

Working From Home: Analysing Employees' Perspective on Flexibility, Work-Life Balance and Work Performance

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Abstract

Public and government organisations started to offer working from home (WFH) as part of the COVID-19 preventive measure. Working from home however, has its challenging aspects due to adaptations to its working style which may negatively impact work performance. The primary objective of this study is to analyse the influence of flexibility and work-life balance on employees' work performance when WFH. A quantitative methodology was employed in this study and questionnaire was used for data collection. The 29-item questionnaire was distributed to private and government employees using the simple random sampling method via Google Forms. Data were obtained from 201 employees and a preliminary t-test was conducted which highlighted that there was no significant difference between government and private employees' responses. Subsequently, descriptive analysis and multiple regression analysis were conducted to fulfil the formulated research objectives. The multiple regression results illustrated that the total variance of work performance explained by flexibility and work-life balance was 44%. However, the findings revealed that the influence of flexibility on work-from-home performance was not significant. A notable finding of this study is that work-life balance was identified to be a significant predictor of employees' work performance. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that work-life balance is an important facet that needs to be considered when implementing work-from-home policies. This is because working from home is still heavily practised in many organisations despite the reduction in the number Covid-19 cases.

Keywords: Flexibility, Work-Life Balance, Work Performance, Covid-19, Employees

Introduction

The recent coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) that struck the world has forced many countries to impose restrictions and regulations to curb the infection rate. This has also affected the working environment when Malaysia mandated stay-at-home order during the early days of the pandemic. Hence, to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, working from home practice (henceforth WFH) was adopted as a response to facilitate the operation of businesses and organisations (Shah et al., 2021).

Working from home is where employees are not required to be physically present to their workplace (Aczel et al., 2021). With the advancement of technology, employees begin to adapt to the new norms where they complete the assigned tasks remotely (Shareena & Shahid, 2020). For instance, meetings and discussions are conducted through teleconferencing. While the concept of WFH is not new, Malaysia is one of the countries that were forced to adapt to this working style during the pandemic. Thus, this abrupt transition in the working environment has witnessed a vast number of people, regardless of government and private sectors adapting to work from home for the first time. The Malaysian Ministry of Health and the National Council of Security are the responsible agencies for managing the virus outbreak in Malaysia and have regularly updated the standard operating procedure for the operation of companies and organisations according to the fluctuating infection rate in Malaysia (Tambou et al., 2021). Following this, employers were constantly updating their remote working policies and guidelines to ease the shift from the traditional working at the office to working from home.

However, there are mixed perceptions toward the current WFH practice. Some view WFH positively as they have more time with family members, are able to do house chores, and increase their productivity (see for instance, Mustajab et al., 2020; Ipsen et al., 2021). For instance, Ndubisi and Kahraman (2005) in their investigation on teleworking adoption in Malaysian firms, highlight that this working mode allows the employees to gain flexibility and manage their time with family and work. Subsequently, this would contribute to productivity improvements due to their increased work efficiency. On the other hand, some consider WFH practice as a negative habit as their work-life balance is affected where they get easily distracted, and indirectly increase their working hours (Chung et al., 2020). Since there have been concurrent discussions regarding WFH experience, this study aims to provide further insights on the relationship between the Malaysian employees' perspectives on WFH and how it influences their work performance.

Problem Statement

In early 2020, the landscape of the work environment has shifted for most working adults across the globe due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Grant, 2021). During the global crisis, various organisations were forced to reconfigure the traditional workplace setting to work remotely from home (Barbieri et al., 2021). With the proliferation of information technology and increased access to it, WFH has become an ideal solution to the crisis (Aczel et al., 2021). Since the pandemic, it was found that there is a 5% increase in the percentage of employees who work from home (Choukir et al., 2022). This is also supported by Kohont and Ignjatović (2022), who stated that a combination of the pandemic, advanced digitalisation, and national lockdown have forced many employees to start working from home. For example, it was reported that 65% of employees have been working from home which is slightly higher than

the global average which is at 52% (Sivanandham, 2021). In the event of national lockdown in a country, both government and private sectors had no choice but to accept the reality of WFH, given the gravity of the Covid-19 virus effects on a person. Due to this, those who were not exposed to or familiar with the concept were forced to experiment with a full-time mode of WFH (Kohont & Ignjatovic, 2022) and started to face various challenges that may impact their work performance.

