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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v12-i3/14533> DOI:10.6007/IJARAFMS /v12-i3/14533

**Received:** 17 June 2022, **Revised:** 21 July 2022, **Accepted:** 03 August 2022

**Published Online:** 26 August 2022

**In-Text Citation:** (Amran et al., 2022)

**To Cite this Article:** Amran, A., Suhaimin, M. F., Pauzi, N. M., Kozako, I. N. M. F., & Aminuddin, A. S. (2022). The Influence Factors of Telework on Employee's Job Performance among Academician in Higher Educational Institutions. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, 12(3), 238–248.

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Vol. 12, No. 3, 2022, Pg. 238 - 248

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## The Influence Factors of Telework on Employee's Job Performance among Academician in Higher Educational Institutions

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### Abstract

The study regarding telework should be given proper attention, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years. It is widely known that telework impacts employees in many aspects, especially academicians who play a significant role in the academic progress of college and university students. This study aims to determine the relationship between telework factors in three areas: Motivation, Self-Efficacy, Self-Efficiency, Job Performance, and job performance. 369 samples were selected randomly from 8788 academic staff members of 13 UiTM branches. This study examined the link between every factor related to telework with job performance. The study used SPSS Version 22 to analyse the collected data. The findings showed that while all variables have moderate, positive relationships with job performance, only telework motivation and self-efficacy influence the job performance among academic staff in UiTM. A future study is suggested to determine the roles of telework self-efficiency towards job performance among management staff in UiTM because it's proof that these two variables have weak influences among UiTM's academician.

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

### Introduction

Teleworking practices are becoming so popular after the strike of The covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the current outbreak of the covid19 virus, many workers must be isolated

and work from home, as directed by the local government, to prevent the virus from spreading (Fachriansyah, 2020). Many industries have applied this for a long time; however, telework's impact can be seen recently, especially regarding manpower. Telework is the execution of work away from other places than production facilities or the main office for a specific duration based on a pre-established work schedule or timetable (Melo & Silve, 2017). Telework is typically undertaken by persons with high education or organisational position in so-called "knowledge- and information organisations," such as IT enterprises and universities (Allen et al., 2015). Academicians are among those who are highly impacted by telework during the Covid-19 pandemic. The push for telework by most employers creates numerous reactions because not all jobs can be done remotely, considering the hindrance of the environment and facilities. This situation affects employees' motivation, efficacy and efficiency while teleworking.

Studies on the academic work environment showed that staff members experienced high levels of stress and lack of time for relaxation, sleep disturbance, work/life interference and decreased levels of physical activity (Widar et al., 2021). Employee job performance is the reflection of business or organisation success, and the practice of telework should not negatively impact employees in any aspect. Thus, the effects of telework on motivation, efficacy and efficiency and its effects on job performance must be given proper attention to ensure businesses and organisations function effectively in this challenging globalisation era. This research was conducted to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, Telework Efficiency and Employee Job Performance and the most influential factors (Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Efficiency) affecting Employees' Job Performance.

### **Problems Statement**

Academicians and research staff are among those who spend the most time doing telework during the Covid-19 pandemic, and this situation has impacted their well-being, job performance, and recovery in various ways (Widar et al., 2022). Despite much research on telework, studies on the impact of telework among academicians are still lacking. In this regard, existing studies have mainly focused on contexts outside the Malaysian academic sectors, and no emphasis has been given to the acceptance of teleworking (Munusamy, 2016). Thus, much research on telework should be conducted in Malaysia to boost employees' awareness of telework.

Staff members respond to telework differently. Some employees found telework has increased their productivity, while others experience a hard time working away from their workstations. The rapid growth of technology and lockdowns due to COVID-19 have called for more studies on the occupational health aspects of telework. While telework has been a common practice for academicians, little is known about staff members' behaviours and psychophysiological reactions to such flexible work schedules (Widar et al., 2022). A study by Segal (2020) found that 34% of diskless customer services employees could not deliver their work at the same level as before the pandemic. This issue is highly related to the employees' performance and should be given more attention by many researchers, especially academicians who play crucial factors in delivering knowledge. Thus, staff members' performance during telework should always be measured as the decline in performance might significantly impact the quality of higher education in Malaysia.

