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Telework Factors and Employee Performance: A Case of Junior Academics of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

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ABSTRACT

This basic qualitative study investigates how COVID-19 affects telework factors and the performance of junior academics who are now working from home owing to the global pandemic. Accordingly, the authors conducted this research among the junior academics of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the population and the sample of this study is the junior academics who are currently employed in the FMSC, USJ in Sri Lanka. Further, the authors used a standard questionnaire to collect the responses from these academics, and the data was analysed based on the content analysis. The conceptual framework of this article was designed by combining the two research models found in Nakrošienė, Bučiūnienė and Goštautaitė's factors of telework model published in 2019, and Pradhan and Jena's employee performance model published in 2017. According to the results of this study, the authors found that academic performance at FMSC, USJ is good even when they work from home, and most lecturers can handle their job even when they work from home. However, FMSC, USJ still lacks a reliable communication channel, and junior lecturers receive insufficient supervision and support. Furthermore, academics consider working from home to be an incompatible notion for them, due to the large number of administrative tasks that are outside the scope of lecturers' responsibilities and the lack of digital documentation.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (2019), the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a transferrable disease that began by a newly revealed coronavirus. COVID-19 negatively affected the universal public health, sending economic and social tremors amongst the global population. As a result of COVID-19, most of the businesses were forced to shut down and only a limited number of businesses remained in operation. However, some of the businesses converted the COVID-19 pandemic into an opportunity to working from home. 'Working from home' is the sub-theme that is included in the concept of telework, and under this concept, the employee is provided the opportunity to work from any remote place other than the traditional workplace (Nakrošienė et al., 2019). Among the many industries in Sri Lanka, the service industry facilitated more chances to the employees for continually completing their jobs by staying at home, and especially those belonging to the education sector commenced the delivery of lectures online whilst being at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this research measures the effectiveness of the working from home concept among the junior academics at the FMSC, USJ, Sri Lanka and how it affected the academic performance during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Across the globe the educational system has plummeted due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing wide-spread confusion and unprecedented changes to normal routines (Wijewardene, 2021). The Corona virus has overturned life (EdSource, 2020) and caused an enduring threat to educational institutions from kindergarten to tertiary level (Mishra, Gupta and Shree 2020). The whole education landscape from elementary to tertiary level has seen a shift during the lockdown period of the novel Corona virus disease 2019 (Mishra et al., 2020). Hence, due to the pandemic,

Both teachers and students have been compelled to embrace the digital academic experience (Lederman, 2020). Despite implementing measures to control the pandemic, it is blowing out of proportion at an alarming rate, in Sri Lanka and globally (Wijewardene, 2021), with the situation in Sri Lanka being more catastrophic than in developed countries (Chandasiri, 2020). Against this backdrop of a raging pandemic, around 88% of U. S. companies encouraged or required their employees to work from home (Facilityexecutive.com, 2020). Most universities moved online, with college and university faculty being required to self-isolate and work from home (Smalley, 2020). While most academic institutions believe that they provide a work-life supportive environment through their policies and benefits, some scholars believe they generally fail to some degree (Kossek& Lee, 2020a; Kossek& Lee, 2020c; Matthews, 2020). In a study conducted by Stadtlander, LaCivita, Sickel&Giles (2017), most participants indicated that the environment of the home had not changed as a result of including a workspace. These findings supported previous research in the area of telecommuting regarding work-life balance (Golden, Veiga&Simsek, 2006). Stadtlander and colleagues speculated that developing a balance between work and home may require clearly defined home and work areas. Participants in their study indicated that positive aspects of working at home were having the flexibility to set their own hours, being able to control work-related interruptions, and having a reduction in their stress levels through not having a daily commute. Nevertheless, they also reported negative aspects to their work, such as being lonely and missing the social aspect of the workplace. The faculty also reported the need to justify their work status with family and friends who intruded on their work time. It remains unknown as to how the COVID-19 self-isolation affects the way in which online faculty do their work or if there are any differences evident with land-based faculty working from home on an emergency basis. In a study done by Stadtlander&Sickel (2021) faculty showed indications of stress due to self-isolation, which in turn affected their feelings about work.