Among the most common challenges faced by the employees are unpreparedness to work from home (Ghislieri et al., 2022), difficulty in balancing work and personal life (Schieman et al., 2022), and a decline in job satisfaction (Ghislieri et al., 2022). Employees who have less experience in WFH than those who frequently have it struggle more to adapt with this new working arrangement. This is especially true to the employees who have family members to take care of such as children or parents. Working remotely from home has invaded the family domain and impacted employees greatly, especially in delegating time for work and family (Aczel et al., 2021). Schieman et al. (2022) asserted that family and working time have merged in ways that were not encountered before, and this situation became more intense when the educational institutions like schools and day care centres were closed. Sivanandham (2021) reported that 63% of employees are having difficulties to achieve work life balance thus resulting in high anxiety levels. This could overwhelm the employees in managing their work-life balance and could indirectly affect their job performance and satisfaction as well. A study by Ghislieri et al. (2022) has found that when conflicts of work and family increase, the employees' job satisfaction decreases.

As citizens of a developing country, employees in Malaysia are no exception to these struggles. With these challenges faced, it is important to examine their perspectives when it comes to working remotely from home, both from the government and private sectors. Existing studies pertaining to WFH in Malaysia involved employees from specific professions like academicians (Mohamad & Despois, 2022), domestic workers (Au et al., 2020) and urban professionals (Prihadi et al., 2021). However, Choukir et al (2022) claimed that there is a lack of studies involving these employees' perspectives when WFH. Furthermore, this study explores their perspectives in terms of flexibility, work-life balance, and job performance as part of indicators to measure their performance while working from home. The outcomes of this study will provide informative insights to stakeholders such as employers and policymakers related to WFH. Therefore, the following research questions were established as the focus of the study;

1. What are the employees' perspectives of working from home in terms of flexibility, work-life balance, and work performance?
2. To what extent do flexibility and work-life balance influence work performance?

Literature Review

Rapid development in digitalisation and innovation has enforced a flexible working style and environment to employees from various occupational sectors. Although working from home is a common practice in some countries, the culture only started to be widely implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Vyas and Butakhieo (2021) reported that there is an increased workforce working from home, between February to May 2020 in the U.S when the pandemic first hits. Bosua et al. (2013) investigated the WFH culture of employees

from government and private sectors and found that WFH has a greater impact on one's well-being compared to when working in the office.

There is a large body of literature that discusses the benefits of WFH in terms of environmental and social aspects (see for instance Sooriyapperuma & Nawarathna, 2021; Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021; Bouziri et al., 2020). Following this, most companies decided to continue with WFH practice during the post-COVID phase. Specifically, many prefer to practice a hybrid style of working; office and remotely. For instance, in their investigation on post-COVID working styles, Kong et al (2022) found that 57% of the participants claimed that they prefer to WFH at least one day a week while 11% of them chose to WFH everyday. However, Kong et al (2022) further reported that there are various challenges faced by employees when choosing WFH which is associated with childcare, privacy issues, home environment and others. In another study, Figueroa et al (2020) found that levels of education influenced the employees' frequency to WFH. For example, those with lower levels of education such as the food service workers are more likely to get involved with physical work and do not have the option to WFH. Other than that, Hashim et al (2020) found that administrative employees such as those in the universities prefer WFH compared to WFO. Results from these studies show that there are various factors that may contribute to one's intention to work from home, including education level and the employee's types of work.

