The Role of Emotional Intelligence Domains on Working Remotely Norm During Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and working remotely. Additionally, this study looks at how emotions in each of the four categories of emotional intelligence domain play a role in influencing Malaysian civil servants' norm of working remotely. The study sample consists of respondents from both academic and non-academic service categories. To assess the first variable, researchers who underwent instrument, face , and construct validation created the questionnaire known as the Emotional Intelligence Domain Inventory (EIDInv; Siti Sarawati Johar, 2021). The questionnaire used to measure the second variable is called the Work from Home Norm Instrument. It was adopted from the Work from Home Challenge COVID-19 Instrument (WFHI-CvdC; Siti Sarawati Johar, 2021). To determine how the four domains of emotional intelligence impact the emotional well-being of a typical homeworker, this study used regression analysis. The study's conclusions show how each variable's relationships and effects have a significant influence. This study expands our understanding of emotional and behavioral well-being in general. It provides valuable information for future researchers examining the topic from the organizational psychology perspective and its connections to the social and economic domains of the community.

Keywords: *Role, Emotional, Domains, Working, Remotely*

INTRODUCTION

As a nation's human capital, employees constitute a vital human resource. Among the components of the administrative and management apparatus, workers play a significant role in influencing and deciding the course of social and national development, among other factors that contribute to raising people's standard of living (Johar, 2019). The organizational mission and operational vision work together to achieve management following the guidelines developed and supplied by the Malaysian Administration Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU, 2009), which is in line with the practical understanding of human resources as human capital in the nation's efforts to generate sustainable transformation.

However, the contagion of COVID-19 that occurred in 2020 and triggered a global pandemic phenomenon has changed the world scenario in general and the country in particular due to having a large and heavy impact on all members of society, including various aspects of life such as social, economic, physical, emotional, and mental. Accordingly, the date 18 March 2020 is the beginning of the Movement Control Order (MCO) for activities involving shops, offices, universities, and schools that need to be closed as a proactive effort to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Malaysia (Syah Rul, 2020). The MCO applies to every civil servant because they have to work from home (WFH) as one type of remote work. However, there is relaxation for frontline workers (Rusli, 2020). From that moment, the people in Malaysia, including public and private employees, must stay home and do their regular work from home throughout the MCO period.

With that, the norm of working remotely (which is focused on working from home) began and was accompanied by the history of the pandemic that all cannot forget. Although the norm is no longer applied at

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this time after four years have passed due to the phase now being an endemic transitional phase, the exposure of the new working norm to employees in this country has brought about a transformation in the working culture that does not necessarily have to work at the workplace, instead anyone, whether employer or employee, needs to be ready to adapt to whatever is possible if the norm of working at home is practical at other times than during the pandemic (Siti et al., 2021). Accordingly, researchers conducted a study to identify the extent to which the domains of emotional intelligence can influence the norm of working from home among employees as one of the mediums of emotional well-being in life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence as An Emotional Well-Being Role

The foundation of this study is the model of four branches of emotional intelligence developed by Mayer and Salovey, which draws on the theory of emotional intelligence proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990). This study does not cover other emotional intelligence competencies and variables outside the scope of theory and model. As quality human capital, besides focusing on expertise, employees should also be more holistic in ethics, values, emotions, and character (Awada et al., 2020). The balance of human capital through three categories, namely emotional, mental, and physical balance, needs to be optimally focused (Johar, 2019). However, in organizations, various phenomena and serious problems still affect the psychological interaction environment between employees, which hurts the emotional side and can affect work commitment (Johar et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, it can have a lasting impact on the behavior and commitment of employees in the organization (Johar, 2019; Sarawati, 2018).

A prior study (Michael, 2010) discovered self-esteem's behavioral and psychological components and their relationship to commitment and performance in human resource-related organizations. An organization's human capital is defined as its human resource, comprising three primary domains: emotional, mental, and physical (Johar, 2019). The degree to which it acts against the organization's demands or in line with them can be measured, and this could lead to either an internal or external crisis. Testing the emotional component and its impact is the primary goal of this study. The range of feelings experienced by every individual in the human body is their emotions. As "movement of energy," emotion has Latin origins (Childre and Martin, 1999). Behavior is shaped and influenced by experiences with emotions, which impact brain cells and memory. This study will conclude the construct of emotional well-being among civil servants by examining how emotions significantly influence the norm of working from home. Also, the primary goal of this research is to determine how employees' perceptions of working-from-home norms are impacted by their emotional well-being as measured by the four emotional intelligence domains. Significant differences exist between working from home during a pandemic and when there isn't one, especially regarding the COVID-19 epidemic.

