

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND MODERATING EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TELECOMMUTING AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN THE PHILIPPINE SHARED SERVICES INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *This study examined the mediating role of motivation and the moderating effect of work environment to the telecommuting with the job performance of the 393 associate-level employees from the Shared Services companies located in Bonifacio Global City (BGC) and Makati Central Business District (CBD). Descriptive correlational method was applied. The heuristic Framework of individual job performance was adapted in examining the job performance. In the assessment of the Work Environment, the Vischer's model was also adapted in the study. Also, McClelland's theory of needs was utilized to examine Motivation. Lastly, questions for the Telecommuting were derived. Majority of the respondents belong to 26-30 age group. In the job class, Technology was also seen to be the highest. The first hypothesis was accepted, indicating that Telecommuting has significant effect in the Job performance. On the other hand, the second hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that the Work Environment has no moderating role in the effect of Telecommuting with Job performance. The third hypothesis was comprehensively analyzed. First, it was postulated the significant effect of Telecommuting with Motivation. Next, it was also seen the significant effect of Motivation in the Job performance. Lastly, the indirect effect of Telecommuting with Job performance through Motivation showed the significant mediating effect of Motivation to the effect of Telecommuting in the Job performance, hence, the third hypothesis was accepted.*

Keywords: *Job performance, Motivation, Shared Services Industry, Telecommuting, Work Environment*

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1. Introduction

The advent of technology has resulted to a major transformation and disruption to the way how human lived. It took an important place in the modern society that almost all human activities relied so much to it. As postulated in the article by Kazekami (2020), it also revolutionized and disrupted almost every traditional market and brought up opportunities as the plethora of new technological advancement continuously coming in.

These technological advancements as well as the disruptions that have been happening across industries globally made the telecommuting a thing and a possibility (Monteiro et al., 2019).

Telecommuting or “Work from Home” is an employment arrangement where employees can work outside of the office locations (Anwar et al., 2021). This requires the employees to utilize extensive range of collaboration tools and software to perform their duties remotely. Even before the pandemic hits, telecommuting, has brought into spotlight and has seen a growing adoption by several organizations globally due to its perceived value to the organization (Monteiro et al., 2019).

According to the shared services industry briefing, given the continuous and massive implementation of telecommuting, just as the pandemic hits, the shared services industry in the Philippines has seen to be the most amenable domain to have telecommuting implemented, given that they mostly cater back-office tasks. Shared services is an operational provision of the organization that involves centralization of the administrative function that were once performed by disparate units of the

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organization. The country’s Shared services industry, with its four major types- Procurement, IT, HR, Finance- has seen to be a major growth driver for the economy. According to Grant Thornton Philippines, by 2022, the shared service industry is poised to generate \$7.61 billion in revenue.

As the telecommuting setup has been regarded to be a viable option for work arrangement, especially for the Philippine shared services industry, it also deals with disadvantages and perils in the organization perspective such as the Unmonitored job performance, Lack of Office Equipment, Security Concerns, Inconducive Working Environment, Productivity concerns as well as the other factors (Anwar et al., 2021). This only gives opportunity for the researchers to explore variables that will serve as mediators to further analyze the effect of Telecommuting to the Job Performance.

In the examination of Job Performance, the Motivation and Work Environment are the two of the highly recognized constructs among researchers and has continuously draw interests among researchers. Hence, this study aims to examine the role of Motivation as mediator and Work Environment as moderator to the effect of telecommuting to the Job Performance of the employees in the shared services industry in the Philippines.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Telecommuting

Researchers have analyzed the effects of working from home across industries and disciplines like business and economics, environmental sciences or psychology. It was postulated to be more convenient and applicable to knowledge-based workers and back-office tasks (Susilo, 2020). Telecommuting has seen to have both advantages and disadvantages and various studies in the related domains have seen mixed postulations on this.

