

How the Brazilian Workers are Dealing with Return-To-Work Post-Pandemic: An Unchartered Territory

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has caused instability and uncertainty in various aspects of life, including labor relations. This article explores the return-to-work (RTW) scenario in the Brazilian IT sector, the top ten largest global IT market. The research focuses on the employee's perspective, addressing a gap in understanding productivity effects. Through Focus Groups and In-depth Interviews, the study found a trend of adherence to three work modalities: face-to-face, hybrid, and teleworking, contrary to other industries. The findings highlight the need for further analysis and discussion on RTW post-pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Brazilian IT industry, Return-to-Work (RTW)

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, COVID-19 swept the globe. Uncertainty and instability drastically altered our way of life. In most instances, overnight social isolation measures imposed by governments worldwide, such as international border closures, were ineffective in containing the spread of the coronavirus. The WHO has confirmed 676,609,955 cases and 6,881,955 fatalities in 228 countries, causing economic devastation [1]. On 5 May 2023, the WHO declared the end of the Public Health Emergency of International Concern regarding COVID-19 [1].

Then, with the withdrawal of the sanitary restrictions and the end of social isolation, workers gradually returned to their activities, but the world was not the same anymore. The coronavirus pandemic affected workers' bodies, minds, and souls on an unprecedented scale for the first time in century XXI. Through focus groups and qualitative in-depth interviews, this research investigates what happened to workers on their return within the Brazilian IT sector, the tenth largest market worldwide, in the upcoming paragraphs.

Firstly, Return to Work (RTW) has been intrinsically associated to work after (a) physical diseases [2]; [3]; [4]; [5]; [6]; (b) musculoskeletal rehabilitation [7]; [8], (c) after COVID-19 [9]; [10]; [11]; [12], and (d) mental diseases [13]. In addition, RTW is also related to face-to-face work [14]; [15]. However, with the pandemic, lockdowns, and social mobility restrictions, it is unrealistic to assume that RTW means workers returning to face-to-face work, sometimes called Return to Office [14]; [15].

Due to the health restrictions imposed by governments around the world, most workers had to adapt overnight to teleworking, with face-to-face work prohibited until the transmission of the virus was controlled. Nonetheless, when the number of coronavirus cases decreased, Return to Work (RTW), for the first time, was not associated with a physical or mental health condition but with the cessation of a legal restriction imposed for sanitary reasons.

Furthermore, with the improvement of communication technology, some workers preferred to stay home, others preferred face-to-face work, while others preferred a hybrid work modality. Therefore, after the pandemics, the three modalities coexist.

Therefore, in this article, we introduce the following typology regarding the Return-to-Work modality after the pandemic is over: (a) Return to Work - Office (RTW-O), when the employees return to face-to-face work; (b) Return to Work - Teleworking (RTW-T), when the employees return to teleworking, and (c) Return to Work - Hybrid (RTW-H), if the employees are part-time face-to-face, part-time teleworking.

It is reasonable to suppose that workers would prefer to return massively to face-to-face work after COVID-19, primarily because they were tired of social isolation and desperate for physical contact with coworkers. On the contrary, returning to work did not follow the expected course. Therefore, in this article, we explored the uncharted territory of Return-to-Work (RTW) in the Brazilian IT segment, given its relevance to the global economy, primarily because (a) Brazil is the top ten global IT market; (b) Brazil is the first IT market in Latin America with almost the double of the size of the second market which is Mexico (c) the availability of data; (d) because the disruptiveness of IT industry due to easy access to technology, and finally, (e) personal motivation. Therefore, the challenges and nuances of unknown RTW in the Brazilian IT sector are explored here through qualitative methods.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

RTW is usually studied after medical conditions, such as (a) stroke [16]; [17]), (b) injured workers [6], (b) after mental disorders [18]; (c) after occupational therapy [19]; (d) after the treatment of coronary heart disease [20]; (e) after musculoskeletal disorders (Schultz, et al., 2007); (f) after depression [21] to name a few recent studies. In addition, a handful of studies have examined RTW through the employer's perspective [22]; [23].