Not everyone feels the same emotions because a person's emotional response depends on the type of personality showing emotions, which is quite difficult to determine objectively (Zohar and Marshall, 2000). The sentiments and emotions of employees as human beings can change with various feelings such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, despair, or anger. Uncontrolled emotions can create conflicts and problems in the organization. Because of that, employees need to be more aware of how to manage any issue effectively and prudently because failure to control emotions can affect work performance. This is where we can understand the need for employees to have positive emotions to influence positive behavior and further form a positive work culture and spirit.

Emotional well-being refers to an individual feeling good emotionally and being able to manage their emotions impassively. Emotional well-being involves positive feelings, the ability to deal with challenges and stress, and the ability to interact healthily with others. Emotional well-being also includes recognizing, understanding, and managing unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, anger, or stress. Similarly, emotions are feelings or impacts that occur when an individual is in a situation or interaction that is considered necessary, especially for well-being (Cherniss, 2001). Therefore, emotional well-being is also an emotional state that includes happiness, life satisfaction, and a balance between positive and negative impacts. This is reinforced by the fact that emotional well-being is life satisfaction with an individual's assessment of his life by including affective aspects, whether

positive or negative (Bluth et al., 2017). Emotional well-being is also a construct related to two affective indicators, which are positive and negative in mental health (Afridah et al., 2018).

In addition, the emotional well-being scale indicates high or low levels of positive emotions through emotional intelligence competence. It correlates with positive indicators such as self-esteem, psychological well-being, and extraversion. At the same time, negative indicators are such as depression, anxiety, and neurosis (Diener, 1984). The statement that emotional well-being is a component of mental health (Budiarto, 2018) aligns with the opinion of Keyes et al. (2002). The concept of positive mental health is in a three-dimensional network of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Emotional well-being focuses on subjective well-being in terms of holistic satisfaction and happiness. Emotional well-being is a group of signs that reflect the presence or absence of positive feelings in life. The positive impacts include cheerfulness, enthusiasm, joy, calm, peace, and contentment. Well-being is also related to happiness in the past and present or anything good in life (Keyes et al., 2002). Through the norm of working from home, emotional well-being can be traced to its role through emotional intelligence competence.

Regardless of an employee's duties, whether working in the office or at home, they will bring emotions together, and challenges will undoubtedly remain. It is essential to keep emotions under control in all situations. Facial expressions, emotional reactions, and behavior must be controlled, and employees must be more sensitive to avoid harming others. High-status employees are more likely to express anger, while those with lower status tend to express their emotions as sadness (Tiedens, 2001). Happy employees will show good behavior and performance and achieve more productivity (Wright and Cropanzano, 2004). Negative emotions that cause stress are not a good sign in an organization. Past studies have proven the importance of emotions in work. Emotions at work and in the workplace are related to the quality of interaction between employees and customers. In this context, customers are interpreted as anyone interacting with employees (Zapf, 2002).

The management and regulation of emotions are essential in organizational behavior, human resource management, and organizational psychology, especially in leadership, conflict management, decision-making processes, and efforts to respond to organizational change (Fineman, 2003). Emotional competence is a skill that can be learned to improve performance and work commitment. Furthermore, the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace is based on self-control, self-awareness, empathy, motivation, and social relationships (Goleman, 1999). Several other causes can cause negative emotions, especially stress among civil servants (Zafir and Sheikh, 2014). Work-life balance, mental health problems, personal stress, excessive workload, resources and communication, compensation, and benefits, work control, as well as aspects of job security can also be sources of stress in the workplace. This, in turn, will affect the productivity of the organization. Correspondingly, employees' emotions must be well managed and stable to achieve emotional well-being that can affect work results more positively and proactively, whether working at home or in the office.

WORKING REMOTELY SCENARIO

Working remotely in this study focuses on the term and scenario of working from home. In working from home, virtual interaction also requires ethics and civilization when dealing with emotions as part of the job. Working from home is conceptually a work arrangement where individuals work from home or other places outside the company's physical office (Rusli, 2020). Typically, working from home involves using information and communication technology, such as computers, telephones, and internet access, to carry out work tasks. Working from home has recently become a standard norm, especially with technological advances allowing for more efficient remote communication. Some companies may adopt work-from-home policies as part of work-life balance initiatives, work flexibility, or response to emergencies or disasters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working from home can provide several benefits, such as:

Time flexibility: working from home can provide flexibility in managing work schedules, allowing individuals to adjust work hours to meet personal and family needs.

Save time and travel costs: not having to go back and forth to the office saves travel time and expenses usually incurred in the daily routine.

