

Employee Engagement, Loyalty, and Job Performance among Women Teleworkers in the Philippines during Covid-19

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Abstract

Telework has been a critical response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Denham, 2021). Many industries resort to telecommuting to ensure business continuity. Women are drawn to telework because it combines work and family responsibilities and, at the same time, faces numerous issues that hinder their ability to maintain both work and domestic duties. The study analyzes the relationship between employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance among Women Teleworkers of a Case Company in the Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study is postulated based on the social exchange theory. The researcher identified 208 Women Teleworkers of the case company as respondents using a random sampling technique: utilized Mean and Standard Deviation, T-test, ANOVA, and Pearson coefficient in data analysis. The result reveals a positive correlation between employee engagement and loyalty, while a negative correlation between loyalty and job performance and employee engagement and job performance among women teleworkers.

Keywords: Women, Telework, Employee Engagement, Loyalty, Job Performance, Covid-19, Philippines

Introduction

The entire world has been affected Covid-19 pandemic (Cerami et al., 2020), which affects several aspects of people's lives around the globe (Spurk & Straub, 2020), causing severe economic consequences, and no other country will be unaffected (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Technologies have played an essential role in ensuring business continuity as the lockdown has abruptly forced employees to telework, often leaving them unprepared and ill-equipped (Carillo et al., 2021). The COVID-19 Pandemic has shifted millions of people from working at their workplace to teleworking from home, generating a hybrid workspace—the home office (Katsabian, 2020).

Flexible work arrangements like telework are gaining importance (Steidelmuller et al., 2020). Telework has been a critical response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Denham, 2021). Telework describes an arrangement where employees work outside the company sites but remain in touch with employers and co-workers using modern technology (Beno & Beno, 2019). Mandatory teleworking is an unforeseeable side-effect of the pandemic (Singh & Verma, 2020). The increase in telework during the pandemic impacted working life in terms of a more significant number of employees working from home, and, more importantly, it may transform how we conceptualize work (Bjursell et al., 2021). Many industries

resort to telecommuting to assure business continuity and address social distancing needs (Martin, 2020).

However, telework was already gaining ground in the Philippines (Tudy, 2021). The legislation passed a bill in 2019 known as the "Telecommuting Act," which approves the employers of different organizations to implement work-from-home or alternative work arrangements for their employees (Ramos & Prasetyo, 2020). However, based on studies, only 12.38 percent of all workers can work from home, and 25.7 percent of Philippine occupations are teleworkable, mainly from the following occupation groups: professionals, clerical support workers, technicians, and associate professionals (Gaduena et al., 2020).

Women are drawn to telework because it combines work and family responsibilities (Fulton, 2000). Women face numerous issues that hinder their ability to maintain work and domestic duties, including long working hours, short maternity leave, and limited daycares (Adriani, 2019). Paid work, domestic work, care work, and personal and family life coexist in the same space and time (Undurraga et al., 2021). Home-based teleworkers, especially women, present better results than highly mobile workers in terms of working time quality and intensity, though in exchange for lower skills and discretion, income, and career prospects (Rodríguez-Modroño & López-Igual, 2021). For women, telework would be considered a solution post-Covid-19 to solve the burden existing pre-Covid -19 and increasing Covid -19 (Nguyen & Armoogum, 2021).

Despite much research on telework, few studies have examined the relationship between employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance among women teleworkers in the Philippines, more so in Bacolod City, and minimal, if not, studies at all since the pandemic began.

This study would be helpful to the case company and the management to help improve their policies and telework arrangements, and strategies.

Objectives of the Study

To determine the significant difference and relationship between employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance among Women Teleworkers of a Case Company in the Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Framework

Based on social exchange theory and related concepts, this study explained employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance.

