

Influence of Human Relations Movement on Employees’ Self-reported Productivity in Work from Home

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The COVID-19 pandemic is having a disastrous effect on employability. Employers in different sectors have taken challenging decisions to minimize the congregation of people by taking an abrupt shift to work from home (WFH). The current literature revealed, how the occupational incongruity determines the employee's ability to WFH. This paper further examines the influence of employees’ socioeconomic characteristics and interpersonal relationships on their self-reported productivity during WFH. Additionally, the employees’ preference for continuity of this “hybrid way of working” even after the Covid-19 crisis has passed in Sri Lanka. The survey data was collected using a google form over 150 employees using the Snow Ball Sampling method. The perception of self-productivity was evaluated using Five Point Likert Scale in view of relative time spent on completing a task. The comparative analysis conducted using descriptive statistic methods and the Chi-square test. The sample was compromised with 21% of Government, 17% of Semi-government, and 62% of Private Sector employees representing 59% of females and 41% of males. The result displayed, no significant relationship between employees’ gender and age with their self-reported productivity. However, the results interpreted a significant difference between marital status and employees’ perceived productivity ($p = 0.003(\alpha < 0.05)$). Married employees manifested lower productivity than singles. Besides, this lower productivity is disproportionately affected by the presence of children. There is a significant difference between the presence of children with time spent on completing a task ($p=0.031 (\alpha < 0.05)$) and the presence of children with their perceived productivity ($p = 0.003(\alpha < 0.05)$). The results further indicated interpersonal relationships with partners, management staff, co-workers and, customers were significant to employees’ performance and achieving job tasks effectively ($p=0.000, \alpha < 0.05$). The absence of motivation and positive interaction has limited their capacity leading towards lower productivity during WFH. However, 59% of employees preferred to continue WFH and 27% have responded as indifferent while 14% have stated their disfavor towards continuity of WFH even after the social distancing policies gone back to normal. The evidence dispensed in this study helps to inform policy-makers to understand that WFH is largely been beneficial if the main issues are being addressed accordingly.

Keywords: Perception on self-productivity; Work from home; Socioeconomic; Social distancing; Interpersonal relationship