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Paradox of 'Work from Home' in Institutions of Higher Learning: The 'APA' (Atrophy Performance Assessment) Perspective

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Abstract

This paper offers two capsulated acronym-approach to understanding the new normal phenomenon of "Work from Home" (WFH) during the blanketed prohibitions of COVID-19 pandemic in institutions of higher learning, particularly private ones, in Malaysia. It does not neglect, however, public ones where similar WFH prohibitive circumstances and inhibitive restrictions stifle the full and vibrant articulations of expressive and interactive face-to-face academic engagements, formal or otherwise within and outside the campuses. In this context, therefore, the first acronym 'PARADOX' which represents Perspective, Action, Reality, Agenda, Disruption, Omnipresence and Xenophobia is tendered to capture the essential elements-content on how they collectively instigate, intentionally or insinuatingly, a milieu of cynicism among the academic community specifically and the interested public generally about 'work from home' and its impact on their lives and livelihood. Circumscribing the 'PARADOX' contextual enunciations, is the second acronym 'APA' representing Atrophy, Performance and Assessment tendered as a 3-prong evaluation-approach on the impact of confusing Covid-19 sets of ambiguous-solution pronouncement in order to stimulate a recall of Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' without magnifying the subtle cynicism of a cascading public outcry for business-survival and individual-despair assistance. In essence, WFH is a new normal work-culture with limited options to behave otherwise like before COVID-19 lockdowns that must be cultivated based on a stoical but not necessary fatalistic orientation and nurtured with tenacious resolute values that accepts in good faith a propensity to adapt and change as necessary a disrupted before-lifestyle and values that are increasingly depreciated. The new knowledge and experiences, together with the paradoxical insights of caustic criticisms, should now provide emerging platforms on new learning-learnable curricula for education-training providers and purveyors respectively in the institutions of higher learning, both private and public, without the bureaucratic forbearance of Ministry authority. In conclusion, offered as a dualistic combination of an enigma and axiom manifested in the contention of a 'paradox' and 'oxymoron' dualism about our lives under the restrictive inhibitions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its ravaging mutations of deadly Delta (and probably more hydra species to spawn), the antilogy of this paper rests on a tongue-in-cheek approach to the lexicon-interpretation application in viewing the analysis of the

COVID-WFH relationship at the macro-level and the WFH-IHE (institutions of Learning) oxymoron relationship at the micro-level, without the benefit of any judgmental wisdom. The aetiology discovered but prescriptive solutions are far from permanent resolutions ... yet.

Keywords: Work From Home, Paradox (Paradox, Apa,) 'Comedy Of Errors', Context, Approach, Learning-Learnable Curricula, Enigma-Axiom Dualism, Antilogy, Oxymoron, New Normal Culture

Introduction

This paper is offered as a dualistic combination of an enigma and axiom manifested in the contention of a 'paradox' and 'oxymoron' dualism about our lives under the restrictive inhibitions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its ravaging mutations of deadly Delta (and probably more hydra species to spawn). On the one hand, it is an enigma that confirms the conundrum or quandary we are in – a dilemma that is more perplexing than vexing, compounded by a compendium of mixed prevarication and fabrication of the origin of the resilient viruses and efficacy of commercialized branded vaccinations that promote a wildfire spread of truth and falsehood about the population-decimation of humans, the demise of God-conscious humane communities, and the rise of consortium commercialism and dehumanized proxies of vested interests. On the other hand, it is an axiom that requires no proof of the self-evident scenarios of disruptive and ravaged lives across the globe since the relentless onslaught of the pandemic, with the ominous reality of more blazing deaths and destruction to come. In short, there is paradoxical dilemma in the antilogy **and** aetiology of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on our lives, livelihood and living today in general and the modus operandi of 'work from home' or working from Home (WFH) productivity in particular. The latter, however, may vary from organization to organization in different industries and business enterprises; in this case, the private and public institutions of learning as providers of the business of education and the education of business.

