



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**Managing teams remotely: New Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic
in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa. A case study in the UN
World food program Engineering team**

By

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The research project submitted to Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Project Management

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Approval page

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Declaration

I, the undersigned declare that the project entitled “***Managing teams remotely: New Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa. A case study in the UN World food program Engineering team***” is my original work and has not be presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the project have been Acknowledged accordingly.

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Certification

This is to certify that **Berhanu Hunegnaw** has properly completed his research work entitled ***“Managing teams remotely: New Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa. A case study in the UN World food program Engineering team”*** under my supervision. In my opinion, his project work is appropriate to be submitted as a fulfillment requirement for the award Degree of Master of Arts in Project Management.

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Abstract

In beginning of 2020 the Covid -19 pandemic has changed the normal operation of most international organizations operating in Ethiopia. The pandemic has affected most organizations' workplaces and productivity. To ensure business continuity organizations have had to make provision for staff to operate remotely following the implementation of lockdown regulations in the international organizations.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the effect of the workplace on efficiency of remote workers' experiences in UN world food program Engineering unit team after immediate conversion from the normal workplace environment to working remotely from home. The tools and techniques used to enhance the efficiency of the team also are assessed.

The study used mixed research approach and descriptive analysis has been also deployed. To achieve the research objectives, questionnaires were prepared and distributed to the target population in the organization and were self-administered by the researcher.

The main findings in this study identified different reasons from managers and remote team about communication, team cohesion that caused low performance as well as tools and techniques used to enhance the performance of the remote team.

The researcher gave recommendations based on the results that obtained from the analysis and resented the major causes of reduction of remote team efficiency and suggested remote team management instruments that helped to enhance remote team management.

Advances in communication and information technology create new opportunities for organizations to build and manage virtual teams. The researcher recommendation was that the organization should give attention to the improvement of team communication system on remote management practices and managers perception to get the best communication and effective remote team management. Since the team lack of cohesion is the dominant factors in WFP in terms of reduced effectiveness of the remote team current situation and or demands, the managers should recognize the uses of remote team communication system to enhance team effectiveness.

Keywords: Remote workers, Covid-19 pandemic, communication, WFP, team effectiveness and team cohesion.

Acronyms

UNWFP	United Nations World food program
BIM	Building information modeling
BIMCollab	Building information modeling Collaboration software
MBO	Management By Objective
SAP	Enterprise resource planning and Management software
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the background of the study, addresses statement of the problem, introduces basic research questions, explains objectives of the study and definition of terms as well as acronyms. The chapter also explains significance of the study, and delimitation/scope of the study.

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1.2 Background of the study

The covid pandemic has hit the world and affected the business environment in general, the society and organizations and changed the way they operate. It has had a drastic and sudden impact on the practices of both workplaces and within organizations and the way individuals react. (Carroll N. and Conboy, 2020).

Carroll and Conboy described the application of Normalization process theory (NPT) and its usefulness in offering (i) a novel theoretical perspective on the normalization of new technology-driven work practices, and (ii) practical insights on how NPT can better guide organizations to normalize technology-driven work practices during pandemics. It explained the implications of pandemics and debate about the normalization of new tech-driven work practices and transformations. Whereas the efficiency of the team due to reducing team cohesiveness and the detailed practices adopted to enhance the efficiency are not discussed in their research.

The pandemic has forced most workers globally to change their work patterns. (Davison, 2020); (Richter, 2020) It has now become known that all types of businesses have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in one way or another. For continuity of business employers had to find new

ways to ensure productivity from workers working remotely . Therefore working from home has become a new way of operating for many businesses. We are not sure that the need for office space will decline or remain as a primary workplace once the lockdown restrictions are lifted. (Walter, 2020)

Walter tried to provide insights from workers who had to convert and rapidly adjust to working remotely from their homes in response to the Covid-19 restrictions based on the structuration theory which was adopted to understand the social structural challenges experienced by staff working from home.

Walter tried to study based on the following specific objectives;

- (1) apply the structuration theory and highlight how social structures play an essential role in the remote working settings in South Africa;
- (2) understand how social structures are experienced by remote workers working from their homes; and
- (3) understand how remote workers are making provision for the work-and-life balance, interact with their colleagues and manage their workload during the lockdown that forced workers to work from home for safety reasons.

The reduction of team efficiency and adopted practices to enhance the efficiency was not addressed here.

Despite the fact that working on-site is still the standard in several industries, not all telecommuters are treated as outliers in their departments. Indeed, several organizations have flipped the "typical" employment model on its head, with teams made up partially—or even entirely—of remote workers. Remote teams are groups of people who collaborate on a project, sometimes for the same organization, sometimes as freelancers, and sometimes a mix of the two. They usually fall into one of four groups, which are often identified by location rather than function.

Some teams are "co-located," meaning that several members work in the same area, while others work remotely; this is what the term "partly distributed" means. Some teams operate entirely remotely, regardless of geography; this is referred to as "completely distributed" labor. Taking it a step further, some businesses are made up of multiple teams based in different places..
([Sutherland, 2020](#))

It is often assumed that there is a link between a worker's performance and his or her boss's physical location, and that any separation between them will be costly. However, while these costs exist, they vary based on the following factors: inspiration, team building, and communication with a high level of leadership or experience ([Zelege, 2021](#))

Zelege also studied the relationship between team performance to the leadership qualities of the team coordinator , not the details of team cohesion and techniques of remote management.

But as the myths and mystery of the pandemic was unclear at the time of the beginning the WFP Ethiopia country office adopted working remotely with a minimum number core team in each unit chosen to continue the business as usual. The new trend had pushed the organization to practice managing teams remotely. ([2021](#))

Whereas the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia ministry of Labor and Social Affairs Covid-19 Workplace Response Protocol developed immediately ([Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2020](#)) only adopted standard covid workplace covid protocols with no option of working remotely.

This assessment of the practice of remote working within selected team in WFP (engineering team) may open a ground for further development of managing teams remotely for local companies in Ethiopia which may benefit a lot even after the pandemic is over.

1.3 Background of the organization

The World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian agency, saving lives in emergencies and providing food assistance to help people rebuild their lives after conflict, catastrophes, and the effects of climate change.

Ethiopia has the continent's second-largest refugee population. 780,000 registered refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, and Kenya are now housed in 26 camps in five regional states: Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Somalia, and Tigray. The Ethiopian Country Strategy of the World Food Programme focuses on disaster risk management and resource management, basic social services, and farm markets and livelihoods. The overall purpose is to alleviate hunger while also contributing to Ethiopia's change. Since 1968, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been present in Ethiopia. (WFP, 2017)

Globally, there are approximately 200 WFP engineers, architects and technicians working in 45 countries on projects valued at over US\$100 million in total. These projects connect communities to markets, provide easier access to food and lower the risk of devastating food insecurity. (WFP, 2022)

The organization has a wide range of operation in Ethiopia and has a wide range of departments with different units and subsequently teams.

As Mr Alemu Seifu, Senior engineer in WFP Ethiopia country office, explained after the engineering team went virtual coordinating each project lifecycle has become more difficult. The efficiency of team reduced drastically and implementing projects shown a considerable delay until further different techniques were adopted to increase the efficiency of the team.

1.4 Statement of the problem

For many managers, keeping team members and connected while working remotely is a new issue. Similarly, for some employees, this may be their first time working fully alone. We can do a lot to make this shift as supportive and painless as possible, including adopting some helpful working practices to fight feelings of loneliness and stress that working alone can bring. This may take some time, and we will all need to learn and share what works well along the road. We'll have to be patient and flexible with one other if we don't want to settle on the perfect schedule or have all the answers right away. Our initial focus should be on promoting welfare while sustaining morale and motivation during this period of transition. This ensures the continuation of mission-critical tasks and fosters a culture of trust and communication among our teams. In the future, we may want to concentrate on assuring output and performance. ([OurCambridge, 2020](#))

In general, most teams perform efficiently and effectively when team members meet each other face to face regularly. Heterogeneity and cohesion are the most important single elements in defining a multidisciplinary group's performance. Heterogeneity refers to how different team members are in terms of qualifications, experience, viewpoint, and a variety of other aspects that might affect team effectiveness. In general, the more variability there is in a team, the more effective it is at addressing challenges. They will think about more details and brainstorm more successfully. However, this boost in efficiency comes at the expense of more debate and conflict. ([AbdurezaK & Dereje, 2015](#))

Based on my observation on projects lesson learned documentations and as per Mr.Alemu Seifu's explanation ,many fast truck projects executed during the pandemic has shown a major creep on the schedule and scope of projects at the very beginning of the pandemic.Projects which were started after mid-2020 has shown a better performance compared to projects started during the first seasons of the covid pandemic .As the pandemic strikes the WFP engineering team went virtual which then changes the heterogeneity of the team as it used to be where the effectiveness of the team reduced abruptly.