After the pandemic, this concept it is still used to speak about RTW now also addressing people who had COVID-19 complications [9]; [10]; [11]; [12], and the general term used to return to the office face-to-face, but in Brazilian IT industry the return to work opened new options, where we detail the findings regarding RTW collected from Focus Groups (FG) and Interviews (I) with qualified professionals from the sector.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study incorporated multiple methodologies, including focus groups and in-depth interviews, to examine the influence factors of teleworking on the Return-to-Work (RTW) in the Brazilian IT industry before, during, and after the pandemic.

Sampling

This article used three different types of sampling: (i) purposive sampling, (ii) criterion sampling, and (iii) snowball sampling. These were the best for the research because they met the study's goals, setting standards used throughout the data collection and taking advantage of opportunities as they came up. The snowball sampling technique is often used when the population of interest is unknown and uncommon, making choosing people for inclusion as research samples challenging. A purposeful sampling strategy was chosen because the data quality to comprehend the nuances of the analyzed phenomenon using a questionnaire.

The following criteria were used to select participants and interviewees: (a) Brazilians, as we are studying Brazil scenario; (b) Workers, as an active market professional; (c) from the IT sector, including service providers, software, and hardware industries, as we are focusing in IT industry; (d) a minimum of three years of professional experience, as we considered the minimum to fit the timeframe studied (period of pandemic and post-pandemic). The snowball sampling strategy was chosen because participants could assist in locating additional participants/interviewees. It was instrumental in the Focus Group, where, for instance, one participant (P#12) brought two additional participants (P#1 and P#2) to the session.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Focus Group 1 and 2 findings and analysis

As a result, after following a rigorous three-phase, iterative coding process, the open, axial, and selective codes were grouped into categories and subcategories, revealing three emerging themes in Focus Group 1, such as (i) control; (ii) performance, and (iii) affected relationships and Focus Group 2 revealed four emerging themes after careful content analysis: (i) Control in Teleworking, which is also revealed in FG1; and three new subjects ordered in sequence as (iv) Feelings post-pandemic; (v) Bad market practices; (vi) and Teleworking common issues. Table 1 shows the emerging themes from Focus Group 1 and 2. In this next section, we analyze the findings from Focus Groups 1 and 2 together.

Table 1: Emerging Themes from FG1 and FG2

Focus Group	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
	Control in Teleworking	Performance	Affected Relationships	Feelings Post-Pandemic	Bad Market Practices	Teleworking Common Issues
FG1	•	•	•	-	-	-
FG2	•	-	-	•	•	•
Implications	Individual/Social	Individual	Individual/Social	Individual	Individual	Individual

Finally, to ensure validity through the convergence of attributable to the consolidation of data from multiple sources, we triangulated data by a researcher, following [24] and [25]. As a result, two independent coding processes validated the themes before the convergence of analysis consolidated them.

Focus Group 1 and 2 Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis was conducted to avoid elite bias [26]. First, the Focus Group participants were grouped according to their management positions. Then, each theme's relevance level was attributed to all participants, aiming at finding different perspectives regarding the

clusters (see Note 2) Because Focus Groups 1 and 2 differ in ranking positions, we display the two separate cluster analyses, illustrated in Tables 2 (Focus Group 1) and 3 (Focus Group 2):

Table 2: Focus Group 1 Cluster Analysis

Management Level	Themes	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
	Participants	Control in Teleworking	Performance	Affected Relationships
H	P#1	●●●	●	-
H	P#2	-	●●●	●●●
H	P#11	●	●●●	●●●
H	P#12	-	●●●	●●●
H	P#13	●	-	●●●
M	P#3	●●●	●●●	●●●
M	P#4	-	●●●	●●●
L	P#5	-	-	-
L	P#6	●●●	●	●●●
L	P#7	●●●	●●●	-
L	P#8	●	●	-
L	P#9	-	-	●●●
L	P#10	-	-	●

Note: H=High; M=Medium; L= Low management level
 Notez: (●) = Relevant; (●●●) = Extremely Relevant; (-) =non-Relevant