Telework: Telework has suddenly experienced a rebound, as a result of the measures to protect citizens from the coronavirus disease (Belzunegui-Eraso&Erro-Garcés, 2020). In the beginning of 2020, several governments recommended that companies facilitate teleworking to avoid employees gathering together in the same place (Belzunegui-Eraso&Erro-Garcés, 2020). Although there is no universally accepted definition of telework telecommuting, it can be described as a type of work and/or provision of services done remotely, at a distance, and online using computer and telematics technologies (Belzunegui-Eraso&Erro-Garcés, 2020). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) telework is defined as the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and/or desktop computers, for work that is performed outside the employer's premises. This could be summarized as work that is done with the assistance of ICTs, not within the location of the place of employment. The use of telework as a response to the crisis and for business continuity depends on the activity of the organization, and it is heterogeneous among activities. (Belzunegui-Eraso&Erro-Garcés, 2020).

Under the concept of telework, employees can work in any virtual space, remote place, in their homes or while they are travelling from one place to another, except the traditional physical office places (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Further, Madsen (2003) stated that telework consists of several characteristics such as Telework intensity, Telework timework, and Telework place.

- **Telework Intensity:** Telework intensity means how often the employee works at remote places other than the traditional office. Telework intensity can be measured by the total time that the employee takes to complete the work at a remote place, where the employee is a fulltime or part-time teleworker. A fulltime teleworker is an employee who is working from some remote places by using telecommunication technologies; he or she does not go to office at any time, but a part-time teleworker works partially in office or some remote place due to some unexpected circumstances such as sickness etc. (Gajendran& Harrison, 2007).
- **Telework Timework:** Telework timework is defined as, when the remote works occur either during the normal working hours or not. Telework timework is evaluated by focusing on employees who are working during the standard working hours in the office or not. Moreover, the employees who are working in the office need to work for exactly eight hours, but teleworkers can work beyond this standard, and complete their workload while spending their free time (Towers, Duxbury, Higgins & Thomas, 2006).
- **Telework Place:** Meanwhile, Telework place indicates the place where remote works happen. For example, Huws (1997) explained that the telework can be completed by staying at many places such as home, in the vehicle or at any site etc. Therefore, telework place can be defined as a multi-site telework. This concept can be measured by focusing on the places which employees use to engage with their work.

Telework Factors: Innovative organization of work through teleworking, if the job allows for working remotely, has been adopted by organizations in response to the Covid-19 threat (Belzunegui-Eraso&Erro-Garcés, 2020). Nevertheless, Nakrošienė et al. (2019) mentioned that still the definition of telework depends on

the teleworker, the people who are working in the remote places. Therefore, the telework concept does not have a specific definition. As a result, most of the researchers selected the telework factors from the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) Theory. Basically, the JDR model has two working conditions, namely, job demand and job resources. Job demand consists of the characteristics of physical workload, time pressure, recipient contract, physical environment, shift work, and job resources contains the attributes of feedback, rewards, job control, participation, job security, supervisor's support (Parker, Morgeson & Johns, 2017). These above job demand and resource variables can be applied as it is for any field or industry to measure the employee motivation, satisfaction etc. In terms of assessing the teleworker factors, most of the scholars pursued the same attributes but, in a more descriptive manner. For example, Nakrošienė et al., (2019) formed their research model with the variables of:

- **Time planning skills of teleworkers:** When comparing with the non-teleworkers, teleworkers are working longer hours and therefore teleworkers need to manage both their personal and working life. (Hill, Ferris & Martinson, 2003)
- **Possibility to work during the productive time:** Under this attribute, teleworkers should decide the most productive time for them in terms of engaging with their work. Further, this concept related to the work autonomy.
- **Supervisor's trust and Supervisor's support:** Teleworkers need to develop the trust among the supervisors and other employees, because teleworkers have less guidance and support compared to the traditional employees (Makarius & Larson, 2017). This can negatively affect the career opportunities of teleworkers.
- **Reduced time for communication with co-workers:** Due to the teleworking concept, teleworkers have communication problems with others. As a result of the lack of communication, the teleworkers can be isolated (Wilson & Greenhill, 2004), and this can unfavourably effect the efficiency of information and slow the decision-making process.
- **Possibility to take care of family members:** As a result of the long hours of work, teleworkers can have family problems when trying to balance their work and family life.
- **Possibility to work from home in case of sickness:** Telework concept is a significant theme when employees are asking for sick leave, because employees can work from home when they are feeling better (Johnson, Audrey & Shaw, 2007).
- **Suitability of a working place at home:** This represents that most appropriate place (home or well-arranged working place) to the teleworker in terms of working effectively.
- **Possibility to access organization documents from home:** Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, & Garud (2001) stated that the organization should facilitate a new system to the teleworkers for accessing the sensitive information of the organization.
- **Possibility to save expenses for travel:** Tremblay & Genin (2007) mentioned that automatically travelling costs reduce when employees are working at home.