Terminology Defined

- ❖ **Work from Home (WFH):** According to the definition by the International Labour Organization (2020), it refers "uniquely to home-based working teleworking as a temporary, alternative working arrangement (that) requires a share responsibility and commitment by both employers and workers to ensure business continuity and employment".
- ❖ **Antilogy:** any thought, viewpoint or opinion, statement or word, and articulation of contradiction in terms or ideas whose unverified credibility is questionable such as the boon of time-choice flexible productivity working from home than the bane of clockwork-precise rigid productivity working at office.
- ❖ **Aetiology:** It is used in United Kingdom, and as 'etiology' in United States of America, originating from the Greek word of '*aitia*' meaning 'cause' and '*logos*' meaning 'discourse'. In social sciences, it refers to the study of causal relationships variables or elements in a phenomenon under investigation; but it refers to the cause-origin of illness-disease in medicine. Thus, the aetiology of WFH is both an enigma and axiom of the COVID-influencing joy of flexi-work practice and the COVID-foreboding gloom of job-loss in the current disrupted employment field of uncertain economic emaciation.

- ❖ **Enigma:** a sense of mystery wherein an unverified thought or motive is yet to be disclosed, leading to speculative remarks or tentative conclusion to be justified. It is basically a phenomenon of attitudinal and behavioural action-consequences that remain perplexing and riddled with more questions than answers.
- ❖ **Axiom:** the antonym or opposite of 'enigma' that refers to the explanation or clarification of doubts or questionable propositions, with justifiable evidence of research-based statistical information or proof-support data-analysed enunciation.
- ❖ **Paradox:** Originated from Latin word '*paradoxum*' and Greek word '*parádoxos*', the English derivative '*paradox*' refers to an anomaly in a statement, proposition or opinion apparently contradictory until verified true or proven otherwise to reflect a phenomenon under research or probe such as the variegated macro-level public opinions on "Stay Home" or "Stay at Home" directive and "Work from Home" or "Working from Home" compulsion under the prohibitive governance of COVID-19 movement control operation (MCO) and emergency movement control operation (EMCO) for all districts and states country-wide. In essence, it means "unbelievable", that is, beyond belief" as manifested in the widespread "false news" label in popular electronic and print media.
- ❖ **Oxymoron:** A figure of speech that comprises a combination of contradictory or incongruous words or elements with seemingly self-contradictory effect. For example, at the micro-level public opinions on "declining or low quality of degree-program certification-awards" or "incongruent match between qualification and industry work-demand" are questionable assertions basically about the 'high qualification low application' oxymoron of the value of higher education today.
- ❖ **Comedy of Errors:** A Shakespeare literature that portrays a humorous play about mistaken identities among people in various coincidental situational interactions where a series of events, touted as comedy of errors, compound the absurdity of increasing number of errors throughout the interplay of unfolding events. In the context of this study, the comedy of errors pertains to the humour of satirical debates, propositions and theories about and under the recurring situation-impact of persistent COVID pandemic and ineffective governmental enforcement mechanisms that are lamentable events in expansive errors of expensive investments in choice, methods and locations of vaccination.
- ❖ **APA:** This is an *original* acronym conceived by the writer. It represents Atrophy, Performance and Assessment tendered as a 3-prong evaluation-approach on the impact of confusing Covid-19 sets of ambiguous-solution pronouncement of governance and enforcement, redress and aid of public in distress, and the politics of "frogging" in the corridors of Cabinet and Parliament at the expense of public interest and the focus-combat against the merciless claims of COVID onslaught on human lives, living and livelihood.

Findings in Selected Literature

In a mixed of data presentation for the period of 2012 to 2021, on before-after COVID-19, by Apollo Technical Engineered Talent Solutions (2021) internet publication on “Surprising Working from Home Productivity Statistics” has shown the following findings on WFH:

(a) Before COVID-19

- i. In a 2012 study on “office workers who were assigned boring tasks performed better and faster in the regular office setting. Home-life distractions are more likely to prevent productive work when you don’t enjoy the work”. However, there were “more productive results when the work was more creative” suggesting that “fewer restraints put on a task (lead to) quicker it will be completed”. Nevertheless, the conclusion was that “an entire “office” will underperform if they each work from home” because “Each individual will put in the same amount of work as the next” suggesting that “no individual wants to put in more work and let the others ride their coattails”.
- ii. In the 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics had established that “ 24% of people that were employed did some or all of their work at home on days they worked, and 82% of people that were employed did some or all of their work at their workplace” and “workers employed in financial operations, business, and management occupations (37%) and workers employed in professional and related occupations (33%) were more likely than those employed in other occupations to do some or all of their work from home on days they worked”.
- iii. In another more recent publication by van der Lippe & Lippényi (2020) was asserted that “the more hours an individual works from home, the less productive they become” and “those who worked full time (8 hours/day) at home are 70% less productive than those who don’t work from home”.
- iv. The results of a Stanford study on WFH 16,000 workers with an increase productivity by 13% over 9 months due to “more calls per minute attributed to a quieter more convenient working environment and working more minutes per shift because of fewer breaks and sick days” and an “improved work satisfaction, and attrition rates were cut by 50%”. And also “workers have improved 77% of those who work remotely at least a few times per month show increased productivity, with 30% doing more work in less time and 24% doing more work in the same period of time”.

(b) After COVID-19

During this period, WFH has shown improvement because, among others, “communication software is getting better” to enable “a better turnaround on projects, and increasing productivity”.

- i. According to Businesswire (2020) Prodoscore research results, there was “an increase in productivity by **47%** since March of 2020 (compared to March and April 2019), suggesting that “people are the most productive’ during “Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; and between 10:30am and 3:00pm. The average workday still reflects an 8:30am to 5:30pm schedule, and more workers are using emailing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to stay in contact with co-workers”.

- ii. Kazi and Hastwell in their 2021 “Remote Work Productivity Study Finds Surprising Reality: 2-Year Analysis” have contended that WFH was “as productive as working in the office – possibly more so” after a 2-year study-result that showed “more than 800,000 employees at 715 Fortune 500 companies (representing over 3 million U.S. employees) ... reported stable or even increased productivity levels after employees started working from home”
- iii. Bloom (2021) in the Stanford survey on “How Working from Home Works Out” had established that “only 65% of Americans had internet fast enough to handle video calls” and “With 42% of Americans working from home and 26% working at their employer’s physical location” including the following highlights: (1) the 42% of U.S. workers WFH full time accounted for more than 2/3 of economic activity; (2) broadband service should be expanded, by policymakers, to ensure that more workers can do their jobs away from conventional office; (3) the geographical topography would change whereby “cities may suffer while suburbs and rural areas benefits” as companies relocate from ‘densely populated urban centers’; and (4) WFH is “here to stay, but post-pandemic will be optimal at about two days a week”.

The broad findings based on selected overseas studies, by research and consultancy companies, all agree that WFH, or alternatively known as “remote working” and other similar designations, tend to reinforce social distancing to combat against the persistent ravaging COVID-19 and its emerging mutations of more deadly viruses such as Delta now; consequently, it is “not only economically essential ... (but) a critical weapon in combating the pandemic”.

Paper-Focus Content-Analysis

(a) Dualism of WFH Paradox-Oxymoron

A spate of publications in the wake of COVID pandemic WFH review-advocacy since 2020 is showcased by some authors such as Douglas, Gordon and Webber in “Remotely Working” (2020), Grant in “Remote Work” (2020), Neeley in “Remote Work Revolution” (2021), and Schwartz in “Work Disrupted – Opportunity, Resilience and Growth in the Accelerated Future of Work” (2021), Hill and Hill in “Work Anywhere” (2021), and Mangia in “Work from Home” (2020). They share a consensus that WFH is here to stay beyond the persistent trauma of COVID pandemic culture. However, each one differs in perspective and emphasis of the nature, character and content of WFH that justify their idiosyncratic outlook of the WFH content and context discourse and recommended solutions to this paper writer’s paradoxical rendition of a focus-specific WFH dilemma in higher institutions of learning (greatplacetowork, 2020).