Avoiding stress: Employees can avoid or minimize stress factors when they don't have to deal with traffic jams, the worry of a late commute, and the fatigue of commuting to work every day.

Work and personal life balance: working from home can help achieve a more stable balance between work and personal life demands, as individuals can be more flexible in managing work time and time for personal activities.

However, working from home also has its challenges, such as:

Social isolation: working from home can reduce social interaction with colleagues and can lead to feelings of isolation.

Time management skills: working from home requires personal discipline in managing work time, avoiding distractions, and ensuring work remains efficient.

Home environment distractions: the home environment can be a source of distractions, such as household chores, childcare, or pets.

In practical situations, there is generally a lot of flexibility between employers and employees, including when there is a voluntary element (Rusli, 2020). This concept can be used for many types of jobs. The implementation mode and mechanism will be more varied, and all parties must reach a mutual agreement on working from home based on the stipulations and reasons allowed. For the public sector, service circulars issued by the Director General of Public Services are issued from time to time based on the decisions of the National Security Council (MKN) during the MCO in the COVID-19 pandemic season.

A Randstad Workmonitor survey has found that up to 48% of respondents as employees expressed the desire to continue working from home and at the same time also work in the office intermittently and periodically, even after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hazwan, 2021). 14% of respondents want the standard of working at home to be maintained during the post-pandemic period. It turns out that more flexible work policies are believed to help improve employee morale and reduce stress levels. Some researchers and academics think the medium of working from home should continue because it positively impacts some conditions, such as the need to take care of sick and chronically ill family members (Harris Shah, 2021). It is seen as a practical method to help reduce the stress level caused by conflict and imbalance in the demands of work and family. Female workers need higher mental and physical stamina to work from home because of the greater responsibilities they have to shoulder as mothers and wives (Tuty Haryanti, 2021). Like it or not, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the landscape of implementation and management of working methods and spaces. This transformation can affect the workplace atmosphere for both employees and employers. Therefore, there is no denying that long working hours from home can create challenges in emotional, mental, and physical balance among employees (Nor `Asyikin, 2021).

Undoubtedly, there are some challenges in implementing work-from-home norms, such as unstable internet data access, management conflicts between work and family, and time management. In a Vase.ai survey of 1,100 online users, 35% of respondents gave feedback that data and internet access problems are one of the main challenges when working from home (Rusli Ahmad, 2020). 77% of respondents admitted to facing challenges when working from home. The survey also revealed that only 9% of respondents like to work from home (Rusli Ahmad, 2020). The phenomenon also includes the reality of an increasingly urgent environment, rapid development, global competition, technological change, pandemic, and endemic threats, and the demands of contemporary forms of work making the world of work more and more challenging, including the changes that lead to the scenario of working from home. It is also closely related to the emotional element, which is not only focused on physical and mental issues. Because of the disruption to people's lives caused by a once-in-a-century pandemic, organizations attribute their success to their employees' work engagement, job satisfaction, and overall psychological well-being. Millions were compelled to take refuge at home to stop the spread of COVID-19, which resulted in them having to work remotely (Prasad et al., 2020). As a contra result of being confined to their homes, employees under quarantine reported deteriorating physical and mental health conditions, loss of income, and social isolation (Banerjee and Rai, 2020; Torales et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

In short, good emotional intelligence leads to emotional well-being, which is very important in life, including working from home. When individuals feel more emotionally stable, they tend to have lower stress levels, higher levels of job satisfaction, and a better balance between work and personal life. Optimal emotional well-being can improve the quality of relationships between colleagues, impactive communication, and strengthen resilience in the face of work challenges. However, working from home can also present challenges on the psychological level, including emotional, mental, and behavioral factors (Siti et al., 2021). Employees may face social isolation, difficulty separating work and private time, and increased work demands regardless of time through virtual interactions that may affect their emotional stability. Therefore, it is essential for individuals who work from home to maintain their emotional well-being by having accurate resilience, adopting healthy coping strategies, maintaining a balance between work and personal life, and interacting realistically to obtain support from family, colleagues, and organization (Siti et al., 2021). Although working from home features a high frequency of virtual interactions, employees can improve communication effectiveness with family members.

By understanding and managing emotional well-being well, individuals who work from home can improve their quality of life and work performance more dynamically and consistently. With that, this study reviewed the influence of the four domains of emotional intelligence as a dimension of emotional well-being on the perception of working-from-home norms. In conclusion, this study aims to investigate, using four emotional domains, the influence of emotional intelligence on government employees' work-from-home practices within the framework and circumstances of Malaysia's public sector. Thus, this study is carried out to examine the phenomena of the public sector in this nation that are pertinent to the current local situation, based on several well-established theories.