Table 3: Focus Group 2 Cluster Analysis

Management Level	Themes	Theme 1	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
	Participants	Control in Teleworking	Feelings Post-Pandemic	Bad Market Practices	Teleworking Common Issues
H	P#1	-	-	●●●	●●●
H	P#12	-	-	-	-
M	P#3	●●●	●●●	-	●●●
L	P#2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
L	P#4	●	-	-	-
L	P#5	●	●●●	-	●●●
L	P#6	●	-	-	-
L	P#7	●●●	●●●	●●●	-
L	P#8	-	●●●	-	●
L	P#9	●	●●●	-	●
L	P#10	●	●●●	-	●●●
L	P#11	●	-	-	-
L	P#13	-	●	-	-

Note: H=High; M=Medium; L= Low management level
 Notez: (●) = Relevant; (●●●) = Extremely Relevant; (-) =non-Relevant

Table 3 shows the four emerging themes, organized into clusters (High, Medium, and Lower management levels), and we attributed relevance intensity levels (Relevant, extremely relevant, and non-relevant for each theme versus participant, following [25]. Observe how Theme 4, Feelings Post-pandemic, was considered highly relevant to the upper management positions.

In-depth Interviews Findings and Analysis

The 6 themes emerged in FG1 and FG2 were also observed in the interviews, as depicted in the following Table 4:

Table 4: Emerging Themes: Focus Groups 1, 2 and Interviews

Focus Group	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
	Control in Teleworking	Performance	Affected Relationships	Feelings Post-Pandemic	Bad Market Practices	Teleworking Common Issues
FG1	•	•	•	-	-	-
FG2	•	-	-	•	•	•
Interviews	•	•	•	•	•	•
Implications	Individual/Social	Individual	Individual/Social	Individual	Individual	Individual

In-depth Interviews Cluster Analysis

The interviews allowed us to cross and drill down the themes found in the FG1 and FG2, which gave us more insights regarding RTW in the Brazilian IT industry. Cluster analysis was conducted to avoid *elite bias* [26]. First, the Interviewees were grouped according to their management positions. Then, each theme's relevance level was attributed to all interviewees to look for different perspectives regarding the clusters (Note 2 – Table 5). The attributed relevance intensity levels (Relevant, extremely relevant, and non-relevant) for each theme versus participant, following [25] and previously used to make the comparison easy. As a result, some themes were considered relevant or highly relevant to some management groups than others, as illustrated in Table 5:

Table 5 Interviews' Cluster Analysis

Themes		Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
Mgt Level	Int.	Control in Teleworking	Performance	Affected Relationships	Feelings Post-Pandemic	Bad Market Practices	Teleworking Common Issues
H	I#1	•••	•••	-	•••	•••	•••
H	I#9	•	•••	•••	•	•	-
M	I#3	•••	-	•	-	-	-
M	I#4	•••	-	•••	•••	•	-
M	I#7	•	•••	-	•••	•	-
M	I#14	•	•••	•	•••	•	•••
L	I#2	•••	•••	•	-	•••	-
L	I#5	•••	•••	•••	•••	•	•••
L	I#6	-	•	•	-	•	-
L	I#8	•••	•	•	-	•••	•••
L	I#10	-	•••	-	-	•	-
L	I#11	-	-	•	-	-	-
L	I#12	•••	•••	-	-	•••	-
L	I#13	•	•	•••	-	-	-
L	I#15	•	•••	-	-	-	-
L	I#16	-	•••	•	-	-	•
L	I#17	-	-	-	•	•••	-
L	I#18	-	•••	•	-	•••	-
L	I#19	•	-	•	•	•••	•
L	I#20	•	•••	-	•••	•	•••

DISCUSSION

Firstly, this research was designed to understand the Return to Work (RTW) after pandemics in the Brazilian IT industry according to the employees' viewpoint through exploratory, qualitative research, which best suits the research objectives outlined in the Introduction.

Answers to the Research Question

The Research Question: "How are employees affected by Return to Work (RTW) in the Brazilian IT industry after the COVID-19?" is addressed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, at the beginning of the study, we were expecting a post-pandemic with a different scenario since some aspects of Teleworking and even the psychological effects of the pandemic would make the RTW-O and RTW-H more present. However, the evidence found in the FG sessions and interviews showed that the RTW for Brazilian IT differed before the pandemic. There was a considerable change in how professionals work, with a sensitive change from face-to-face before the pandemic to few or none as face-to-face (RTW-O), some as hybrid mode (RTW-H) or and most of them as full teleworking (RTW-T) after the pandemic, which endorses an enormous change in the Brazilian IT industry.

