Performance Management:
Virtual Teams vs. Traditional Teams in Multinational Companies

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Abstract
This paper analyzes differences between virtual and traditional teams in perceptions of performance management effectiveness in the context of multinational companies in Romania. The accelerated transition to virtual work, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, has produced significant changes in organizational structures and in the way employees collaborate, engage, and are evaluated. The research stems from an interest in understanding how these changes influence the professional experience of young people, especially those in Generation Z. The main objective of the study is to compare the perceived productivity of virtual teams with that of traditional teams. Secondary objectives include: analyzing perceptions of the level of flexibility offered by virtual teams compared to traditional ones, assessing the degree of engagement and motivation, and evaluating the perceived effectiveness of performance management systems. The study implies a quantitative approach, collecting data from 130 respondents. The results indicate a more favorable perception of traditional teams in terms of cohesion and employee engagement, while virtual teams are valued for the flexibility and autonomy they offer. The conclusions highlight the need for differentiated management practices that capitalize on the advantages of each work organization model and respond to the specific requirements of the hybrid context.

Keywords
Performance Management; Virtual Teams; Traditional Teams; Efficiency; Evaluation; Digital Transformation

Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has redefined the fundamentals of performance management and organizational collaboration by hastening the shift from traditional to virtual teams at a never-before-seen rate. Although this change has frequently been presented as purely a technological one, its effects are profoundly organizational and include the reorganization of internal relationships, communication channels, and work processes (Almeida et al., 2020). Virtual teams were once praised for their adaptability and effectiveness, but they rapidly exposed difficult problems with maintaining worker motivation, engagement, and output over time (Contreras et al., 2020). These difficulties go beyond organizational frameworks, influencing how people view cooperation, teamwork, and performance reviews (van Zoonen et al., 2021). Important questions about how performance management procedures differ between virtual and traditional teams remain unanswered, despite the growing body of research on virtual work. This is especially true for multinational corporations, where team dynamics are further complicated by cultural diversity and geographic dispersion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sped up the transition from traditional to virtual teams, which has drastically altered how businesses plan for collaboration and handle performance. Although the flexibility and autonomy of virtual teams were first commended, issues with participation,

cohesiveness, and the efficacy of performance evaluation quickly surfaced (Almeida et al., 2020; Contreras et al., 2020; Chamakiotis et al., 2021). In international corporations, where geographical dispersion and cultural diversity add layers of complexity to performance management, this argument is especially pertinent (Almulaiki, 2023).

By investigating how young workers in Romanian multinational corporations perceive the effectiveness of performance management in both traditional and virtual teams, this study tackles these issues. Despite being underrepresented in the literature, Generation Z is becoming increasingly prevalent in international organizations. Alongside the primary goal of comparing perceived productivity between the two team styles, there are auxiliary goals such as examining variations in employee involvement, motivation, and flexibility. Using Likert-scale items and SPSS for descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and T-tests, a quantitative survey was administered to employees with experience working in both virtual and in-person teams.

Thus, this research paper makes a theoretical contribution by adding to the body of knowledge on performance management in hybrid work environments. It also makes a practical contribution by providing leaders with guidance on how to adjust tactics, improve teamwork, and guarantee long-term performance in increasingly virtualized organizational settings.

Literature review

The shift from traditional teams to virtual teams in the context of the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on society at large, including teams in businesses that have been compelled to switch to remote work due to restrictions and the necessity to preserve organizational effectiveness (Nowrouzi-Kia et al., 2024). In this sense, organizations had to figure out how to exist and accomplish their socio-economic objectives in a setting where social isolation had become the norm, among all other social actors. To adapt to the changes brought by the pandemic, the initial actions were to create hybrid work environments (Stratone et al., 2021). According to Wildman (2021), remote teamwork imposed by organizations was considered vulnerable to the disruptions of the pandemic, with coordination between individuals becoming a challenge in the context of social distancing and virtual environments.