Research Objective

To test the impact of the emotional domain on working remotely.

To test the impact of the domain of self-awareness on working remotely.

To test the impact of the domain of emotional well-being on working remotely.

To test the impact of the domain of emotion regulation on working remotely.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This kind of study is non-trial, a field study, and is portrayed utilizing connection and relapse insights. Field research is highly pertinent to this study since it is considered profoundly solid and moderately low in execution cost (Maimunah, 1992). This review is clear and has speculation testing that can make sense of the free factors of at least two variables in a particular circumstance (McIntyre, 2005). Relapse examination tests the impact or impact in the relationship, everything being equal.

Research Location and Subject

One of the public universities in the central zone of Peninsular Malaysia, which is also a statutory entity of a government agency, was selected for the location of this study. One of the main criteria of this study is focused on civil servants. A systematic random sampling method was used to select the respondents, and the Krejcie & Morgan table was used to choose them. This study selected a sample of 235 civil servants, consisting of academic and non-academic staff from several salary grade categories.

Research Instrument

This study is a quantitative report. The estimation device to test the space's capacity to understand individuals on a profound level is a survey created by researchers and has gone through the process of construct validation, face validation, and instrument validation, named the Emotional Intelligence Domain Inventory (EIDInv; Siti Sarawati Johar, 2021). This instrument has a reliability value of .947, while the total KMO is .918. The survey for the subsequent variable is the Working from Home Norms Instrument, adapted from the Working from

Home Challenges COVID-19 Instrument (WFHI- CvdC; Siti Sarawati Johar, 2021). The reliability for this instrument is .743, while the total KMO is .819. This study used a questionnaire to collect the data the researcher required. As a result, the researcher can gauge respondents' emotional intelligence and work-from-home norms. Since all the instruments the researcher used in this study have already undergone the validity process, the study's accuracy and reliability depend on the instruments used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The impact of the domain of emotions on working remotely

The study's results on the emotional domain's impact on the perception of the norm of work-from-home respondents are shown in Table 1. The analysis found that the emotional domain significantly impacted the perception of work-from-home norms with a sig. value = .001 and R= .237. The findings showed that the emotional domain contributed as much as 5.6% (R^2 = .056) of the variance change in the perceived norm of working from home.

Table 1: The impact of the domain of emotional on working remotely

Variables	Sig.	R	R^2
Emotional Domain	.001	.237	.056

The impact of the domain of self-awareness on working remotely

The investigation of how the self-awareness domain influences respondents' perceptions of the norm for working from home is displayed in Table 2. The analysis's findings indicated that self-awareness significantly influenced the perception of working-from-home norms. Sig. Value is equal to .023, and R is equal to .148. The results suggested that the variance change in the norm of working from home was only partially explained by the self-awareness domain, accounting for 2.2% (R^2 = .022) of the variance change in the norm of working from home.

Table 2: The impact of the domain of self-awareness on working remotely

Variables	Sig.	R	R^2
Self-Awareness Domain	.023	.148	.022

The impact of the domain of emotional well-being on working remotely

The study results on how respondents perceived the norm of working from home concerning the emotional well-being domain are displayed in Table 3. The analysis's findings indicated that the perception of working from home norms was significantly influenced by the self-awareness domain, with a sig. value= .001 and R= .235. The results indicate that up to 5.5% (R^2= .055) of the change in variance in the perception of the norm of working from home can be attributed to the domain of emotional well-being.

Table 3: The impact of the domain of emotional well-being on working remotely

Variables	Sig.	R	R^2
Emotional Well-Being Domain	.001	.235	.055

The impact of the domain of emotion regulation on working remotely

The findings of the investigation into how the emotional regulation domain affects the norm of working-from-home respondents are displayed in Table 4. The analysis's findings indicated that the perception of working from home norms was significantly influenced by the self-awareness domain with a sig. value= .001 and R= .331. The results indicate that up to 11% (R^2= .110) of the variation in the perception of working-from-home norms can be attributed to the emotional regulation domain.

Table 4: The impact of the domain of emotion regulation on working remotely

Variables	Sig.	R	R^2
Emotion Regulation Domain	.001	.331	.110

This research looks at the emotional intelligence domains that may affect how civil servants view the standard of working from home. The findings show that there has been a dramatic impact on the perception of working-from-home norms by the domains of emotional intelligence. This study was carried out to test the impact and influences of the domains of emotional intelligence as a marker for emotional well-being, which consists of emotional self-awareness, emotional well-being, and emotional regulation among civil servants. The result of the study shows that the influence of emotional intelligence on the norm of working from home is significant. It can be interpreted that emotional intelligence significantly influences maintaining elements of emotional stability and good emotional well-being. Some domains of emotional intelligence have produced significant positive regression coefficients on the norm of working from home. It also highlights the importance of a dominant employee approach in managing positive behavioral tendencies consistent with more consistent emotional regulation. Employees with emotional intelligence to achieve good emotional well-being can work anywhere, including at home, because they can better control their environment and themselves. Moreover, compared to other domains, the impact of the emotion regulation domain had a more significant influence (R =.331) on the work-from-home norm variable.