Ironically, pre-COVID era already witnessed this WFH concept being tossed around to enable people to exercise a choice of personal freedom to work anywhere outside the confines of the concrete offices to better enjoy, among others, the liberty to reduce the on-the-road stress of struggling with the maddening traffic rush of jam-packed highways to and from workplaces including to capitalize on the work-life balance benefits of spending more time with family and pursuing leisure-driven lifestyles to destress under sightseeing and travel options. However, a major challenge to employers is how to determine the number of hours or volume of output an employee or a staff commits to the flexibility of WFH. In the case of the owner-operators of IHE, some have opted for a detailed weekly Time-based Work Sheet for a breakdown, with brief description, of day-

hour record of 'work done' (to the chagrin and silent dismay of especially academic staff who do no-teaching or more thesis-dissertation supervision in between a sprinkle of lectures quite easily measureable on a semester timeline delivery.

An example of the paradox of antilogy is "execution". The execution of duty-responsibility by choice or compulsion at home or at office respectively is contrary to the execution of death-penalty or act of killing in the etymology of 'execution'. But a tongue-in-cheek interpretation of this antilogy could be seen, under COVID-19 circumstances, in the different forms of employer-employee relations including the subtlety of voluntary or involuntary employee pay-cut or the consoling directive of employee suspension-pending further notice or the blatant act of employee layoff. In addition, the hovering threat of neglect or delayed submission of Time-based Work Sheet does not augur well for a profession that values trust and honesty in truthful measured interaction between the lecturers (including titled academic-honorific ones) and external clients of both students and their parents or guardians.

The antilogy of "measure", as another example, refers to the process of using a criteria-set assessment of work-in-progress such as lecture-objectives in a specified study program or a yardstick-benchmark tool of a scale-set of tests grade-mark examination for assignment-project paper submissions. The reality phenomenon is still about a compromised efficacy of 'measure-to-measure' performance evaluation as the disrupted on-site timetable of examination schedule is replaced by a virtual coordinated exercise with questionable implications on supervised invigilation of conventional examination. An example is, in an invigilated supervision of mass assembly of conventional examination candidates at on-site designated locations, the regulated scrutiny is almost impeccably question-free and the results obtained tend to reinforce, among others, individual performance effort that affect the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) summation scores of completed study modules. On the contrary, the virtual conduct mentioned is an 'open sesame' to doubtful lapses of stringent oversights that more importantly questions the quality and fairness of the paradoxical 'measure-to-measure' antilogy.

In the context of IR4.0 and its promotion of digitalization economy, a paradox-oxymoron situation in education specifically and training generally, the reliance on digital performance alone is a limited value for unlimited opportunities to use more technology inputs in procuring, delivery and achieving desired productivity including more comprehensively planned education and training output-outcome programs online. But truth is more difficult to realize than half-truth is easier to accept in the disrupted universe of schooling, undergraduate and graduate education in higher institutions of learning gradually ravaged by the semi closure and half open campuses that once characterize the pulse and beat of tertiary engagements.

(b) Comedy of Errors

In the context of this study, the comedy of errors under the umbrella situation of COVID pandemic and governmental enforcement mechanisms at the macro-level continue to witness a daily increase in COVID cases, hospitalized-treatment death cases, the panic-stricken overflow and inadequacy of hospital beds and equipment, and the questionable sunken-efficient monetary allocations and million-to-billion ringgit public financial assistance to combat the on-the-rise of more noxious-spreading pandemic forms of the virulent-genre of Delta mutation. At the micro level of IHL

delivery chain, the impatient patient waits for fresh directives from the Ministry of Education (Higher Education) atrophies an anticipated change from online WFH to onsite OC (office campus) with cascading anxiety emotions that do more harm than good psychologically and socially. Reliance on Whatsapp or/and email messages as new normal practices to keep communication alive and information relevant help to a certain extent, but intensified criss-crossing and overlapping communication defeats clear and unclouded messages whose volume overshadows the urgency of responses to inquiries and answers, more importantly, between academic staff and students domestically and internationally. In short, intensive communication leads to defensive explanation that misses the crux of correspondence messages, wittingly or unwittingly.