One of the primary forces behind global economic and social change is the irreversible process of globalization, which is forming a socioeconomic structure that cuts over national and cultural boundaries. Organizations are under increasing pressure to adjust to the intricacies of cultural diversity inside teams as well as to the dynamics of global markets (Gross-Gołacka & Martyniuk, 2024). To effectively manage multicultural work environments, leaders must embrace inclusive approaches and demonstrate they can understand, incorporate, and celebrate cultural diversity in professional collaborations (Knap-Stefaniuk, 2023). Leading multicultural teams requires leveraging diversity as a constructive asset, as the literature shows (Seliverstova, 2022). However, issues such as decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork have frequently proven challenging to address (Knap-Stefaniuk, 2023). Moreover, in multicultural teams, intolerance and a lack of understanding of diversity often erode cohesiveness and productivity. Organizational barriers also play a part. The Deloitte (2019) Trends in Human Capital study conducted in the Czech Republic found that three main problems hinder team development: inadequate performance management practices (41%), a lack of advanced technological resources (34%), and a lack of leadership knowledge in managing diverse groups (45%).

People's lives changed drastically overnight, as the literature emphasizes, and the general public progressively turned into amateur researchers who relied on summaries, analyses, and a ton of graphs for comfort (Ågerfalk et al., 2020). Although most people were only familiar with the infection and mortality rates and the ongoing efforts to flatten the curve, the same authors noted that people needed to comprehend the pandemic's effects. At the same time, the government mandated that people stay in their homes, which led to a significant shift in collaboration practices from traditional office collaboration to virtual collaboration. Organizations had to adapt their methods of operation as a result

of this shift, which had a significant impact on how teams accomplished their objectives (Waizenegger et al., 2020).

The post-pandemic environment has introduced additional complications related to increased digitization and its consequences for employees' rights, in addition to these structural issues. Concerns about privacy and human rights have been raised by the use of real-time monitoring technologies such as sensors and geolocation applications (Hassankhani et al., 2021). The widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work patterns during and after the pandemic has presented managers with additional challenges, notably in maintaining staff motivation and well-being, ensuring efficient communication, and supervising employees (Blaszczyk et al., 2022). These processes exposed the brittleness of control and unity in digitally mediated organizations. The literature has regularly questioned the reliability and long-term sustainability of digitalization, despite its becoming an essential option to ensure organizational continuity on a global scale (Seliverstova, 2022).

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and technology advancements have had a significant impact on businesses, making digital transformation a crucial requirement for staying relevant and competitive. In addition to adopting new technologies, this process also involved redefining organizational strategies. The pandemic had a direct impact on the development and application of digital approaches that were intended to take advantage of technological resources and lower the risk of operational stagnation (Burlea-Schiopoiu et al., 2023). Significant changes in corporate processes, relationships, products, and services have resulted from widespread digitization, compelling organizations to reevaluate their operations on a fundamental level. However, because the sudden change hindered proper planning for managing people in virtual environments, the absence of in-person interactions—which had previously helped to strengthen teams in multinational corporations—became a significant difficulty for leaders (Newman, 2021). Because remote work invariably damaged employees' ties to company culture, beliefs, and norms, employees continued to feel lower levels of support and trust from managers and organizations overall, even after such difficulties were successfully resolved (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

Traditional teams vs. virtual teams: characteristics, adaptation, and productivity shifts

Fast technological change and globalization have forced leaders to face new obstacles in accomplishing corporate objectives in addition to seizing new opportunities (Batırlık et al., 2022). Increasingly, traditional organizational structures have changed into digitalized, flexible models that necessitate major changes in workplace dynamics (Polevaya & Shustova, 2023). Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, which changed leadership behaviors, digitalization has revolutionized organizational functioning and replaced traditional communication channels with virtual ones (Greimel et al., 2023). Although managing digital teams is similar to managing traditional teams, there are some differences. For example, remote employment requires additional evaluation of technical expertise, soft skills, time management, cross-cultural communication, and the ability to work across multiple time zones, whereas traditional recruiting focuses on evaluating knowledge and skills (Seliverstova, 2022). Accordingly, a virtual team is a geographically dispersed group that primarily uses technology to facilitate both synchronous and asynchronous interactions to accomplish shared objectives (Smith & Ruiz, 2020).