Performance is a multicomponent concept and on the fundamental level one can distinguish the process aspect of performance, that is, behavioral engagements from an expected outcome (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell et al., 1993; Roe, 1999). The behavior over here denotes the action people exhibit to accomplish a work, whereas the outcome aspect states about the consequence of individual's job behavior (Campbell, 1990). Apparently, in a workplace, the behavioral engagement and expected outcome are related to each other (Borman, & Motowidlo, 1993), but the comprehensive overlap between both the constructs are not evident yet, as the expected outcome is influenced by factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities than the behavioral aspect. Performance in the form of task performance comprises of job explicit behaviors which includes fundamental job responsibilities assigned as a part of job description. Performance is a multicomponent concept and on the fundamental level one can distinguish the process aspect of performance, that is, behavioral engagements from an expected outcome (Borman, & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell et al., 1993; Roe, 1999). The behavior over here denotes the action people exhibit to accomplish a work, whereas the outcome aspect states about the consequence of individual's job behavior (Campbell, 1990). Apparently, in a workplace, the behavioral engagement and expected outcome are related to each other (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), but the comprehensive overlap between both the constructs are not evident yet, as the expected outcome is influenced by factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities than the behavioral aspect. Performance in the form of task performance comprises of job explicit behaviors which includes fundamental job responsibilities assigned as a part of job description.

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Employee Performance: In 1999, Roe stated that performance is the process of behavioral engagement of the employee in terms of achieving the expected outcome of the organization. However, Borman&Motowidlo (1993) mentioned that there is a relationship between behavioral engagement and expected outcome, and most of the time the factors such as motivation and cognitive abilities of the employees affected the expected outcomes. Nevertheless, performance is still a multicomponent concept, and the concept of performance formed by Task performance, Adaptive performance and Contextual performance (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

- **Task performance** indicates the essential responsibilities of the job that the employee needs to perform as their regular duties. Job description is the legal document of the task performance activities that forms a contractual relationship between employer and employee. Further, employees must have a technical knowledge, previous experience, cognitive thinking ability, task skill, task habits to fulfil their job requirements (Conway, 1999).
- Baard, Rench, and Kozlowski (2014) disclosed that employees practise **Adaptive performance** when dealing with the unpredictable work situations such as transformations in the market, technology, changes in job etc. Employees need to have innovative ideas, proactive behaviour and risk-taking ability in terms of facing the undefined business problems.
- **Contextual performance** is the charitable actions that are performed by the employee without expecting any personal benefits. Therefore, Bateman & Organ (1983) mentioned that the benefits of contextual performance are intangible, and there are non-job components in the organization that are not included in the job description.

Research Question: The goal of this basic qualitative study was to see how working from home as a result of COVID-19 impacted FMSC, USJ's telework elements and employee performance. The study was guided by two main research questions.

1. How does working from home affect academic performance?
2. How did academics react to teleworking during the global pandemic?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework of this research is a combination of two research models, because the authors followed the Nakrošienė et al., (2019) and Pradhan & Jena (2017) research models to find the effect of telework factors and employee performance respectively as given below in Figure 1.