In Malaysia, both government and private sectors have implemented WFH policy during the COVID-19 outbreak. For instance, the Malaysian government announced that 80% of the government staff will WFH while 40% of the private sector will do the same in order to curb the spread of the virus (Sivanandham, 2021). However, WFH practice has been slowly discontinued by most organisations during the post-pandemic phase. Therefore, it is necessary to look into this area, particularly on the employees' perspectives on WFH. The pandemic could have changed how employees perceive the flexible working styles which can affect their mental and physical states. Therefore, the present study intended to bridge the gap by providing new evidence and insights into this discussion.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was adapted from McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory and Abdullah et al.'s (2020) perceptions on working from home. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. McClelland (1987) listed three main dominant factors that motivate people to work, and they are (a) Power, (b) Affiliation and (c) Achievement. In the context of this study, the three dominant factors mirror the Abdullah et al.'s (2020) WFH framework on (i) flexibility, (ii) work-life balance and (iii) work performance.

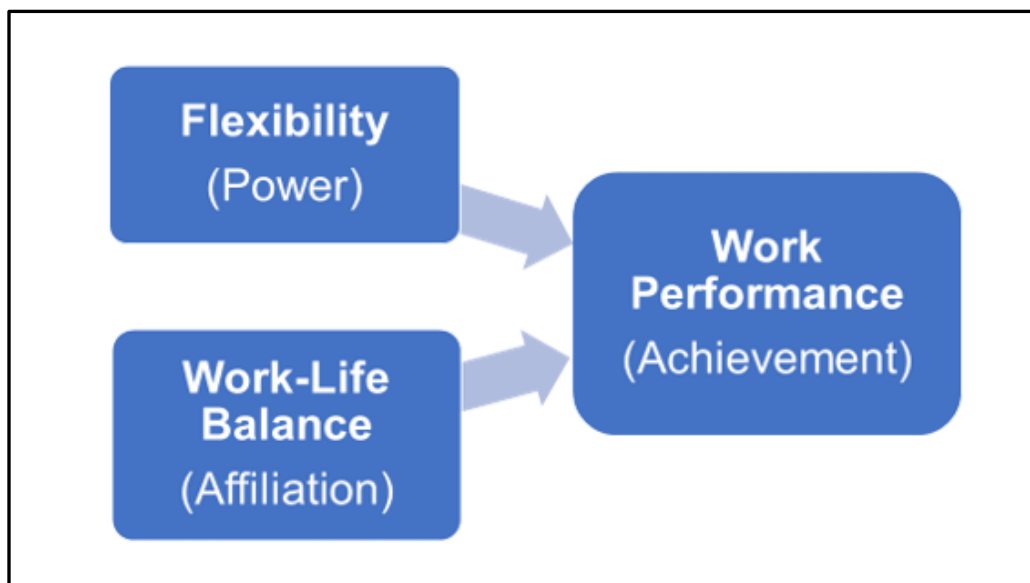


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework adapted from McClelland's Theory

In addition to contributing to McClelland's theory, investigating the relationships in this framework also provides new understanding of remote work and the employees' reflections on their work performance which can be assessed and implemented in the post-COVID era.

i. Power Achieved through Flexibility

Figure 1 depicts the relation between power and flexibility. Flexible working arrangements can be broken down to flexibility in time and flexibility in place (Shifrin & Michel, 2021). Specifically, time flexibility provides employees the freedom to control their working hours such as adjusting start and end times, compressing work weeks and reduced work hours. On the other hand, place flexibility refers to policies that permit employees to complete their work remotely from locations outside the physical workplace such as the employees' homes (Kossek & Michel, 2011). This practice is becoming increasingly common following the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently, many big companies such as Google and Apple have adopted these working styles (Shifrin & Michel, 2021). In the context of this study, flexibility held by the employees motivates them to work. Therefore, employees with a high need for power are inclined towards influence and control. Having control of their own time, workplace and tasks allow the employees to assume that they are in charge of furthering the goals of an institution.