More than that, in order to maintain continuity and survival throughout the pandemic, virtual teams have been characterized as an organizational need rather than a strategic decision (Richter, 2020). Around 3.4 billion people in 84 nations were compelled to drastically alter their work environments and switch to remote work arrangements by March 2020 as a result of government-imposed lockdowns (Bouziri et al., 2020). According to later research, many workers felt that online meetings were more productive than phone conversations or the numerous disruptions that were a feature of pre-digital work environments (Kuscu & Arslan, 2016). However, as teams performed best when members felt free to share their opinions and ideals without worrying about criticism or exclusion, trust became a crucial component of virtual cooperation (Lechner & Mortlock, 2022). In order to make up for the lack of in-person encounters and lessen the sense of isolation that came with the pandemic, leaders had to cultivate inclusive digital cultures. At the same time, other obstacles made virtual collaboration even

more difficult, including human factors such as home surroundings and erratic internet connections, as well as technological constraints (Alkoud et al., 2023).

Performance management of traditional and virtual teams within multinational organizations

According to the literature, performance management is a continuous process of establishing, assessing, and enhancing individual and group performance to align with a business's strategic objectives. Even though Almulaiki (2023) reports that over 70% of installed systems fail, performance management is still crucial in dynamic environments that demand efficiency and quick adaptation. Employee performance, morale, and well-being are all improved by properly implemented performance management systems, according to Salin et al. (2023). Organizational priorities shifted toward ongoing coaching, communication, and individualized support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which also highlighted the shortcomings of conventional annual review systems and accelerated the adoption of digital tools for virtual goal-setting and real-time feedback (Roboji et al., 2023). Additionally, effective performance management enables top talent retention, employee motivation, efficient resource allocation, and well-informed HR decisions regarding bonuses or promotions (Aguinis, 2023). Systems that offer opportunities for professional development, continuous feedback, and participation in decision-making directly increase job satisfaction and productivity while aligning personal growth with corporate objectives (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024; Almulaiki, 2023).

Performance management in teams requires considering the characteristics specific to each team type. According to McShane and Glinow (2018) and Putra et al. (2023), teams—which are characterized by two or more people working together with shared accountability for organizational objectives—face difficulties with motivation, collaboration, and skill development, all of which affect performance. Variations in employee engagement and performance can be explained by motivational and goal-setting theories, such as Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory and Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964; Latham, 2023; Pervaiz et al., 2021). The impact of team dynamics on outcomes is highlighted by team development models such as Tuckman's stages of forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (Bonebright, 2010; Sokman et al., 2023; Muscato et al., 2023).

Performance in virtual teams depends on factors such as cohesiveness, leadership, communication, trust, cooperation, acknowledgment, and empowerment (Topaloglu & Anac, 2021). To adapt to virtual environments, traditional evaluation techniques that relied on peer assessment and observation have shifted toward digital tools, surveys, and 360-degree feedback (Jahagirdar & Bankar, 2021; Dalvi, 2023; Souki & Samir Aad, 2024). By highlighting the importance of psychosocial factors, informal communication, and active leadership in promoting collaboration, trust, and overall team success (Sipahioglu, 20204), effective performance management, especially in remote contexts, enhances engagement, well-being, and intrinsic motivation (Chayomchai, 2022; Hacker et al., 2019; Alzaabi et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2022; Salin et al., 2023; Parandy, 2024; Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020).

Comparative analysis of traditional and virtual team performance: indicators, productivity, adaptability, satisfaction, and the influence of younger generations

To preserve performance and job security during the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional teams had to reskill and adapt their operations, highlighting the vulnerability of both employers and employees (Lajcin & Porubcanova, 2021). Organizations used key performance indicators (KPIs), which are measurable metrics used to analyze team progress and success and form the basis for performance management and the implementation of continuous improvement strategies, to gauge the degree to which organizational objectives were being met (Van de Ven et al., 2019; Aithal, 2023). Comparative analysis of the teams revealed notable differences: in virtual teams, the primary indicators of trust were work quality and product reliability, while in traditional teams, interpersonal relationships were built through direct meetings. The absence of body language, vocal variation, and casual conversations had a detrimental effect on performance and cohesion (Smith & Ruiz, 2023; Stratone et al., 2022). While virtual teams were less reliant on direct supervision, they showed greater economic efficiency by lowering expenses associated with office space, travel, and equipment, as well as achieving higher productivity and a positive environmental impact through lower energy consumption and emissions.

Meanwhile, traditional teams benefited from direct managerial oversight to coordinate activities efficiently in terms of productivity (Makhecha, 2019; Seliverstova, 2022).

