capacity (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2022b). Private IT companies and trade enterprises have a higher level of implementation of the management function "organisation" than educational institutions due to the higher financial capacity of private sector institutions. The financial capability enables businesses to provide remote workers with personal computers and pay for overtime.

In research by Voytsekhivska and Voytsekhivskyy (2021), Peek (2022) and Wiles (2022), similar findings on the substantial influence of companies' financial resources in organising efficient remote work management have been presented.

Analysing the survey results confirms certain conclusions in analytical studies about the lower efficiency level of remote work management in state-owned companies compared to commercial ones (OECD, 2021).

By contrast, the study's findings with those reported in the scientific literature (Arunprasad et al., 2022; Fritz & Cotilla Conceição, 2021; Soman, 2022) about the increase in psycho-emotional stress on employees and the deterioration of their mental health has made it possible to identify the inconsistency of management efficiency with existing problems and threats regarding the decline of the mental health of employees in the conditions of remote work. This is due to the low control over employees' psycho-emotional state in educational institutions and commercial enterprises.

The general problems of organising remote work in educational institutions, IT companies and commercial enterprises are primarily unchanged from the coronavirus era. Still, the experience businesses obtained from the epidemic is a foundation for creating effective strategies for organising remote work. Such strategies should provide for increasing the efficiency of the organisation and the motivation of personnel in the conditions of remote work. According to other scientific research (Ali & Simamora, 2022; Galanti et al., 2021), the motivational aspect should depend on increasing monetary compensation for overtime labour and reducing employee psycho-emotional load.

Also, Berguig and Abdelbaki (2021) reveal that beyond survival needs, employees are more

motivated and satisfied with the many other variables that form quality of work life. For instance: a balance between work and family life, work opportunities, and a pleasant organisational climate. It is suggested that organisations offering a better quality of work life will have less turnover and systematically less turnover intention. The topic of the work environment is also well described by Nguyen et al. (2021). The authors claimed that employee productivity would increase if an organisation maintained a good working environment.

In summary, environmental factors and social values are essential to the organisation. An interesting thesis is being raised that developmental value reflects that a potential candidate is attracted by the recognition, confidence and working experience underpinning career development. Agreeing with the statements of the scholars mentioned above, we can highlight many other factors that directly or indirectly affect the management of remote work organisations. It also correlates with certain limitations that we identified throughout the study. They relate to the need for qualitative analysis of organisation-specific management documents that reflect employee requirements, procedural aspects of organising remote working, motivational factors, etc. The following study will consider all necessary aspects and relevant requirements will be met.

6. Conclusions

A survey of employees of educational institutions, IT companies and trading enterprises made it possible to conclude that the management is more effective than in state educational institutions. Financial capacity plays an essential role in achieving a high level of management in remote work, which affects companies' ability to organise a remote workplace and increase employee motivation by increasing remuneration for overtime work.

The survey results also indicate that none of the companies from the respondents' target groups pays enough attention to controlling the psycho-emotional state of employees, which negatively affects their performance and motivation.

The practical significance of the results obtained is to formulate a methodological approach to identifying the main problems of management in remote work, which will allow taking measures to improve management efficiency in post-quarantine hybrid remote work models.

Research on personnel's social and psycho-emotional management effectiveness in distance work can be future research directions.

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