Then, the changes are translated into six themes: (i) Control in Teleworking; (ii) Performance; (iii) Affected relationships; (iv) Feelings Post-Pandemic; (v) Bad Market Practices; and (vi) Teleworking Common Issues. All themes are discussed in the upcoming sections.

Theme One: Control in Teleworking

After COVID-19, the control over the employees changed as well, here evidence showed different types of control once the biggest workforce is now teleworking. Focus Group 1 analysis revealed this subject that was corroborated by FG2 and in the interviews. Cluster analysis of FG1 pointed this subject as relevant to the lower management for some lower and higher management levels, while in the FG2, it was also considered relevant to the low management level, highly relevant to medium management, and not to the high management level. For the interviews this was considered relevant or highly relevant to medium and high management levels and non-relevant to some lower management levels. Evidence showed participants from FG1, FG2 and Interviewees that (i) controls in teleworking is more difficult to separate from personal life as declared by interviewee #4 and participant #7 from FG1:

"You have greater flexibility to work outside your normal hours, right, and compensate." (I #4)

"If you're going to work at dawn, in the morning or the afternoon, I don't care. What I want is for you to get your work done." (P#7 FG1)

(ii) there is an excess of control over working hours as revealed Participant #7 from FG2, Participant #1 from FG1, and Interviewee #8:

"We have a point to clock in; we have another point where we clock the project hours. Our company uses software for clocking in time, posting project hours, updating quarterly programming allocations, and logging hours in JIRA for up-to-

date project course allocation. So, it's a crazy time management system." (P#7 FG2)

"You use technology for you in a certain way, trying to ensure that the guy is really working, right?" (P#1 FG1)

"the manager saw it through the delivery time, I know that this activity takes 20 hours to deliver." (I #8)

(iii) good time control is key to keep teleworking (RTW-T) as revealed by interviewee #20, #15, and explained in different way by participant #10 from FG2 who said about control by demand as a way of control:

"good time management is essential." (I# 20)

"I control my schedule a lot." (I #15)

"And we work with cards in JIRA, I write down more or less what I have done that day without having to write down the time, these things, I think it is better that way because we spend less time and at the end of the day I put my notes there, and that is it." (P#10 FG2)

Finally, answering the research question, evidences revealed the excess of control in teleworking influences somehow the perception of employee in the RTW in the Brazilian IT industry after the COVID-19, what was predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T), while flexibility influences somehow.

Theme Two: Performance

Performance was revealed during Focus Group 1 analysis that was corroborated by the interviews, not appearing in Focus Group 2.

Cluster analysis of FG1 highlighted this subject as highly relevant to medium and some high and low management levels. At the same time, the interviews were perceived as highly relevant to high management levels and for some medium and low management levels (see Tables 2 and 3).

Evidence showed participants from FG1 and Interviewees that (i) work by demand is easier to measure, as declared Participant #1 and corroborated by Interviewee #6, but adding the seniority as a point of autonomy:

"The guy who works on demand, it is effortless for him to adapt to this model." (P#1 FG1)

"it depends a lot on the seniority of the resource. I can manage myself; I can see why I have to deliver. I had projects that I carried out alone, or it was like, I took off; I did it very quickly. However, then, when we depend on other resources, it depends on the maturity of another resource that is available; for example, I saw some juniors in my company who sometimes, perhaps, do not have the maturity to take care of themselves, the schedule, not to be distracted, not going to the gym in

the middle of the day, going to the market, you know, helping the mother. I saw these things, and I think it depends greatly on seniority and the person's maturity." (I #6)

(ii) Productivity in teleworking is comprehended as more productive or equal face-to-face as stated by Interviewees #12, and #13, as well as Participant #3 from FG1:

"I'm infinitely more productive from home. Infinitely. When I do it on time, I work my way. So, going to work, no way, I'm zero. I think you allocated within the client, allocated within the company I should yield 40, 50% of what I earn." (I# 12)

"Nothing has changed in terms of performance in telework. When I go to the office, my productivity drops a lot. Why? Because I like to talk. Despite being from the technology area, I am very communicative. I like to stop, talk, and find out how things are going, and I understand that this greatly benefits everyone." (I #13)

"Teleworking has brought fantastic productivity gains." (P#2 FG1)

Theme Three: Affected Relationships

Affected Relationships were revealed during Focus Group 1 analysis that was corroborated by the interviews, not appearing in Focus Group 2.