(c) Enigma-Axiom Paradox of WFH

Paradox: An anomaly referring to a statement, proposition or opinion apparently contradictory until verified true or proven otherwise to reflect a phenomenon under research or probe such as the variegated public opinion on “Stay Home” or “Stay at Home” directive and “Work from Home” or “Working from Home” compulsion under the prohibitive governance of COVID-19 movement control operation (MCO) and emergency movement control operation (EMCO) for all districts and states country-wide. The exceptions therefore provide the ‘paradox’ of blanket-versus-selective enforcement, fines and prosecution for the lay-violating populace against the cult of power-wielding people representatives in state-federal authority positions.

(d) PARADOX Acronym Interpretation

PARADOX: an acronym whose alphabets represent Perspective, Action, Reality, Agenda, Disruption, Omnipresence and Xenophobia that broadly covers discussion-category is tendered to capture the essential elements-content on how they collectively instigate, intentionally or insinuatingly, a milieu of cynicism among the academic community specifically and the interested public generally about ‘work from home’ and its impact on their lives and livelihood. Circumscribing the ‘PARADOX’ contextual enunciations, is the second acronym ‘APA’ representing Atrophy, Performance and Assessment tendered as a 3-prong evaluation-approach on the impact of confusing Covid-19 sets of ambiguous-solution pronouncement in order to stimulate a recall of Shakespeare’s ‘Comedy of Errors’ without magnifying the subtle cynicism of a cascading public outcry for business-survival and individual-despair assistance.

PARADOX represented by Policy-Programs, Action, Reality, Agenda, Disruption, Omnipresence and Xenophobia is therefore tendered to capture the essential elements-content on how they collectively instigate, intentionally or insinuatingly, a milieu of cynicism among the academic community specifically and the interested public generally about ‘work from home’ and its impact on their lives and livelihood.

(e) APA Acronym Interpretation

Circumscribing the ‘PARADOX’ contextual enunciations, is the second acronym ‘APA’ representing Atrophy, Performance and Assessment tendered as a 3-prong evaluation-approach on the impact of confusing Covid-19 sets of ambiguous-solution pronouncement in order to stimulate a recall of Shakespeare’s ‘Comedy of Errors’ without magnifying the subtle cynicism of a cascading public outcry for business-survival and individual-despair assistance.

For example, directly or indirectly, ensuing the negative impact of the COVID pandemic, at the macro-level on 'missed school days' in IHL recruitment-feeder systems of primary and secondary schooling that further compounds a growing belief about the 'high volume of number applicants and low quality entry requirements' in IHL (institutions of higher learning) – a 'matching mismatch' oxymoron of education paradox.

In essence, WFH is a new normal work-culture with limited options to behave otherwise like before COVID-19 lockdowns that must be cultivated based on a stoical but not necessary fatalistic orientation and nurtured with tenacious resolute values that accepts in good faith a propensity to adapt and change as necessary a disrupted before-lifestyle and values that are increasingly depreciated. The new knowledge and experiences, together with the paradoxical insights of caustic criticisms, should now provide emerging platforms on new learning-learnable curricula for education-training providers and purveyors respectively in the institutions of higher learning, both private and public, without the bureaucratic forbearance of Ministry authority.

Recommendations

According to van der Lippe and Lippenvi (2019) in "Co-workers working from home and individual and team performance", "The number of firms supporting work from home has risen dramatically as advances in communication technology have fundamentally transformed the way humans cooperate". But the focus only on WFH individual workers has neglected the "potential influence of co-worker engagement". Admitting that WFH "may be useful for some workers, it does bring issues for them as well" with obvious consequences of neglected WFH "co-workers negatively impacting employee performance and team performance being worse when more co-workers are working from home". In short, the *esprit d'corp* of professional relationships dissipates and the *comaraderie* empathy between staff and students is denigrated, with regrettable loss of the vibrant dynamism and accolades of humanized personal individual-group reciprocity, campus-community interlinkages, and parent-alumni associational interfaces, almost all silently loss in COVID-19 transition in our restrained and interdict lives now embargoed to respond to virtually and rather callously to hopeful news of pandemic end or depressing reportage of escalating deaths and prohibitive curtailment of freedom to socialize and travel again.