In line with the performance analysis by team type (which includes productivity, adaptability, and satisfaction), the degree of virtuality in a team has a big impact on internal procedures and results in the current globalized and technologically advanced environment. Achieving organizational objectives and increasing productivity require an understanding of the basic components of internal collaboration. While virtual teams need responsibilities to be well-defined from the start, traditional teams are often thought to be more productive because managers can directly oversee workflows and resolve interpersonal issues when needed. Since group identification represents both belonging and the perceived efficacy of collaboration, trust and a sense of belonging present more difficulties in virtual teams and have an impact on performance (AlZaabi, 2021). Organizational success, client satisfaction, and sales are all positively impacted by strong management frameworks that offer clear goals and the support employees need to perform, participate, and be happy (Chanana, 2020; Damayanti & Darmawan, 2025). Moreover, inspirational leadership has been connected to enhanced team performance and increased job satisfaction, underscoring the part leaders play in encouraging participation (Braun et al., 2013).

Additionally, teams must learn to adapt to the constantly changing nature of work due to globalization and technology; only adaptable teams can remain productive and relevant in ever-changing professional settings (Rigo et al., 2020). According to Grześ (2024), organizations that invest in technology, skill development, and a collaborative, trust-based culture can turn these challenges into competitive advantages for virtual teams. It emphasizes that, in the future, trust should replace control, with effective communication remaining crucial to organizational success.

Referring back to the earlier topic of the young generation's influencing variables in team dynamics, generational diversity has grown in importance in determining cooperation, output, and creativity in organizational teams (Cizmaș et al., 2020). Born between 1995 and 2010 (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2021), Generation Z is considered the first genuinely digital-native generation, having grown up surrounded by social media and technology. Using technology to facilitate flexible work arrangements has become crucial as the pandemic accelerated the growth of remote work (Chuah, 2025). Technology has become a vital tool for staff development, encouraging flexibility in responding to ongoing workplace changes, boosting creativity, and enhancing individual output (Leuhery, 2024). According to studies, younger workers are more confident and enthusiastic about working remotely since they are more accustomed to using digital platforms and have technological abilities (Yüceol et al., 2021). Because the pandemic has hastened digital adoption, firms need to create opportunities for remote collaboration and virtual interactions using platforms like Zoom (Charalampous et al., 2019). This will help younger teams adjust. Transparency, effective teamwork, and adaptable leadership that promote work-life balance, meaningful engagement, and ongoing development are necessary to meet the challenges posed by this generation's strong digital orientation, high expectations, and unique social needs (Maj, 2022).

Rigid structures or a lack of autonomy may be difficult for young workers to adjust to, which can have a detrimental effect on team cohesion and engagement. Flexible work arrangements, both in time and location, have thus become increasingly important post-COVID-19, allowing alignment of personal and organizational objectives. Moreover, the same author underlines that the willingness to collaborate depends heavily on the quality of interpersonal relationships, as strong personal connections drive engagement and cohesion in teams of young employees, where alignment is based on shared values rather than hierarchy. Overall, Generation Z significantly shapes team dynamics through their emphasis on technology, flexibility, digital communication, collaboration, autonomy, and recognition, compelling organizations to adapt team management practices to promote inclusion, autonomy, and transparency.

Methodology

The purpose of this case paper is to investigate how young workers in Romanian multinational corporations view the effectiveness of performance management in virtual vs traditional teams. The study examines how young workers view these two work arrangements to identify key variables affecting team productivity and efficiency. The following are the goals of the study:

- → O1: Analyze employees' perceptions of the flexibility offered by virtual versus traditional teams.
- → O2: Examine how performance management influences perceived efficiency in virtual and traditional teams.
- → O3: Assess employee engagement and motivation according to the type of team.
- → O4: Compare employee productivity in virtual and traditional teams within Romanian multinationals.

Corresponding hypotheses were formulated:

I1: There are significant differences in employees' perceptions of flexibility between virtual and traditional teams. (Research questions: How does perceived flexibility contribute to work-life balance depending on team type? What are the main disadvantages perceived in virtual versus traditional teams?)

I2: There is a positive association between clarity of performance evaluation criteria and employee productivity in both team types.(Research questions: How does clarity of performance objectives influence perceived efficiency? How does clear and consistent feedback improve individual performance in both team types?)

