

# **Possibility Transition to Hybrid Working System for Interior - Architecture Consultants in the Post-Pandemic Era**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over time, the world community began to be able to live side by side with the Covid-19 pandemic. One of those is in the work system of the interior design and architecture consultant office that has gone through the work from home process with all the benefits and drawbacks, so interior design and architecture consultants still need a work from office way of working. Adaptation of work from a working system at home to a working system that is more responsive to current needs, namely the Hybrid system. This new work system is considered more effective and efficient considering its adaptability which is safer and more comfortable to complete design work, this system of course relies heavily on many strong supporters, one of which is the readiness of the office to respond to these safe and comfortable needs. Adapting to new needs for an office today are two sides of consideration that must be improved, the first side is the comfort and security of the office from the pandemic, on the other hand, is the ability to adapt to the possibility of working with a hybrid system. Through this study, the author will discuss the possibility that arises from fulfilling the safety and comfort factor through the point of view of apprentice students who work in interior design and architectural consultants, through the ethnographic method which is carried out through in-depth interviews, so that qualitative data is collected enough to build this writing.

Keywords: Post-Pandemic, Hybrid Work System, Technology

## **INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes to the working system of the interior-architectural design consulting office. The series of activities in the work

system must run well, and the proper way is needed so that it can be carried out safely and comfortably. This needs to be addressed so that the work process at the office continues to run smoothly even in a pandemic condition.

Along with the emergence of various new policies, many consultants have begun to switch to a hybrid work system by combining the WFH and WFO work systems. Of course, this decision has an impact on the workers and interns in it. Therefore, this study will discuss the possibility of a hybrid work system transition in the future for interns at interior-architectural design consultants.

Based on the explanation above, questions arise: (1) When the pandemic is considered sloping, is a hybrid work system still needed? (2) What are the advantages of a hybrid work system and how to take advantage of its possibility?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The author uses a descriptive qualitative method by using literature studies to find the basic principles of measurable office work effectiveness. Besides that, the author does in-depth online interviews to get wider data because the author can choose communication media so it can easily interact verbally with informants anywhere and anytime (Salmons, Janet 2014:29).

### **Design Consultant Work System**

Suyenni's research entitled "Analysis of Solution Search Strategies in the Design Process" (2009), it shows that: "the design principal sets from the start the design direction he wants to achieve in the design consultant he leads. The clarity of this design direction must be able to be translated by the working designers. In it, so that the design process in the consultant is maintained and controlled until it is time to issue the design results".

Through the quote above, it can be seen that the design process within the design consultant must be well controlled, supervision and control require a design strategy, but furthermore, it is necessary to think about the constraints related to the pandemic and the adverse effects it has on the design strategy.

Susanne Colenberg and Tuuli Jylhä, two researchers from Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands, used a literature sample of 59 peer-reviewed papers published across disciplines and used them to collect examples of workplace design features that positively affect worker well-being. Through their research, they can understand the influence of the workplace on the performance of current interior design employees.

The author interprets the design strategy as strategic steps to deal with various possibilities in current conditions, but still prioritizes work safety and comfort.

## **Worker Productivity**

Interior-architectural design consultants are institutions that must be professional in providing services to the community, to approach this understanding one aspect that is easily measured is the productivity of the work produced.

According to Colenberg and Jylhä, (2021), four factors must be considered by interior design offices today: (1) Design for comfort, (2) Design for restoration, (3) Design for social welfare, and (4) Design for healthy behavior. Their discussion emphasized the physical influence of space on employee behavior during a pandemic.

On the other hand, Andriyany (2021) mentions factors that affect employee work productivity, such as: (1) The relationship between superiors and subordinates can affect employee performance and productivity, (2) employee work motivation, where the WFH and WFO work systems have an impact on employees. motivation of a person at work, (3) Attitude of work ethics with colleagues and superiors, (4) Sophistication of technology, where the existing facilities can accommodate work needs and affect employee motivation.

## **Discussion of WFH and WFO During Pandemic**

Following the recommendation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and considering the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO) to open up more relaxed social isolation, the work system began to be divided into two, namely WFO (work from office) and WFH (work from home).

This discussion will be presented in stages through exposure to the constraints and possibility of WFO's work, then the limitations and possibility of WFH's work to facilitate understanding of the possibility of hybrid work.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Through this research, the author wants to know the effect of the pandemic on the work system of interior-architectural design consultants, so the author needs to find information from parties directly involved in it. The author uses ethnographic research methods with data collection through telephone interviews with resource persons. The selected resource persons have interned students from Pelita Harapan University class of 2018-2019. The data is compiled in field notes, with coding and memoing to facilitate discussion.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Working conditions in the office**

The first factor is: Office for comfort, comfortable design is not just beautiful and cool, interior design also opens up opportunities for vertical relationships between superiors and subordinates, as well as horizontal relationships between subordinates and subordinates. Some interesting responses from informants are:

"...have to talk often to ask questions so that it looks like the initiative is brought to the site so I can learn a lot." (Informant D, Apprentice, 2/3/,2022)

“...Usually if you are an intern you are given a senior designer supervisor, so he is the one who always teaches you and if he has a project, you will be invited.” (MK informant, Apprentice Student, 02/03/2022)

“...if we ask anything it becomes easy. If you're not close enough, you think a lot... If you're close, their superiors are welcome to answer me” (Navy Informant, Internship Student, 03/03/2022)

From the data above, it is found that the interior design of the consultant's office must meet the comfort needs of employees, both physical comfort and comfort at work. The relationship between supervisor and apprentice greatly affects the performance of the intern.