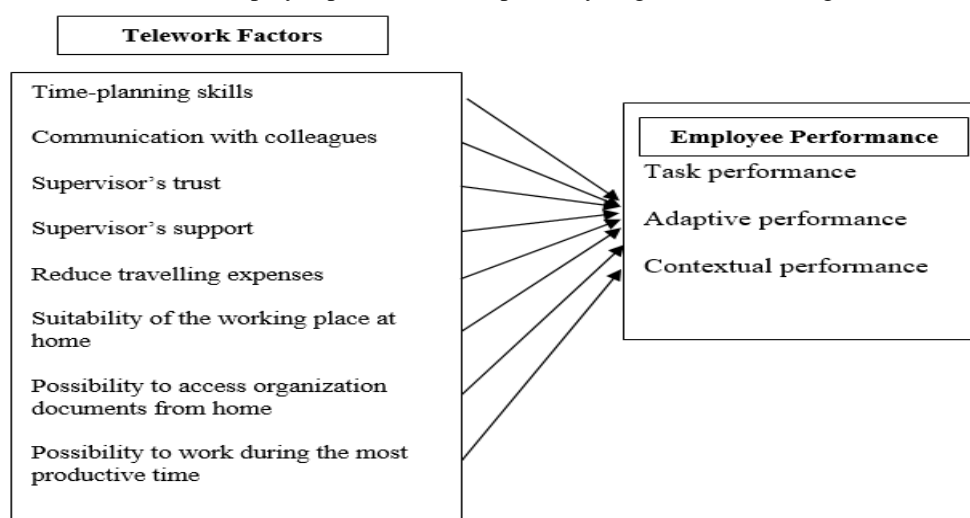


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted by the authors by combining the Nakrošienė et al., (2019) and Pradhan & Jena (2017) research models. In 2019, Nakrošienė et al., established their research model in order to search whether working from

home is good or bad by including ten telework factors such as Time-planning skills, Decreased time for communication with colleagues, Possibility to work from home in case of sickness, Supervisor's trust, Supervisor's support, Possibility to reduce expenses for travel, Possibility to take care of family members, Suitability of the working place at home, Possibility to access organization documents from home, and Possibility to work during the most productive time, as independent variables.

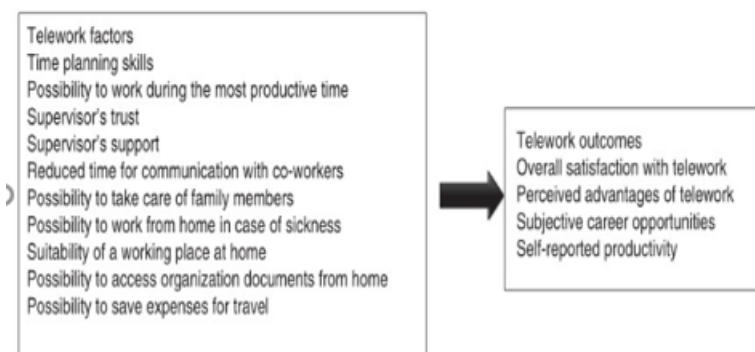


Figure 2: Telework factors and outcomes research model
 Source: Nakrošienė et al. (2019)

In 2017, Pradhan & Jena formed their conceptual framework to measure the employee performance by adding three types of performance named Task performance, Adaptive performance, and Contextual performance.

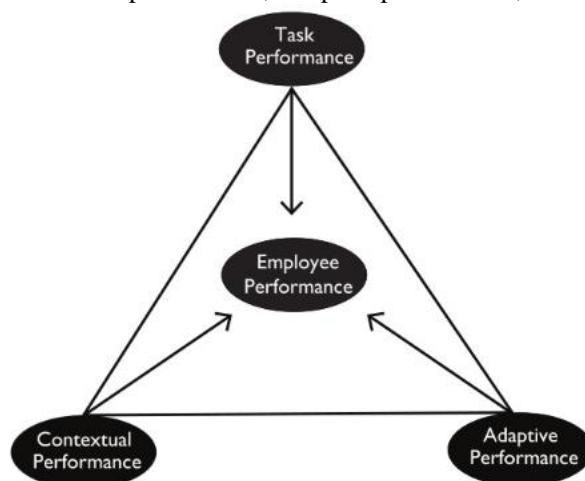


Figure 3: Triarchy model of employee performance
 Source: Pradhan & Jena (2017)

However, when developing the research framework for this research (Figure 1), the authors eliminated and modified some attributes from these above two research models. For example, Nakrošienė et al., (2019) used ten telework factors and those factors are common to all the telework places such as the home, branches of the organization, while travelling etc., but this research is focusing on the employee performance during the COVID period, and during that time Sri Lanka could not travel due to the lockdown in the country and, hence, working from home was the only option for the people. Therefore, the authors selected the eight telework factors as follows.

