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The Influence of Work from Home on Job Performance among Academicians in Kelantan, Malaysia: Mediating Role of Employee Work Motivation

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to see how work-from-home affects job performance. It posits work motivation as mediating variables, and investigates how work-from-home affects employee performance via these characteristics. The findings have ramifications for companies looking to assess the efficiency of their work-from-home policy. This is especially true in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The study's original contribution is its questionnaire, which has been tailored to alterations caused by COVID-19.

Lecturers were given a printed questionnaire to complete as part of the data collection process. The questionnaire, which included a Likert scale, personally distributed to respondents via the officer in charge to 190 lecturers. A total of 165 people took part in the survey. This study employed regression analysis to answer the research questions. Employees who worked from home reported higher levels of motivation, which improved job performance. While the validity of this study is limited to how these benefits are expressed in higher education institution at Kok Lanis, it may have external validity in other COVID-19-affected Public Higher Institution in Malaysia.

Keywords: Work From Home, Employees' Job Performance, Work Motivation

Introduction

COVID-19 has lately emerged as a global threat. Governments all around the world are being pushed to take action in order to prevent the virus's spread. Social separation is one of the policies. Schools, workplaces, tourist sites, and even some public transportation have all been forced to close indefinitely as a result of this policy. Many businesses have adopted government regulations that allow employees to work from home. However, the impact of work-from-home on employee performance has remained controversial (Andriyanty et al., 2021), leaving a research void. According to researchers, workers can work from home if they use video conferencing systems for communication. It may give people the impression that

they are safe from the coronavirus. Employees who work from home have more flexibility in scheduling appointments and running errands.

They also don't have to waste time or money on commuting. The autonomy of office workers who work from home is expanded. This refers to the extent to which a job permits you to make decisions about how you want to finish the job. Another advantage of working from home is the ability for employees to customise or select their own work environments. According to Bawono and Setyadi (2021), telecommuting works best when the job is portable or can be completed online. As a result, job performance in a telecommuting setting is significantly influenced by the job's qualities. In response to COVID-19, governments around the world implemented a work-from-home policy to reduce the virus's transmission from one person to another. Because Malaysia is a severely damaged country, the government has taken steps to implement work-from-home policies in the afflicted areas. Because of the disagreement over the success of working from home, employers have been hesitant to implement the programme; as a result, academics have been pushed to research the benefits.

Although there has been some earlier research (Bawano et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2021) on virtual offices and telecommuting, a work-from-home policy during the COVID-19 crisis is not the same as telecommuting. The most significant distinction is its restriction on work locations. While telecommuters can work from a variety of locations, including coffee shops, people can only work from home during the pandemic. As a result, they will be distracted by family concerns, because isolation affects all family members, not just employees. Researchers will be able to collect data not just from organisations that are ready for telecommuting, but also from those that aren't and are still striving to adapt, as a result of the broad adoption of work-from-home.

Remote learning, with a range of teaching and learning modalities, has become the new norm, and this must continue long after the pandemic is over to ensure that effective learning is carried out in the most efficient manner possible. Due to the rapid rise in Covid-19 instances, the Malaysian Higher Education Ministry (MOHE) has instructed all higher learning institutions to perform academic activities in a remote location and has also issued an order to postpone students' on-campus registration (Hanafiah et al., 2020). Until the situation improves, higher education institutions are encouraged to implement online registration for new and returning students for the Semester 1 2020/2021 session, as well as to complete the entire teaching and learning process online.

Malaysian universities are also working out how to improve teaching and learning methods while keeping their professors, staff, and students safe from the COVID-19 virus. However, efforts must be taken to guarantee that internet connectivity issues do not impede the teaching and learning process. As a result, synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods are required to ensure that all students can participate in class while both learning and submitting their online tutorial or assignment, which has become the new norm in education (Hanafiah et al., 2020).

During the Covid 19 pandemic, lecturers will also be required to work from home, following this new approach. During the global Covid-19 outbreak, several organisations moved their staff from the workplace to a work-from-home model, making work-from-home a major topic. When millions of individuals were forced to work from home for the first time, it became the new normal, and the practise grew in popularity (Efendi et al., 2022). Work from

home is described as work that is completed at home rather than at an office (Hanafiah et al., 2020). Working from home was not always a possibility for all industries, especially education, but it is now the norm. Malaysian workers have been urged to work from home, with the exception of those providing critical services, since the first Movement Control Order (MCO) was proclaimed in March 2020, to decrease the risk of infection. On the other hand, changes in the workplace brought on by the pandemic would have a long-term negative impact on the workforce (Ibrahim et al., 2021). The majority of them are struggling with inadequate home-office setup, severe loneliness and isolation, and work-life balance concerns.