The time of completion required to finalize fast track projects processes: initiating processes, planning processes, executing processes, controlling processes and closing processes increased compared to previous performances with a significant drop in the efficiency of the team.

Although there are many factors related to the decrease in efficiency of the team such as stress due to the new pandemic, one major factor would be due to the practice of remote working reducing the heterogeneity of the team should be on major cause.

1.5 Research Questions

The research attempted to answer the following leading questions:

1. What caused in the reduction of the team effectiveness when they start performing autonomously from remote?
2. How much the effectiveness of the team reduced after the practice of remote working started?
3. How did the reduced effectiveness of the team affect the operation of the organization or other units in the organization?
4. What instruments and tools were adopted to overcome the team effectiveness problem?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine and understand how the effectiveness of a team is reduced when the work environment is unexpectedly changed to remote/virtual because of the covid pandemic, how to manage remote teams for effective performance and assessing the practice of remote team management in organizations to overcome a sudden change in the working practice.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives of the study

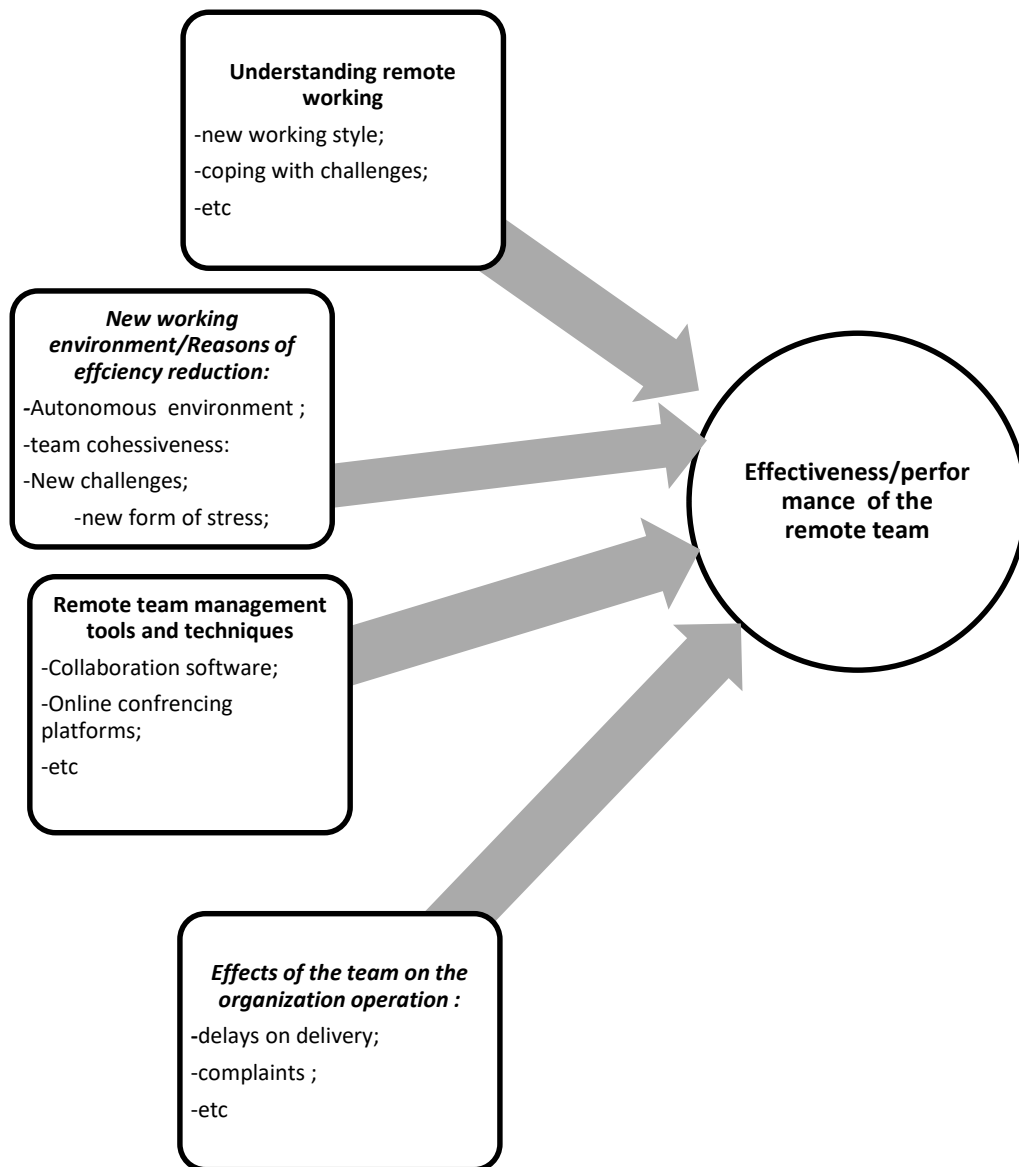
Specific objectives of the study shall be:

- To assess the cause of the reduced effectiveness in the WFP engineering team after the team started working remotely.
- To assess scale of reduction of the effectiveness of the team working remotely.
- To assess the reduction of the effectiveness of the engineering team affected the operation of other units and or the organization.
- To see the instruments and tools developed/adopted to manage and increase the effectiveness of the remote team.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Fig 1.1 Conceptual Framework cause-effect relationship

Dependent Variable (The new practice of remote working in WFP engineering team)



1.8. Research Hypothesis

This study has tested the following hypotheses based on the above theory:

Hypothesis 1

H0: There is a significant/strong correlation between remote working environment and employee effectiveness in WFP engineering team

H1: There is no significant/strong correlation between remote working environment/ and employee effectiveness in WFP engineering team

Hypothesis 2

H0: There is a significant/strong correlation between remote working tools and techniques used to increase the efficiency of team members in the WFP engineering team .

H1: There is no significant/strong correlation between tools and techniques used to increase the efficiency of team members the WFP engineering team.

1.9 Definition of Terms

1.9.1 Conceptual definition

Remote team: Remote teams are groups of people who work together on a project: sometimes for the same company, sometimes as a group of freelancers, and sometimes as a combination of both. They typically fall into one of the four following categories, often determined more by location than by function. In some teams several members work together in the same location (“colocated”), while others work remotely; this is what’s meant by the term “partly distributed.” In some teams everyone works remotely, regardless of location; this is also known as being “fully distributed.”

Expanding to the company level, some companies are made up of several teams in different locations. (Sutherland, 2020)

1.9.2 Operational definition

Team collaboration: is a communication and project management approach that emphasizes teamwork, innovative thinking, and equal participation to achieve objectives.

Team collaboration software: Team collaboration software tools can be used to increase collaboration efficiency, hold team members accountable and organize projects. Key features that collaboration tools might incorporate include chat platform integration, scheduling systems, video conferencing and task checklists.

BIM: Building Information modeling/management

BIMcollab Zoom : BIMcollab ZOOM brings IFC model viewing, validating and clash detection fully integrated into the issue management workflow. ZOOM is the perfect tool to discuss issues in review meetings, helps to analyze data to find design flaws and to verify solutions. Navigation is fast, intuitive, and smooth, even with large models.

UNWFP: United Nations World food program

PMBOK: The standard for project management and a guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK guide).

1.10 Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that the study has addressed the issues related to reduction of team efficiency when the working environment was changed suddenly to working from home situation due to the covid-19 pandemic.

The research has assessed also different remote team management approaches used in the specific organization to increase and or optimize the efficiency of the team working remotely.

The researcher believes that this assessment will give the **World Food program** a significant insight into the remote team management techniques and tools used in the engineering team and may help the organization to further develop a guide on remote team management.

The researcher believes that this assessment will be an eye opener for different organizations and business entities to develop and adopt remote team management guidelines, tools and techniques apart from the standard policies and guidelines existing so far.

The researcher also believes this assessment will be a base to assist organizations to assess the advantages of creating remote working teams further help them to see the cost benefit analysis and subsequently establish standard remote

Remote working practices are not new to any organization due to different reasons. such as geographical locations, limitations to working conditions, types of jobs that need to be remote. Whereas to most teams in organizations who went virtual due to the outbreak of the covid pandemic is a new experience.

1.11 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In addition to fulfilling the academic requirement of the researcher, the study has assessed the practice of remote team management in WFP engineering team only. The study has only seen the reduction in the effectiveness due to the remote working practice. The study also is limited to remote team management tools and techniques used to enhance the effectiveness of the team while working remotely in the engineering team of the organization.