ii. Affiliation Achieved through Work-Life Balance

Working in isolation can take a toll on a person's motivation to work as the environment that it creates can include many uncertainties (Cousins, 2020). However, McClelland (1961) suggested that reduced motivation may affect more people with high need for affiliation. Since the start of the pandemic, many workplaces have been relocated to homes of employees. This situation has drawn a very thin line between work and personal life thus affecting work performance (Gaskell, 2020). Lonska et.al (2021) defined work-life balance as not only getting a fair allocation of time between work and personal life, but also the ability to work in the professional area while still having time and energy to devote to personal life. Through affiliation, employees are able to maximise their effort while working and devote their time for personal matters. According to Siegling and Petrides (2020), affiliation helps

people to experience less anxiety and fear. When people are able to associate with others who share common interests, it becomes easier for them to find the motivation they need (Sokolowski & Heckhausen, 2008). Doeze Jager et al (2017) stated that people who are inclined towards establishing relationships would thrive in a work environment that encourages social interaction. In this context, seeking out affiliations outside the workplace can be a great way to increase one's work life balance.

iii. Achievement Achieved through work performance

Achievement motivation is the final factor that drives employees to work. Achievement motivation is defined as the need to be successful with some high standard (Singh, 2011). Employees with such motivation are those with the desire to accomplish something difficult, attain a high standard of success, master difficult and challenging tasks, and be better than others (Daft, 2008). With the motivation to perform well at work, the employees are able to work from home despite others who find WFH difficult. When they work remotely, they find their work to be more meaningful. Research found that employees' work performance is not compromised by the working mode provided by the employer (Zamani et al., 2021). Furthermore, working from home is also a sign of appreciation and trust from employers because it limits their ability to supervise the employees (Rupietta & Beckmann, 2016). In addition, studies show that such employees put extra work effort and spend longer working hours to achieve their desired goals (see for instance Rupietta & Beckmann, 2016; Bhattacharya & Mittal, 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that employees with achievement motivation would perform at work. As trust is given by their employer, their work is not jeopardised.

Methodology

This quantitative study employed a descriptive research design. A closed-ended survey was utilised as the research strategy. The instrument used for this study was adapted from Abdullah et al (2020) and contained four (4) sections. Section A consisted of demographic items which include gender, marital status, age group and work sector. Section B examined the respondents' perception on the flexibility of working from home and consisted of ten (10) items. Section C investigated respondents' perception on their work-life balance when working from home and encompassed ten (10) items. Section D analyses respondents' perception on their work performance when working from home and nine (9) items were included in this section. A 5-point scale was utilised in the questionnaire which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Muda et al., 2018).

The target population of this study was private or government employees who possess experience of working from home for more than six (6) months. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of the respondents to ensure that there was minimal or no bias (Muda et al., 2018). The survey was pre-tested to three (3) employees to ensure that there are no ambiguities in the survey. Ethical approval was obtained before pre-testing the survey (REC/07/2022-ST/MR/154). Minor revisions were made to several items to improve the alignment with the research questions and framework. The online questionnaire was distributed to one government university in Selangor, Malaysia and several private organisations from June 2022 to July 2022 using Google Forms.

The collected data were first checked for any blanks and outliers in Microsoft Excel. No blanks and outliers were detected; thus, no responses were deleted from the data. Therefore, the final number of responses in this study was 201. Next, each response was allocated a unique ID and was transferred to SPSS. The data underwent reliability analysis in SPSS and each construct exceeded the minimum acceptable value of 0.60. Flexibility and work-life balance, which had 10 items, obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.84 and 0.86, respectively. The final construct, work performance which comprised 9 items, obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.81.

The data were then subjected to descriptive analysis to identify the employees' perspectives of working from home in terms of flexibility, work-life balance, and work performance. An independent t-test was conducted as a preliminary analysis to determine if there is a significant difference between respondents from the private and government employees' perception towards flexibility, work-life balance and work performance. The t-test results revealed that there was no significant difference between these two groups of respondents for all three constructs ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, multiple regression analysis was performed to answer the second research question which was to determine the extent of flexibility and work-life balance in influencing their work-from-home work performance.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Profiles