### Literature Review

- Telework Motivation

Nowadays, many firms have allowed their employees to work from home. Even though the endemic phase has started, telework is still a norm. In many instances, employees believe telework could increase motivation and improve work-life balance (Felstead et al., 2017). Stable and secure job is among the most crucial motivating factors during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially those in the educational sectors. Additionally major elements that have a big impact on employees' motivation are interesting job and pay (Rozentale et al., 2021). In the meantime, employees' motivation varies depending on how the centre of the firm designed the pattern of telework. Therefore, the company needs to decide on an approach that provides security for their employees to maintain their motivation, especially when teleworking during covid-19 (Balda and Mora, 2017). As Krishnan (2018) argued, the organisation is the main key to increasing employee motivation. Fujii (2020) further highlighted that the Herzberg theory emphasises the importance of employees' motivation in ensuring high job performance and better professional opportunities. Employees also play a big part in handling their telework schedule as operations are handled with minimum supervision. In this regard, telework gives employees freedom in coordinating and planning their schedules. The study's by Balasundran et al (2021) showed that school administrators can enhance educators' motivation by offering certificates as endorsements of remuneration, recognising teachers who effectively involve their majority of students in online learning, and organising casual discussion sessions with online learning. As academicians carry many responsibilities, high motivation is required to make sure they can handle everything promptly. Individual behaviours can greatly influence motivation, and these two variables are connected (Sultana et al., 2021). This indicates that employees' motivation is crucial in sustaining their work performance and commitment (Gheitani et al., 2019). Nevertheless, according to Delgado et al (2022) employees who did not telework claimed to be more motivated, even though their appraisal of the organization's and their colleagues' and superiors' measures was more unfavourable than that of teleworkers. This evaluation also demonstrated that the availability of technology tools for working from home was the lowest ranked component of teleworking circumstances. In this regard, when employees thought they lacked the necessary technology to operate from home, their motivation dropped in contrast to non-teleworkers.

- Telework Self-Efficacy

Working from home can sometimes be challenging, especially when dealing with different aspects and others. In this light, self-efficacy entails believing and trusting that an employee can produce a certain result based on their actions and will persevere in difficult situations (Farley, 2020). Working with colleagues allows interactions that help boost employees' productivity and optimise their work performance Support from colleagues and peers are important as certain works cannot be done individually. However, such support might be hard to obtain during teleworking that has been implemented widely in organisations. In addressing this issue, employee self-efficacy can somehow change employees' productivity while teleworking when there is a lack of support and intervention from others. Individuals believe self-efficacy has a consequence on meetings specific goals (Bandura, 2018). The short notice quarantine imposed during the Covid-19 outbreak has brought drastic change to the working environment as employees were forced to work from home (WFH) and were cut off from their usual social environment (Prihadi et al., 2021). This situation has increased

employees' work self-efficacy considering the nature of the quarantine situation, which has impacted their sense of belongingness and self-esteem (Prihadi et al., 2021). Moreover, Duenas & Gloria (2017) proved that self-esteem increases as we feel socially included, which shows that employees' self-efficacy can be improved in a particular manner. It could be argued that telework is not always as effective as conventional face-to-face workplace interaction.

- **Telework Efficiency**

The advent of teleworking significantly impacts the processes and strategies of production, as well as organisational work arrangements. ICT has largely eased teleworkers' daily routine (Wojcak et al., 2017), allowing businesses and work to be handled regardless of times and locations. Previous studies showed that teleworking efficiency is based on three key elements: society, employees and organisation (López, Legaz & Garces, 2020). It is important to measure employees' efficiency in teleworking during the pandemic to ensure business continuity, as argued by (Mihailovic et al., 2021). Several studies found that the organisation's efficiency can be boosted by teleworking (Allen, Golder & Shockley, 2015), (Manag, 2012). On the other hand, some of the studies showed no direct relationship between these elements because the performance of the job depends on different factors like support from the organisation (Struman, 2014), employees' commitment (Chen & Fulmer, 2017), turnover intentions Kroll & Nuesch (2019) and family-work conflict (Ongaki, 2019). According to Carli (2020), psychological challenges because of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak have led to declining work efficiency and weakened staff performance. Donnelly and Johns (2020) further concluded that telework practices tend to cause overwork among employees since they are required to work beyond normal office hours. It could be argued that even though telework normally gives employees more flexibility, it rises to a greater work burden, specifically during the Covid-19 outbreak. According to Contreras, Baykal, & Abid (2020), teleworking seems more practical and can increase the efficiency of the organisation's conventional management, especially with today's advanced technology.

- **Employee's Job Performance**

Employee's job performance is a significant factor in determining employee efficiency. Job performance is also impacted by efforts, abilities and opportunities and reflected through task outcomes (Sololomo & Agbaeza, 2020). Golder & Gajendran (2019) stated that the relationship between teleworking and job performance had generated serious discussions among researchers due to the effects of changing working modes on employees' job performances. This situation has raised a lot of concern among the management team. Teleworkers recognise they can attain high job performance since employees are distracted by many aspects (Vegat et al., 2015). Studies have classified characteristics that could lead to greater job performance, a lower distraction from colleagues, a dedicated workstation at home, and the capability to effectively divide work task and home responsibility (Nakrosiene et al., 2019). Different organisations have imposed different approaches to handling employees' productivity during teleworking. In this regard, Baron & Parent (2015) asserted that emphatic leadership is needed during telework and that leaders' concern and emotional support could enhance job performance and the well-being of employees. Nuangjamnong (2022) has proven that while teleworking may not necessarily influence employees' job performance, employees' job satisfaction and performance might be affected by employees' commitment. Hence, to help increase employees' job performance, organisation leaders

need to increase employee commitment by providing a conducive working environment and sufficient support, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic,