The reduction in team effectiveness due to new practice of working remotely affects the organization as a whole and different units in particular. The UNWFP has a wide range of operation in Ethiopia. The researcher believes covering all the organization units on the study requires long time and

Due to the large staff and operation size as well as large geographical coverage of the organization the study is limited to only the organizations engineering team remote management.

Other teams which has different associations with the overall operation of the organization are not included as access to each department of the organization is limited.

The scope of the study is restricted to the practice of remote team management practices and the reduced effectiveness of the UNWFP engineering team after the covid-19 pandemic and after the team was sent to virtual as well as assessing the tools and techniques used for remote team management and improving of the team performance.

Due to access limitation to every unit in the organization, this study does not intend to cover the organization as whole and the impact of remote working practices in all departments and organization.

1.13 Organization of the Paper

The research is organized as follows: Chapter one has presented introduction of the study. Chapter two contains a review of the literature. The research design and methodology are presented in chapter three. Chapter four presents data presentation, analysis and interpretation of results. Finally, chapter five summarized the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter two: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This section examines the literature which is relevant to the research under study. It involves theoretical review, forms of remote working practices, factors that influence efficiency, team cohesion, practices of remote team management and efficiency of team.

As the pandemic is still ongoing there are no many research works are available in this area, but educational researchers have studied the effect of remote working on effectiveness in relation to the working condition and uses of telecommuting platforms to cope up with the new issues of remote working. This study seeks to build upon those research based on the UNWFP engineering team remote working practices. The following review of the literature represents the literature pertinent to my research study on remote working practices and would try to go through the reduction in effectiveness, tools and techniques used to enhance the effectiveness of the team.

2.2. Theoretical literature

2.2.3 Project Team Performance

As per the project management course module (AbdurezaK & Dereje, 2015) Team performance is a complex issue. Numerous internal and external factors can influence the performance level of any project team. The strongest single factors in determining a multidisciplinary group's performance are heterogeneity and cohesiveness.

2.2.3.1 Heterogeneity.

Heterogeneity is the extent to which the team members are unlike each other, either in terms of qualifications, experience, outlook or a range of other factors that could affect team performance. Generally, the greater the degree of heterogeneity, the more effective the team will be at solving problems. They will consider more information and will brainstorm more effectively. However, this increase in efficiency is at a cost of increased discussion and conflict. Heterogeneous teams exist when members are different from each other in terms of qualifications, experience, personality, ethnic or cultural background or other various factors that could affect team performance. In general, it is said that the greater the degree of heterogeneity, the more effective the team will be at solving problems because they will collectively have more information and will brainstorm more effectively. However, it can also be the major source of conflict (Burke and Barron, 2014).

2.2.3.2 Cohesiveness.

Cohesiveness is a combination of how much the members of the team want to be members, how well their personal goals are aligned to the team goals, and to the overall commitment and morale of the team members. Generally, the more cohesive the team, the better it will perform. In general terms, the higher the heterogeneity and cohesiveness of the team, the more effective it will become. Thus, multidisciplinary teams (and hence, by definition, most project teams) are good so long as they are established and controlled properly. However, in order for team heterogeneity and cohesiveness to be useful to the organization, the goals and objectives of the individual and the group must be clearly aligned with those of the organization. As with team motivation in general there is no point in developing team commitment and drive unless the goals of the individual, team and organization are all compatible.

Cohesive teams exist when members of the team wants to be members of that team, when their personal goals are well aligned to the team goals, and when there is unity, commitment to one another. If they work in close proximity, if they have similarity in values and attitudes and if they are few, then the team will more likely be cohesive , (Adair, 2004). In general, the more cohesive the team, the better it will perform. However, it can lead to the dangers of group think when team

members are highly cohesive. In this case, cohesiveness will be more important to the team rather than evaluating decision making process critically and objectively (Verma, 1997).

2.2.4 Remote management

Historically, remote management has been a reactive response to deteriorations in security and access. Aid agencies and international donors generally consider it a last resort, short of suspending operations completely. Recently, however, some programmes have been managed remotely almost from the outset. Remote management is now no longer an exception, but a regular mode of operation for humanitarian work, especially in highly insecure contexts (Leidecker, 2018)

Remote management is the situations in which humanitarian agencies implement program with limited or non-existent direct access to populations in need. For some agencies, remote management is simply the decentralization of management, a practice that might be used in situations where the agency did have access but chose to work through partners on the ground. Several organizations have linked the notion of remote management to the absence of international staff performing some key functions associated with assessments, program design and/or monitoring. To other agencies, remote management implies a lack of physical presence due to political limitations or security risks. It is notable that organizations also employ diverse definitions of ‘access’, ranging from occasional short visits to a given area by senior staff with the constant presence of local staff, to working only through local partners without any direct contact between the agency and the affected population (Maxwell, 2014).

2.2.5 Employee performance

Employee performance is defined as how an employee fulfills their job duties and executes their required tasks. It refers to the effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of their output. Performance also contributes to our assessment of how valuable an employee is to the organization. Each

employee is a serious investment for a company, so the return that each employee provides must be significant. (Ciner, 2019)

2.2.6 Factor affecting Employee performance (EP)

2.2.6.1 Organization related factors

According to (Anastasios D., 2018) many researchers (Pulakos, 2004; Armstrong, 2012) claim that management support is an important condition for EP improvement. As Morrison and Phelps (1999) also indicate, when employees perceive that the management supports their job-related efforts, then it is likely that improved job performance will be noticed. Further, Parker et al. (2006) found that management support is positively related to commitment and proactivity (employee-related factors).

Concerning job environment related factor, Kopelman et al. (1990) report that job environment affects employee productivity and performance. Further, Fawcett et al. (2008) state that job environment affects employees' ability to be proactive and productive. Similarly, van Veldhoven (2005) support the fact that job environment is related to EP. Finally, it is argued that employee commitment, which consists of the three components (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) is also related to EP. Chen and Francesco (2003) argue that the nature of the psychological status of each commitment factor varies from employee to employee.

According to Chen and Francesco (2003), there is a positive relationship between affective commitment and EP, suggesting that, employees who feel that a firm's behavior towards them is good (e.g. fair treatment, participation in decision making) may increase their levels of emotional commitment to the firm and, in turn, their performances may also improve.

Further, employees with high continuance commitment feel a strong obligation to perform their jobs in such a way that is identified with the firm's goals, while employees with low continuance commitment feel no such obligation to support the firm's goals (Chen and Francesco, 2003).

Meyer and Allen (1997) claim that there is a negative relationship between normative commitment and EP. They argue that this occurs because employees with a high degree of normative commitment are “trapped” in no-choice situations, such as remaining in the firm even if they do not want to. Thus, they perform their jobs passively and gradually their performance decreases (Meyer and Allen, 1997). However, Somers and Birnbaum (1998) report that normative commitment can be positively associated with EP. (Diamantidis, 2019)

2.2.6.2 Communication

Effective communication builds trust, partnership and collaboration. This is what creates synergy in teams. (Verma, 1997)

According to PMI (2013) Project communications management consists of the process required for proper collection and dissemination of project information. It includes communication planning, distribution of information, project meetings and reporting of project progress.

2.2.6.3 Psychological contract

According to psychological contract theory (PCT), Psychological contracts refer to employee beliefs about their own and their employer’s obligations, typically formed through their interactions with organizational agents (Rousseau, 1995). Employees rely on their psychological contract to interpret their relationship with their organization (Rousseau, 1995). For example, employees perceive schedule flexibility and fair pay as an organization’s obligations in exchange for their professionalism and hard work. Our research focuses on two critical aspects of psychological contracts: psychological contract formation and breach. Early writings on psychological contracts (Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley, 1962) argue that employees develop their psychological contract through a process of anthropomorphizing the organization and form a view of the employer as a single entity (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Levinson et al., 1962; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Rousseau (1995) elaborates on the process by arguing that employees perceive messages from human organizational agents who

play the role of psychological contract makers. Human contract makers, such as supervisors, convey organizational messages through interaction. Perceived employer commitments can emerge early on, such as through recruiting events, job interviews, and onboarding processes, when organizations explicitly or implicitly explain organizational inducements (Rousseau & Greller, 1994). Through their exchange with these contract makers, employees may perceive transactional commitments from the employer, such as promotion schemas, and relational commitments, such as caring, recognition, and future investment, which strengthen a perceived emotional bond that can positively affect employee attitudes and behavior toward the organization (Robinson et al., 1994). At times, employees perceive that their employer has failed to honor their side of the psychological contract (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). For example, under-delivering perceived commitments may result in a breach of the employee's psychological contract—that is, employee perceptions of how well the organization fulfills their side of their contract and honors its terms (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Rousseau, 1995). Consistent findings show that when employees perceive a breach, they tend to form negative attitudes, such as feelings of violation, an emotional response toward the employer, such as anger and betrayal (Robinson & Morrison, 2000), and turnover intentions, among others (Bal, De Lange, Jansen, & Van Der Velde, 2008; Bordia, Restubog, & Tang, 2008; Ng, Feldman, & Lam, 2010; Zhao et al., 2007). We note that perceived breach may not always lead to feelings of violation, depending on how the perceived breach is interpreted. Factors such as assessment of outcome magnitude, fairness judgments, and attributions influence the link between psychological breach and violation feelings (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). As algorithms perform managerial functions as organizational agents, they are likely to convey promissory cues that signal employer intentions and/or make decisions that may impact one's beliefs about their psychological contract and affect their relationship with the employer in a similar manner to human contract makers. Emerging work began to theorize how robotic coworkers might influence human employees' psychological contracts through interpersonal relationships (Bankins & Formosa, 2020). In our work, we empirically explore the role of algorithmic agents as contract makers and the degree to which they influence one's psychological contract in the context of algorithmic management. (Maria T., 2022)