1. Time-planning skills
2. Communication with colleagues
3. Supervisor's trust
4. Supervisor's support
5. Reduce travelling expenses
6. Suitability of the working place at home
7. Possibility to access organization documents from home
8. Possibility to work during the most productive time

Population and Sample: In the context of the study the population comprised junior lecturers from the FMSC at USJ. The total population was 52, and the sample was 37. Du Plooy (1997:48) refers to sampling as the

rigorous procedures involved when selecting individuals from a large population. A sample is therefore a group of subjects chosen from the population using a particular sampling method. Adopting the sampling technique observed in the study conducted by Malatji (2014), in the first phase of data collection, an open-ended questionnaire was used. Thereafter, purposive sampling determined the number of respondents who were interviewed. The open-ended questionnaire was used to gather information on how lecturers perceive working from home. Themes were identified and analyzed in a qualitative approach.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Out of 50 junior academics in the FMSC, USJ, 37 junior academics participated in the interviews; 63.9% and 25% of the respondents belong to the 20-30 and 30-40 age categories, respectively, and, the majority of the participants (62.2%) are female academics. Moreover, 52.8% of the sample have a Bachelor's degree and 30.6% academics have a Master's degree, and most of the respondents are married (51.4%).

Analysis Based on Narrative Analysis: To analyze the collected qualitative data, the authors used both Narrative Content Analysis and Thematic Content Analysis to evaluate the telework factor in order to provide a clear reflection of what the participants thought and then, the authors assessed the employee performance section based on the Thematic Content Analysis to eliminate the repetitive data, as follows:

TF1: Time-planning skills - I am able to plan my time when working from home, I can balance my family life and working life when I stay at home. According to the received responses, a majority of the participants are confident in their ability to schedule their time effectively when there are working at home, but Participant 12 (P12), P21, P4, and P30 do not agree with this statement. They believe that they cannot properly manage their time at home. Similarly, out of 37 participants 27 academics mentioned that they have the ability to properly balance their personal and professional obligations while working from home; however again 6 participants (P2, P15, P16, P17, P21, P30) did not agree with this statement.

TF2: Communication with colleagues - I spend more time for communication with colleagues when working from home, Weekly, I participate in peer review meetings when I am working from home. Under the 1st question, 'I spend more time for communication with colleagues when working from home', 16 participants stated that they are allocating more hours to discuss academic and non-academic related matters with their peers. However, 12 participants (P1, P5, P7, P9, P10, P14, P20, P22, P25, P28, P35, P37) have a doubtful feeling about the effectiveness of the communication because of the lack of computer literacy of the non-academic staff, lack of documents etc. Similarly, 9 participants (P2, P3, P4, P13, P18, P19, P30, P32, P33) completely disagreed and elaborated that the communication process is not effective when they are staying at home. The FMSC, SJP conducted its weekly review sessions at the university during the COVID outbreak, and 16 participants attended those meetings. However, 12 members (P1, P2, P4, P5, P10, P13, P14, P18, P22, P29, P33, P37) did not participate in the meetings and 9 members (P12, P17, P23, P27, P28, P30, P31, P35, P36) participated in some of the meetings but not all, due to the safety issue.

TF3: Supervisor's trust - I think my superior trusts me a lot when providing the opportunity to work from home. My superior gives me lots of individual responsibilities when I am working at home. A majority of the respondents (22 out of 37) admitted that their seniors trusted them even when they completed their academic work by staying at home; nevertheless, 6 participants (P2, P9, P12, P13, P21, P29) disagreed, mentioning that their superiors do not have much faith in their work, and 8 participants (P5, P8, P14, P17, P26, P27, P37) do not have a clear idea regarding this point. Apart from that, 23 participants agreed and said that they may be given certain responsibilities by their superiors even when they do not come to the university.

