

# Virtual Work Management Patterns In Organizations: Pre, During And Post COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

Even prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, virtual work had been increasingly adopted as a management practice within organizations. However, the pandemic accelerated this trend, compelling even those organizations that had previously been hesitant to embrace virtual work to adopt it as their primary—or most viable—mode of operation. Since 2022, in the post-pandemic context, organizations have regained the autonomy to choose their preferred working arrangements, whether virtual or in-person, as was customary before the pandemic. This article seeks to examine and analyze the evolution of management practices before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on various models of virtual work maturity within organizations (e.g., Benitez, 2023; Carbonara et al., 2023; Ameen et al., 2023). The empirical data spans the years 2017 to 2023 and includes information from 338 Estonian organizations that participated in a national virtual work quality assessment initiative during this seven-year period. For the purposes of this study, the pre-COVID-19 period is defined as 2017–2019, the COVID-19 period as 2020–2021, and the post-COVID-19 period as 2022–2023. Results (based on Carbonara et al., 2023 SWOR model) indicate that there have been more significant changes in some of the virtual work maturity and management dimensions: People (subdimensions Skills and Mindset) and also Organizational-Managerial behaviour (subdimensions Organisational Culture and Managerial/HRM practices). And unexpectedly less changes in Technological dimension (ICT infrastructure and Digital Strategy).

**Keywords:** covid-19; maturity models; management; smart work; virtual work