

We could not go any further without technology. I do not want to relate it with the pandemic, since social media, teleworking and online services have been there years before. However, we can say, it became more structured now or let's say obligatory in many circumstances, or more in need.

So indeed, we have all these great tools that have appeared in our workplace and businesses, and in our life in general, to make it more convenient and more safe and more fun. But let's talk about the impact they have on people and on their behaviors or performance. Because definitely as a psychologist, I am much interested on people's well-being and psychological status, but as a person in charge of the development of people in an international company, we are equally interested on their performance

I am going to talk about things that you have heard already, but I will focus on hidden things that we do not realize how they exist

So let's start with Teleworking, stress, emotions and health

If you ask anyone why do you prefer working from home, most of the answers will be, because the office is far away, because of the traffic, because I don't see annoying colleagues, because I manage my time, because I don't have to dress up, because of any other reason, but rarely you hear 'because I perform better'. Well, maybe this is the consequence of all the above, but this is not the actual target

By now, we are all aware of the benefits more or less

1. Some say that there is a Better balance of home and work life. Employees are able to spend less time away from home and thus use the time which might otherwise have wasted on traveling or being in the office
2. Increased flexibility. Employees can often use the hours they work (some taking advantage on gym membership, or collect kids from school), or simply – and let's hope for that – they choose working at times when they are more productive. Flexibility comes from the freedom of managing one's own time
3. Reduction in commuting. the reduction in commuting has potential positive impacts on cost, time and stress and maybe the primary reason employees choose working from home
4. Reduced expenses for employers. research shows savings of around 25% , and that might come from office space , electricity and so on
5. Increased productivity – although I am not sure how this can be tracked – but in this case is probably due to fewer interruptions, longer working hours and the flexibility when planning work schedules

On the other hand, a wide range of problems associated with teleworking have been documented.

1. Social isolation . is the most frequently cited disadvantage of teleworking by employees. Almost 60% report that this is the greatest disadvantage . being with others provides a social comparison. In general, people look to others to give them some idea of how we ought to be behaving. we tend to use other people as barometers. The reduction of this barometer or measure of ourselves is significant to employees
2. Presenteeism is a wonderful KPI, and au currant these days. A definition of presenteeism is dragging yourself into the office when you're ill, to show you're not a lazy person or logging in to do extra work from home, to be seen doing it. You'll likely achieve little in the time, but you'll still feel the need to appear productive

The word "presenteeism" is a play on "absenteeism ," which describes the opposite pattern of behavior: unexpectedly not showing up, especially when you actually could

Before the rise in virtual working, presenteeism often involved arriving first in the office and leaving last. Now, studies show that we're working even longer hours, but doing it remotely. Digital presenteeism is setting in. We're answering emails and sending direct messages at all hours. In short, we can't switch off.

For many, presenteeism is a heritage of office culture. People don't want to be the last to arrive or first to leave. We worry that our bosses will be disappointed, or that our colleagues will gossip – affecting our chances of promotion.

The pandemic has made many of us feel the need to go the extra mile to hold down our jobs when others are losing theirs . There is also a widespread assumption that leaders and managers will rate more highly the team members who they get to meet, those who've made the effort to come in to the office.

Trouble is, research shows our fears might be real. A 2019 study found that remote workers have slower salary growth than their office-based co-workers. Psychologists point to unconscious biases :

- "Mere-exposure effect" – the more you see someone, the more you relate to and like them.
- "Halo effect" – you fall into the logical fallacy trap of seeing someone as nice rather than productive

These phenomena can conspire and lead to people getting promoted over less-visible but more-skilled employees. Just because they turn up!

Clearly, presenteeism can lead to physical and mental exhaustion. Research suggests it can also be caused by lack of sleep and poor mental health.

Studies also show that our health has declined during the pandemic. We're sleeping less, are more depressed, So, a rise in presenteeism is a logical outcome of the pandemic, not simply for reasons of job security or visibility.