TF4: Supervisor's support: I think my employer supports me a lot when I am working at home. Compared to the previous number of meetings, now my superior organizes more meetings in order to guide me. A majority of the interviewees (22 participants) declared that while their supervisors are at home, they are not very supportive of them, and most of the respondents (24 participants out of 37) revealed that their department heads and other responsible parties do not attend as many review meetings as they did before the global pandemic.

TF5: Reduce travelling expenses - When I am working at home, it saves my money for travelling. When I am working at home, it saves my time for travelling.

A majority of the participants enthusiastically agreed, pointing out that working from home saves their money by reducing both travel costs and time spent on travelling.

TF6: Suitability of the home as a working place: I feel that home is the most suitable place for me to work compared to my workplace. I am working long hours at home compared to the office hours 14 participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P5, P11, P12, P17, P22, P24, P25, P27, P31, P33) went on to note that they are still undecided about whether working from home is a good option for an academic, and 15 participants completely disagreed and mentioned that working from home is not compatible with an academic's work (P2, P7, P8, P10, P14, P15, P16, P19, P20, P21, P26, P28, P29, P30, P34) because of the lack of university documents, inability to check their work with the seniors etc. Moreover, a majority of the population (29 participants out of 37) are currently working long and productive hours from home under the telework provisions.

TF7: Possibility to access organization documents from home - When I am working from home, I have a chance to access company documents. Most of the interviewees disagreed (16 participants out of 37) and provided a neutral answer (12 participants out of 37) and all of them were very disappointed with their inability to obtain university documents because of the lack of development in the digital platform to access the documents.

TF8: Possibility to work during the most productive time - When I am working from home, I can work during the most productive time. 20 participants went on to say that they can work productive hours at home rather than at the university, but 12 participants (P2, P7, P10, P11, P20, P21, P22, P24, P25, P27, P28, P30) had a neutral opinion, stating that working from home is a good idea because of the pandemic outbreak; but they still believe that the university is the best place to work. Meanwhile, 5 of the participants totally disagreed with this point.

Analysis Based on Thematic Content Analysis

When analyzing the collected data altogether under the Thematic Content Analysis, the results indicated that:

- Most of the junior academics (76.9%) who are working in the FMSC, USJ can plan their work perfectly when they are working from home. Further, 62.2% of junior lecturers mentioned that they can balance their family life and working life when they are staying at home under the time-planning skills.
- In the 'communication with colleagues' section, only 37.8% of the junior academics agreed that they can spend more time communicating with their colleagues when working from home; however, 21.6% of the junior academics disagreed with that idea and 32.4% have a neutral idea. Yet, 43.2% of lecturers are participating in the peer review meetings when they are at home.
- 47.2% of junior academics believed that their superiors trust them when they are working at home instead of at the university, but only 43.2% of the junior academics agreed that their superiors give lots of individual responsibilities when they are working at home under the supervisor's trust.
- In the supervisor's support section, most of the junior academics (Neutral - 40.5%, Disagree - 16.2%) do not have a positive idea regarding their senior's support, and on the other hand, 43.2% of the junior academics are not sure whether their superiors would organize more meetings to guide them.
- As a positive point, a majority of the sample stated that they can save both their traveling cost (94.6%) and time (100%) when they are working in the home under the 'reduced traveling expense' section.
- Under the 'suitability of the working place at home' section, most academics do not feel that the home is the best place for them to work when compared to the university because 35.1% and 37.8% disagreed and picked the neutral option to that question respectively (I feel that home is the most suitable place to work for me compared to my workplace). Again, they mentioned that they are working long hours at home when compared with the office hours (78.3%).
- Under the 'possibility to access organization documents from the home' section, the majority of the sample (75.6%) provided negative feedback regarding the accessibility of university documents from home.
- Finally, under the telework factors, currently, 54% of academics have confidence that they are working more productive hours from their home; however, 45.9% of academics do not believe that working from home is creating productive hours.

