

Employee Job Performance in Higher Education Institutions as Affected by Academicians' Attitudes Towards Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Qualities During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to identify the elements that have the greatest influence on job performance, motivation, and self-efficacy as they relate to telework.

Design/methodology/approach: This study using a sample from 13 branches of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia. A total of 369 samples were drawn at random among 8788 academic employees. To complete this study, every aspect of telework was evaluated in connection to job performance utilising quantitative methodology. The gathered data was analysed using SPSS, Version 22.

Findings: Findings show that all categories have a strong positive link with job performance, with the exception of telework self-efficacy and telework characteristics, which influence job performance among academic employees at UiTM.

Research limitations/implications: Future research is advised to evaluate the functions of telework self-efficacy towards job performance among UiTM management personnel because it has been demonstrated that these variables have a limited influence among UiTM academicians.

Practical implications: The identification of efficient telework arrangements and performance management measures may assist organisations in optimising their telework policies and enhancing employee job performance, while also maintaining employee well-being.

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Keywords: Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, Telework Qualities, Job Performance, Covid-19

Introduction

Between 2019 and 2021, the pandemic of COVID-19 has caused significant changes to our lifestyles and work patterns. The pandemic has led to academic institutions closures and the adoption of remote learning (Zheng et al., 2021). Both academicians and students have a direct influence on this occurrence. It influences their academic and career achievement, mental health, and well-being (Bonsaksen et al., 2022). Academicians faced numerous challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it disrupted traditional teaching, research, and administrative processes in educational institutions. These challenges include multitasking in new and added ways to achieve the same goal in e-learning platforms, poor internet access, lack of interaction between teachers and students, lack of technological facilities, and students' attitudes (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). Additionally, Rasheed et al. (2020) stated that academicians may experience technological anxiety, complexity, and illiteracy, while students may experience technological illiteracy due to the changes of this work arrangement. The problems are that academicians need to change the way they teach online because it is not the same as teaching in person. Due to numerous issues effected, it is crucial for the researchers to do a study on academicians's job performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research was conducted, firstly, to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Qualities towards Employee's Job Performance and secondly, to determine the most influential factors (Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Qualities) that will affect Employee's Job Performance.

Literature Review

Telework Motivation

Telework motivation is one of the most significant factors influencing job performance. The correlation between employee motivation and job performance within the framework of telework has garnered significant attention, particularly in light of the COVID-19 epidemic, which prompted numerous organizations to implement remote work arrangements as a means of maintaining operational continuity and safeguarding employee well-being. A study conducted in Spain during the COVID-19 lockdown found that teleworking resulted in an increase in employees' motivation and improved performance (Romeo et al., 2022). This can be attributed to the flexibility and autonomy that telework provides, allowing employees to better manage their work-life balance and reduce stress, as mentioned by Jaafar and Rahim (2022). Another study by Campo et al., (2021) found that teleworkers perceive they can attain higher job performance levels because this modality provides more opportunities. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Japanese researchers has shown evidence that employee productivity declines following the transition to teleworking in comparison to the traditional office environment (Morikawa et al., 2020). However, according to the research conducted by Bloom et al. (2015), teleworking has been shown to enhance staff productivity. Moreover, the study suggests that productivity levels can be further elevated when employees are given the autonomy to decide whether to telework, and this finding is not limited to the context of a pandemic.

Telework Self-Efficacy

Several research shows that telework self-efficacy is an important factor in remote work. According to Lange and Kayser (2022), self-efficacy is defined as a judgment of one's ability to execute a particular behaviour pattern, and it is considered an important personal resource in dealing with work-related stress during work from home. Based on Bandura (1986), self-efficacy theory is determined as social cognitive theory that describes individual's behaviour, environment as well as cognitive factors in result of expectations. Teleworking is not lightly

brought negative implication towards employees' self-efficacy if they employees are being included along in social circle, beside the social media program led them to perform their job well (Prihadi, Chang & Goo, 2021). Meanwhile, studies have shown that self-efficacy can reduce work-related stress and increase job satisfaction (Lange & Kayser, 2022; Kröner & Müller, 2023). Staples (1999) suggests that to ensure the positive results of this variable, self-efficacy assessments play a critical role in influencing work from home effectiveness, perceived productivity, job satisfaction, and ability to cope. However, according to Darmawan and Lussak (2022), employees may experience technological anxiety, complexity, and illiteracy, which can negatively impact their self-efficacy. Another study focused on telework leadership competencies and their impact on workplace well-being and job performance (Alkhayyal & Bajaba, 2023). The findings revealed that telework self-efficacy partially mediated the relationship between telework leadership competencies and workplace well-being, and fully mediated the relationship with job performance. This suggests that effective telework leadership can enhance employee self-efficacy, leading to improved job performance in telework settings. Thus, self-efficacy can be a significant resource that can promote employees functioning and well-being (Yap & Baharudin, 2016).