The findings of this study also show that the domains of emotional intelligence, to some extent, have contributed to an increase in the percentage of positive perceptions toward the norm of working from home among employees. With a moderately high level of emotional intelligence domains (mean= 3.046, 3.160, 3.081, 2.643), it was found to influence the level of perception of the norm of working from home respondents to be at a moderate level (mean= 2.382). The influence of the domains of emotional intelligence has produced a significant positive regression coefficient on the perception of working-from-home norms. In summary, the domains of emotional intelligence can function as variables that can increase a positive sense of the scenario and policy of working from home among respondents so that it does not lead to harmful emotional levels that can negatively affect the emotional stability and mental health of respondents directly.

The ability to handle stress in any situation and workspace catalyzes emotional well-being. This situation can be translated from the need for employees at a consistent level of emotional intelligence to support employee resilience when working from home during a pandemic. The results of this study are also partly consistent with previous studies, which assert that emotional intelligence significantly affects the stress and performance of employees when working from home (Shivangi, 2020). Having emotionally intelligent organizational members can provide an advantage in competitive and resilient behavior. In short, the ecosystem of working from home can also impact how employees can understand, manage, and regulate various emotions, such as anxiety, sadness, confidence, and self-esteem, even after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individuals who work from home need precise and high emotional intelligence to continue to carry out their duties, as well as to be able to avoid the occurrence of work irregularities. The results of previous studies widely show that employees who work far from the actual formal workspace need a high level of emotional intelligence to deal with the difficulty of performing their duties when there is a problem or a pandemic. This importance requires the ability to handle emotions. There are several issues related to interaction, work management, and quality of work when working from home. Individuals with vital emotional intelligence can be more responsible in their work and do not need supervision to keep it up to standard (Zapf, 2002). Individuals who work from home also have an outstanding work balance when they can spend quality time with their family and at the same time engage in their interests or hobbies (Shivangi, 2020). While there is no denying that there are times when it can be challenging to prioritize work and generate high-quality work when working from home.

The Bar-On Model's emotional intelligence domain, which includes stress management subdomains, was developed by Bar-On in 1997. The capacity to handle the criteria of emotional stability is also consistent with this domain (Bar-On, 1997). He underlined that stress management is almost always a strong suit for those with high emotional intelligence. This circumstance may highlight the value of having emotional self-control and the capacity to respond appropriately under duress. According to Salovey and Sluyter's (1997) research, people with high emotional intelligence are better at controlling their emotions and handling those of others. The results of

this study also corroborate and support their findings (Johar et al., 2018; Johar et al., 2020). The results of this study also help those of Salovey and Mayer's (1990) study, which found that people with high emotional intelligence are more adept at controlling, regulating, and managing their emotions. The present study's results are similar to those of the Randstad Workmonitory survey, which indicated that 48% of participants desired the continuation of remote and traditional office work after the COVID-19 pandemic. Hazwan (2021) states that a quarter of the participants advocate for continuing to work from home. This circumstance amply demonstrates the person's capacity to handle stress.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the results of this study show that the COVID-19 pandemic has pioneered the scenario and norm of working remotely, and it impacts workers, including civil servants. Nevertheless, the effect can be stabilized with awareness and sensitivity to manage and control emotional levels more to contribute to consistent emotional well-being or to contribute to a lower level of emotional instability among employees. The ability to take care of emotional, mental, and physical well-being to achieve holistic well-being is found to help employees be in a calmer and more controlled state by having self-resilience in the face of challenges. Employees who can regulate their emotions and achieve emotional well-being are more likely to be relaxed and controlled, as shown by the regression of the emotional intelligence domain on the perception of working from home in this study. This need must be highlighted the importance of its implementation even in complex and challenging environmental conditions. In this study, it is suggested that other interested researchers can also test and use the emotional intelligence instrument because it has been built effectively and has gained high validity and reliability. It is also suggested that any future government agency use the conclusions of this study as a guide. To adapt to the evolutionary changes of situation, time, culture, technology, and organizational workload, it is suggested that further research can also adjust the measurement of emotional intelligence and perception of working from home that is easier to administer, less complicated to understand, more open and dynamic contemporary.

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