2.2.6.4 Employee Commitment and Motivation

The concepts of employee commitment and motivation were analyzed using Herzberg's (1959) Motivation-Hygiene Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), and Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Characteristic Model of Work Motivation. Employee satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment are driven by motivational factors that make employees want (i) to perform, grow, and be recognized (Herzberg, 2003); (ii) to become valuable members of the team by realizing their full potential through creativity, independence, and recognition (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2005); and (iii) to have meaningful work, task autonomy, and responsibility (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Steers and Mowday (1977) highlighted the additional motivational factors of greater scope for personal achievement, more challenging work, and increased opportunities for advancement and growth.

When managers implement work strategies that include meaningful and diverse work assignments, task autonomy, and recognition, remote workers will tend to increase their job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment

2.2.6.5 Remote Management Relationships

Monthly project reports indicated that a gap exists around employee commitment and efficiency issues on the team members working remotely in the WFP engineering unit. While the current research focuses mainly on finding the rationale behind the reduction of efficiency in the remote team and tools and techniques used in managing remote team virtually through technology, limited research exists about relationships between remote working and employee performance.

This research focuses on finding out the reduction of efficiency in the remote team withing the WFP engineering unit as well as tries to find out the tools and techniques of remote team management used by team leaders in enhancing the team performance.

This research was designed to study a how a change in working environment to remote working styles has changed the efficiency of the team to perform after the pandemic and examines how this efficiency was enhanced using remote management tools and techniques.

In this study, other factors cohesiveness and heterogeneity between remote teams and their management teams are examined. Challenges facing remote teams today include feelings of professional isolation and disconnect, reduced personal contact, increased chances of misunderstanding and conflict escalation, and increased opportunities of role ambiguity and goal conflicts because of differing commitments

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Very few studies have been made regarding remote team management and effectiveness as well as tools and techniques used to enhance performance.

According to the study conducted by (Swati K. et al, 2017) ,even though there is ample literature pertaining to the topic of managing virtual teams; little has been done to quantify the scope and magnitude of practices within organizations today. The prominent factors on which trust, information sharing, and communication are dependent in virtual teams were identified. These factors help member in virtual teams to remain focused for achieving effectiveness and efficiency in their work. The study adds efforts by highlighting the importance of factors that impact trust, information sharing and communication in the virtual team. The resulting factors of the research- 1[Dependability on Each Other], 2[Dealing with Time], 3[Concern for Collaboration], 4[Information Penetration], 5[Variety of Information], 6[Reliability on Technology], 7[Tools Used for Communication], 8[Implementation of Results], should be considered to create effective virtual teams. The findings and factors provide a useful insight into how virtual team efficacy and ability is determined. The study strives towards developing a set of factors that can be used by managers of virtual teams for establishing an efficacious relationship amongst the members. Since virtual teams enable a set of talented, highly capable and experienced individuals spread across various locations, to work together for the completion of a particular task, without being relocated, these factors can be used by both members and organizations to analyze their teams and their members well. Researchers claim that geographic

separation amongst members of teams causes adverse effects on communication, knowledge sharing, and work coordination . In this scenario, our factors provide a holistic approach to make the virtual team and its employees more effective.

2.3.1 Trust in virtual teams

Trust is a fragile item in team building and should be dealt carefully when teams are located at diverse sites. The virtual teams are formed by bringing together talent from different functions, locations, and organizations . This difference generally leads to trust deficit. Research suggests that trust acts as an integral and important component for the efficacious working of the team. Even though trust is reflected as a multidimensional construct , but Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's model of trust, which treats trust as a unidimensional construct is mostly appreciated and referred to, in literature. Mutual trust and shared understanding is required for the growth of team members .Since members of virtual teams know that they have to interact for a limited tenure; they can change their attitude towards developing trust in the other members of a team . Mayer in his research explained that trustworthiness factors are "conditions that lead to trust".

2.3.2 Information sharing in virtual teams

Virtual teams give individuals a chance to plug and play, cooperate and strive, share knowledge, information and work . The degree of interaction and interdependence between the team members is the first dimension on which definitions of virtual teams may differ . As information sharing is a vital part of a team's success, organizations often exchange persons within virtual teams to minimize the effects of loss of technical or non-technical information .It is vital for organizations to encourage individuals within the organization to share information with other members. Information sharing happens once individuals who share a mutual purpose and experience, come together to exchange ideas .The process of information sharing among individuals involve the conversion of the knowledge held by an individual into a form that can be understood, absorbed, and used by other individuals . An interruption or breakdown happens when an individual of the team withholds the information from another . Sharing information

becomes a tough job when teams are spread out in distant geographical locations . Hence, it becomes essential to develop mechanisms in virtual environments, through which knowledge and information can be transferred from one individual to another. In fact, sharing information amongst team members has been shown to enhance the performance of the teams . However, effective knowledge sharing between members is more difficult in virtual teams than in traditional forms of teams .

2.3.3 Role of communication in virtual teams

Due to the fact that virtual team member's work across geographically dispersed locations, communication becomes a critically important factor in virtual team functioning . Their interaction methods could include telephone, teleconference, messaging, email, skype, etc. All the computer-mediated communication technologies face the same drawback due to the lack of verbal and nonverbal cues, compared to traditional face-to-face communication. The verbal cues (i.e. tone of voice, verbal hesitation, volume) and non-verbal cues (i.e. facial expression, body movement, emotion) are however important sources to process information from team members for tasks . Compared with face-to-face teams, virtual teams face problems such as “decreased social interaction, communication, and emotional expression”. The human and technology aspects need to be managed so that virtual teams with attributes like high performance, high commitment, and high cooperation and communication. Our findings from our previous studies suggest that individuals in the virtual settings suffer because of absence of informal meetings and many respondents feel that cross-border knowledge must be used as a potential source of competitive advantage .

It is difficult to find available similar researches in Ethiopia although the challenge of remote team performance since the covid pandemic , especially in WFP engineering team during meeting, team building, performance evaluation meetings, training and also other similar organizations, because almost all organizations operating in Ethiopia went virtual during the pandemic.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about the topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

3.2 Research Design and Approach

This research is a descriptive type which enables the researcher to determine the practice and challenges of remote team management, tools, techniques, procedures and leadership used to increase the efficiency of the team working remotely in the case of UNWFP engineering team for an in-depth understanding and attempt to elicit further information in that area by providing meaningful information and data. This design is selected and considered appropriate for the researcher to gather as much information to understand the issue under investigation and describe it to the reader (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is one shot or cross-sectional study as data is collected only once. The major purpose of descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs as it currently exists from an individual and organizational perspective. In social science and business research, this method is often used. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he or she can only report what has happened or what is happening. In most cases the information gained by descriptive study can be useful to evaluate certain practices and considering corrective steps for the future; for instance, if the team leader must consider changing the existing practices based on the findings.

The approach used in this research was a mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative approach as interviews and retrospective survey was employed to address the research questions.

3.3. Sampling Design

This section lays down the methodology elements utilized to perform the survey. It also composes the population of the study, study design, methods and instruments used for collecting data and data analysis.

The target population of the research was the entire projects and activities managed by team members in the selected organization department, UNWFP engineering team.

The selected department has conducted many fast-track projects in the past and during the covid pandemic with a good number of staff members involving in different activities of each project stage.