I3: There are differences in employee engagement and motivation depending on the team type (virtual vs. traditional). (Research questions: How is active employee participation in decision-making influenced by team structure? How does collaboration with colleagues affect engagement in virtual versus traditional teams?)

I4: There are significant differences in employee productivity based on team type. (Research questions: How do employees perceive work pace efficiency in traditional versus virtual teams? How does team type influence employees' perception of work quality?)

A quantitative research approach was used, and 130 respondents aged 20 to 36, with at least a high school degree and experience in both types of teams, completed a 32-item online questionnaire. Four mirrored dimensions were used to frame the questions for both virtual and traditional teams: productivity, employee engagement, clarity in professional performance and evaluation, and work flexibility. A 5-point Likert scale was used to record responses, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement.

Data were gathered between May 10 and June 4, 2025, using Google Forms shared on social media. To identify patterns, distinctions, and connections among the four research aspects, analysis was conducted using SPSS v26, including the computation of means, standard deviations, t-tests, and Pearson correlation coefficients. This approach ensures a systematic comparison of reported variations in productivity, engagement, and performance management effectiveness between traditional and virtual teams.

Sample characteristics

A sample of 130 respondents in Romania who worked for multinational corporations and had experience in both traditional and virtual teams provided the data. Age, gender, and educational attainment were among the personal data gathered. Young professionals just starting their careers predominate, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents (69.2%) were between the ages of 20 and 25. Only 10% were in the 32–36 age range, whereas 20.8% were in the 26–31 age range, probably going through a period of professional consolidation. Because they are more accustomed to digital technology and flexible work arrangements, this young-dominated sample may have an impact on how people view traditional and virtual teams.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by age

Age	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
20-25	90	69.2%
26-31	27	20.8%
32-36	13	10%
Total	130	100%

Source: Authors` work

According to Table 3, most respondents are female (54.6%), i.e., 71 out of a total of 130. Male respondents account for 43.8%, or 47 people. A small number (1.5%), i.e., 2 people, chose not to declare their gender, opting for an anonymous response. Thus, the gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight predominance of female respondents.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Female	71	54.6%
Male	47	43.8%
Other	2	1.5%
Total	130	100%

Source: Authors` work

According to Table 3, most respondents are female (54.6%), i.e. 71 out of a total of 130. Male respondents account for 43.8%, or 47 people. A small number (1.5%), i.e. 2 people, chose not to declare their gender, opting for an anonymous response. Thus, the gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight predominance of female respondents. At the same time, most respondents (51.5%) had completed a bachelor's degree, indicating that they had a basic higher education. 33.8% of respondents had completed a master's degree, suggesting a significant interest in further study and professional specialization. 11.5% of participants had graduated from high school or vocational school, indicating a lower percentage of respondents with secondary education. Only 3.1% of respondents had completed doctoral studies, representing a small proportion of the sample.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to the last form of education completed

Education	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Highschool	15	11.5%
Bachelor Degree	67	51.5%
Master degree	44	33.8%
PhD	4	3.1%
Total	130	100%

Source: Authors` work

Results and discussion

The results of the questionnaire are presented and examined in the section that follows in order to interpret the information in light of the goals and theories of the study. The study focuses on the main patterns and variations that respondents saw in terms of employee engagement, productivity, flexibility, and evaluation clarity based on the type of team (traditional or virtual). This phase supports pertinent study conclusions and aids in confirming or disproving the hypotheses.

In order to test the first hypothesis (There are significant differences in employees' perceptions of flexibility between virtual and traditional teams), it was analyzed the first conceptual dimension (work flexibility). There is a noticeable difference, according to descriptive analysis: traditional teams scored low on flexibility (mean = 2.296), had little autonomy in time management (2.37), had trouble juggling their personal and professional lives (2.22), and were less able to adjust to their own needs (2.30). Virtual teams, on the other hand, received much higher scores (mean = 4.426), with participants expressing strong flexibility in meeting personal needs (4.50), freedom in time management (4.39), and effective work-life balance (4.39). These findings support Hypothesis I1 by confirming a significant difference between the two team types. They also imply that perceived flexibility is a

crucial competitive advantage for companies adopting virtual work models, improving work-life balance (Grześ, 2024).