Social exchange theory is one of the known conceptual perspectives in management and related fields like sociology and social psychology (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Menes & Haguisan III, 2020). It is a very influential theory having its roots centuries ago and is applied in organizational research (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Holthausen, 2013). The theory focuses on the employment relationship and the exchanges implied in that relationship (Ciobanu et al., 2019; Latorre et al., 2016). Explain why employees respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement and predict and explain employees' attitudes during the organizational change process (Atadil & Green, 2020; Rothmann, 2016).

Employee engagement

Employee engagement is an issue in management and practice in the modern business world (Khan & Altaf, 2015; Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). The concept of 'employee engagement' has streamlined

with the management school of thought in the recent past as it helps achieve improved organizational performance and business excellence (Delina & Samuel, 2020). It embodies a work-related state of mind exemplified by vigor, fulfillment, enthusiasm, absorption, and dedication (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017). It refers to the level of commitment and involvement an employee has toward their organization and its values (Zondo, 2020). An engaged employee carries out what is expected of him, has a clear focus and goal, and brings success to the organization (Simon, 2011). As teleworking spreads, the problem of declining employee engagement among teleworkers also comes to the fore (He et al., 2020).

Loyalty

According to Mowday et al. (1979), as cited by Phuong & Vinh (2020), loyalty means a demonstration of one's commitment to an organization, typified by the relative advantage of a person's identification with an active engagement in a firm's operations. An emotional assurance of employees' ambition to involve and remain determinedly constant and responsible with the organization and committed to its success, believing that working for the company is their best option (Al Qudah et al., 2018; Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2006; Kanakriyah, 2020). A loyal employee is valuable (Kot-Radojewska & Timenko, 2018).

Job Performance

The study of Deadrick & Gardner (1999), as cited by Wu et al. (2019), defines job performance as the achieved work outcomes for each job function during a specified period. Campbell et al. (1993) further described performance as the goal-relevant actions of an employee, as cited by (Gong et al., 2019).

From various perspectives stated above, this study theorizes that there is no significant difference in employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance when taken as a whole and compared accordingly to age, civil status, and income. The proponent further proposes no significant correlation between employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance among women teleworkers of the case company in the Philippines.

Methodology

This research utilized the quantitative descriptive comparative and correlational research design. The study was conducted on 208 Women Teleworkers of the case company in the Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study used the probability sampling design. Random sampling was utilized in this study to determine the sample size. The population was 450 using the Raosoft online application, and the sample size was 208.

For ethical considerations, the researcher submitted a letter of request to the managing director and owner of the case company before conducting the study. The researcher secured the signed informed consent form from the respondents. The respondents' rights, benefits, risks, and confidentiality information were all stipulated in the consent form.

The survey questionnaire was subjected to content validity and reliability. The instrument generated a content validity ratio of 0.91, indicating that the questionnaire is valid. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yields a coefficient of 0.93 for employee engagement, 0.84 for loyalty, and 0.87 for job performance, all within the reliability index of .7 to 1, indicating high reliability.

The researcher used soft copies of the instrument and sent it via email to collect data from Women Teleworkers with the help of the company's human resource department. After validation, reliability

testing, and collection of emailed responses, the researcher ensures the completeness of the answers. Data were analyzed using the Frequency and Percentage Distribution, Mean, t-Test, ANOVA, and Pearson coefficient to determine the relationships among variables.

Results and Discussion

The proponent utilized a T-test to determine the significant difference in employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance compared to age (18-35- vs. 36 and above). The result showed a significant difference in the scores for loyalty with a p-value of .002, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. While no significant difference in employee engagement and job performance with a p-value of .070 and .689, respectively. Thus, the proponent's null hypothesis was accepted.

These results suggest that employee engagement and job performance have no bearing regarding age for women teleworkers, while loyalty does. The result reflects Strenitzerová & Achimský (2019) study that the employee's age is a factor in employee loyalty. The findings suggest that younger employees have higher loyalty mean scores than older employees.

