

IMPACT OF TELECOMMUTING ON EMPLOYEE JOB PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON BANKING SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

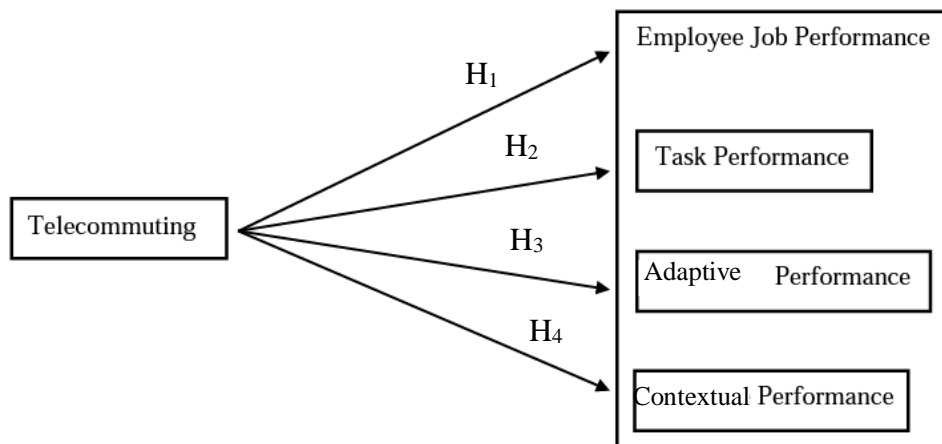
With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Telecommuting has become the core of the new normal. Telecommuting is defined as “a work practice that involves members of an organization substituting a portion of their typical work hours to work away from a central workplace typically principally from home using technology to interact with others as needed to conduct work tasks” (Allen et al., 2003). Statistics reveal that telecommuting has been adopted by organizations worldwide at a growing rate (Junça-Silva et al., 2022). Proving this fact, Milasi et al. (2020) disclose that before the pandemic only 15% of employees were telecommuting whereas in 2020 it rises to 40%. Similarly, Sri Lankan organizations rushed to adopt telecommuting during the pandemic (Dias & Eliatamy, 2020). This reflects that organizations will continue to use telecommuting in the future too. Workplace performance is essential for both organizations and individuals, and individual work performance is the behavioral outcome of an employee who shows a good attitude toward the organization. The measure of how well employees do their jobs is called job performance (Iddagoda et al., 2022). Conway and Monks (2007) combine employee and job performance, defining it as the extent to which an employee completes the tasks required to maintain a particular position within an organization. Following the dimensions presented by Pradhan and Jena (2017) this study adopted three dimensions of job performance namely; task, adaptive and contextual performance. Although job performance has been a topic which was continuously received much attention, teleworkers’ job performance is yet to be focused more in the literature.

The banking industry is considered the backbone of the Sri Lankan economy, whereas the job performance of bankers not only results in the growth of the organization but also has an influence over the country’s economy. However, very less studies have been focused on exploring the influence of telecommuting on the job performance of bankers in the Sri Lankan context. Yet, there’s a significant need to address this empirical gap as uplifting job performance of bankers is essential to ensure better performance of the banking industry which has a direct influence on the country’s economy. Thereby, addressing the existing empirical gap this study develops its main research question as “Does there is an impact of telecommuting on the job performance of Bankers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka?”. Four research objectives have been developed through the above research questions namely; “To identify whether there is an impact of telecommuting on employee job performance; To identify whether there is an impact of telecommuting on task performance; To identify whether there is an impact of telecommuting on contextual performance; To identify whether there is an impact of telecommuting on adaptive performance in the banking sector of Sri Lanka”.

