

## The Influence of Telework Motivation and Self Efficacy on Employee's Job Performance during Working from Home

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### Abstract

Since the pandemic Covid-19, the telework arrangement has played a significant role in Malaysia and has become one of the mechanisms to ensure business continuity. The changes in working arrangement somehow affected most of the employees as they need to adapt quickly to telework environment. This study aims to identify the relationship between teleworker's motivation and self-efficacy on their job performance. Survey data was collected from 369 academicians who are working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of this study reveal that there is a significant positive relationship between teleworker's motivation and self-efficacy on their job performance. In addition, both teleworker's motivation and self-efficacy variable is perceived as the most important factor that affects the teleworker's job performance. These factors need to be focused on to ensure the effectiveness of telework environment. On the other hand, the findings from this study have contributed to the significant development of WFH policies and guidelines for the company's practices in ensuring employees performed their job expectations regardless of the conventional office setting. Future studies suggested to study other characteristics that affect employees' job performance during working from home. Meanwhile, the organization may consider making working from home an option for academicians after moving into the endemic phase.

**Keywords:** Work From Home, Telework, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance

### Background of The Research

The Covid-19 pandemic between 2019 to 2021 has created significant changes in our lifestyles. In Malaysia, all schools and universities were closed, and online learning became

the new normal (Hashim et. al., 2020). Academicians need to get used to online teaching and learn new methods of teaching online. Working from home also becomes a new normal for them. Creating a flexible and family-friendly workplace (e.g., having flexible work hours or offering remote work) can help to improve the well-being of the employees (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). It can offer many benefits to both the organization and its employees, including reduced real estate costs, enhanced efficiency, reduced absenteeism, flexible labor relations, and improved customer service (Saludin et al., 2020). Considering employee performance is one of the most significant business aspects for firms, it is critical to determine whether working from home has an impact on employee motivation, self-efficacy, and performance. There were few studies focusing on telework motivation and self-efficacy to determine employee job performance. This research was conducted, firstly, to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation, and Telework Self-Efficacy towards Employee's Job Performance and secondly, to determine the most influential factors (Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy) that will affect Employee's Job Performance. This study focuses on the specific working arrangement, which is those working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Literature Review**

### *Telework Motivation*

Working from home, especially during pandemic Covid-19 has become a crucial aspect that has been encouraged by the public. Somehow, changes in working have slightly lowered the motivation of employees. One of the studies conducted by the Japanese has proof that employee productivity is declining after the changes to teleworking compared to the normal office space (Morikawa, 2020). Disruptions such as social engagement with co-workers without addressing work, or enjoying forms of entertainment such as watching movies, singing, or playing with children can all lead to decreased job motivation (Osman et. al., 2020). However, study by Bloom et. al (2015) has shown that teleworking may enhance employee productivity, which can rise even more if the decision to telework is taken by the employees themselves, and this is not even tied to the setting of a pandemic. This is because employees must manage both working and personal activities since all family members are at home. Research on the motivation of academicians is important, as the shortage of academicians is a serious problem in many countries, posing a serious threat to sustainable development (Wang & Zhang, 2021).

Meanwhile, telework can be a beneficial, ingenious incentive to improve the motivation of the employees with the existence of employee needs such as childcare essential, remote work options as well as flexibility in choosing the working hours. Teleworking normally allows employees to work away from the office, besides childcare and commuting costs can also be reduced (Fujii, 2020). These opportunities and chances can boost employee motivation and freedom (O'Neill et al., 2009). In other options, the employee can choose the most typical working times and durations when teleworking, in which they feel most effective, and they are able to have direct control over their own working hours (Eversole et. al., 2012). Meanwhile, the performance of the individuals can affect the performance of the business; thus, HR professionals need to find a way to increase employee motivation in their workforce (Fujii, 2020).