This section elaborates on the demographic profiles of the respondents involved in this study. There were four demographic profiles investigated which were gender, marital status, age group, and work sector. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	72	35.8
Female	129	64.2
Total	201	100
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	109	54.2
Married with child(ren)	68	33.8
Married with no child	21	10.4
Separated/Divorced	3	1.5
Total	201	100
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 - 30 years old	109	54.2
31 - 40 years old	64	31.8
41 - 50 years old	20	10.0
51 - 60 years old	8	4.0
Total	201	100
Work Sector	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	53	26.4
Private	148	73.6
Total	201	100

Table 1 above illustrates the results of the respondents' demographic profiles in this study. There were four categories of demographic profiles investigated which were gender, marital status, age group, and work sector. In this study, it was observed that there were 35.8% (f = 72) of male respondents and 64.2% (f = 129) female respondents. From the respondents involved, 54.2% (f = 109) respondents were single, 33.8% (f = 68) were those who are married with child(ren), 10.4% (f = 21) were married with no child, and only 1.5% (f = 3) were separated/divorced. In the category of age group, most of the respondents were between 20 to 30 years old (54.2%, f = 109) while only 4% (f = 8) of them were between the ages of 51 to 60 years old. In the last demographic category, (work sector) there were 26.4%

(f = 53) of the respondents from the government sector while there were 73.6% of them from the private sector.

Research Question 1

Employees' Perspectives on Work-Life Balance when Working from Home

In order to answer the first research question which aims to examine employees' perspectives on flexibility when working from home, descriptive analyses were conducted to all three variables of the study: flexibility, work-life balance, and work performance. The analyses generated the mean scores and standard deviation of all items involved in each variable. The mean score table interpretation by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) was used in interpreting the results from the descriptive analysis. The table used is shown in below:

Table 2

Interpretation of mean scores according to Nunnally & Bernstein (1994)

Mean score	Score interpretation
1.00 - 2.00	Very low
2.01 - 3.00	Low
3.01 - 4.00	High
4.01 - 5.00	Very high

Table 3

Perspectives on Flexibility when WFH

Items	Mean	SD
FQ1: I take less time to complete my task when I work from home.	3.602	1.217
FQ2: I cherish not having to spend time commuting to work on a daily basis.	4.627	.771
FQ3: I am able to save on commuting expenses while working from home.	4.731	.622
FQ4: I feel working from home reduces my vehicle maintenance cost.	4.587	.796
FQ5: I can immediately get to work upon waking up every day while working from home.	4.478	.819
FQ6: I am comfortable to do my work anytime.	4.080	1.137
FQ7: I can focus on my work by managing my own schedule.	4.358	.843
FQ8: I am able to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.	4.169	1.030
FQ9: I face less stress doing some work tasks at home.	4.050	1.076
FQ10: My work productivity increases with less stress while working from home.	4.030	1.019
Total mean score of flexibility	4.271	.606

Table 3 above displays the respondents' perspectives on flexibility when working from home. Based on the table, it is observed that the highest mean score was 4.731 (SD = .622) which refers to the item 'I am able to save on commuting expenses while working from home'. This was followed by the item 'I cherish not having to spend time commuting to work on a daily basis' with a mean score of 4.627 (SD = .771) and the item 'I feel working from home reduces my vehicle maintenance cost' with a mean score of 4.587 (SD = .796). Meanwhile, the item 'I take less time to complete my task when I work from home' scored the lowest mean score which is 3.602 (SD = 1.217). The second lowest mean score was 4.030 (SD = 1.019), which refers to the item 'My work productivity increases with less stress while working from home'. In total, the variable of flexibility obtained a total mean score of 4.271 (SD = .606) which is a high score, according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). This indicates that the respondents in this study mostly agreed that they had flexibility when WFH.

