Assessing The Effect of Work From Home on Employee Motivation During Covid-19 Movement Control Order

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Abstract: Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a global lockdown affecting the economic cycle in all countries. Employees of public and private organizations were forced to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak leading to challenges in motivation. This study focuses on the effect of work from home on employee motivation during Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO). The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that affect employee motivation when working from home and the level of motivation based on influencing factors. A quantitative method was carried out with about 200 employees who are working from home in Malaysia through the google form. The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package Software (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. In this research, reliability test, normality test, Independent sample t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis have been used to interpret the collected data. From the findings, the researcher found out that there is a relationship between employee motivation and the factors that influence employee motivation such as technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support, and manager's trust. Therefore, the results from this study could be useful information for all organizations to improve their employees' motivation when working from home.

Keywords: *motivation; relationship; work; home*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

The Covid-19 outbreak was declared as a public health emergency worldwide (WHO, 2020) which led the Prime Minister to announce a Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia on March 18, 2020, in order to inhibit the spread of the Covid19 virus (Tang, 2020). All the white-collar workers had to work from home and this create a new norm of the working environment for the employees. Past studies have disclosed that working from home enhances job satisfaction (Baker, Avery, & Crawford, 2007) as it could create functional flexibility like working time flexibility, contractual flexibility, functional flexibility, and workspace flexibility (Davidescu et al., 2020). Furthermore, these flexibilities exhibited a positive effect on job satisfaction and work performance (Zamani et al., 2021).

Somehow, there are some drawbacks working from homes like the technical problems that cannot be solved remotely, the unequal salaries between employees working in the office and teleworkers; employee isolation, limitation of normal interaction with the colleagues, and difficulties in organizing union activities (Thorstensson, 2020). In addition, a lack of competitive spirit among employees resulting from a loss of human engagement and communication with coworkers and employers could lessen competitive spirit and weaken the employee's motivation (Aczel et al., 2021). There are a few variables that can affect immensely the motivation of the workers. The degree to which different WFH arrangements use technical support such as laptops, tablets, or computers and high-speed internet is a significant contributor to employees' motivation in the WFH environment (Rodriguez and Lopez (2021). A technical support provided by the organization could augment positive vibes to the employee's motivation (Koekemoer et al., 2021).

During MCO, financial difficulty could be one of the essence that affect the employee's motivation. According to Clancy (2020), there is a strong relationship between financial support and employees' motivation. Employees found to work more diligent if they had enough financial support from the organization as the cost of WFH technology such as VPN tunnels, work re-alignment, zoom cloud meetings and maintenance costs are lavish (Vina et al., 2020). Beauregard et al., (2019) investigated that working from home without proper training support can lead to failure as the employees frequently unprepared for the changes. But, there is evidence that organizational support in the form of training can improve the resilience and well-being of the WFH employees which eventually boost their motivation (Bentley et al., 2016).

Apart from that, Human Resource (HR) department demonstrate an important role for WFH employees. Fully support from HR department offer solution to different level of workers and provide supervisory support to them during the time of crisis. They also keep employees up to date and informed on the present state of the organization (Khalil et al., 2020). Finally, trust from the superior is essential to the workers as to ensure the organization's survival and increase employees' motivation. Therefore, the objective of this study is to determine the best fit model of the employee motivation (Y) between the technical support (X_1), financial support (X_2), training support (X_3), human resource support (X_4) and manager's trust (X_5).

1.2 Problem Statement

Nowadays, covid-19 issues are getting serious and the number of cases increasing tremendously. It is expected that we have to continue to work from home until end of this year since the current total number of cases in Malaysia holding the highest number of new cases with 5-digit numbers (MOH, 2021). Study shows that work from home causes less productivity among the employees (Thorstensson, 2000, 2019-2020). When the employees are thought to be less productive the operations in an organization are disrupted. This will affect the organization's income and they will be unable to pay the employees. Due to this negative impact, employees' salaries had to be cut and many loses their jobs.

Vishal (2016) argued that employees are subjected to far too many negative impacts. Working from home falls into slackness. There are no supervising and monitoring for those who are WFH. This allows individuals to choose their own working hours and not feel obligated to dress a certain manner, allowing them to feel more relaxed and stress-free. As a result, they are slow to get started on tasks and do not take them seriously until the deadline approaches. The causes of this negative behaviors are many organizations could not achieve their goals, performance declines and leads to affect the economy of the country.

Aczel et al., (2021) mentioned that there is a lack of competitive spirit among employees, as a result of a loss of human engagement and communication with coworkers and employers, which lessens competitive spirit and may weaken employee motivation. The effect on employee motivation will be considered in terms of organization support, financial support, technology support and physical ability. The employees may be satisfied with their motivation and performance by the factors that affect when work from home.

1.3 Objective and Research Question
This study is one to answer the following question.

1) Is there any significant difference in mean of employee motivation towards age groups, gender, race, marital status, field of work and years of service?
2) Is there any correlation between employee motivation and technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust?