Cluster analysis of FG1 revealed this subject as it was considered highly relevant to the upper management positions. At the same time, the interviews were perceived as highly relevant to some professionals from all levels and relevant to half of medium and low management positions.

Evidence showed participants from FG1, and Interviewees that (i) lack of contact as revealed by Participants #12, #11, and corroborated by Interviewee #18:

"You lose a bit of contact, not with the clientele, but with the people themselves. I end up meeting people once every two months. I go there, have a coffee, then we go out for lunch together." (P#12 FG1)

"I don't see an exchange of experience, and that had an impact, too much of an impact." (P#11 FG1)

"the good thing about face-to-face is precisely the human warmth, the contact, the participation that we have." (I #18)

It was also provided (ii) Ways to mitigate physical presence as declared by Participant #9 from FG1 and corroborated by Interviewees #14 and #16.

"And camera people to improve this part of networking to have a connection to generate a relationship, I think it's just like that." (P#9 FG1)

"We have, every end of the month, we have that little happy hour party together, birthday party of the month, that kind of thing." (I# 14)

"we as a team organize at least once a month to go, for us to have lunch together, meet, talk, you know, have the one-one face-to-face, thus, having the interactivity

in terms of the team. It's not a company requirement, at least for my area, which is technology. It's not a requirement, but we do it to get closer and get a little out of the remote. So, unfortunately, those who are far away, in other states, cannot do it, but those who are here in the São Paulo region can." (I #16)

In conclusion, addressing the research question, the evidence demonstrates that the perception of employees in the Brazilian IT industry following COVID-19, predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T), reveals an influence on Affected Relationships. However, open cameras and designated socialization days have a positive mitigating effect on these affected relationships.

Theme Four: Feelings post-pandemic

Focus Group 2 analysis revealed this subject that was corroborated by the interviews, not appearing in Focus Group 1. Cluster analysis of FG2 pointed this subject as relevant to medium and low-management positions, not for high-level ones, for the interviews were highly relevant to the most significant part of medium management and some high and low management positions.

Evidence showed a mix of emotions from participants from FG2 and Interviewees. However, the predominance was related to fear of RTW-O, declared Participants #8 and #5 from FG2 as well as Interviewee #20:

"I think the first feeling I had was a chill in my stomach. Because I didn't know if the company was going to ask us to come back in person, and that was a dilemma for me." (P#8 FG2)

"fear of having to go back to face-to-face (OC: the fear was related to the possibility of change from teleworking to face-to-face)." (I #20)

"I don't see myself going so much to companies anymore, I don't see the market doing that anymore, there can be a hybrid system at most, but I believe that the remote is here to stay. Moreover, I think it is excellent!" (P#5 FG2)

Finally, answering the research question, shreds of evidence revealed that the feelings post-pandemic were somehow influenced by the uncertainty and fear of change in the perception of employees in the RTW in the Brazilian IT industry after the COVID-19, what was predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T), while flexibility to let the employee decide to RTW-T, RTW-H, or RTW-O somehow influences RTW.

Theme Five: Bad Market Practices

Focus Group 2 analysis revealed this theme that was corroborated by the interviews, not appearing in Focus Group 1. Cluster analysis of FG2 pointed to Bad Market Practices as highly relevant to some lower and high management positions and irrelevant to medium management, for the interviews were considered highly relevant to some lower and high management positions and most of the medium management level.