Table 5. Level of Work Flexibility in a Traditional Team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
I feel that I have freedom in managing my time in a traditional team.	130	1	5	2.37	.864
Teamwork in a traditional team allows me to efficiently combine personal and professional life.	130	1	5	2.22	.883
The activity of the traditional team is adaptable to my personal needs.	130	1	5	2.30	.912
Dimension mean				2.296	

Table 6. Level of Work Flexibility in a Virtual Team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
I feel that I have freedom in managing my time in a virtual team.	130	1	5	4.39	.731
Teamwork in a virtual team allows me to efficiently combine personal and professional life.	130	1	5	4.39	.840
The activity of the virtual team is adaptable to my personal needs.	130	1	5	4.50	.760
Dimension mean				4.426	

A Paired Samples t-Test was performed using SPSS to validate the descriptive findings (Table 7), confirming that employees' perceptions of work flexibility differed significantly between traditional and virtual teams. The findings indicated that time management freedom (mean difference = 2.023, t = 17.391, p =.000), a better balance between personal and professional life (mean difference = 2.169, t = 18.432, p =.000), and greater adaptability to personal needs (mean difference = 2.200, t = 18.135, p =.000) are all perceived as benefits of virtual teams. With strong t-values and confidence intervals excluding zero, all results were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), supporting the idea that virtual teams offer noticeably more flexibility than traditional teams.

Table 7. Paired Sample Test for testing H1

Pair	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Std. Error Mean*	*95% Confidence interval of the difference*		*t*	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
				Lower	Upper			
I feel that I have freedom in managing my time in a traditional team. / I feel that I have freedom in managing my time in a virtual team.	2.023	1.326	.116	1.793	2.253	17.391	129	.000
Teamwork in a traditional team allows me to combine personal and professional life efficiently. / Teamwork in a virtual team allows me to efficiently combine personal and professional life.	2.169	1.342	.116	1.936	2.402	18.432	129	.000
The activity of the traditional team is adaptable to my personal needs. / The activity of the virtual team is adaptable to my personal needs.	2.200	1.383	.121	1.960	2.440	18.135	129	.000

Source: Authors` work

In order to test the second hypothesis (There is a positive association between clarity of performance evaluation criteria and employee productivity in both team types), the descriptive analysis of the dimension Clarity in Evaluation and Professional Performance resulted in consistently high mean values for both types of teams. Employees strongly agreed that well-defined goals (M = 4.32), regular feedback (M = 4.42), and open assessments (M = 4.49) increase productivity in traditional teams (Table 8), with an overall mean of 4.41. Results were even better in virtual teams (Table 9), with an overall mean of 4.66, which reflected similarly positive perceptions of evaluations (M = 4.65), feedback (M = 4.68), and clear objectives (M = 4.66). These findings suggest that clarity in performance evaluation is perceived as a key factor in improving efficiency and productivity in both traditional and virtual contexts.

Table 8. Clarity in evaluation and professional performance in a traditional team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
The clarity of performance objectives helps me work more efficiently within the traditional team.	130	1	5	4.32	1.049
Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a traditional team.	130	1	5	4.42	.994
A clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a traditional team.	130	1	5	4.49	.917
Dimension mean				4.41	

Table 9. Clarity in evaluation and professional performance in a virtual team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
The clarity of performance objectives helps me work more efficiently within the virtual team.	130	1	5	4.66	.604
Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a virtual team.	130	1	5	4.68	.638
A clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a virtual team.	130	1	5	4.65	.657
Dimension mean				4.663	

The results were supported by a Pearson correlation analysis (Tables 10 and 11), which examined the relationship between perceived productivity and evaluation clarity and found a positive, statistically significant correlation in both traditional and virtual teams. The correlation between virtual and traditional teams was moderate ($r = .595$, $p < 0.001$) and stronger ($r = .837$, $p < 0.001$), respectively. This suggests that face-to-face interactions have a greater impact on the impact of clear evaluation on professional performance. Although workers in virtual teams generally reported higher mean scores for productivity and clarity, evaluation clarity had a more significant impact on outcomes in traditional settings, where direct communication and instant feedback enhanced its performance-enhancing effects.