This study was made based on non-probability sampling, as the target department has different team members of different experience, managing different types of projects/activities located in different geographical locations with different budget sizes. These imply that, they have no similar and common character to consider one population and provide equal opportunity to select as sample and apply probability sampling.

It is complete listing of our target population in the organization with no formal sampling frame. This gave the researcher a better result within a small population group like the WFP engineering unit.

3.4. Sources of Data, Collection method, instrument and validity and reliability

The selected engineering teams and the projects they have managed/participated was the primary sources of data for this study. The tools used to collect data were closed ended and open-ended questionnaires to participants. The study was done based on both secondary and primary data

sources. To effectively accomplish it; books, articles, journals, magazines, project reports and the compliance project audit report were reviewed.

Primary data about the practice and effect of remote working was collected through questionnaire surveys. The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section I incorporated an open-ended question that gives respondents a chance to give their own explanation to the phenomenon and practices of remote working including the tools and techniques they used. The interview questions were broad to get more detailed ideas on their experience of remote team management practices. Section II, contains demographical questions about the respondents. It includes sex, age, years of work experience, and level of education (qualification) and position in each or specific project they participated. Finally Section III, items incorporate items that help to measure the efficiency of employees in performing project tasks and the scale of efficiency dropdown during the pandemic. It also includes the effect of the engineering team efficiency on other units.

All participation in this research were voluntary and participants of the study were given a full description of the study before deciding to participate through phone, email and telegram. After granting consensus for participation the questionnaires were mailed to individual e-mail address or telegram to be filled and returned within ten days. The researcher reminded the participant two days before the final date of submission to have high response rate. Then the questionnaires were be checked for proper filling and those filled improperly were discarded.

The researcher collected data through questioners and based on the information collected from existing documents. Under the interview part, the study followed the focused interview. Questioners were sent to all team members in the engineering department with request to answer and return the questionnaire.

Secondary data was collected from meeting minuets, project report, updated project charters, site progress reports, any reports generated to stakeholders.

The responses from the closed-ended questions were systematically coded and analyzed accordingly.

The validity of the questioners was checked to ensure whether the questions include the research questions intended for the objectives. The questionnaires was shared to five senior engineers/project managers who had been working with the organization from five to twelve years in the engineering department including the chief engineer of WFP. The objective of the study was clarified to the senior engineers through telephone and the questionnaires were shared. The team confirmed that the questioners truly reflect the areas of challenges and practices in line with the study objectives related to remote team management.

Descriptive statistical method was used to summarize the data obtained from survey and was analyzed by calculating the frequency of the responses, the mean and percentages using statistical package for social sciences (IBM-SPSS statistical data editor) software, and the results are presented in tables in chapter 4.

Reliability test was conducted on the dependent and independent variables, internationalization factors and entrepreneurial orientation. The Cronbach's alpha is used in this research to see the internal consistency of the research instrument, the developed α (Alpha) is a coefficient of reliability used to measure the internal consistency of a test or scale, and it resulted as a number between 0 and 1. As the result approaches to 1 the more is the internal consistency of the items, which means all the items measure the same variable.

- I. Reliability statistics of the Understanding of telecommuting Concept and Importance of remote working during the pandemic questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.810	3

Acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's alpha is greater than acceptable percentage 0.7.

- II. Reliability statistics of the Team efficiency or effectiveness during the pandemic in remote working conditions-Reasons of efficiency reduction questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.902	12

Acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's alpha is greater than acceptable percentage 0.7.

III. Reliability statistics of the Scale of reduced efficiency questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.970	13

Acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's alpha is greater than acceptable percentage 0.7.

IV. Reliability statistics of the Effect of the engineering team efficiency on other units questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.805	4

Acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's alpha is greater than acceptable percentage 0.7.

V. Reliability statistics of the Enhancing the team effectiveness (tools and techniques used) questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.902	7

Acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's alpha is greater than acceptable percentage 0.7.

3.6 Research Ethics

Ethics in business research refers to a code of conduct or expected societal norms of behavior while conducting research. Ethical conduct applies to the organization and the members that sponsor the research, the researchers who undertake the research, and the respondents who provide them with the necessary data. The observance of ethics begins with the person instituting the research, who should do so in good faith, pay attention to what the results indicate, and, surrendering the ego, pursue organizational rather than self-interests. Ethical conduct should also be reflected in the behavior of the researchers who conduct the investigation, the participants who provide the data, the analysts who provide the results, and the entire research team that presents the interpretation of the results and suggests alternative solutions. Thus, ethical behavior pervades each step of the research process – data collection, data analysis, reporting, and dissemination of information on the Internet, if such an activity is undertaken. How the subjects are treated and how confidential information is safeguarded are all guided by business ethics. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016)

Chapter Four

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents data collected from respondents through interview and questionnaires. Data collected from the interview were analyzed qualitatively and presented in narratives. Data gathered from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively and are presented in tables the frequency of respondents, percentages, and averages.

The criteria to measure each variable ranges from participants assessment of each variable and varies from strong agreement to strong disagreement by highlighting the number with the range of (5) if strongly agree, (4) if agree, (3) if neutral, (2) if disagree, and (1) if strongly disagree. Mean is calculated out of 5 and the percentage is calculated out of 100. Response tables are divided into Variables, and with the symbols to denote the frequency of the responses of SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D- Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree, T- Total, and M-Mean. The results are presented as follows.

4.1 Response Rate

To this study, 34 questionnaires were distributed, and 31 participants responded. All the questionnaires returned were completely done. The overall response rate to the survey was 91.17 %.

4.2 Demographic Profile

The demographic composition of the respondents includes 40% female, 60% male, with the age category between (25-35) 26 %, (36-45) 71% and (46-55) 3%. ,87% respondents were Ethiopians and 13 % were foreigners, 68 % of them have their first degree and 32% have their master's degree. The data clearly shows the WFP engineering team is young

and educated. The percentage of women is also considerably proportional to men. This a result of the UN organizations effort to balance gender in their team.

4.3 Results and Analysis

4.3.1 Understanding of telecommuting Concept and Importance of remote working during the pandemic

Team composition shows 68% of the respondents involve in technical part of the project and 32% involve in supervisory level.

Team members understand the importance and concept of remote working as demonstrated by their response on how they understand the importance to go virtual for business continuity and was the only option during the pandemic. The team leaders were also part of the technical team in who went virtual and started managing the team from remote.

Managers indicated that during the pandemic there was no choice to go virtual at the beginning. Later they discovered that some activities such as maintenance of facilities and critical project should be performed with precautionary measures on site.

Table 1. Understanding remote working

variables	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	S D	%	Tot.	Mean
Each team member understands the concept and importance of remote teamwork during the COVID pandemic times	17	54.84%	11	35.48%	3	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.45
Team members have different experience of working from remote before the pandemic hits but not like this at full scale, working autonomously	26	83.87%	3	9.67%		0.00%	2	6.45%		0.00%	31	4.71
Team members believe that remote working was the only choice for business continuity during the pandemic	3	9.68%	4	12.90%	8	25.81%	16	51.61%		0.00%	31	2.81

The results from the above table indicate that all the respondents understand the importance of remote working. Most of them confirmed even if they have experience of

remote working but was not at this scale. Many respondents disagreed and showed uncertainties in saying that remote working was the only choice during the pandemic.

The total mean is 3.99. The translation of level of ranking is analyzed based on the criteria of customers satisfaction designed by Best (1977: 174)

The score among 1.00-1.80 mean lowest satisfaction

The score among 1.81-2.61 mean low satisfaction

The score among 2.62-3.41 mean average satisfaction

The score among 3.42-4.21 mean good satisfaction

The score among 4.22-5.00 mean very good satisfaction signed by set by

This implies that the importance of remote working was understood by the team to ensure business continuity.

4.3.2 Team efficiency or effectiveness during the pandemic in remote working conditions-

Reasons of efficiency reduction

Performance is often easier to document and review in virtual teams because most interactions, commitments, and outcomes are archived automatically and electronically. (Berry, 2011)

The project managers interviewed for this research purpose indicated that the team efficiency immediately after went virtual drastically reduced. Lots of complains from other units were received on late delivery of projects.

The researcher reviewed monthly progress reports of ongoing projects during the pandemic (2019-2020) and observed that in almost all of the projects except the temporary covid hospital constructed at Bole Bulbula area showed a major schedule creep in the first five months of the pandemic (January to May 2020).

Projects were planned based on the practical time estimated before the pandemic. All the project implementing processes such as initiating processes, planning processes, controlling processes, and closing processes showed a major delay. Fair delay was only seen on executing processes as the projects were mainly construction and renovation which needed physical existence of team on site which indicated collocated environment is more convenient for a team to produce more.