3) Is there any significant on the best fit model of the employee motivation (Y) between training support (X_1), financial support (X_2), training support (X_3), human resource support (X_4) and manager's trust (X_5)?

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Sample and Population

This research has been carried out with a total of 200 respondents only because a greater number of respondents who works from home were not easy to be accessed during this MCO time and the time collected data through online was not enough to get a large sample size.

2.2 Instrumentation

This questionnaire is divided into three sections which are Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A compromises of respondent background or demographic questions. The required information is gender, age, race, marital status, field of work and years of service. Next, for Section B is the factors that influence employee when work from home divided into five factors as technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust. This section used five points Likert scale as strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), averagely (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). Section C contains five questions related to employee motivation. This section also used five points Likert rating scales as strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), averagely (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5).

2.3 Validity and Reliability

Instrument or normally is called as questionnaire question are said to be valid if there is significant correlation with the total score. Validity is a measure which indicate that the measured variable is a variable to be studied by researcher. (Cooper and Schindler, in Zulganef, 2006). In this research, validity is tested by using the Pearson Correlation method. The value of r table with 0.05 level of significance, two-way test, and $N = 200$ is 0.14. If the value of $r \geq 0.14$ then the statement items in questionnaire are valid. If the value of $r \leq 0.14$ then the statement items in questionnaire are invalid.
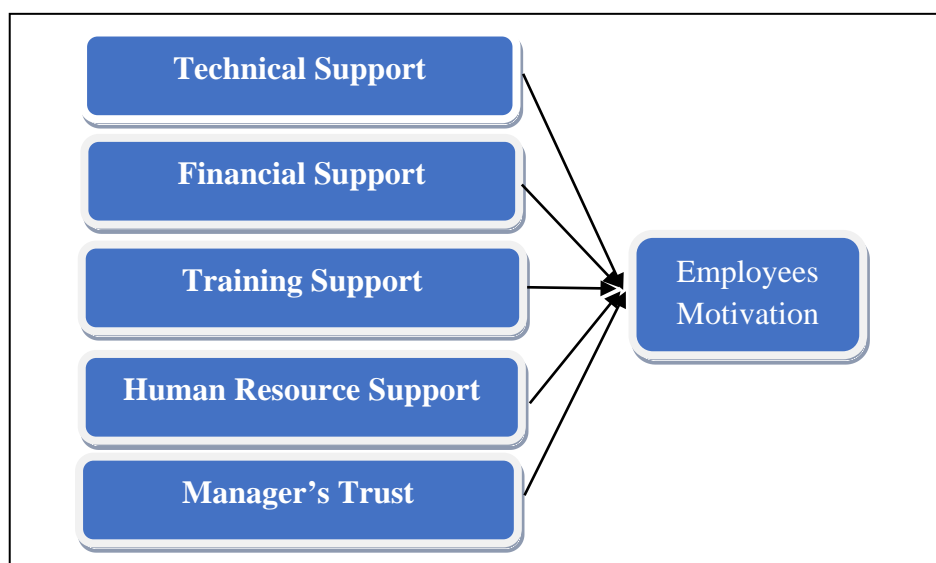

Figure 1. Conceptual research framework with hypothesized relationships

Reliability is the extent of consistency between multiple items measuring the same construct. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency that is how closely related a set of items are as a group. The coefficient of reliability ranges between 0 and 1 where when the high value of coefficients indicates a very stable and reliable set of data. It is considered to a measure of scale reliability. A high value for alpha which is above 0.7 is considered as have internal consistency and reliability.

The conceptual framework was developed from the variables were shown in Figure 1. In the research framework, the independent or explanatory variables (IVs) are technical, financial, training, humar resource support and manager's trust, while the dependent or response variable (DV) is employees motivation. The conceptual framework is employed to determine the direct effect of the relationship between superior support towards employees motivation during working from. Analysis of the data includes Correlation, Multiple Regression Analysis, and ANOVA F-statistic for model adequacy testing.

3.   Result and Discussion
3.1   Findings and Demographic Profile

The distribution of the respondent's gender was answered by 56% of female and 44% of male respondents which equals to 112 females and 88 males. The distribution can be seen in Figure 2 and summarized that female respondents were willing to answer the questionnaire and majority of them are working from home. Whereas Figure 3 revealed the distribution of respondent which the range of age are between 18 to 29 years old have the highest percentage of 72% by representing 144 respondents, while the lowest percentage is 5.5% (50 and above years old) which equal to 11 respondents. 13.5% of respondents were from 30 to 39 years old which were 27 respondents and 40 to 49 years old age category represent 9% which were 18 respondents who has answered the questionnaires.
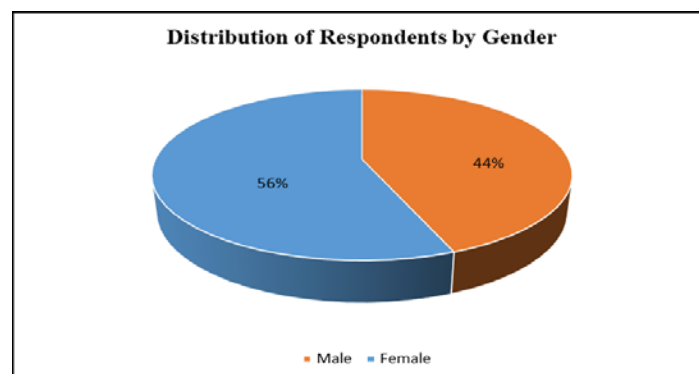