### **Research Methodology**

This research follows the correlational research design, which investigates the relationship between variables to explain how two or more variables are related to a specific variable (Salkind, 2012). This study examined the relationship between dependent and dependent variables using collected data via questionnaires. Before the data collection, this study obtained approval from Research Ethics Committee, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

### **Population and Method of Data Collection**

The research population is a large collection of individuals known to have the same characteristics as the research target. The study's research population encompasses all 8788 academic staff of all 13 UiTM campuses in Malaysia. 369 samples were selected randomly from 8788 academic staff of 13 UiTM campuses in Malaysia. Simple random sampling was used to ensure that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected as the study's sample. The data source for this research is primary data acquired through questionnaires. The questionnaire used a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

### **Research Findings**

#### **Normality Test**

A statistical normality test is used to determine whether a data set is normally distributed. Skewness is to quantify the variance of a random variable's distribution from a symmetric distribution. Skewness values ranging from -1 to 1 are acceptable and indicate that the data is normally distributed (Pallant, 2011).

Table 1

#### *Skewness Result*

Skewness value	
Skewness	-0.39

As shown in Table 1, the skewness is -0.39, which falls within the range of -1.0 and 1.0. This result indicates that the data is normally distributed.

#### **Reliability Test**

Cronbach's Alpha was adopted for the reliability analysis. The acceptable alpha value in reliability analysis is 0.7 (Kline, 1999). Table 2 below shows that all variables' Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.815. This indicates that the questionnaire items for each variable are 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
<b>Telework Efficiency</b>	0.902	7
Employee's Job Performance	0.931	11

***Inferential Statistics***

A series of tests are needed to fulfil the research objectives. A correlation test was performed to determine the relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, Telework Efficiency, and Employee Job Performance. As shown in Table 3 below, this research found a significant positive relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, and Telework Efficiency with Employee Job Performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). The r-values 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 an Employee's Job Performance. Meanwhile, the r-value for Telework Efficiency is 0.331, which indicates that the variable has a weak, positive relationship with Employee 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
Telework Efficiency	0.331	0.000	Weak

Table 4 shows the model summary for the regression model. The value of R Square is 0.339, which shows that the variation explains 33.9% of the variation in employee's job performance for the independent variables, Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy.

Table 4

*Model summary<sup>c</sup>*

<b>Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.582 <sup>b</sup>	0.339	0.335	0.62308

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

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 the F-Statistic is 72.837, and the p-value is 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), which indicates that the data used in this research fit 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 results of the regression model. The results show that only two independent variables, Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy ( $p < 0.05$ ), significantly influence employees’ job performance:

Table 6

Regression model result

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	3.288	0.232		14.148	0.000
	Telework Motivation	0.288	0.041	0.325	7.843	0.000
	Telework Self-Efficacy	0.220	0.028	0.366	6.967	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee’s job performance

One variable, Telework Efficiency, was removed from the model using the stepwise selection method since the p-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the final regression model is shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + 0.788 X_1 + 0.788 X_2$$

Employee’s job performance =  $3.288 + 0.288$  (Telework Motivation) +  $0.220$  (Telework Self-Efficacy)

**Conclusion**

This research found a significant, positive relationship between Telework Motivation, Telework Self-Efficacy, Telework Efficiency, and Employee’s Job Performance since each p-value is less than 0.05. In addition, only Telework Motivation and Telework Self-Efficacy are perceived as significant variables affecting an Employee’s Job Performance. These findings demonstrate that when employees telework, all parts of the telework should be given special attention because it has a substantial impact on the employees. Employers and managers should develop adequate procedures to ensure that the feature of telework motivation favourably influences employee performance, which will determine the organization's effectiveness from time to time. Thus, future researchers could determine the importance of Employee Self-Efficiency in influencing the job performance among management staff to support or refute findings that self-efficacy among academicians in UiTM has the least influence on their job performance. Studies on this aspect are still lacking and require action



to be taken instantaneously. Besides, researchers can examine the relationship between teleworking factors and job performance after Malaysia announced it is entering the Covid-19 endemic stage on 1st April 2022. The transition from pandemic to the endemic stage might have changed the academicians' perceptions about teleworking and job performance. Future studies can also focus on respondents from the private education sector in Malaysia, as there are few studies involving this group of academics. Public and private academicians might have different perceptions about teleworking factors, especially telework efficiency, due to differences in procedures and facilities that may significantly influence job performance. Lastly, future research is encouraged to examine whether employees' performance changes after employees start to work from the office again after almost two years of working from home.

### Acknowledgement

Last but not least, this paper is completely funded by Internal Grant by UiTM (600-TNCPI5/3/DDN (03) (007/2021), Special thanks to Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kelantan Branch for the opportunity that has been given to our group.

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