According to Kazekami (2020), there were several factors that favored the telecommuting setup, such as the increase time for personal life and the reduced need to commute to work especially during rush hours. This is supported by Shiraki and Igarashi (2018), postulating that telecommuting significantly improves the productivity of the employees. This was supported by Lupu (2017), asserting that in the organizational standpoint, it reduces the operational expenses such as the utilities expenses, office leases, workplace maintenance, as well as logistic maintenance such as computers, telephones,

offices, equipment. In addition, the cost of employment benefits to some organizations such as the parking, transportation allowance, and meal allowance were waived (Bloom et al., 2020).

According to the study of Lupu (2017), absenteeism and tardiness was significantly reduced as well as the risk of contagion for any dreaded diseases have been prevented which made it unsurprisingly, the most logical attempt for organizations globally to opt for telecommuting in the recent pandemic in order to continuously support the operations. Given this, there various studies that suggest disadvantages of telecommuting. Susilo (2020) discussed that there are technical issues that might not easily resolved remotely. Also, telecommuting leads to employee isolation which resulted to limited interaction and therefore resulted to miscommunications which might undermine the resolution time (Zhang, 2016).

In the discussion of the real value and effects of telecommuting to the both employees and organization, there were various studies that presented. Susilo (2020) took on the Effect of Work-From-Home on job performance. Another study was conducted by Bloom et al. (2020), analyzing the impact of Work from Home on Motivation & Productivity of the employees. Raisiene et al. (2020), also examined the effect of Work from Home to the efficiency and experience of workers in this setup. Schall (2019) examined the relationship of Remote Work with Job Satisfaction.

2.2 Motivation

Motivation is one of the constructs continuously draws the interests of the researchers due to its perceived value to the human capital in general (Braver et al., 2014). According to Ryan and Deci (2017), motivation is the drive to initiate and attain a goal-oriented behavior. This only suggested that employees have various needs which served as driving force or motivators (Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018). Hence, factors that contribute to motivation of the employees should be examined as it is crucial in driving the job performance and growth (Bonemberger et al., 2014). According to Murayama and Kitagami (2014), rewards positively affect the motivation of an individual although, “extrinsic rewards can sometimes undermine intrinsic motivation”.

In the discussion of Motivation, there are various frameworks and models that have been identified. First is the McGregor’s theory X and theory Y, which was defined as the influence that the managerial practices employed helped in shaping the “attitudes, work behavior, and job performance of subordinates” (Patil et al., 2017). Hence, Theory X defines the classical view of the workforce, depicting inherently lazy, self-centred, and lacking ambition employees while Theory Y indicates that employees are innately motivated and eager to accept responsibilities and challenges (Cheng et al., 2020).

Other motivation theory is the Vroom’s theory of expectancy which basically postulates that the employees can be productive and motivated if only their efforts will lead to successful results, and that they will be rewarded for their achievement (Agah et al., 2020). The Self-determination theory (SDT) is a broad theory model of human motivation that deals with individual interaction and its social environment (Legault, 2016). On the other hand, is broken down into two main ideas: extrinsic and intrinsic. Intrinsic simply defines the motivation that is internal to employees such as excitement, sense of accomplishment, elation, and satisfaction as a result of work-related activities (Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017). On the other hand, Extrinsic motivation discusses the individual’s drive to work is influenced by the external forces or factors brought by organization such as the work, atmosphere, values, and goals (Legault, 2016).

Another theory is the McClelland’s theory of needs which basically assesses the three motivating drivers and that one of which will be the dominant behaviour in an individual and largely

depends on their life experiences (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2019). These three motivations are: 1) Achievement, which is a need to accomplish and demonstrate an individual's competence, 2) Affiliation, which basically postulated an individual's need for love, belongingness and social acceptance, and lastly, 3) Power, which indicates the need for control own work or autonomy as well as the work of others.

In the telecommuting context, Susilo (2020) asserted that employees working from home significantly improved their motivation due one main reason- convenience. This means, convenience working anywhere they want as long telecommuting is available logistically. This only suggested and was supported by that telecommuting helped in building connection between home and office in terms of work environment and creating a more balanced atmosphere giving employees an increased motivation (Agbozo et al., 2017). This is supported by Ahluwalia and Preet (2017), which posited that there's a causality between motivation and productivity which was enabled by telecommuting.