Moreover, under the Employee Performance section the following results emerged: Task Performance: Most of the lecturers use high standards to complete their jobs (76.7%); a majority of them are capable of handling their jobs without much supervision (81.1%); they are very passionate about their work (81.1%); they can handle multiple duties at the same time (70.3%); they can complete many responsibilities on time when they stay at home (62.1%); however, most of them do not have an idea about the co-worker's idea regarding his or her work (54%).

Adaptive Performance: A large number of lecturers are providing their knowledge for teamwork even when they are working at home (74.8%); they can manage any changes and perform their job according to that situation (73%); they can handle their work effectively within the team even when they are staying at home (64.9%);

junior lecturers have a mutual understanding of the organizational issues (91.6%); they can reduce their temper when they are working as a team member (69.5%); moreover, most of the junior lecturers are comfortable with the job flexibility in the 'working from home' concept (69.4%), and they like to change their job according to the organizational changes (66.7%). Contextual Performance: Most junior academics are helping their co-workers even when they are working at home (88.9%); they love to handle extra responsibilities in addition to their job role (58.4%); they show their sympathy and empathy for their co-workers during the COVID time period (88.9%); further, they actively participate in group discussions (94.4%); most of the junior lecturers congratulate their peers on their achievements (94.6%); they share their knowledge and experience with the team (100%), maintain a good coordination with the team members (91.7%); and guide new team members even when they are at home (86.1%).

V. DISCUSSION

According to both analyses, there is no doubt that the performance of the junior academics working at the FMSC, USJ is at a good level even when they are working from home; further, they do not have any internal issues within themselves or within their families which are causing a disturbance to their work under the results presented through the analyses of Task Performance, Adaptive Performance and Contextual Performance. This finding is in congruence with the findings in Stadlander and Sickel (2021) who mentioned that, as a result of working from home, home-front duties and responsibilities have not changed, and therefore, it does not affect the performance of their respondents. Further, the research findings of Kulikowski, Przytuła and Sułkowski (2021) consolidated this result by stating that according to their findings, working from home motivates academics because of the flexibility it offers. Under the telework factors, the results show that most of the junior lecturers believe that they can manage their work when there are working at home. The findings of Stadlander and Sickel (2021) also proved that the isolated junior academics successfully completed their work at home. Furthermore, Stadlander and Sickel's (2021) data analysis presented that the interviewees' daily work schedule has not changed as a result of working from home.

However, the FMSC, USJ does not have a proper communication channel to conduct meetings with the students, seniors and peers. As a result of that, senior lecturers are still conducting the department and faculty meetings physically, and junior lecturers are participating in those meetings even when they are working from home. Kulikowski et al., (2021) also proved that teachers do not have an ideal way to maintain a relationship with their students. Most of the academics mentioned that they do not get proper supervision and support from their senior lecturers when they are at home, because most of the senior lecturers prefer to come to university for their work, and as a result, junior lecturers are required to be in the university. Similarly, in their findings, Kulikowski et al., (2021) mentioned that most of the institutes are not supporting and advising them to successfully conduct academic works. A majority of the lecturers are engaging in administrative activities, which are out of their job scope, and because of that, they do not have a proper platform to access the university documents. As a result, eventually, academics need to come to the university to finalize their work. This is in congruence with the finding of Stadlander and Sickel (2021), where most lecturers think that working from home is not a good concept for the higher education system.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Responsible parties should encourage academics to use technology to conduct all of their activities, and senior lecturers, in particular, should advise and guide junior lecturers to ensure that their tasks are completed successfully. In addition, university officials should revise the work definition for junior lecturers. Responsible parties should, for example, reduce the number of non-academic duties available to junior lecturers, and senior lecturers should encourage junior lecturers to focus only on their academic role. Meanwhile, universities must create a digital platform that includes all university documents, making it easier to access, submit, and amend university materials. Furthermore, the university should improve the computer literacy of non-academic staff, to facilitate an easier work environment for junior academics, whilst they are working from home.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study surveyed how the feelings of junior academics of the FMSC, USJ, about their performance and home workspace changed due to COVID-19. The findings showed that the working from home concept is not a suitable concept for junior academics due to the lack of documents, inadequate support from senior lecturers and the additional amount of non-academic jobs. However, the performance of junior lecturers is maintained at a good level even when they are working from home.

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