From Zoom to Boom: Analyzing the Impact of Communication Tech on Employee Output in Canada’s Lockdown Landscape

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# Abstract

This research proposal aims to explore and analyze the relationship between communication technology usage and employee productivity during lockdowns in Canada. Though there were obvious health and crisis-lessening benefits that came from the lockdowns, there were also many negative side-effects, including professionally and psychologically, that were initially way lined for the greater good. By examining the factors that influenced the adoption and utilization of these communication tools, as well as their effects on individual productivity and overall organizational performance, this study intends to shed light on the role of technology in remote work contexts and its potential implications for workforce management.

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# Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 subsequently triggered the greatest disruption to life in recent history, leading to a global crisis within days. This crisis led governments worldwide, including Canada, to implement stringent measures to curb the spread of the virus and “flatten the curve”. These measures included government-mandated lockdowns, restricting social interactions and confining millions of employees to work remotely from their homes. In response to these exceptional circumstances, businesses rapidly adopted various communications technologies to sustain operations, enabling employees to remain connected to collaborate and continue working amidst the challenges of isolation and physical distancing. The widespread adoption of communication technology during the lockdown period has not only transformed the way organizations function but has also raised questions about its implications for employee productivity. While remote work offers benefits such as flexibility and reduced or eliminated commuting time, it also introduces new challenges related to employee productivity, work-life balance, and social interaction. Therefore, understanding the impact of communication technology on employee productivity during government mandated lockdowns is not only academically significant, but also practically relevant for businesses and policymakers seeking to optimize their strategies for future crises or remote work scenarios and for the continuance of remote work as we know it today.

# Problem Statement

The increased reliance on communication technology during government-mandated lockdowns has led to a pressing need to assess its impact on employee productivity and its implications for work-life balance.

The pandemic-induced remote work shift has compelled employees to adapt quickly to virtual communication platforms, such as video conferencing, instant messaging, and collaboration software. While these technologies have facilitated a flexible communication environment and enabled teams to stay connected, their influence on employee productivity remains a topic of interest and concern. Understanding the extent to which these technologies influence productivity is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize remote work practices.

As the world adapts to a “new normal”, it is imperative to delve deeper into the interplay between communication technologies and employee productivity. This research seeks to address critical questions and provide evidence-based recommendations that can shape remote work policies and practices, leading to enhanced productivity, improved employee satisfaction, and a healthier work-life integration for remote-work employees in Canada.

# Preliminary Literature Review

A preliminary literature review revealed that past studies were few in number as they pertained to the problem as a whole. Relevant literature was primarily focused on researching and analyzing problems as they related to niche problems, such as the effectiveness of public health communication during lockdown (Lowe, et al., 2022) and the effects of social isolation and communication with family and friends during lockdown (Heshmat & Neustaedter, 2021).

# References

* Heshmat, Y. & Neustaedter, C. (2021). Family and Friend Communication over Distance in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Available at: <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3461778.3462022> (accessed 04 August 2023)
* Lowe, M., et al. (2022). Public health communication in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17269%2Fs41997-022-00702-z> (accessed 04 August 2023)