Telework Qualities

Telework qualities is another important variable to look on to ensure better work performance of academicians working from home. A study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy found that employees' emotional exhaustion and work engagement levels were related to telework quality (Miglioretti et al., 2022). This suggests that organizations need to focus on providing a supportive and effective telework environment to enhance employee well-being and job performance. Meanwhile, teleworkers often perceive that they can attain higher job performance levels because this modality provides more opportunities for them (Campo et al., 2021). Telework gives employees more freedom and flexibility, which can help them better control their time and work on tasks that match their most productive times. This will lead to better work quality. Finally, telework requires strong leadership (Lilian, 2014), as it is managers who are responsible for the formation of feedback culture, introducing communication rules, efficient information exchange, motivating employees for active and continuous communication, and for the attitudes, feelings, thinking, behaviours, and activities of groups or organizations. Better leadership have proof to relate in better telework qualities. In addition, a systematic review of research on teleworks and organizational economic performance indicators found that telework was associated with increased organizational qualities, particularly in homogenous samples with unique work tasks (Mutiganda et al., 2022). This suggests that telework qualities may vary depending on the nature of the work and the composition of the workforce. The provision of telework allows employees to have increased flexibility and autonomy, enabling them to effectively manage their time and focus on tasks that coincide with their optimal productivity periods. This, in turn, can result in enhanced work quality.

Employee's Job Performance.

Academicians' ability to do their jobs has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on research conducted in India, the COVID-19 pandemic has had detrimental effects on the capacity of female academicians to sustain a harmonious equilibrium between their professional and personal lives, consequently impacting their work dynamics (Mukhopadhyay, 2023). This shows that the pandemic significantly affected how well women performed at their jobs in academics. Shoaib et al. (2022) stated that academicians' performance has been affected by stress brought on by the pandemic-induced work transition.

Meanwhile, Ghasemy and Elwood (2022) has conducted a cross-national comparative study in Malaysia and Japan. The result reveals that the pandemic influenced academicians' work satisfaction, academic motivation, and organizational citizenship behaviour. This implies that the pandemic has impacted academicians' motivation and job happiness, which may influence how well they do their duties. Another related study investigated the moderating effects of academic competence on COVID-19 fear, job performance, and the impact of workplace measures (Chaudhry et al., 2023). According to the study, academic competence moderates the association between workplace measures and COVID-19 worries, and workplace measurements have a significant impact on both job performance and COVID-19 anxieties. To understand more on this issue, past researchers have investigated how academics perceived the resources available to them and the responsibilities of their jobs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on working conditions. According to the study, academics may have negative effects, such as elevated stress levels, because of a combination of greater job expectations and reduced resources (Karatuna et al., 2022). This shows that academicians' job performance has been impacted by the move to remote employment. Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on academicians' ability to do their jobs well, especially in terms of changed work dynamics, stress, and productivity.

Method

The present study is classified as a correlational research design. Correlational research design is a method that investigates the association between variables, providing insights into the interrelationship of two or more factors and another variable (Salkind, 2017). It is a quantitative research method that concentrates on analyzing the statistical relationship between two or more variables. This study employed quantitative research methodologies to collect data. Upon obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Committee at Universiti Teknologi MARA, the researcher proceeded to commence the data collection process.

Population and Method of Data Collection

A research population is a large collection of individuals known to have the same characteristics of the research. The population for this research is all 8788 academic staff at UiTM all 13 campuses in Malaysia. In this research, 369 samples from 8788 academic staff will be selected by random for each 13 campuses in Malaysia. This research used simple random sampling. Simple random sampling ensures that 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 research is primary data which is acquired through questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