How do we advance and progress from inertia to assiduity in order to revitalize the slumbering spirit and gusto of education – a life-long journey to acquire, convert, apply and renew knowledge, skills and competencies into creative innovations that promote designs, products and services in the supply and logistic chains of industries and businesses to add and enhance economic wealth, country prosperity and human societies in the public interest? The recommended action summarized in Table 1 below, in all humility and passion to learn more, is only part of many unconverted thoughts of unfathomed probabilities and possibilities to resolve the outstanding or recurring issues of education content-delivery particularly by institutions of higher learning domestically.

In this discussion of "PARADOX OF 'WORK FROM HOME' IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING: The 'APA' (Atrophy Performance Assessment) Perspective", the attempt is made to articulate and explain, with some justifications but based on an experience-factual combination of tongue-in-cheek and vestibule-of-episodes delivery that is contemporary and continually recurring since and throughout the COVID pandemic, especially pertaining to the management and delivery of the business of education in institutions of higher learning in

relation to its perceived atrophy performance assessment (APA) requirements. The latter is discussed using 'PARADOX' as the acronym guideline for systematic rendition of governance and enforcement perspectives on policy-program management, action aspects on rewards and punishment, reality on politics and lobbying, agenda on action-orientation and practical-driven initiatives, disruption on detect and design, omnipresence on obstinate recurrences and order, and xenophobia on extra vigilance and anxiety dispersion. And for APA, atrophy refers to remedy and hypertrophy, performance refers to consistency monitor and verification, and assessment refers to depersonalization and technology usage.

This tabulated summation of dualistic PARADOX-APA combination leaves room for further research and interpretative analysis of the paradoxical position of culture-transforming focus on pre-COVID normal conventional culture (NCC) versus ongoing COVID pandemic new normal culture (NNC). In this context, the impact assessment of NCC premised on established order and organization stability is contrasted with that of NNC whose gradual settling on uncertain disruptions and disorder have challenged and destabilize the stability organizational lives, livelihood and living lifestyles evidenced today and beyond post-COVID-19 pandemic. Invariably, among others, IHL must refine and redefine its organization culture, particularly its course-program offerings beyond the current alternative practices of delivering full, partial or variegated online schedule-fulfilment of obligation. It must review and re-engage the depreciated humanized staff-student interaction with more human-contact and performance-drive of virtual engagements by investing in LEGGO-type building blocks of internal and external staff-customer (students and parents) engagements and exchanges beyond the mere incremental on-demand off-on and on-off responses to the pronouncements of COVID-19 inhibitive and restrictive movements in an otherwise vibrant and dynamic campus of shared knowledge seekers and providers of certificated learning now atrophied, stigmatized and emaciated.

Table 1: Encapsulated Suggestions in PARADOX and APA

Acronym	Backronym	Phenomenon	Remark
P	Perspective	Governance & Enforcement <i>External & Internal Authority</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government (MoE/MoHE) PrIHL (IPTS) & PuIHL (IPTA) 	REVIEW, REALIGN & RESTRATEGIZE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy (SOPs) Programs (Courses) Participants (clients)
A	Action	Reward & Punishment <i>Incentive & Penalty</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast Processing & Approval Delayed communication & Threat of suspension 	REVISE, MODIFY & DEBUREAUCRATIZE Implementation aspects in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature (structure) Processes Contents
R	Reality	Politics & Lobbying <i>Authority & Power</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imposition Compulsion 	REFRESH, REMOVE & NEGOTIATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory impasse