While suffering with their employment, some of them are concerned about their job security and are anxious due to a change in routine, a shift in habit, as well as family pressure. As a result, online teaching and learning are required. As a result, it's critical to determine whether working from home affects workers' job performance, with a particular focus on lecturers in higher education institution at Kok Lanis.

Furthermore, there is minimal research on this problem from a Malaysian perspective, particularly among lecturers in Kok Lanis. Using work motivation as a mediating variable, this study intends to analyse the influence of working from home on job performance and answer how it affects employee performance. The new study approach will greatly benefit business practitioners, particularly the Malaysian government, which wants to assess the success of its work-from-home policy during the pandemic. It can also be used to help governments and businesses determine whether to encourage work-from-home rules or look for other options. The study's original contribution is its questionnaire, which has been tailored to alterations caused by COVID-19.

Research Objectives

To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives are formulated:

1. To investigate the influence of work from home on job performance among academicians in higher education institution at Kok Lanis.
2. To investigate the mediating role of work motivation in influencing the relationship between work from home and job performance among academicians in higher education institution at Kok Lanis.

Scope of Study

This study focuses on lecturers of higher education institution at Kok Lanis. From this study researcher can figure out the effects of work from home on job performance during COVID-19 among lecturers in higher education institution at Kok Lanis. This study will allow analysis and conclusions based on lecturers' responses in the questionnaire which was distributed by hand. At the end of the research the outcome of the study will be able to assist researchers to recognize the effects of work from home on job performance during COVID-19 among lecturers in higher education institution at Kok Lanis.

Significance of the Study

The researchers gather data and evaluate the effect of work from home and job performance among lecturers. The researchers discover the relationship between work from home and job satisfaction among lecturers that may be weakened or decreased in value at work. As a result of the new normal created by the pandemic, the management of polytechnic was able

determine whether there is a connection between work from home and job performance among lecturers in higher educational institutions.

Literature Review

Job Performance

This study's goal also included evaluating the performance of the instructors at Kok Lanah' higher education institution. The theory of action and work performance's creator Bowano et al (2020) claims that the individual, the organisational environment, and the nature of the job all have a significant impact on an organization's performance. The first aspect is individuality, which encompasses the employees' goals, principles, knowledge, nature, competences, career path, preferences, and hobbies. The second factor to take into account is the organisational environment, which encompasses the culture and climate, structure and procedures, industrial maturity, organisational strategic position, core competences, and the broader context. The third factor is work demand, which entails the responsibilities, tasks, and responsibilities of each employee in the firm.

The best performance (best fit), according to the theory of action and work performance, may be achieved by integrating individual elements, the environment, and the roles and responsibilities carried out by human resources, including leaders in an organisation (Bowano et al., 2020). Values, qualities, style, and expertise backed by the organisational environment can drive a leader's role in accomplishing duties and activities intended to achieve the greatest organisational performance. An informed and skilled team may improve an organization's performance.

Work from Home and Work Motivation

Productivity and personal life are the two main reasons why employees are more motivated to work from home. Employees who telecommute are more productive because they save on traffic and transportation expenses. They can also live in a less expensive area, like a suburb, even though it is far from their job. Additionally, they have the chance to tackle personal concerns while at work, which enables them to achieve greater levels of personal fulfilment (Azmy et al., 2022). In line with previous research findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1. Work from Home has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation

Work from Home and Job Performance

Telecommuters may adapt and personalise their own work environment, which can increase their working performance. Working from home saves them time and money. It also generates a sense of independence, which makes employees happy and so impacts their job performance (Efendi, 2022). Employees who telecommute more regularly have greater levels of work motivation than those who telecommute less frequently. As a result, it has the potential to boost their performance (Nuur et al., 2021). In line with previous research findings, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2. Working from home has a positive and significant effect on Job Performance