Remote working operation plans: Changing the whole team remote suddenly was not properly planned after the pandemic hit. The organization had reporting mechanisms for teams' operation remotely in refugee camps only. At later stage core staff of each unit

was selected to plan a standard operation plan for team working remotely depending on the nature of the team operation.

Working remotely, cohesion/interaction, working time: Most team members indicated that working remotely was not the place to produce effectively. It is a direct result of reduced team cohesion and face to face interaction. Team members do not believe they acquire more effective working time remotely than in office.

Nature of jobs: Most engineering works need a physical presence to do the work. Site supervisions, maintenance works, surveys require the presence of the team member to perform. There are some engineering works such as design, quantity surveying and modeling which can be performed remotely even though they need to collect and measure to collect data for design input. Some administrative work also can be performed from remote.

Stress due to the pandemic: Many researchers believed that those working at home full- or part-time reported significantly higher levels of stress and depression than those who continued to work in their usual place during lockdown, indicating that abrupt disruption to routine and unfamiliarity of working practices and environment, potentially coupled with job insecurity and anxiety (Katharine Platts1, 22).

Unlike the study conducted by many scholars the team has showed neutrality on the stress experienced by the pandemic.

Communication and collaboration, control by team leaders: There was a communication plan with clear objectives, defined stakeholders and definite time schedule to deliver the messages in standard operation of projects before the pandemic. Just after the pandemic the implementation of those protocols to virtual teams were delayed and resulted in miscommunication and lack of collaboration with team members.

Table 2. Reasons of efficiency reduction

variables	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	S D	%	Tot.	Mean
There was no standard operational plan with clear description of requirements, Communication system and Trainings, and readiness with the engineering team to get remote immediately during the pandemic.	18	58.06%	10	32.26%	2	6.45%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.39
As a team member you can more produce in a collocated working environment than remote.	26	83.87%	4	12.90%	1	3.23%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.81
Do you believe reduced cohesion between team members reduced your	23	74.19%	7	22.58%	1	3.23%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.71

effectiveness at the beginning of the pandemic?												
You had more effective working time in remote than in office.	24	77.42%	6	19.35%	1	3.23%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.74
You need live interaction and support with team members to produce effectively.	25	80.65%	6	19.35%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.81
The nature of your assignment /job needs live interaction to produce effectively.	25	80.65%	3	9.68%		0.00%	3	9.68%		0.00%	31	4.61
The stress due to the covid pandemic contributed to your effectiveness reduction.		0.00%	4	12.90%	18	58.06%	9	29.03%		0.00%	31	2.84
Miscommunication and a lack of effective collaboration with the team members contributed to reduced effectiveness.	7	22.58%	24	77.42%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.23
Internet connections at home were unstable and contributed to reduced effectiveness.		0.00%	4	12.90%	10	32.26%	17	54.84%		0.00%	31	2.58
Destructions by family members /friends contributed to work ineffectively.	17	54.84%	9	29.03%		0.00%	5	16.13%		0.00%	31	4.23
You feel relaxed at home, and you prioritize your personal issues than organizational works		0.00%	3	9.68%		0.00%	16	51.62%	12	38.71%	31	1.81
At the beginning of the pandemic there was no control by team leaders and that contributed for reduced efficiency.	28	90.32%	3	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.90

The total average is 4.06. Accordingly, it clear that the organization had no clear operation manual prepared for particular teams like engineering teams at the beginning of the pandemic. The data indicated that lack of communication, reduced cohesion and face to face interaction and nature of the engineering teamwork contributed a lot for reduced effectiveness of the team. Stress due to the pandemic and internet connection was not considered as an issue for less productiveness of team members.

4.3.3 Scale of reduced efficiency

Efficiency issue: As indicated in the findings of previous sections the team efficiency has been believed to be reduced considerably.

The organizations focus on individual performance, some other concentrate on both team performance and individual outcomes. In comparison to virtual teams, individual output may be more noticeable in face-to-face setting. It is very important for the measures of group virtual teams as well focus on individual outcomes. The quality, quantity, creativity, cost, and timeliness of the team's deliverables. When organizations assess individual outcomes, they do so at the same level which they do for team outcomes, but they assess individual outcomes based on their ability to meet milestones which they have set for general team performance and personal deadlines. Through KPIs organizations able to measure their performance in terms of the objectives and goals. The relevant information which is required by organizations is to understand that if they are achieving their goals

and objectives or not is provided by KPI. The present study considered as effectiveness and efficiency in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for measuring the performance of global virtual teams' performance, argues that a project can only be successful if the measures of efficiency and effectiveness are satisfied. Efficiency measures correspond to the strong management and internal organizational structures. (Gheni, et al., 2017)

Effectiveness measure in this study is defined as the satisfaction of the team as well as the usefulness of the project processes.

The data collected showed that the team has shown efficiency decline in all phases of the project.

Areas of reduced efficiency: Research suggests that a switch to permanent remote work would make us all less productive. The efficiency reduction can be seen in many aspects of team member jobs.

Informal communication is associated with face-to face encounters; thus, face-to-face communication plays an important role in collaboration and has been 'crucial' or 'indispensable', particularly at the beginning of a project. Frequent face-to-face interactions enable collaboration in virtual teams and is credited with the ability to dramatically boost the strength of work and social ties within the team, which promotes a worker's sense of belonging to the team and awareness of group activities, as well as boosting mutual trust and understanding, which is critical for preventing conflicts. In addition, face-to-face communication is associated with higher levels of consensus within groups, higher perceived quality, more communication, and greater efficiency in completing tasks. (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2019)

The team has shown major efficiency decline in delivering expected quality, delivering in time as well as contributing ideas to the team. The team has shown a major decline in supporting other team members and units. The team was not efficient in using available resources such as BIMcollab tools, online resources, communication tools and engineering equipment. Trust between team members has shown a decline as well as the team suffered in redundancy of effort with in team members because of the communication gap.

Table 3. scale of efficiency reduction

variables	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%	Tot.	Mean
Do you believe immediately after the pandemic your efficiency on your job reduced considerably	10	32.26%	13	41.93%	8	25.81%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.06
Reduced efficiency in Initiating phase	23	74.19%	7	22.58%	1	3.23%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.71
Reduced efficiency in Planning phase	27	87.10%	4	12.90%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.87
Reduced efficiency in Execution phase	15	48.39%	9	29.03%		0.00%	7	22.58%		0.00%	31	4.03

Reduced efficiency in Monitoring and controlling phase	11	35.48%	15	48.39%	1	3.23%	4	12.90%		0.00%	31	4.06
Reduced efficiency in Closeout phase		0.00%	25	80.65%	3	9.68%	3	9.68%		0.00%	31	3.71
Delivering expected quality	28	90.32%	3	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.90
Delivering in time	29	93.55%		0.00%	2	6.45%		54.84%		0.00%	31	4.87
Contributing ideas to the team	27	87.10%	4	12.90%		0.00%		16.13%		0.00%	31	4.87
Supporting other team members as needed	29	0.00%		9.68%	2	0.00%		51.62%		38.71%	31	4.87
In using available resources	27	90.32%	4	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.87
Trust between team members	1	3.22%	4	12.90%	8	25.81%	18	58.06%		0.00%	31	2.61
Redundancy of effort with in team members	4	12.90%	22	70.97%	5	16.13%		0.00%		0.00%	31	3.84

From the above table the results show that the team perceived that each individual has reduced efficiency during the pandemic in remote working practices. The data shows that the team's efficiency was reduced in all phases of a project life cycle.

It is clearly shown in the above table that the performance of individuals in delivering expected quality, in delivering in time, contributing ideas to the team, supporting other team members as needed, in using available resources as well as redundancy of efforts with in team members had reduced dramatically.

Trust between team members was not an issue during the pandemic.

The total mean is 4.33 which indicates that the team has shown considerable efficiency reduction during the pandemic in all phases of project cycle and in delivering expected results.

4.3.4 Effect of the engineering team efficiency on other units

Effect on other teams: WFP engineering work bridges the divide between humanitarian and development activities. Whether stemming from an emergency or the request of a government for technical assistance, an investment in infrastructure is an investment in a country's recovery, resilience and long-term food security. Globally, there are approximately 200 WFP engineers, architects and technicians working in 45 countries on projects valued at over US\$100 million in total. These projects connect communities to markets, provide easier access to food and lower the risk of devastating food insecurity. WFP engineers get the job done even in the most remote locations and under extremely challenging circumstances. The team provides the most cost-effective, high-quality, timely and sustainable infrastructure to help both WFP and the broader humanitarian community reach those in need and have safe facilities to store food supplies. (WFP, 2022)

The WFP engineering team in Ethiopia country office is one of the core teams of the organization which facilitates the operation of other units and the organization in general. The duty of the team expands from providing and managing office and camp facilities to team in field offices to monitoring condition of bridges, roads, air strips, storage facilities, food distribution centers and office/residence buildings for smooth operation of the organization. The team is tasked with managing construction project of different size in all parts of Ethiopia for the operation of WFP. It is therefore clear that the team has a direct link to the operation of the organization as a whole and different departments.