**Telework Self-Efficacy**

The theory of self-efficacy is determined as the social cognitive theory that describes an individual's behavior, environment as well as cognitive factors because of expectations (Bandura, 1986). Teleworking is not lightly brought negative implications for employees' self-efficacy if the employees are being included in social circle, besides the social media program led them to perform their job well (Prihadi et al., 2021). Added to this, individuals that attain high self-efficacy can achieve valued outcomes and gain satisfaction from their workloads, thus they will have greater self-efficacy, leading to higher motivations and adjustment toward telecommuting (Judge & Bono, 2001). Meanwhile, behavioral strategies are more actively initiated by employees who have strong self-efficacy in which they work from home and are capable to manage another set of demands (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Obviously, if employees work from home, they must also focus on their house chores including managing their family. That is why employees must have a high level of self-efficacy since it may lead employees to cope with the demands of everyday tasks (Cattelino et al., 2019). Ultimately, self-efficacy can be a significant resource that can promote employees functioning and well-being (Yap & Baharudin, 2016).

**Employee's Job Performance**

Essentially, job performance is a measure of how well a person performs their job. How an employee performs their job has a direct impact on the productivity of an organization. According to Kahya (2009), the most significant dependent variable in industrial and organizational psychology is work performance. That is why managers are constantly searching for new methods to boost productivity using new goods, procedures, or technology, but until there is a virtual employee, there must be some attention to actual work performance. Research in human resources and other fields has consistently focused on how to improve job performance within organizations. Traditionally, job performance was associated with a defined list of tasks, all of which were often included in an employee's job description. Currently, job performance is assessed dually, with respect to job tasks and with respect to context. Contextual performance is an individual effort, outside of basic job functions, that is instrumental in shaping the organizational, social, and psychological context that serves as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes (Werner, 2000). This day, employee performance is highly related with teleworking during the pandemic covid-19. According to Bloom et al (2015), employees at the largest Chinese travel agency are having a very higher overall performance rather than employees who work from the office because of the more silent environment of work, besides they are to enjoy their rest time when working. Added to this, study made by Susilo (2020) prove that employee's job performance has a positive and significant effect with working from home. This directly shows that employees can increase their job performance if they are able to work away from the office. In contrast, there is a study found that employee is more easily getting disrupted by the rapid usage of several ICT devices and smartphone when working at home which able to reduce the employee job performance (Li & Lin, 2019). In fact, the effect of job performance on the employees working from home still receives little attention in nowadays literature (Rupietta et. al., 2018). Measuring employee performance is crucial since it seeks to identify the outcomes of employees' task (Azmy, 2022). All the reason stated has made the authors consideration in looking further into this issue especially in the context of academicians working from home.

### Research Methodology

This research is categorized as a correlational research design. Correlational research design examines the relationship between variables which indicate how two or more variable are related to another variable (Salkind, 2012). Quantitative research methods were used to gather information for this study. The researcher initiated the data collection process after getting approval from the Universiti Teknologi MARA Research Ethics Committee.

### Population and Method of Data Collection

In this study, 369 samples from 8788 academic staff working at Universiti Teknologi MARA are selected at random from 13 different campuses in Malaysia. This study was using simple random sampling in selecting the respondents. Simple random sampling ensures each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected to be part of the sample. The source of data for this study is primary data acquired through questionnaires that have been distributed through email at interval times. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was designed using 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

### Research Findings

#### *Normality Test*

In statistics, a normality test is used to determine whether a data set is normally distributed. This study uses skewness to measure asymmetry of the probability distribution of a random variable about its mean. The skewness value ranging from -1 to 1 is an acceptable range for the data to be normally distributed (Pallant, 2011).

Table 1

#### *Skewness Result*

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Skewness value |        |
| Skewness       | -0.549 |

Since the measure of skewness is -0.549 in Table 1 and falls within the range of -1.0 and 1.0, the researcher can conclude that the data distribution is normally distributed.

#### *Reliability Test*

The reliability analysis was conducted by computing the Cronbach's Alpha for each section. The acceptable alpha value in reliability analysis is 0.7 in the ability test case (Kline, 1999). Table 2 below shows that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables are greater than 0.815. This indicates that the questions for variables in the questionnaires are reliable and valid. The reliability value for each section were in acceptable range which is more than 0.8 as stated by Said (2018).