H3. Work Motivation mediates the effect of working from home on Job Performance

Work Motivation and Job Performance

It is a realistic choice for enhancing motivation for both personal and organisational goals, hence improving employee performance. Employee motivation is a powerful component in enhancing work efficiency and productivity, which is commonly acknowledged as a sign of strong job performance (Purwanto et al., 2020). Balasundran et al (2021); Paamungkas et al (2022), who previously performed research on the influence of work environment and work motivation on performance, have also shown that work motivation has a beneficial contribution to job performance. He also claimed that job happiness dampens the impact of job motivation and surroundings on job performance. When people are strongly motivated to accomplish their jobs, organisational goals are more likely to be reached. As a result, businesses must pay special attention to it. In line with the results of previous studies, this research posits the following hypotheses:

H4. Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Job Performance

Methodology

This study relied on quantitative methods such as questionnaire surveys to finish it. The demographic information about the respondents is found in Section A of the questionnaires, while questions about working from home are found in Section B. Section C contains questions about job performance and motivation. Each variable was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019) The target population is lecturers in higher education institution at Kok Lanas, with a sample size of 365 respondents. The sample size is calculated using the Krejcie and Morgan Table. By offering a table that provides a solid sample size decision model, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) substantially simplified sample size decision. This table serves as a broad scientific guideline for determining sample size. Based on the table created by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for a population of 365 staffs, a sample size of 190 is recommended.

Table 1
Questionnaire Items

Variable	Item	Statement
Work From Home	WFH1	My location for doing office work is at home.
	WFH2	I always communicate with other people remotely for my work.
	WFH3	The duration I work at home is the same as the duration I work in the office.
	WFH4	The organization can monitor the results of my work easily.
	WFH5	Information and communication technology tools really help me in doing my job.
	WFH6	Information and communication technology tools allow me to do my chores at home.
	WFH7	I can easily get or access the data I need related to my job.
Work Motivation	WM1	My organization gives me a salary while staying safe from infection of COVID19.

	WM2	My organization gives me the freedom to fully arrange my work schedule.
	WM3	My organization allows me to work independently without supervision.
	WM4	I can work more efficiently because I do not need to travel to the office.
	WM5	My organization gives me opportunities to get reward such as yearly bonus while staying safe from infection of COVID-19.
	WM6	My organization gives me opportunities to get promoted while staying safe from infection of COVID-19.
	WM7	My organization gives me the chance to develop myself so that I am not bored during the COVID-19 crisis.
	WM8	My organization gives me the chance to attend online training so that I am not bored during the COVID-19 crisis.
Job Performance	JP1	I fulfill the responsibilities stated in my job descriptions.
	JP2	I perform tasks that are expected of me.
	JP3	I meet formal performance requirements of the job.
	JP4	I involved in activities that are relevant to my yearly performance assessment.
	JP5	I neglect aspects of the job that I am obliged to perform (R).
	JP6	I fail to perform essential duties.
	JP7	I adequate by complete the assigned duties.

Data Collection Procedure

One set of questionnaires was used to collect the necessary information for this study. The process of data collection begin with contacting the human resources office from higher education institution at Kok Lanas, of through phone calls, followed by official letters to get the approval for data collection.

After approval is obtained from human resource office, a total of 190 questionnaires were personally distributed to respondents via the officer in charge. Respondents were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. An arrangement was made to collect the questionnaires from the officer in charge in each department about two weeks later.

Data Analysis

The data were keyed in by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26.0.

Analysis and Discussion

The total number of responded questionnaires is 165 which contributed to the respond rate is 86%. Every questionnaire has been checked, and there are no missing values among the 165 returned surveys.

Table 2
Returned Questionnaires

Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaire returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number of valid questionnaire	Percentage valid (%)
190	165	86	165	100.0

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Work from home

Variables	Mean	SD
Work from home	4.50	.41
Work motivation	4.64	.39
Job performance	4.58	.39

Descriptive analysis was performed on the variables in this study. As presented in Table 3 above, it shows the results of the analysis which involve mean value and standard deviation of each variable. The mean values are in the range of 4.50 and 4.64. Standard deviation values range from .39 to .41. The highest mean value is for work motivation with the score of 4.91 and the lowest mean value is for job performance with the score of 4.15.

Table 4
Reliability Analysis for Work from Home and Job Performance

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
• Work from home	7	0.694
• Work Motivation	8	0.732
• Job Performance	7	0.724

As presented in Table 4 above, the Cronbach's Alpha values for work from home as an independent variable is 0.694. The figures indicate that the measures had acceptable and good values of Cronbach's Alpha. This is also supported by the Cronbach's Alpha for job performance as dependent variable that is 0.724. Meanwhile work motivation as mediator variable is 0.732. According to Nunnally (1978) the minimum acceptable reliability is set at .60. Reliability less than .60 is considered as poor, those in .70 ranges are acceptable and those over .80 is good (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019).