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standoff/stalemate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haggling, wheeling-dealing, quibbles
A	Agenda	<p>Action-orientation & Practical-driven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline Schedule Achievable Goal & Objectives Output-Outcome Specifications Assessment mechanisms 	<p>ACTIVE PARTICIPATION & COMMITMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define allocated time Tracking diary of input-output results Team affiliation
D	Disruption	<p>Detect & Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify cause-effect (aetiology) Device solutions (SML: short, medium, long term) 	<p>DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT & EVALUATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem-solving approaches Debriefing
O	Omnipresence	<p>Obstinate Recurrences & Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine repeat patterns Research available model-analysis Order to disorder (oxymoron) 	<p>RESOLVE, REMOVE & RE-STRATEGIZE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding issues Neglected suggestions Obsolete solutions
X	Xenophobia	<p>Extra Vigilance & Anxiety Dispersion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allay doubtful decision-action Relieve ominous articulations Eliminate manipulations 	<p>EXTRAORDINARY & FAST MOVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid partiality Refine persuasions Empathy share
A	Atrophy	<p>Remedy & Hypertrophy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen depreciated confidence Overcome negativity of inertia 	<p>REJUVENATING & FORTIFYING ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivational engagements Mutually supportive
P	Performance	<p>Consistency Monitor & Verification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklist realignment with target-set 	<p>CONTROL & SIMPLIFY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review CPI (composite

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria-set measurement updates 	performance index) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback-improvement share
A	Assessment	Depersonalization & Technology Usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update criteria-set evaluation Use state-of-the-art technology 	REVIEW & ADJUST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give-take Compromise Amplify negotiated mutual benefits

Source: Original Conceptualization and Model by Writer (2021)

Conclusion

In essence, an *original* acronym representing Atrophy, Performance and Assessment is tendered as a 3-prong evaluation-approach on the impact of confusing Covid-19 sets of ambiguous-solution pronouncement of governance and enforcement, redress and aid of public in distress, and the politics of “frogging” in the corridors of Cabinet and Parliament at the expense of public interest and the focus-combat against the merciless claims of COVID onslaught on human lives, living and livelihood. In order to stimulate a recall of Shakespeare’s ‘Comedy of Errors’ without magnifying the subtle cynicism of a cascading public outcry for business-survival and individual-despair assistance. Furthermore, the dualistic combination of an enigma and axiom manifested in the contention of a ‘paradox’ and ‘oxymoron’ dualism about our lives under the restrictive inhibitions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its ravaging mutations of deadly Delta (and probably more hydra species to spawn). On the one hand, it is an enigma that confirms the conundrum or quandary we are in – a dilemma that is more perplexing than vexing, compounded by a compendium of mixed prevarication and fabrication of the origin of the resilient viruses and efficacy of commercialized branded vaccinations that promote a wildfire spread of truth and falsehood about the population-decimation of humans, the demise of God-conscious humane communities, and the rise of consortium commercialism and dehumanized proxies of vested interests. On the other hand, it is an axiom that requires no proof of the self-evident scenarios of disruptive and ravaged lives across the globe since the relentless onslaught of the pandemic, with the ominous reality of more blazing deaths and destruction to come.

A bittersweet experience of ravaging COVID depression and a hope of persevering resistance to its onslaught therefore set the tone, tempo and spirit of this paper which offers two capsulated acronym-approach to understanding the new normal phenomenon of “Work from Home” (WFH) during the blanketed prohibitions of COVID-19 pandemic in institutions of higher learning, particularly private ones, in Malaysia. It does not neglect, however, public ones where similar WFH prohibitive circumstances and inhibitive restrictions stifle the full and vibrant articulations of expressive and interactive face-to-face academic engagements, formal or otherwise within and outside the campuses. In conclusion, the paradox of aetiology on both the enigma and axiom of the COVID-influencing joy of flexi-work practice and the COVID-foreboding gloom of job-loss in the current disrupted employment field of uncertain economic emaciation is a repeated call to ‘Stay Home’ and ‘Be Safe’. Despite the double-

dosage vaccination coverage (and a 'booster shot to come?'), there is no guarantee that new normal culture (NNC) insures against living-dead clouds that hover ominously over our heads at home and Work from Home including the previous-held axiom for "Work-Home Balance" (WHB) solution at conventional enclaves of high-rise buildings and furnished offices of pre-pandemic era, nearing a curtain-call to historical ignominious obloquy in post Covid-19 era as a destructive tsunami that handicapped and paralyzed nations and humanity.

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