2.3 Work Environment

Work environment played an important role on how an employee performs his duties (AlOuari & Okasheh, 2017). Hence, working environment can vary and classified into two main types- conducive to employee and a toxic work environment (Muchhal, 2014). It was postulated that a work environment such as layout and design enable a positive behaviour in the workplace (Assaf & Alswalha, 2013). Stadlander et al. (2017), postulated that in the telecommuting setup, tend manipulate their environment to find the comfort and fit.

In this regard, the Vischer's model of environmental comfort has described this construct into three main categories: Physical, Functional, and Psychological. Physical comfort describes the basic human needs while the Functional comfort describes the support for the Job Performance in workrelated tasks and activities", lastly, the Psychological comfort refers to the feelings of belongingness and perceived autonomy in the workspace (Stadlander et al., 2017).

Previous studies highly indicated that telecommuting has a positive effect on the work environment (Susilo, 2020). This was supported by Ahluwalia and Preet (2017), postulating that telecommuting enabled a more flexible and more autonomous work environment as employees gained a sense of work autonomy and flexibility in terms of their own work schedule and workplace environment setup. Their personal needs and taste can be fulfilled because they can customize their own working area according to their personality (Alhalafawy & Zaki, 2019).

2.4 Job performance

Various researchers have attempted to reveal the relationship among employees' behavior at work and Job Performance. One is the study conducted by Lis and Yunus (2017), postulating that the empowerment, "self-efficacy and organizational culture positive and significant impact on the job satisfaction, Job Performance and job satisfaction". Job Performance was defined by Lis and Yunus (2017) as the function of individual traits, effort, as well as the support it provided to the organization. In addition, the results of the study by Murayama and Kitagami (2014), indicated that Job Performance goals support the short-term learning, "whereas mastery goals facilitate long-term learning".

Another definition was posited by Dharma (2018), Job Performance is the output created by the job or mandate, per se, over a period of time. Hence, this encompasses the work mandated and the requirement to complete it (Nancarrow, 2015). Job Performance was explained by Korner et al. (2016) in three main types- proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. Proficiency is a Job Performance type

exemplifying attitude such as personal support, helping behavior, and a team first mentality (Fuller et al., 2015). Adaptivity, on the other hand, exemplified an attitude of individuals that allows to deal with changes affecting their roles and all within its remit (Dark et al., 2017). Lastly, Proactivity, as the name implies, explains the individual capacity to “anticipate changes in working methods or procedures when circumstances require”, hence allowing to take preventive measures (McEwan et al., 2017).

Job Performance, as postulated by Ibrahim (2015), Job Performance indicates the holistic result of an individual in compliance with predetermined work standards and thresholds. Hence, an individual’s Job Performance was also dictated by other factors such as job satisfaction, pay for job performance, individual expertise (Imran et al., 2016). In addition, Job Performance is also determined by ability, desire, and environment (Hernaus & Mikulik, 2014). As postulated by Obeidat et al. (2016), Job Performance as postulated in the AMO framework, indicates that the Job Performance is a function of three main focus areas: ability, motivation and opportunity. Hence, this only suggested that employee’s creativity played a crucial role in driving individual Job Performance and ultimately the Job Performance (Gupta & Sharma, 2018).

Koopmans et al. (2013) introduced a more comprehensive model of job performance called the Heuristic framework of individual work Job Performance, which was described in four main dimensions- Task Job Performance, Contextual Job Performance, Adaptive job performance, and Counterproductive work behavior. Task Job Performance was postulated as the proficiency with which one performs central job tasks which includes "job-specific task proficiency, technical proficiency, or in-role job performance" (Koopman et al, 2013). The Contextual job performance was derived, which looked at the individual behaviors supporting the organizational, social, and psychological environment (Borman & Motowildo, 1993, as cited by Koopmans et al, 2013). Lastly, the Adaptive job performance viewed the individual behavior as more adaptive to changes such as but not limited to the following-work processes, roles, situations, and environments (Tongo, 2015).