Employees' Perspectives on Work-Life Balance when Working from Home

Table 4

Perspectives on Work-Life Balance when WFH

Items	Mean	SD
WLBQ1: I can manage my work responsibilities alongside my personal and family	4.180	.932
WLBQ2: I prefer flexibility for my work as I can take time off during workdays without loss of pay.	4.383	.904
WLBQ3: The flexibility offered to my current job is ideal for me.	3.896	1.155
WLBQ4: I find having an office space at home helped improve my job satisfaction.	4.279	.901
WLBQ5: I find working from home beneficial for me as I am able to simultaneously attend to my family needs.	4.304	.955
WLBQ6: I found working from home more conducive than working in a normal office condition.	3.945	1.141
WLBQ7: I no longer have to face traffic jams to and from work every day.	4.721	.716
WLBQ8: I no longer have to travel to work, therefore I am able to spend more time on the task at hand.	4.433	.947
WLBQ9: I feel healthy and have a better well-being when working from home.	4.045	1.110
WLBQ10: I am able to take care of myself and others better while working from home.	4.234	.949
Total mean score of work-life balance	4.242	.671

The respondents' perspectives on work-life balance when WFH are shown in Table 4 above. This table shows that the highest mean score was obtained by the item 'I no longer have to face traffic jams to and from work every day' (M = 4.721, SD = .716). This is followed by the items 'I no longer have to travel to work, therefore I am able to spend more time on the task at hand' and 'I prefer flexibility for my work as I can take time off during workdays without loss of pay' with mean scores of 4.433 (SD = .947) and 4.383 (SD = .904) respectively. On the other hand, the item 'The flexibility offered to my current job is ideal for me' obtained the lowest mean score (M = 3.896, SD = 1.155) and this is followed by the item 'I found working from home more conducive than working in a normal office condition' with the second lowest score (M = 3.945, SD = 1.141). The total mean score of the variable work-life balance when WFH was 4.242 (SD = .671), which is also a high mean score. This means that in this study, the respondents mostly agreed that they had work-life balance when WFH.

Employees' Perspectives on Work Performance when Working from Home

Table 5

Perspectives on Work Performance when WFH

Items	Mean	SD
WPQ1: I feel my superior understands my challenges while working from home.	3.647	1.170
WPQ2: My employer has high trust in employees working from home.	3.716	1.274
WPQ3: I feel that working from home facilitates my career progression.	3.582	1.124
WPQ6: My employer is concerned about employees' mental and physical health when they work from home.	3.363	1.316
WPQ7: I am able to connect efficiently from home using my own Internet connection.	4.323	.985
WPQ8: My employer educates employees on cybersecurity threats and the importance of data protection.	3.627	1.313
WPQ11: I find that my collaborative skill has improved when working from home.	3.771	1.085
WPQ12: I find my technological proficiency is enhanced when working from home.	4.254	.878
WPQ13: I find it easier to submit my work within the deadline when working from home.	4.090	.955
Total mean score of work performance	3.437	.642

Table 5 above shows the perspectives of respondents in terms of work performance when WFH. In this table, it is shown that the highest mean score was 4.323 (SD = .985) which refers to the item 'I am able to connect efficiently from home using my own Internet connection'. The second highest mean score is obtained by the item 'I find my technological proficiency is enhanced when working from home' with a mean score of 4.254 (SD = .878) and this was followed by the item 'I find it easier to submit my work within the deadline when working from home' (M = 4.090, SD = .955). In contrast, the lowest mean score obtained was 3.363 (SD = 1.316), referring to the item 'My employer is concerned about employees' mental and physical health when they work from home'. The second lowest mean score was attained by 'I feel that working from home facilitates my career progression' with a mean score of 3.582 (SD = 1.124). The total mean score for the work performance variable was 3.437 (SD = .642), which shows a high score. This indicates that the respondents in this study regarded their work performance when WFH was effective.

Research Question 2**Employees' Perspectives on Work Performance when Working from Home**

Table 6
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square
1	.666	.444

Table 7
ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	45.213	2	22.607	78.977	.000
	Residual	56.676	198	.286		
Total		101.889	200			

Table 8
Coefficients

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	.555	.272			2.039	0.043
Flexibility	.278	.107	.236		2.600	0.010
Work-Life Balance	.490	.096	.461		5.086	0.000