METHODOLOGY

The study consists of four hypotheses. Scholars have revealed that telecommuting has a positive influence on employee job performance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). Similarly, Tabasum et al. (2021) reveal that telecommuting is reported to influence job performance and job satisfaction of employees. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is developed as; H₁: There is a significant impact of telecommuting on job performance. Secondly; Junça-Silva et al. (2022) state that telework dimensions related to the increase in task performance. Also, it has been revealed that due to the flexibility enjoyed by teleworkers in telecommuting, employees' ability to concentrate is increased leading to enhanced task performance (Gajendran et al., 2015). Hence, the second hypothesis is developed; H₂: There is a significant impact of telecommuting on task performance. According to the revelations of Hamid (2023); Park & Park (2019) telecommuting has a direct relationship between work-family balance and work satisfaction encouraging employees to enhance their adaptive performance. Thereby, the third hypothesis is developed as; H₃: There is a significant impact of telecommuting on adaptive performance. Moreover, autonomy is positively associated with contextual performance (Malik, 2018). Teleworkers enjoy greater autonomy due to the nature of teleworking leading to influence contextual performance (De Boer et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Thereby the fourth hypothesis is advanced as; H₄: There is a significant impact of telecommuting on contextual performance. Accordingly, the conceptual framework is presented below;

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



This study follows a deductive approach, as a quantitative study. The survey strategy is being followed under a cross-sectional time horizon. The unit of analysis of the study is individual employees who work in the banking sector in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The population of the study is the employees who work in the banking sector in Sri Lanka whereas the sample is 200 employees who engage in the banking sector in the Colombo district. The sample is derived based on the convenience sampling technique.

The data were gathered using a questionnaire developed based on the pre-validated scales proposed in the existing literature. Telecommuting was measured using the scale proposed by Khairudin and Aziz (2019). Job performance including its three dimensions namely; task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance was measured using the

scale proposed by Pradhan and Jena (2017). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software following regression analysis. The Cronbach's alpha values of the variables are task performance (0.877), contextual performance (0.919), adaptive performance (0.852), and job performance (0.953). Further, Cronbach's alpha value of the complete data is recorded as 0.879 ensuring the reliability of all the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study depict that telecommuting has a significant impact on job performance with a p-value of 0.000 at the 95% confidence level, further R^2 value was presented as .187 which shows that an 18.7% variance in job performance can be explained by telecommuting. Moreover, as per the analysis, telecommuting has a significant impact on task performance as the p-value is 0.001 at the 95% confidence level in which a 6.7% variance in task performance is explained by telecommuting. In addition, as per the results, telecommuting has a significant impact on adaptive performance with a p-value of 0.003 at the 95% confidence level in which a 5.5% variance in adaptive performance is explained by telecommuting. Finally, it has been revealed that telecommuting has a significant impact on contextual performance with a p-value of 0.005, and, a 4.8% variance in contextual performance is explained by telecommuting. Hence, it can be concluded that all H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , and H_4 hypotheses are being accepted.

Analysis of the study implies that there is a significant impact of telecommuting on job performance. Hence it presented that telecommuting positively contributes to influencing the job performance of banking sector employees. This result is consistent with the previous findings of Liu et al. (2021); Tabasum et al. (2021), which assert that telework has a significant influence on employee job performance. This is very effective for banking and financial institutions, especially under emergencies like COVID-19 and under the situation of economic recessions. Through this practice, the firms can increase their efficiency and reduce operating costs.

In addition, the analysis presents that there is a significant impact of telecommuting on task performance, which implies that telecommuting practice positively contributed to enhancing the task performance of banking sector employees. This result is also supported by the existing studies Gajendran et al. (2015); Junça-Silva et al. (2022), in which those studies elucidate that telecommuting positively influences the task performance of the employees. Further, as per the findings of the study telecommuting has a significant impact on adaptive performance. This finding is consistent with the existing literature (Hamid, 2023; Park & Park, 2019). Finally, the study findings reveal that telecommuting has a significant impact on contextual performance which was also supported by the existing literature (De Boer et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study emphasizes that telecommuting influences employee job performance. Hence, it provides directions for practitioners to take necessary strategies before implementing telecommuting to ensure that employees are well informed and provide necessary facilities to engage in telecommuting as it may have a direct influence on their work performance. Furthering the implications, the study alarms practitioners to continuously review the employee's perception of telecommuting even after implementing the telecommuting, because unfavorable attitudes towards telecommuting may have a negative influence on employee job performance which could have a direct impact on the success and survival of the organization.

Hence, this type of research is essential for practitioners to get insights into this novel work mode of telecommuting to ensure both organizations and employees reap the benefits of this novel work mode.

Keywords: Adaptive performance, contextual performance, job performance, task performance, telecommuting,

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