Evidence showed participants from FG2 revealing some bad market practices that they see while teleworking as declared Participant #7 and #2 from FG2:

“were exacerbated by the home office, which is the quiet quitting, which they call when the professional wants to be fired, he just stops making deliveries; people who accumulate several jobs, I hear reports like that not from anyone close, more people who had worked in six places at the same time.” (P#7 FG2)

“I think the only big change that I see, which is little like, oh ok, now there are people who have seven simultaneous jobs, and do none of them. I worked with a guy like that; it’s not cool.” (P#2 FG2)

The interviews also revealed some bad market practices, but more related to daily situations, as stated by Interviewee #4:

“You have domestic interference; when you are remote, everyone starts calling you. In telework, I came to a company where people didn’t turn on the camera, and I think the face and people also wrote a lot. I always really missed listening to the person, looking at the person, so, in this aspect, I think you manage to be more sensitive to your colleagues, to others when you are face-to-face.” (I #4)

It was also exposed bad usage of time (for the company) as Interviewee #12 stated:

“I sleep for 1:30, 2 hours, I come back, I take half an hour off, I go there, I go for a walk, I go buy popsicles, I don’t know, I’ll do something, you know. (OC: The interviewee declared do these actions during working hours).” (I #12)

The lack of camera usage was also highlighted by Interviewee #19, as well as agenda control to avoid overload of work as declared by Interviewees #2 and #10:

“we do the daily, we do the meetings, everything with the camera closed, right. Perhaps if I opened the camera, I think there would be more human contact there.” (I #19)

“I worked with clients, since I used to schedule the meeting at 5 pm, 5:30 pm to change a simple detail and until 7 pm we were still in the meeting, closing a point, understanding, talking things like that, we had the meeting on Friday, it went overtime, on Monday everything was on the ground, we were not going to follow that anymore, we were not going to do it that way anymore, so it turns out that for the developer this is very stressful.” (I #2)

“With telecommuting, you have to know what time you are working. Moreover, knowing how to distinguish between work time and rest time.” (I #10)

In conclusion, in response to the research question, the evidence indicates that bad market practices have an influence on the relationship between the Employer and Employee, as perceived by the employees in the Brazilian IT industry post-COVID-19, particularly in the context of the return to work is predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T).

Theme Six: Teleworking Common Issues

Focus Group 2 analysis revealed this theme that was corroborated by the interviews, not appearing in Focus Group 1. Cluster analysis of FG2 revealed Teleworking Common Issues as highly relevant to the medium-level position and some lower and higher management, for the interviews were considered highly relevant to some lower, medium, and high management levels.

Evidence showed (i) the internet as the biggest issue. Participant #5 and Interviewee #20 stated:

“A big remote problem that would even be more crucial even for the people who work in the international company is the internet in Brazil. This is the only disadvantage I see here for us, because if we run out of internet or run to the company we are with, or we have to go to a cyber cafe or try some point, not even public point we can use. However, cybercafé is already dangerous, too, for data protection. However, when we are without internet, sometimes the place is far away; it is in the United States or another state, you’re out of work.” (P#5 FG2)

“Quality of the internet, peripherals that I use daily, computer, flexibility... this adequacy of the physical space, in which there is the need to do telework, it is also fundamental for you to have a quality of life. It is not just taking the kitchen chair and putting it in front of you if you’re going to sit down for 8 hours, right? This will cause back pain, a bigger problem.” (I #20)

It was also highlighted (ii) infrastructure and ergonomics as an issue, as exposed by Participant #3 from FG2 and corroborated by Interviewees #15 and #16:

“I started to face other concerns, such as the height of my chair, my desk, the number of hours we spend in a home office.” (P#3 FG2)

“I had many problems last year with ergonomics (OC: The interviewee was speaking about the poor infrastructure to work from home).” (I #15)

“I am 100 percent home office, and now I have, after the pandemic, the office structure in my house.” (I # 16)

Finally, answering the research question, evidence revealed that teleworking common issues somehow influence the perception of the employees in the RTW in the Brazilian IT industry after COVID-19, which was predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T), but it affects RTW-T and RTW-H.