3.Methods

3.1 Research Design

The researchers have implemented the quantitative research method, specifically, the descriptive–correlational, to analyze the demographic profiles of the respondents and quantify if there’s a significance in the relationship and effect of Telecommuting as an independent variable, as well as the Motivation as mediator and Work Environment as moderator, to the Job Performance.

3.2 Research Instrument

Online survey questionnaires that were distributed to the target respondents were assessed via the 5-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Disagree, 3=Neutral, and 5=Strongly Agree. The questionnaire comprised of questions derived from the framework adapted from each of the constructs used in this study. For the Job Performance variable, the researchers adapted Heuristic Framework of individual job performance by Koopmans et al. (2013) which described the model into 4 main types: Task, Contextual, Adaptive, and Counterproductive job performance. For Work Environment variable, Vischer’s model of environmental comfort was used, as described into three main types: Psychological Comfort, Functional Comfort, and Physical Comfort. For Motivation variable, McClelland’s theory of needs was used, which has three types: Achievement, Affiliation, Power. Lastly, questions for the Telecommuting

variable were derived. Given this, all of the questionnaires were validated by the industry experts, and internal consistency was validated using Cronbach’s alpha.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedures

In this study, a probability sampling technique was applied, specifically, simple random sampling method was utilized in which criteria were determine for the randomly selected participants of this study: 1) associate-level employees, or those below the managerial and senior level employees, working in a shared services organization operating within Bonifacio Global City and the Makati Central Business District, and 2) telecommuting experience starting June of 2020. The data was made available through online survey questionnaire to 500 target respondents or samples, although, 107 unanswered online surveys forms, hence only collected a total of 393 responses translating to 78.6% response rate. Still, the number of responses is accepted based on the required number of participants derived using the Cochran’s formula. With a 5% margin of error and 95% confident level as well as the approximated percentage of a population at 50%, the computed sample size is only 385 respondents.

Cochran’s formula:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2} \quad 1)$$

3.4 Conceptual Framework

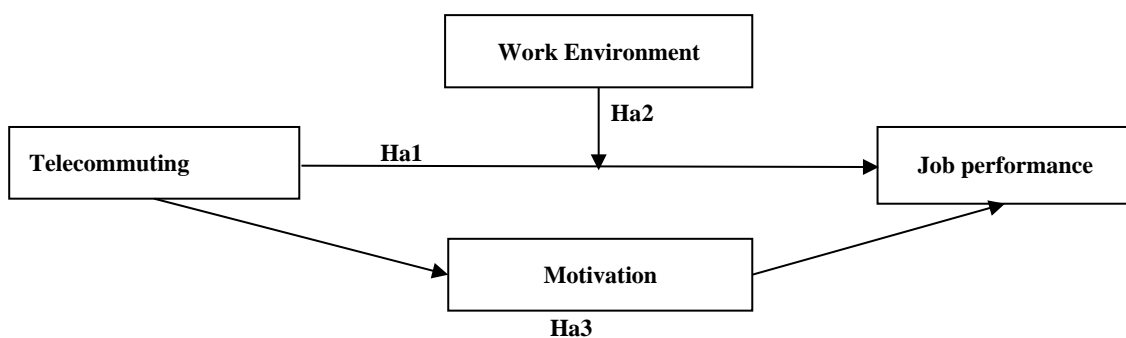
As visualized from the Conceptual Framework above, the hypotheses below were stated:

H_{a1}: Telecommuting has a positive effect to the job performance.

H_{a2}: Work Environment moderates the effect of Telecommuting to the Job Performance.

H_{a3}: Motivation has mediating effect to the causal relationship between Telecommuting and Job Performance.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3.5 Statistical Treatment

As part of the preliminary step, the demographic profile was summarized. Next, the researchers performed three regression analyses, as needed for mediation analysis: First, Telecommuting as the predictor variable and Motivation as the outcome variable. Telecommuting as the predictor variable and Job Performance as the outcome variable. Telecommuting and Motivation as the predictor variables and Job Performance as the outcome variable.