Table 1. Employee Engagement, Loyalty, and Job Performance compared to Age

Variables	18 - 35		36 - Above		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Employee Engagement	4.08	0.32	3.97	0.27	1.82	207	0.070
Loyalty	4.24	0.32	4.04	0.21	3.08	207	0.002**
Job Performance	4.83	0.18	4.85	0.13	-0.4	207	0.689

Significant @ .05**

To test the significant difference in employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance when compared according to civil status, the proponent used ANOVA. The result showed that all variables indicate no significant difference with p-values .187, .161, and .968. Hence, null is accepted.

The result somehow agrees with the study by Mokhine & Geysers (2020) that a significant difference varies in terms of work engagement in terms of age. In contrast, it negates Ojiako Ifeanyi et al. (2017) and A. Singh & Rangnekar (2019), revealing significant differences influencing job performance.

Table 2. Employee Engagement, Loyalty, and Job Performance compared to Civil Status.

Variables	F	p
Employee Engagement	1.77	0.187
Loyalty	1.99	0.161
Job Performance	0	0.968

In determining the significant difference in the extent of employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance compared to income, the proponent used the ANOVA. The result showed that all variables reveal no significant difference in employee engagement with a p-value of .153, loyalty with a p-value of .274, and job performance with a p-value of .173, therefore accepting the study's null hypothesis.

The result refutes the studies of Jayanthi et al. (2020); Pratiwi et al. (2019); and Rizki et al. (2020) that indicate that income has a significant difference and positively influences employee engagement, loyalty, and job performance.

Table 3. Employee Engagement, Loyalty, and Job Performance compared to income.

Variables	F	p
Employee Engagement	1.8	0.153
Loyalty	1.32	0.274
Job Performance	1.69	0.173

Table 4 reveals the Pearson coefficient of .65 with a p-value of .00. The result suggests a strong positive correlation between employee engagement and loyalty. Since both variables are independent, they are expected to correlate low. Since they correlate significantly with each other, there is an overlap between them. It indicates that some elements of engagement are similar to aspects of loyalty.

The analysis revealed significant positive relationships between work engagement and employee loyalty (Vokic, 2015). Studies further show that engagement is a significant antecedent and mediating factor of employee loyalty (Abbas, 2017; Abror et al., 2020).

Loyalty and job performance negatively correlate with $r = -.13$, $p\text{-value} = .193$. This result contradicts the results from various literature, which reveals the relationship between employee loyalty and job performance and that employee loyalty positively influences performance (Brown et al., 2011; Elegido, 2013; Tomic et al., 2018). In their study, Phuong & Vinh (2020) explained that loyal employees perform better because they generally look at the bigger picture and work not because of salary or responsibility but because they want to pursue their passions and interests.

If further indicates a negative correlation between employee engagement and job performance among women teleworkers at $r = -.03$, $p\text{-value} = .79$. The result contradicts Van De Voorde & Beijer (2015); Zhong et al. (2016) that employee engagement is significantly related to job performance. Ismail et al. (2019) reiterated employee engagement's importance and positive effect on job performance. The study of Dajani (2015) further revealed that employee engagement had an influence on job performance.

Table 4. Relationship between Employee Engagement, Loyalty, and Job Performance

Measures	n	r	p
Employee Engagement x Loyalty	208	0.65	0.00**
Loyal x Job Performance	208	-0.13	0.193
Employee Engagement x Job Performance	208	-0.03	0.79

Significant @ .05**

Conclusion

Based on the result, the proponent concludes a significant difference in loyalty regarding age but no significant difference in employee engagement and job performance. Teleworkers who are younger have higher loyalty compared to older teleworkers. Teleworkers who have higher loyalty to the organization tend to have higher job performance. It entails that women teleworkers' job performance is highly associated with the extent of their loyalty. Higher-income teleworkers tend to have higher engagement, loyalty, and job performance. It indicates that women teleworkers' engagement, loyalty, and job performance are highly affected by their income. The study further determines that any changes in the employees' engagement correlate to employees' loyalty and vice versa.

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