Table 5

Results of Regression Analysis with Job Performance as the Dependent Variable

	Without mediator		With mediator		
Independent variable	Standardized Values	Beta	Standardized Values	Beta	Remarks
Work from home	.417**		.344**		Partial mediation effect
Mediator (Work Motivation)			.233*		Mediator
R	.611		.644		
R squared	.373		.415		
R squared change	.373		.041		
F change	21.423		5.017		
Significant F change	.000		.028		
Durbin Watson			1.783		

From table 4.15, $R^2 = .373$ or 37.3%, indicating that 37.3% of the variance of the regression model has been explained by the independent variables without mediator with job performance as the dependent variable. The significance F change value ($F = 21.423$, $p = 0.00$). For the individual contribution of independent variables in explaining job performance as the dependent variable without work motivation as mediator, work from home ($\beta = .417$, $p < 0.05$) are found to be significant predictor. Both of these variables are considered as partial mediation effect.

The $R^2 = .415$ or 41.5 %, indicating that 41.5% of the variance of the regression model has been explained by the independent variables with mediator with job performance as the dependent variable. The significance F change value ($F = 5.017$, $p = .021$). The Durbin Watson value 1.783 and still within the acceptance range.

Looking at the individual contribution of independent variables in explaining job performance as the dependent variable with work motivation as mediator, work from home ($\beta = .344$, $p < 0.05$) are found to be significant predictors.

There is partial mediation effect of work motivation on relationships of work from home as independent variable and job performance as dependent variable. It can be concluded that, work motivation is a mediator for the link between work from home as the independent variables and job performance as the dependent variable and the related hypotheses are supported.

Discussion

Based on findings, the individual contribution of independent variables in explaining job performance as the dependent variable without work motivation as mediator, work from home ($\beta = .417$, $p < 0.05$) are found to be significant predictor. Both of these variables are considered as a partial mediation effect. Meanwhile, at the individual contribution of independent variables in explaining job performance as the dependent variable with work motivation as mediator, work from home ($\beta = .344$, $p < 0.05$) are also found to be significant predictors.

The results of the study suggest that working from home motivates employees more. To boost employee engagement, governments must encourage work-from-home options. Results of the investigation showed that working remotely has a large, beneficial impact on work performance. These findings are in line with earlier study by Zamani et al. (2021), which showed that supporting work-from-home policies is one way to enhance the working environment and that higher levels of employee motivation boost performance. Employers must pay close attention to employee performance. Additionally, the researcher discovered that lecturers are highly happy to work remotely during COVID-19.

The acceptance, contentment, and effectiveness of lecturers when working remotely were dependent on their readiness and prior experiences, which were crucial for online education. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that lecturers who work from home do not have any negative effects on their job performance and are happy and at ease in their surroundings.

Conclusion

The corona epidemic has sped up transformation in several crucial industries, including education. Some people find it very challenging to teach online or work from home especially educators who are in a tertiary level instructor. Work from home significantly and adversely affects both job performance and general wellbeing. The result indicated that work from home is the significant predictor to employee's job performance. Employee's motivations are higher when they were allowed to work from home. Therefore, it is recommended that organisations to create such a WFH policy for the employees with clear expectations and a technological support system. Employees should have the option to work remotely and on-site for a fair amount of time. This study has significantly added to the body of information concerning the consequences of working from home on job performance. Unlike previous studies, the new study discovered that working from home enhanced employee motivation. Companies might adapt to this situation by assessing employees' success based on job accomplishment rather than visible presence and communication availability. It can also assist employees enhance their specific job-related skills. Officials, such as enterprises and governments, are advised to encourage and regulate any work-from-home programme that benefits both employees and organisations. Because the internet is a major requirement in this setting, incentives should be offered to the internet business to make it more accessible and capable of reaching rural regions. While the scope of this study is confined to how the benefits of a work-from-home plan emerged in Politeknik Kok Lanang, Kelantan as higher education institution, there may be ramifications for other higher education institutions affected by COVID-19.

Limitations of Study

This study has a limited scope. Due to the author's restricted resources, only lecturers from Kok Lanang's higher education institution participated in this research. Future research should widen the scope of the study by collecting data from other nations, as the influence of COVID-19 on the implementation of work-from-home policies is not confined to the Kok Lanang area.

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