Next, for the moderation analysis, the researchers examined the significant interaction between the Work Environment and Telecommuting in the analysis of Job Performance. Given this, the Andrew Hayes' process macro template in SPSS was used to examine both the mediating role of Motivation and the moderating effect of Work Environment to the Telecommuting with the Job Performance.

4.Results

Table 1 summarized the respondents' demographic profile. As shown below, a total of 393 respondents participated in this study. Looking at the age group of the respondents, the highest number of respondents are at 28% in the age group of 26-30 years old, followed by the youngest age group of 21-25 years old at 26.7. Looking at the Job Class, around 36.6% belongs to the Technology, followed by Operation with 23.9%, while the HR class has seen to be the lowest at 3.6%. Lastly, looking at the civil status, majority of the respondents or 73.8% are single, followed by those who are married at 25.4%.

Table 1: Summary of the Respondents' Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group		
21-25	105	26.7
26-30	110	28.0
31-35	97	24.7
36-40	81	20.6
Total	393	100
Job Class		
Finance	16	4.1
HR	14	3.6
Operation	94	23.9
Product	43	10.9
Sales	82	20.9
Technology	144	36.6
Total	393	100
Civil Status		
Single	290	73.8
Married	100	25.4
Widowed	3	0.8
Total	393	100

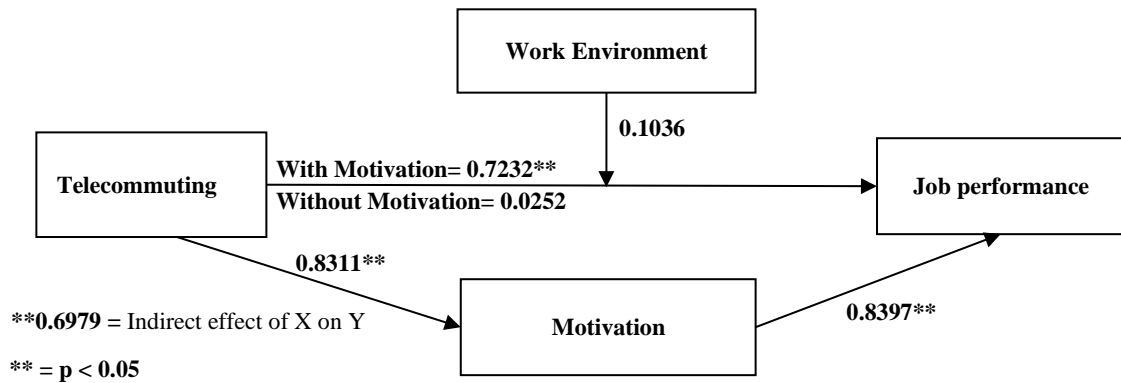
It can be seen in Figure 2 the effect of Telecommuting in the Job Performance. The coefficient of 0.0252 and with a p-value of 0.1001 indicates insignificance of the result, hence, accepted the first hypothesis, suggesting that Telecommuting has a significant effect in the Job Performance of the employee. The revealed relationship between Telecommuting and Job Performance in this study has agreed to the various related literature conducted in the past (Anwar et al., 2021; Susilo, 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Lupu, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017).

It can also be seen the moderating effect of Work Environment to the effect of Telecommuting with the Job Performance. With the coefficient of 0.1036 and p-value of 0.5632, this suggested insignificance of the result, hence, rejected the second hypothesis. This only indicates that the Work Environment has no moderating effect between the Telecommuting and Job Performance of the employee. Given the findings, it contradicts the various studies in the past, suggesting that Work Environment does not interact or moderate to the effect of Telecommuting with the Job Performance and that Telecommuting is indeed the main driving force on the Job Performance of the employees (Anwar et al., 2021; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Susilo, 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Stadlander et al., 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Lupu, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017).