3. Blurring of boundaries. This is another important thing we do not realize it is happening. The commute from home to work has traditionally allowed the transition between roles to occur. Most of employees found commuting a useful break between home and work. Although many employees attempt to develop spatial and temporal boundaries between work and home life, such as creating a room only used for work, working from home does blur the distinction between roles, not only for the employee but also for the family

4. Emotions . coming from a qualitative research by Mann and others, there is a greater percentage of teleworkers than office workers who experience negative emotions of loneliness, irritability, worry and guilt. The only negative emotion that both groups reported was that of stress that was related to the actual job but office workers also felt stress effects related to transport and office politics.

So this is the data collected. However, if I was to interview each and everyone of you, you would come up with a unique situation. For example

1. Babies that cry
2. Dog that barks
3. Many kilometers away , too much traffic
4. Not able to have my own space at home
5. Being super social, thus feeling isolated
6. Being super quite, thus feeling great
7. I am independent, I want to make my own schedule
8. I am team player, I need constant guidance

All the above cases might be a super employee, highly skilled , high performer. However, each one has his own personality and characteristics in their environment. this means that we need to evaluate each employee individually. definitely we need to adopt in some circumstances, however we need to find the maximum that will benefit both the employee and his performance at the end. we have to be clear with teleworking policies that deal with issues such as sick leave and working hours, same conditions as office workers even if less visible. We need to support by providing advice and input on dealing with stress, work and family boundaries and work-family conflicts, all of which might be particularly relevant to teleworkers

In addition, efforts should be made to reduce isolation of teleworkers by providing varied and innovative opportunities for interaction

And due to that we have the trend of technological or digital detox, that we see very often lately on the HR and psychology journals

(Always have in mind that the same condition might have totally different impact on each one of us, as we have different personalities and characteristics, we live under different circumstances and we conduct different behaviors to same stimuli. No one will suffer from technology, if it has a clear set up, and this applies to any form of technology / social media/ tools etc)

Small breaks away from technology can have big benefits - at home and at work

A digital – detox

Small breaks =big benefits

Some might sound dreamlike, but this comes from Harvard business review

- Make meetings device-free. Place phones in a box in the centre of the room and if you're running the meeting, lead by example.
- Encourage walking/device-free meetings, where everyone can get active and leave their phones and screens behind.
- Structure your day into blocks and turn off pop-up notifications.
- Turn your phone on 'do not disturb' mode when you leave the office. No notifications, no checking! This is surreal, right?
- Go screen-free on the weekends
- If you're working on your computer, simply lay your phone face-down to avoid any distraction caused from a flashing phone.

Ok , if we were at the same room, I might see someone laughing sarcastically. Because who's going to have a walking device free meeting? How can we go screen free on the weekends ? well, it should be like that. Personally I have seen people getting sick because of their addiction on their mobile for work or else, and there is a scientific explanation for this

Can Too Much Technology And Social Media Affect our Health And Happiness?

The pull of technology addiction isn't all in our heads. It's quite real, thanks to several chemicals our brains produce: one core of them is dopamine

Dopamine

Scientists used to think dopamine was a pleasure chemical in the brain, but now we know what it actually creates is **want**. Dopamine causes us to seek, desire, and search.

Dopamine is stimulated by unpredictability, by small bits of information, and by reward cues—pretty much the exact conditions of social media. Also, receiving an email, is somehow an award as well

The pull of dopamine is so strong that studies have shown tweeting is harder for people to resist than cigarettes and alcohol.

I'm not saying social media is a bad thing, but any activity that produces dopamine with no hard work can become a problem. (instant gratification theory, addiction)

Workaholics may release a lot of dopamine, but for most people, hard work produces stress, anxiety, and other feelings that make us want to quit, and often the dopamine doesn't come until the task is complete. Instead of quitting your goal when you feel stressed, just push through, and you'll feel rewarded in the end. Instead of checking social media every time you hit a dull moment, try listening to music, pick up a book, or do a task that requires some hard work. Or, you can just learn how to be bored because many people around you forget how to

Well time is up. There is a lot more to say. Just to conclude, tech is amazing. It helps us solve daily tasks, makes it possible to work or study from any part of the world, be connected all the time, and helps save a lot of time. However, using tech can become stressful and overwhelming.

Our time in life is precious, and considering some misuses of technology in our world today, we do not need to have our lives overtaken and overrun by tech. balance is everything, and while it is not easy to achieve in our unbalanced world, it is crucial for a happy and healthy life.