Findings

Normality Test

Normality test is a statistical method used to determine whether a sample data set has been drawn from a normally distributed population within some tolerance. Normality test is an important step in data analysis, as it helps in deciding the measures of central tendency and selecting appropriate statistical methods. According to Mishra et al. (2019) normality test is mostly used to determine if parametric statistical tests, which presume that the data are normally distributed, are adequate. If the data set is not normally distributed, non-parametric tests or data transformations may be more appropriate for the analysis. This research uses skewness to measure asymmetry of the probability distribution of a random variable about its mean. Skewness measures the asymmetry of the distribution, while kurtosis measures the

heaviness of the tails (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), a normal distribution has a skewness of 0 and a kurtosis of 3. If the skewness and kurtosis values deviate significantly from these values, the data set may not be normally distributed. The skewness value ranging from -1 to 1 is an acceptable range for the data to be normally distributed (Pallant, 2020). Since the measure of skewness is -0.619 in Table 1 and falls within the range of -1.0 and 1.0, the research can conclude that the data distribution is normally distributed.

Table 1: Skewness Result

Value	Skewness
-0.619	Skewness

Reliability Test

The reliability analysis was conducted by computing the Cronbach's Alpha for each section. The acceptable alpha value for reliability testing depends on the context and purpose of the research. Generally, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is considered acceptable for most research purposes (Taber, 2017). However, some studies recommend a maximum alpha value of 0.90 for high-quality tests (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). 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 considered reliable and valid.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Values

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No of question
Telework Motivation	0.815	9
Telework Self-Efficacy	0.910	14
Telework Qualities	0.861	7
Employee's Job Performance	0.931	11

Inferential Statistics

In determining the objectives, a series of tests needs to be done. Correlation test is performed to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Qualities towards Employee's Job Performance. Based on the table 3 below, this research founded that, there are significant positive relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Qualities 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 moderate positive relationship with Employee's Job Performance. Meanwhile, r-value for Telework Qualities is 0.809 which indicates that the variable has very strong positive relationship with Employee's Job Performance.

Table 3:

Variable	Employee's job performance		Level
	Pearson Correlation	Significant	
Telework Motivation	0.477	0.000	Moderate
Telework Self-Efficacy	0.501	0.000	Moderate
Telework Qualities	0.809	0.000	Very strong

Pearson Correlation result

Table 4 shows the model summary for the regression model. The value of R Square is 0.658 shows that 65.8 percent of total variation in Employee's job performance is explained by the variation in independent variable Telework Self-Efficacy and Telework Qualities.

Table 4: Model summary ^c

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.811 ^b	0.658	0.657	0.44785

b. Predictors: (Constant), Telework Self-Efficacy, Telework Qualities

c. Dependent Variable: Employee's job performance

F-statistics were carried out to find the overall strength of the model. Table 5 shows that, the value of F-Statistic is 141.521 and p-value is 0.000 (<0.05) which indicated that the data used in the research fit to the model.

Table 5: Anova result

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	141.521	2	70.761	328.8	0.000 ^c
	Residual	73.408	366	0.20		
	Total	214.930	368			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee's job performance

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

Table 6 below demonstrates the regression model result that shows only two independent variable that significantly influence the Employee's job performance which are Telework Self-Efficacy and Telework Qualities (p<0.05).

Table 6: Regression model result

Model	Coefficients ^a				t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
2 (Constant)	1.339	0.182			7.360	0.000
Telework Self-Efficacy	0.046	0.022	0.077		2.095	0.037
Telework Qualities	0.747	0.036	0.766		20.890	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee's job performance

One variable, which is Telework Motivation had been removed from the model using stepwise selection method since the p-value are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the final regression model is shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + 0.046 X_1 + 0.747 X_2$$

Employee's job performance = 1.339 + 0.046 (Telework Self-Efficacy) + 0.747 (Telework Qualities)

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research found that there is significant positive relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Qualities towards Employee's Job Performance since all the p value is less than 0.05. In addition, only Telework Self-Efficacy and Telework Qualities variable is perceived as the most important factor that affect the Employee's Job Performance. This study has proven that all variables need to be taken into consideration in evaluating job performance of academicians working from home. The findings of this study have made a valuable contribution to the substantial advancement of work-from-home (WFH) policies and guidelines inside the company's operational framework. Meanwhile, future research may consider other factors that affect Employee's Job Performance such as telework productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and commitment. Future research should investigate the most effective telework arrangements for different types of jobs and employees. This can help organizations optimize their telework policies and improve employee job performance (Athanasiadou & Theriou, 2021). The identification of efficient telework arrangements and performance management measures may assist organisations in optimising their telework policies and enhancing employee job performance, while also maintaining a balance with employee well-being.

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