The mediating effect of Motivation between Telecommuting and Job Performance has been studied. First, effect of Telecommuting with the Motivation with the coefficient of 0.8311 and p-value of 0.00, indicating the strong positive effect of Telecommuting with Motivation. Next, the effect of Motivation with the Job Performance has been examined with the coefficient of 0.8397 and p-value of 0.00, suggesting that Motivation has a significant effect in the Job Performance of the employee. The result agreed to the outcome of the various studies conducted in the past, suggesting the real value Telecommuting not only to drive the employees' job performance but also enable the overall health of the organization (Anwar et al., 2021; Shafizadeh et al., 2020; Curtis, 2020; Susilo, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Lupu, 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017).

Finally, for the mediating effect of Motivation between Telecommuting and Job Performance, the statistical results showed that the coefficient of 0.6979 (0.8311 *0.8397), with the 95% Confidence Interval of 0.6225 and 0.7751, suggesting significant mediating effect of motivation to the effect of Telecommuting with the Job Performance, accepting the third hypothesis. This agrees to the study conducted various researchers, indicating that there's a causality between Motivation and Productivity as enabled by Telecommuting (Anwar et al., 2021; Shafizadeh et al., 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Susilo, 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Agbozo et al., 2017; Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017).

Figure 2: Mediating and Moderating Variables Report Result



5. Discussion

Take note that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it then examined and tested 4 hypotheses to 393 respondents working in the shared services back office. The findings show that the following: First, this study revealed that Telecommuting has no significant effect to the Job Performance, which has agreed to the various related literature conducted in the past (Anwar et al., 2021; Susilo, 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Lupu, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017).

Next, Work Environment does not moderate the effect of Telecommuting to the Job Performance. Given the findings, it contradicts the various studies in the past, suggesting that Work Environment does not interact or moderate to the effect of Telecommuting with the Job Performance and that Telecommuting is indeed the main driving force on the Job Performance of the employees (Anwar et al., 2021; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Susilo, 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Stadlander et al., 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Lupu, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Telecommuting has significant effect to Motivation and Motivation also has significant effect to the Job Performance. Both results agreed to the outcome of the various studies conducted in the past, suggesting the real value of Telecommuting, not only to drive the employees' Job Performance but also enable the overall health of the organization (Anwar et al., 2021; Shafizadeh et al., 2020; Curtis, 2020; Susilo, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Lupu, 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017; Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017; Agbozo et al., 2017).

Lastly, there's a mediating effect of Motivation to the effect of Telecommuting with the Job Performance, which agreed to the study conducted various researchers, indicating that there's a causality between Motivation and Productivity as enabled by Telecommuting (Anwar et al., 2021; Shafizadeh et al., 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Susilo, 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Agbozo et al., 2017; Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017).

6. Conclusion

Given these findings and the fact that this was conducted at the height of the pandemic, shared services organizations in the Philippines can adopt and implement a more flexible working arrangement and programs as the availability of communication tools and technologies have shown its massive

potential and value during the implementation of Telecommuting. As it has been postulated that Telecommuting has a positive effect on Motivation, and Motivation has a positive effect on the individual Job Performance of the employees, this only suggest that the full implementation of Telecommuting is indeed a rational and beneficial approach to the organizations.

Various studies pertaining to the Telecommuting indicated positive results such as reduced absenteeism, improved work-life balance, reduced attrition, and reduced operational cost for the organization, an indication that focusing on remote work or Telecommuting as one of the flexible working arrangement could be the most logical attempt especially in this contemporary and postpandemic era (Anwar et al., 2021; Shafizadeh et al., 2020; Curtis, 2020; Kazekami 2020; Susilo, 2020; Shiraki & Igarashi, 2018; Agbozo et al., 2017; Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017; Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017).

Lastly, as this paper attempts to explore various constructs indicated in examining the value of Telecommuting in the context of shared services industry in the Philippines, it could be extended to wide range of use-cases as well as aiming to draw the interest of various researchers to further analyze the effects of Telecommuting in the various context possible.

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