### **Employee work motivation**

The second factor is the office must be able to restore, the current pandemic conditions make the concept of space must be changed, the thought of sociologist Aaron Antonovsky was originally developed by Aaron Antonovsky - a sociologist who made the theory of Salutogenics a positive force given by interior designers later adopted to deal with the pandemic. (Roskams and Haynes, 2019). This theory is in line with Positive Psychology written by Lea Waters et.al. (2022) who see an attitude with positive thinking as the best solution to overcome pandemic fears. From these two theories, it can be understood that space and human attitudes can provide solutions to current needs.

A few quotes provide insight into the current state of the design office.

“... our industry will better coordinate offline. Reduces misunderstandings and human errors that can't be controlled by WFH.” (Informant, principal, 30/05/2022)

“...The table is very narrow and the distance between my chairs is also very close to the guest chairs. The air conditioner is also not cold enough, I like comfortable, clean, and cold places so I can be productive...” (EF Informant, Practical Work Student, 01/03/2022)

“I prefer WFO, so I can get to know others and there are no problems for now” (Informant D, Apprentice, 2/3/,2022)

Based on the informant's data above, there are two opinions regarding WFO and WFH, WFH work slows down performance because it requires work coordination to reduce misunderstandings and human errors that cannot be controlled if WFH employees and interns do not get an uplifting work atmosphere. The rest admit that WFO is more profitable because it can build relationships with others and be more focused. The rest mentioned their concerns because health protocols were not properly maintained, especially during this time of the covid pandemic.

From the description above, it can be understood that working WFO motivates employees' work through several aspects, such as, (1) A comfortable office atmosphere, related to employee cohesiveness at work. (2) A clean office environment, associated with the covid pandemic. (3) Ergonomic arrangement of furniture in the office to provide a sense of comfort for its users.

### **Attitude Work comfort**

The third and fourth factors that must be considered are: Design for social welfare and healthy behavior, this factor emphasizes the design that influences the comfort aspect in relation to increase work productivity.

"There's no difference in assignments, I was asked to hold an architect's working drawing and was guided from 0 to really teach it..." (CN Informant, Internship Student, 01/03/2022)

"The good thing is that at the beginning they don't understand boundaries, so they like to skip work hours and still get work" (EF Informant, Internship Student, 01/03/2022)

"...everyone is relaxed and doesn't care, like there is no covid" (MK Informant, Practical Work Student, 01/03/2022)

"...It's a bit negative because the work is too forced, it works all night. I once came home at 1-2 in the morning, maximum at 3 am ." (VL informant, Intern student, 07/03/2022)

From the informant's data above, it can be seen that the potential and constraints of WFO's work arouse enthusiasm for work, but work comfort and healthy behavior at work have a negative effect on interns, and work ethics are not implemented properly so that it affects their work productivity.

### **Sophisticated technology**

This technology-related discussion becomes crucial because the network strength factor is often an obstacle, technology becomes great during WFO, but becomes a big problem during WFH. This obstacle has become a consideration for several principals to eliminate WFH, but it is necessary to think about it if the pandemic rages on again and must WFH.

"Now, WFH is using Discord + GDrive. There are many channels on discord that are based on ongoing projects." (CN Informant, Student Apprentice, 01/03/2022)

"... the system works if large files are sent via email, but if small files use WA." (EF Informant, Internship Student, 01/03/2022)

" ... Files sent using the hard disk due to WFO.... For example, take it home (file), it must be sent to the office drive when finished and the file on your computer must be deleted." (MK informant, Apprentice Student, 02/03/2022)

"...the assist takes a long time to progress because you have to wait for the chat to reply." (VL informant, Intern student, 07/03/2022)

“Zoom is easy to use, fast, everyone uses, can share screens, comments quickly, image resolution is very good for presentations.” (AG informant, intern, 29/05/2022)

Based on the sample data above, the use of advanced technology is preferred for data storage and communication. The existing data storage technology to date has answered the demands and needs of consultants. Online data storage technology has been widely applied by consultants, especially for those who run a work from home (WFH) system. The data security factor is also one of the considerations for the selection of storage system technology. Online storage is considered not as safe as storage through a server, because data online is easier to spread and can be directly accessed by anyone who has a link.

If the constraints of work coordination, data transmission and interaction can take place through available technology, then the design strategy through WFH work can be implemented. The difficulty of the WFO working system allows the WFH working system to develop, but it is an exciting thought that the advantages and disadvantages of these two systems can cover each other if supervision and control can be carried out properly, the opportunity for a hybrid system to be the best choice for certain conditions.

## **CONCLUSION**

If the above considerations are accepted, then the hybrid system can solve the weaknesses of the WFH and WFO systems, and open up new possibilities, including: (1) Work can be done more flexibly. (2) Provide freedom that can make workers more comfortable. (3) There is a regular distribution of WFO and WFH work schedules. (4) Long-distance interaction without being limited by space and time, thus facilitating communication and monitoring by superiors. The first question is answered through this explanation.

The hybrid work system in the post-pandemic period can continue to be applied, due to the fulfillment of worker productivity factors, namely, (1) increasingly sophisticated technology is accompanied by the ability of workers to operate existing technology to optimize work productivity. (2) Work comfort creates good relations between workers and superiors so that work motivation arises. The second question is answered through this explanation.

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