IMPLICATIONS AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The study explores the RTW after the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of teleworking on employees' personal lives. It reveals that teleworking has become more challenging to separate from personal life, with employees having greater flexibility to work outside their regular hours. Additionally, there needs to be more control over working hours, with employees having to clock in multiple points for their company and project hours. Reasonable time control is critical to teleworking, as employees often control their schedules and use tools like JIRA to log hours. The study also explores the relationship between coding's time

control, digital control, flexibility, delivery on demand, and process reinvented in the Brazilian IT industry. Participants reported that their Performance, efforts, and enabling circumstances were somehow influenced by control in teleworking, the research concludes that excess control in teleworking influences employees' perception in the Brazilian IT industry after the COVID-19 pandemic, while flexibility influences it somehow.

The study also focuses on Performance in the context of teleworking in the Brazilian IT industry post-COVID-19. The research reveals that work by demand is easier to measure and more productive than face-to-face work, with seniority playing a significant role in adapting to this model. Teleworking has also brought fantastic productivity gains, with some employees stating that their productivity drops when they go to the office.

The research reveals an influence on Affected Relationships in the perception of employees in the Brazilian IT industry following COVID-19, predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T). This finding is particularly relevant to upper management positions and professionals. Participants from FG1 and interviews revealed that they lost contact with people and experienced a lack of exchange of experience. They also mentioned ways to mitigate physical presence, such as using cameras and designated days for face-to-face socialization.

The study explores the feelings post-pandemic in the Brazilian IT industry, revealing the fear of reverting to face-to-face (RTW-O) and the uncertainty of change. Four of the top eight words cited in the interviews are related to this subject: People, Work, Office, and Company, connecting with the coding's Change dilemma, keep as it is, Freedom, Quality of life, and Happiness.

The research also revealed bad market practices influencing the Brazilian IT industry somehow after the COVID-19 pandemic, with most employees keeping RTW-T. Participants reported harmful market practices such as quiet quitting, people working in multiple places simultaneously, and domestic interference. Additionally, the lack of camera usage and agenda control to avoid overloading work were identified as negative aspects of teleworking. The study also highlights Teleworking Common Issues, which are highly relevant to medium-level positions and some lower and higher management levels. The internet is the biggest issue, followed by infrastructure, which also plays a significant role, with concerns about chair and desk height and the number of hours spent in a home office can cause back pain and hinder productivity. The study observes an influence on the employees' perception in the Brazilian IT industry post-COVID-19, predominantly kept as teleworking (RTW-T). However, they also affect RTW-H.

In sum, the migration from face-to-face work to the massive adoption of teleworking during the pandemic revealed implications individually and socially that follow the RTW, as reported previously. Nevertheless, the scope of the results and analysis is limited to the IT sector in Brazil and the dataset used. Moreover, the prevalence of telecommuting among Brazilian IT workers during the pandemic and after is enormous. It is worth noting that numerous sectors and industries stand to gain from this practice, including human resources, administrative departments, educational institutions, and any other domains that do not need in-person interactions. However, further research is required to comprehensively explore the potential

benefits of teleworking in these specific areas. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that cultural and economic factors may significantly influence the outcomes and conclusions of other nations, particularly within the realm of the IT business.

Finally, during the interviews, it was also mentioned that people's phobias due to social isolation could lead to further studies in psychological areas to correlate perhaps to social anxiety disorder as per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [27]. In conclusion, the implications of returning to work after the pandemic should also play a relevant role in the workers' psychological well-being.

Finally, this article has implications in other fields and subfields of research, such as: (a) Return to Work [28, 99]; (b) trust [30]; (c) business lobby [31]; (d) healthcare [32]; (e) socialization process [33]; (f) business negotiations [34]; (g) psychological contract [35]; (h) virtual business negotiations [36], [37], amongst others.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research is encouraged to investigate Return-to-Work (RTW) in different scenarios and countries. There are nuances revealed in the study that suggest the interviewees and participants' behavior has somehow changed or readapted differently after the coronavirus pandemic was over. We found evidence of a hybrid RTW strategy (RTW-H) that should be explored in future studies. Future studies also should evaluate the integration of RTW and PWB to provide deeper insights on both subjects. In addition, we encourage statistical studies to reveal what degree the influence is, if positive or negative, for instance, and to what extent RTW influences the employees' psychological well-being.

Finally, we recommend, for future appreciation, creating a scale that includes the six factors revealed in this study to test their statistical significance applied to the IT business, as well as other business segments or different countries.

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