Table 2

#### *Cronbach's Alpha Values*

| Variables                  | Cronbach's Alpha | No of question |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Telework motivation        | 0.815            | 9              |
| Telework self-efficacy     | 0.910            | 14             |
| Employee's job performance | 0.931            | 11             |

*Inferential Statistics*

In determining the objectives, a series of test is needed to be done. Correlation test is performed to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy towards Employee's Job Performance. Based on Table 3, this research found that there is a significant positive relationship between Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy towards Employee's Job Performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). The r-value for Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy are 0.477 and 0.501, respectively. This shows that each variable has a moderate positive relationship with Employee's Job Performance.

Table 3

*Pearson Correlation result*

| Variable               | Employee's Job Performance |             | Level    |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------|
|                        | Pearson Correlation        | Significant |          |
| Telework Motivation    | 0.477                      | 0.000       | Moderate |
| Telework Self-Efficacy | 0.501                      | 0.000       | Moderate |

Table 4 shows the model summary for the regression model. The value of R Square is 0.339 shows that 33.9 percent of total variation in Employee's Job Performance is explained by the variation in independent variable Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy.

Table 4

*Model summary*

| Model Summary |                    |          |                   |                            |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model         | R                  | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 2             | 0.582 <sup>b</sup> | 0.339    | 0.335             | 0.62308                    |

*b. Predictors: (Constant), telework motivation, telework self-efficacy*

F-statistics were carried out to find the overall strength of the model. Table 5 shows that, the value of F-Statistic is 93.807 and p-value is 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ) which indicates that the data used in the research fit to the model.

Table 5

*Anova result*

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |                |     |             |        |                    |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|--------------------|
| Model              |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.               |
| 2                  | Regression | 72.837         | 2   | 36.419      | 93.807 | 0.000 <sup>c</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 142.092        | 366 | 0.388       |        |                    |
|                    | Total      | 214.930        | 368 |             |        |                    |

*a. Dependent Variable: Employee's Job Performance*

*c. Predictors: (Constant), Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy*

Table 6 below demonstrates the regression model result that shows two independent variable that significantly influence the Employee's Job Performance which are Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 6

Regression model result

| Coefficients <sup>a</sup> |                        |                             |            |                           |        |       |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| Model                     |                        | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig.  |
|                           |                        | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |       |
| 2                         | (Constant)             | 0.3288                      | 0.232      |                           | 14.148 | 0.000 |
|                           | Telework Motivation    | 0.288                       | 0.041      | 0.325                     | 6.967  | 0.000 |
|                           | Telework Self-Efficacy | 0.220                       | 0.028      | 0.366                     | 7.843  | 0.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee's Job Performance

The final regression model is shown below

$$Y = \beta_0 + 0.288 X_1 + 0.220 X_2$$

Employee's job performance = 0.3288 + 0.288 (Telework Motivation) + 0.220 (Telework Self-Efficacy)

### Conclusion

The results of this research found that there is a significant positive relationship between Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy towards Employee's Job Performance since all the p value is less than 0.05. In addition, both Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy variable is perceived as the most important factor that affects the Employee's Job Performance. This study has proven that both variables need to take into many considerations in evaluating job performance of academicians working from home. Future research may consider other factors that affect Employee's Job Performance such as telework qualities, telework efficiency and others. Future research also may identify whether working from home can be efficient for academicians during post-pandemic situation. Although hybrid and remote working would be more popular in the post-pandemic for nonmanual work, it will not be a "one size fits all" solution (Vyas, 2022). Finally, the findings from this study have contributed to the significant development of WFH policies and guidelines for the company's practices. The policymakers may create a new policy that offers options to academicians to either work from home or work from the office since the results show that they still can perform well even when they are working from home. By looking at this, the findings provide new perspectives on having better well-being for academicians.

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