Complaints from other departments and effects on the operation of the organization:

Based on the interview conducted with project managers they clearly said that the team has received lots of complaints from field offices during the pandemic. Based on the interview conducted with Mr. Saqib Salman (Head of Engineering in Ethiopia country office) and Mr. Alemu Seifu (A senior engineer and project manager) many complaints were received by the engineering team from other departments because of a delay in delivery of expected services by the team. The delay in routine maintenance of warehouses in Gambela and Jigjiga caused warehouse to leak during the rainy season a considerable amount of grains was damaged.

Staff living in Gode and Gambela WFP camps have many complaints in the delay of repairing Air conditioners which led some staff to stay in hotels with ACs for some time.

The country office had many complaints on routine maintenance of leaking pipes, WCs, broken handles of doors and windows.

Donors such as DIFID and USAID also were obliged to extend their donation fund expiration time as the budget allocated for construction of a warehouse facility in Jigjiga and Gode was delayed due to delay in implementing the projects by the engineering team.

The managers believed that the delay in delivery of the engineering team expected services has affected the overall operation of the organization even though a detailed study was not conducted on the effect. The complaints were raised repeatedly during high management meetings within the organization.

Table 4. effect on other units

variables	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%	Tot	Mean
Your team performance affects the performance of the organization in general.	17	54.84%	11	35.48%	1	3.23%	2	6.45%		0.00%	31	4.34

Your team performance affects the performance of other units in the organization.	20	64.52%	8	25.81%	1	3.23%	2	6.45%		0.00%	31	4.61
Considerable complaints received by the engineering unit from units benefiting from the engineering unit	6	19.35%	11	35.48%	14	45.16%		0.00%		0.00%	31	3.74
The team effectiveness reduction affects overall supply chain process of the organization	24	77.42%	4	12.90%	3	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.68

From the above data it is shown that the team believed the performance decrease in the engineering team has affected the organization other units and the operation of the organization.

Complaints were received from other team on the delay, but most complaints are not addressed to the technical team. The data shows most teams are neutral to respond to complaints received from other units but most of the team believes their effectiveness reduction affected the overall operation of the organization.

The overall mean of the data is 4.34 which shows an agreement of the teams efficiency effect on the other units and the organization as a whole.

4.3.5 Enhancing the team effectiveness (tools and techniques used)

As teams become more virtual, they usually confront greater uncertainty and complexity because of distance, time, and cultural differences, thus increasing information processing and communication difficulties as they attempt to complete their work tasks. The increased use of teams in organizations is encouraged, in part, by computer-mediated communication technologies, which has profoundly changed how organizational members collect and distribute data and has also changed the dynamics and relationships between organizational members. (Berry, 2011)

Trainings/communication platforms/collaboration software : From the interview data the researcher observed that different efforts and resources had been made available to the team mainly enhance communication and ultimately to enhance the team efficiency. Design team adopted Team Collab software such as ArchiCAD and Revit so that everyone can prepare the design in each trade(Architectural, structural, Sanitary, electrical and mechanical) and can incorporate in one design file so that the collaboration software detects any clash on the design and team members can communicate through the collaboration software.

Different trainings on use of communication platforms, new collaboration software were conducted to enhance the efficiency and capacity of the team.

Microsoft team was widely adopted for official meetings and discussions as it is recommended by the IT department for safety of information transfer protocol. Others like zoom meeting were also used for informal meetings as well as group discussions.

The team had also a regular online training on stress management and covid prevention safety measures.

New Rules and regulations: New rules and regulations were developed by the organization for attendance of each staff remotely and reporting mechanism to supervisors from remote was developed. Team members were obliged to be accessible online during office hours and team leaders were responsible coaching staff members online.

Online signing of documents through DocuSign was approved by the management for easy access to approvals and note verbal.

Resources: The organization has provided resources such as Wifi dongles ,petty cash to buy table and chair that can suit for their home setup. The organization had provided required Covid -19 prevention wears such as facemasks and shields. The organization has also provided a rapid covid test centers at the organization compound for staff who's work needs physical presence.

The organization has purchased software licenses for individuals and collaboration software to enhance performance during remote working.

Table 5. Enhancing effectiveness

variables	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	S D	%	Tot.	M e a n
Trainings on remote working practices helped to enhance effectiveness	8	25.81%	14	45.16%	9	29.03%		0.00%		0.00%	31	3.97
New rules and regulations developed by the organization on remote working helped to enhance effectiveness	20	64.52%	11	35.48%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.65
Resources for communication such as WIFI and others were fulfilled and helped the team	2	6.45%	11	35.48%	18	58.06%		0.00%		0.00%	31	3.48
Remote conference platforms adopted by the organization/unit helped to enhance team effectiveness.	26	83.87%	5	16.13%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.84

Communication platforms increased team cohesiveness	15	48.39%	13	41.94%	3	9.68%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.39
Communication platforms reduced stress by increasing team cohesion	5	16.13%	22	70.97%	1	3.23%	3	9.68%		0.00%	31	3.94
Other team collaboration software contributed to enhance performance	8	25.81%	19	61.29%	4	12.90%		0.00%		0.00%	31	4.13

The overall mean of the above data is 4.2 which shows the acceptance of rules and regulations including trainings and communication platforms had been accepted as tools and mechanisms for remote working team efficiency enhancement. The above data shows that the efforts done by the organization in putting new rule and regulation with respect to the Covid pandemic has been taken as a good tool to guide and enhance the performance of the team. Trainings on communication platforms and team collaboration software, especially for engineering team, were important tools for remote team performance. Considerable team members show neutrality on the provision of resources by the organization.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is a significant/strong correlation between remote working environment and employee effectiveness in WFP engineering team.

By refereeing team efficiency or effectiveness during the pandemic in remote working conditions-Reasons of efficiency reduction there is a negative relationship between team members effectiveness and remote work environment. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. This shows the effectiveness of a team member reduces in remote located environment than co-located environment. The data mean summary shows that the team which went remote believed that the performance is reduced.

H2: There is a significant/strong correlation between remote working tools and techniques used to increase the efficiency of team members in the WFP engineering team. By referring to enhancing the team effectiveness tools and techniques used it shows that communication platforms, collaboration software and the tools used such as remote working protocols improved the team performance. This shows that due to the use of communication tools and management techniques the team performance has increased, and the hypothesis is accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter includes summary of finding from the data analysis of previous chapter and based on this summaries conclusion will be drawn and finally recommendations will be suggested accordingly.

5.1. Summary of Finding

The main objective of the study is to examine and understand how the effectiveness of a team is reduced when the work environment is unexpectedly changed to remote/virtual because of the covid pandemic, how to manage remote teams for effective performance and assessing the practice of remote team management in organizations to overcome a sudden change in the working practice.

The engineering team has twenty-three permanent staff working at different capacities. The team also constitutes several temporary staff with numbers fluctuating from twenty to thirty-five according to the number of projects the team is managing which includes consultants and contractors.

The results collected from five project managers and senior engineers through interview and data collected from 31 staff in total showed that the team has understood the importance of remote working during the pandemic. It is also clear that the team believed reduction of efficiency after the team went virtual.

To manage and follow up team members' performance Management by objective (MBO) performance appraisal method through the organizations application called SAP system was in place. The efficiency of the staff during the pandemic is measured from previous performance evaluation. The data collected confirms the decline in efficiency of the team members after started working virtual.

Project progress reports were reviewed and compared to previous similar projects where the researcher found a significance time creep in all phases of projects executed during the pandemic.

The data shows that the performance decline by the engineering team also affected cross functional teams in the organization. Interviews conducted indicated that the delay in efficiency also has incurred unaccounted loss on the organization and delay in operation of other units.

Trainings and introduction of different communication platforms has increased the efficiency of the team. The organization has adopted different covid time remote working protocols including immediate access to covid tests which is believed to have enhanced the efficiency. Resources such as internet, collaboration software, stress

management trainings also increased the cohesion between the team and the efficiency of team members.

The findings also implied some gaps in the practice of remote team management which include; lack of clearly defined communication, standard operation manuals for remote teams, overlapping responsibilities or redundant efforts by team members has also resulted in less efficiency of the team.