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the influence of flexibility and work-life balance in predicting employees' WFH work performance. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Table 5 indicates that the multiple correlation coefficient was .666 which underlines that the total variance of work performance was 44.4%. Flexibility and work-life balance entered the regression equation and were significantly related to work performance, $F(2,198) = 78.977$, $p < 0.001$, as presented in Table 6. However, the results in Table 7 revealed that the influence of flexibility on work performance was not significant ($p > 0.001$). Thus, the regression model for predicting work performance using the coefficients in Table 7 is as follows

Predicted work performance = 0.55 + 0.490 (work-life balance)

Thus, this study concludes that work-life balance influences work performance as the model shows that the regression coefficient related to work-life balance is 0.490. This translates to a unit increase in work-life balance will result in a 0.490 unit increase in work performance. Also, flexibility was shown to not exert any influence on employees' work performance.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study intends to investigate the overall perspective of working from home. The results have highlighted that an important factor that influenced the employees' work performance is the use of digital technology while working from home. From the survey, most of the respondents agreed that their feasibility of home-based work strengthens when using their own internet connectivity. Similarly, Purwanto et al (2020) agreed that the internet is an important precondition for the employees to be able to work from home. A reliable internet access allows one to work effectively. For instance, Daud et al (2021) surveyed the benefits and challenges of WFH employees in Klang, and they found that most of the respondents are comfortable with their workstation at home due to the strong internet connectivity. Moreover, their work performance is said to have increased due to the facilities available at home.

The main objective of this paper was to determine the influence of flexibility and work-life balance on employees' work performance when working from home. Work-life balance was determined as a significant predictor of employees' WFH work performance. This regression result is in harmony with the descriptive findings as most of the respondents agreed that traffic avoidance facilitates the attainment of work-life balance since employees can spend more time on the assigned tasks. Purwanto et al (2020), in their study on WFH among Indonesian teachers during the pandemic, asserted that traffic jams contribute to the accumulation of stress among the teachers. This is because a large fraction of the employees' time is used in commuting instead of completing the pending work. Therefore, traffic conditions significantly affect the work-life balance of employees, as it contributes to their increased or decreased work productivity.

A notable finding from the regression analysis underlined flexibility as a predictor of employees' work performance which aligns with the descriptive analysis results. Most of the participants agreed that flexibility in working from home allows them to save on commuting expenses and avoid traffic congestion. This demonstrates that flexibility contributed to the employees' productivity as they would replace the commuting time with other tasks. However, the regression results revealed that the influence of flexibility on work performance was not significant and this contradicts a large body of literature (see for instance Chatterjee et al., 2022; Davidescu et al., 2020).

Conway et al (2020) reported that less time spent on commuting has increased employees' productivity in the United States during the pandemic. Barrero et al (2020) estimated that employees could save up to 62.4 million hours per workday from commuting to work. Taken together, these studies support the notion that flexibility is essential in impacting employees' work-from-home performance. The difference between the result of this study and the literature could be attributed to numerous contextual factors such as the gender role in a working household. For example, working female employees have to juggle between managing their work tasks and also household matters which may negatively impact their work performance (Formánková & Křížková, 2015). Therefore, the discrepancy between the results serves as a base for future studies to investigate as work flexibility is sine qua non in the current work climate.

This paper reflects on employees' WFH practices and whether it contributes to their working performance. Results from this study allow employers to understand WFH feasibility among Malaysian workers in the course of implementing the practice. It was proven in the data that work-life balance will boost productivity when WFH. This emphasizes the importance of employees having a work-life balance in which this study represents a useful starting point for employers and policymakers to restructure the WFH guidelines in general.

In conclusion, this study sets out to study the emerging role of flexibility and work-life balance on employees' WFH work performance. This study has successfully achieved its research objectives; however, several limitations were noted. The main limitation of this study was an equal representation of the sample since the sample is skewed towards private employees which may impact the generalisability of the results. Therefore, future studies on the current topic are needed to establish the feasibility of WFH among private and government employees. Another potential avenue for future research is to examine the influence of gender and work positions on WFH performance which is lacking in the current literature. More definitive evidence is also necessary to compare between employees' WFH and WFO work performance. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this study have extended our knowledge on the rapidly expanding trend of WFH.

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