Table 10. Pearson correlation for variables related to the traditional team

		Clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a traditional team.	Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a traditional team.
Clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a traditional team.	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	130	130
Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a traditional team.	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	130	130

Table 11. Pearson correlation for variables related to the virtual team

		Clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a virtual team.	Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a virtual team.
Clear performance evaluation contributes to increasing my productivity in a virtual team.	Pearson Correlation	1	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	130	130
Clear and consistent feedback contributes to improving my results within a virtual team.	Pearson Correlation	. 595**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	130	130

In order to test the third hypothesis (There are differences in employee engagement and motivation depending on the team type (virtual vs. traditional), the descriptive analysis (Tables 12 and 13) revealed a clear contrast between the two contexts. In contrast to virtual teams (M = 2.46), traditional teams had a significantly higher overall mean score for involvement (M = 4.245), suggesting greater motivation, cooperation, and participation in in-person settings. Workers in traditional teams reported a supportive work environment, as evidenced by their active participation in discussions and decision-making (M = 4.26), effective collaboration (M = 4.37), ongoing motivation to contribute (M = 4.20), and feeling heard and given feedback by colleagues (M = 4.15). With participation (M = 2.62), collaboration and receptiveness to feedback (M = 2.45), and motivation to contribute (M = 2.32) being especially low, all mean values in virtual teams, on the other hand, fell below the neutral threshold of 3, indicating low engagement and indicating emotional distancing and diminished belonging. These results confirm the hypothesis, showing that employees are more engaged and motivated in traditional teams, where direct interaction fosters spontaneity, cohesion, and a stronger sense of belonging, whereas virtual teams tend to limit active involvement and diminish motivation (Stratone et al., 2022).

Table 12: Level of employee involvement in a traditional team

Item	***No. of respondents***	***Min.***	***Max.***	***Mean***	***Std. dev.***
I actively participate in and decisions within the traditional team.	130	1	5	4.26	.903
I actively collaborate with other members of the traditional team.	130	1	5	4.37	.864
I am motivated to contribute consistently to the traditional team.	130	1	5	4.20	.991
When I express an opinion within a traditional team, my colleagues listen to me and give me feedback.	130	1	5	4.15	1.005
Dimension mean				4.245	

Table 12: Level of employee involvement in a virtual team

Item	***No. of respondents***	***Min.***	***Max.***	***Mean***	***Std. dev.***
I actively participate in discussions and decisions within the virtual team.	130	1	5	2.62	1.130
I actively collaborate with other members of the virtual team.	130	1	5	2.45	1.201
I am motivated to contribute consistently to the virtual team.	130	1	5	2.32	1.253
When I express an opinion within a virtual team, my colleagues listen to me and give me feedback.	130	1	5	2.45	1.121
Dimension mean				2.46	

To further support the hypothesis that there are significant differences in employee involvement and motivation depending on team type (virtual or traditional), a paired-sample t-test was conducted (Table 14). The results were statistically significant for all four item pairs, consistently showing higher

engagement and motivation in traditional, face-to-face teams. Specifically, employees reported greater active participation (mean difference = 1.646, t = 11.335, p < 0.001), stronger collaboration (mean difference = 1.923, t = 12.960), higher motivation to contribute (mean difference = 1.877, t = 11.094), and more feedback and attention from colleagues (mean difference = 1.692, t = 10.749). All confidence intervals excluded zero, confirming the robustness of these differences.

Thus, employees feel significantly more engaged and heard in traditional teams, while physical distance and lack of spontaneous interaction in virtual settings may hinder active participation and motivation (Makhecha, 2019), validating the research hypothesis. The robustness of these differences was confirmed by the fact that all confidence intervals excluded zero. Accordingly, workers in traditional teams feel much more involved and heard, whereas in virtual environments, the lack of natural interaction and physical distance may impede motivation and active participation (Makhecha, 2019), supporting the study's findings.

Table 14. Paired Sample Test for testing H3

Pair	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Std. Error Mean*	*95% Confidence interval of the difference*		*t*	*df*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
				Lower	**Upper**			
I actively participate in discussions and decisions within the traditional team. I actively participate in discussions and decisions within the virtual team.	1.646	1.656	.145	1.359	1.934	11.335	129	.000
I am motivated to contribute consistently within the traditional team. I am motivated to contribute consistently within the virtual team.	1.932	1.692	.148	1.629	2.217	12.960	129	.000
When I express a point of view within a traditional team, my colleagues give me their attention and feedback. When I express a point of view within a virtual team, my colleagues give me their attention and feedback.	1.877	1.929	.169	1.542	2.212	11.094	129	.000
	1.692	1.795	.157	1.381	2.004	10.749	129	.000

In order to test the fourth hypothesis (There are significant differences in employee productivity based on team type), a descriptive analysis of the "Productivity Level" dimension revealed a clear contrast between traditional and virtual teams. With a mean score of 4.213, employees expressed greater productivity in conventional, in-person teams, indicating satisfaction with their performance, work quality (M = 4.37), and efficiency (M = 3.94).