5.2. Conclusion

In this research project, managing teams remotely where new Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa, a case study in the UN World food program Engineering team was studied. Interview was conducted and questionnaires were administered.

The results obtained from 5 project Managers and 31 engineering team participants demonstrated that when the changing environment was changed to remote the team members effectiveness has reduced considerably. The organization had no implemented operation plans for remote team management. On later stage the organization has developed standard operation plan for remote team management, different communication platforms and protocols developed, new team collaboration software specially for engineering team were employed to increase team cohesion and ultimately to increase the team efficiency.

The data collected showed that the team efficiency had increased and got momentum after the organization implemented remote working protocols, resources, communication protocols and trainings.

5.3. Recommendations

We are not sure that when covid pandemic will be over. In addition, remote working practices seem to have many advantages in terms of cost benefits in administrating staff and office facilities.

Based on the findings it can be concluded that organizations and business entities should develop a standard operation and management plan including remote working resources and trainings to ensure business continuity during pandemics like Covid or other similar interruptions. The researcher believed that if managed properly remote working practices should be a new normal to business entities for better profit and management.

5.4 Recommendation for Further study

Even though the practice of remote working was not new to different organizations the Covid pandemic has brought a new working style, remote working to a big scale. The researcher recommends for further study on the management of remote team in similar organizations and further to business entities, schools and universities where remote working may benefit in different way if managed properly. Based on the job nature if staff or students are managed properly from remote, the practice would benefit in reducing transport, office facility and utility costs for individuals and businesses.

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ANNEX

ANNEX I

Remote team management - Interview Questions for project Managers

Dear Project Managers,

I am Berhanu Hunegnaw, a prospective graduate in Addis Ababa University School of Commerce for 2022. As a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Project Management, I am researching on Managing teams remotely: New Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa, A case study in the UN World food program Engineering team effectiveness. Your participation in this research is extremely valuable as your response will greatly help to improve the effectiveness of your remote working team and how it shall be managed in the future by evaluating, cause of the reduced effectiveness of the team while working remotely, the scale of efficiency reduction, how any delay in the engineering team affects the operation of other teams in the organization, current practices ,tools and techniques and used to manage your team remotely . It also significantly contributes to the knowledge of remote Project team management in other Non-Government Organizations and Government organizations. The results of the research will be provided to you; however, to maintain confidentiality, all your names will be kept anonymous.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude for your participation.

I. Unstructured Interview Questions

1. Tell me in about your organization, WFP, in general and the engineering unit (i.e., structure and size, number of employees, financial standing, and locations of projects).
2. Can you briefly explain about projects you are currently managing, and you managed before the COVID pandemic?
3. What can you tell me the impact of COVID pandemic on your team you are managing and on projects?
4. Did you observe changes on team efficiency during remote working and what did you do to improve the efficiency of the team?
5. What general challenges are you encountering with respect to project management after the COVID pandemic?

II. Structured Interview Questions

- a. How do you characterize your team in terms of composition and structure?
- b. Do your teams understand the concept and importance of teamwork?
- c. How do you evaluate your team performance before and after the pandemic?
- d. What were the procedures used to change your team to remote immediately after the covid pandemic?
- e. What were the challenges associated with changing your team to remote?
- f. Was the organization prepared for the remote working conditions structure during the pandemic?
- g. What tools did you use to manage remote teams (to improve team effectiveness)?

- h. What types of communication tools are available for remote teams?
- i. What are the major challenges your remote team management?
- j. How do you manage the performance of your remote team?
- k. How far did the team performance declined after the pandemic/started remote?
- l. How was performance followed up and measured?
- m. How is performance evaluated? Is there an effective performance evaluation and accountability system?
- n. How do you manage to enhance the remote team effectiveness?
- o. How did you manage the changes in the work environment (to remote team)?
- p. What were the major reasons of declining effectiveness in your remote team after starting to perform from remote?
- q. What remote management tools/techniques adopted in developing and managing your remote teams?
- r. Are there specific tools you use to make virtual teams perform effectively?
- s. What kind of feedback mechanism did you use for your remote team?
- t. How are changes managed?
- u. Are there ground rules where remote teams are guided by?
- v. What are the tools you use to motivate your team working remotely?
- w. How is project team communication managed?
- x. What are the tools used to enhance effective communication?
- y. What kind of common problems do you have in your remote team and how are they solved?

Annex II

Remote team management survey

Dear Project WFP Engineering team members,

I am Berhanu Hunegnaw, a prospective graduate in Addis Ababa University School of Commerce for 2022. As a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Project Management, I am researching on Managing teams remotely: New Practices developed because of the COVID pandemic in international organizations operating in Addis Ababa, A case study in the UN World food program Engineering team effectiveness. Your participation in this research is extremely valuable as your response will greatly help to improve the effectiveness of your remote working team and how it shall be managed in the future by evaluating, cause of the reduced effectiveness of the team while working remotely, the scale of efficiency reduction, how any delay in the engineering team affects the operation of other teams in the organization, current practices ,tools and techniques and used to manage your team remotely . It also significantly contributes to the knowledge of remote Project team management in other Non-Government Organizations and Government organizations. The results of the research will be provided to you; however, to maintain confidentiality, all your names will be kept anonymous.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude for your participation.

Please complete the following questionnaire with specific regard to the above enquiry, by placing a marking in the appropriate box

Background Information	
BI1	Gender ☐ Female ☐ Male
BI2	Nationality ☐ Ethiopian ☐ Non-Ethiopian
BI3	Age ☐ 25-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ >56
BI4	Education ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ PhD
BI5	Position ☐ Technical ☐ Supervisory

	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	A. Understanding of telecommuting Concept and Importance of remote working during the pandemic					
A01	Each team member understands the concept and importance of remote teamwork during the COVID pandemic times.					
A02	Team members have different experience of working from remote before the pandemic hits but not like this at full scale, working autonomously					
A03	Team members believe that remote working was the only choice for					

	business continuity during the pandemic					
	<i>Additional Notes/Comments:</i>					
	B. Team efficiency or effectiveness during the pandemic in remote working conditions-Reasons of efficiency reduction					
B01	There was a standard operational plan with clear description of requirements, Communication system and Trainings, and readiness with the engineering team to get remote immediately during the pandemic.					
B02	As a team member you can more produce in a collocated working environment than remote.					
B03	Do you believe reduced cohesion between team members reduced your effectiveness at the beginning of the pandemic.					
B04	You had more effective working time in remote than in office.					
B05	You need live interaction and support with team members to produce effectively.					
B06	The nature of your assignment /job needs live interaction to produce effectively.					
B07	The stress due to the covid pandemic contributed to your effectiveness reduction.					
B08	Miscommunication and a lack of effective collaboration with the team members contributed to reduced effectiveness.					
B09	Internet connections at home were unstable and contributed to reduced effectiveness.					

B10	Destructions by family members /friends contributed to work ineffectively.					
B11	You feel relaxed at home and you prioritize your personal issues than organizational works					
B12	At the beginning of the pandemic there was no control by team leaders and that contributed for reduced efficiency.					
	<i>Additional Notes/Comments:</i>					
	C. Scale of reduced efficiency					
C01	Do you believe immediately after the pandemic your efficiency on your job reduced considerably;					
C02	In initiating phase					
C03	In planning phase					
C04	In execution phase					
C05	In monitoring and controlling phase					
C06	In closeout phase					
C07	Delivering expected quality					
C08	Delivering in time					
C09	Contributing ideas to the team					
C10	Supporting other team members as needed					
C11	In using available resources					
C12	Trust between team members					
C13	Redundancy of effort with in team members					
	<i>Additional Notes/Comments:</i>					
	D. Effects of the engineering team efficiency on other units					
D01	Your team performance affects the performance of the organization in general.					
D02	Your team performance affects the performance of other units in the organization.					

D03	Considerable complaints received by the engineering unit from units benefiting from the engineering unit					
D04	The team effectiveness reduction affects overall supply chain process of the organization					
E. Enhancing the team effectiveness (tools and techniques used)						
E01	Trainings on remote working practices helped to enhance effectiveness					
E02	New rules and regulations developed by the organization on remote working helped to enhance effectiveness					
E03	Resources for communication such as WIFI and others were fulfilled and helped the team					
E04	Remote conference platforms adopted by the organization/unit helped to enhance team effectiveness.					
E05	Communication platforms increased team cohesiveness					
E06	Communication platforms reduced stress					
E07	Team collaboration software contributed to enhance performance on project performance					
E08	Can you mention communication platforms used for your remote teamwork?					
E09	Can you mention team collaboration software used for teamwork?					
	<i>Additional Notes/Comments:</i>					