However, despite some perceived flexibility in keeping an efficient pace (M = 3.77), virtual teams displayed a lower mean of 2.92, with lower perceptions of productivity (M = 2.32) and work quality (M = 2.67).

These distinctions imply that while the autonomy of virtual work may impair focus and general productivity, direct interaction, more defined task structures, and physical presence in traditional teams promote higher engagement and operational efficiency (Alzaabi et al., 2021).

Table 15. Level of employee productivity in a traditional team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
I feel productive during face-to-face activities.	130	1	5	4.33	.893

My work is of higher quality when I work in a traditional team.	130	1	5	4.37	.958
Working in a traditional team allows me to work at an efficient pace.	130	1	5	3.94	1.119
Dimension mean				4.213	

Source: Authors` work

Table 16. Level of employee productivity in a virtual team

Item	*No. of respondents*	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean*	*Std. dev.*
I feel productive in online activities.	130	1	5	2.32	1.163
My work is of higher quality when I work in a virtual team.	130	1	5	2.67	1.190
Working in a virtual team allows me to work at an efficient pace.	130	1	5	3.77	.840
Dimension mean				2.92	

Source: Authors` work

A paired-samples t-test comparing perceptions of productivity and work quality in traditional versus virtual teams was carried out in order to further validate the hypothesis that employee productivity varies significantly by team type. The findings indicated that traditional teams were favored by a mean difference of 2.008 points in perceived productivity ($t = 12.856$, $p < 0.001$) and a mean difference of 1.700 points in perceived work quality ($t = 10.552$, $p < 0.001$). The hypothesis and descriptive analysis are supported by these findings, which show that employees perceive higher productivity and better work quality in face-to-face teams. This is probably because of direct interaction, clearer task coordination, and greater emotional engagement.

Table 17: Paired Sample Test for testing H3

Pair	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence interval of the difference**		**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
				Lower	**Upper**			
I feel productive during face-to-face activities. I feel productive during online activities.	2.008	1.781	.156	1.699	2.317	12.856	129	.000
My work is of superior quality when I work in a traditional team. My work is of superior quality when I work in a virtual team.	1.1700	1.837	.161	1.381	2.019	10.552	129	.000

Source: Authors` own work

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to investigate how young workers in Romanian multinational corporations view performance management and professional efficiency based on whether they are part of traditional or virtual teams. The study's primary goals were to determine the benefits and drawbacks of each team type, examine how performance management techniques affect perceived effectiveness, assess employee motivation and engagement, and compare productivity levels between the two team models. Work flexibility, evaluation clarity, engagement, and productivity were the four main dimensions that were examined using a quantitative method backed by a strong theoretical framework. The findings generally corroborate the hypotheses put forth; thus, as a result, virtual teams have a better work-life balance due to more flexibility. On the other hand, the study indicated that traditional teams are more productive, due to in-person interactions, which strengthen the impact of clear evaluation on performance.

The study's limitations, despite its contributions, point to potential directions for further investigation. Generalizability was limited by the sample's homogeneity and small size, which included only young workers from multinational corporations in Romania. The cross-sectional design of the study captures opinions at a single point in time, and reliance solely on quantitative methods limits understanding of the workforce's subjective experiences. By using larger, more varied samples, incorporating qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews, and conducting longitudinal research to monitor changes over time, future studies could fill these gaps.

Additional research could also examine how managers and employees view performance management systems, how leadership styles affect productivity and engagement in traditional, virtual, and hybrid teams, and how task- or role-specific differences differ. Furthermore, as hybrid work arrangements proliferate, examining how virtual and in-person work interact to influence flexibility, motivation, engagement, and productivity would yield insightful information for companies looking to maximize team performance and employee satisfaction.

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