Figure 2: Distibution of Respondents by Gender

The discussion about the distribution of race among the respondents can be seen in Figure 4. The questionnaire was answered by 147 single respondents which means 74% while remaining 26% was answered by married employees which equal to 53 respondents. The race group who participated the most in this questionnaire were Indians with total of 138 respondents collected (69%). Malay races contribute the second most respondents with 23% which represents 46 respondents. The other 13 respondents were Chinese with 6.5% and other races such as Punjabi and Sikh with total of 3 respondents represent 1.5%.
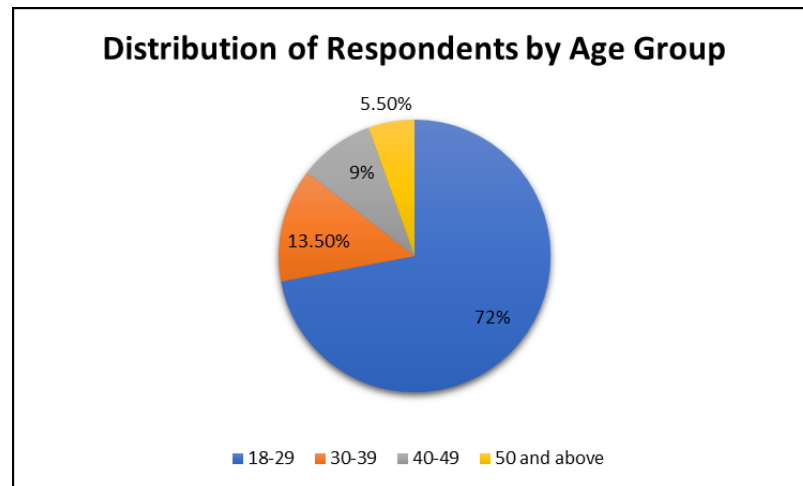
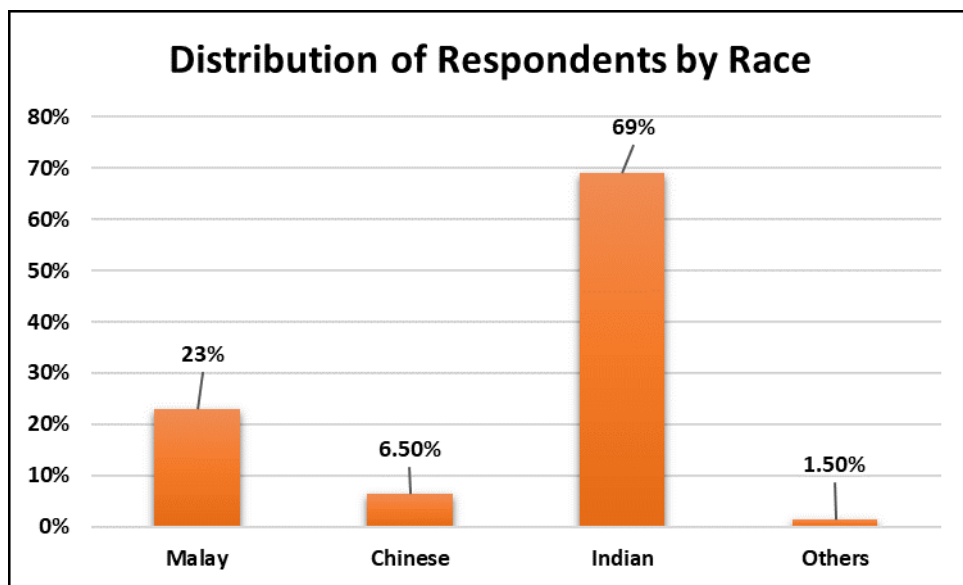**Figure 3:** Distibution of Respondents by Age Group

Figure 4: Distibution of Respondents by Age Group

Figure 5 shows level of years of service the respondents work in an organization. The most respondents collected were from group of respondent with years of service below 2 years with 42% which represents 84 respondents and the least respondents were from group of years of service between 5 to 10 years with 7% which only 14 respondents answered the questionnaire. The second highest number of respondents were from group of years of service between 2 to 5 years with 33% represents 66 respondents and the remaining respondents were from group of years of service 10 years and above with 36 respondents (18%).
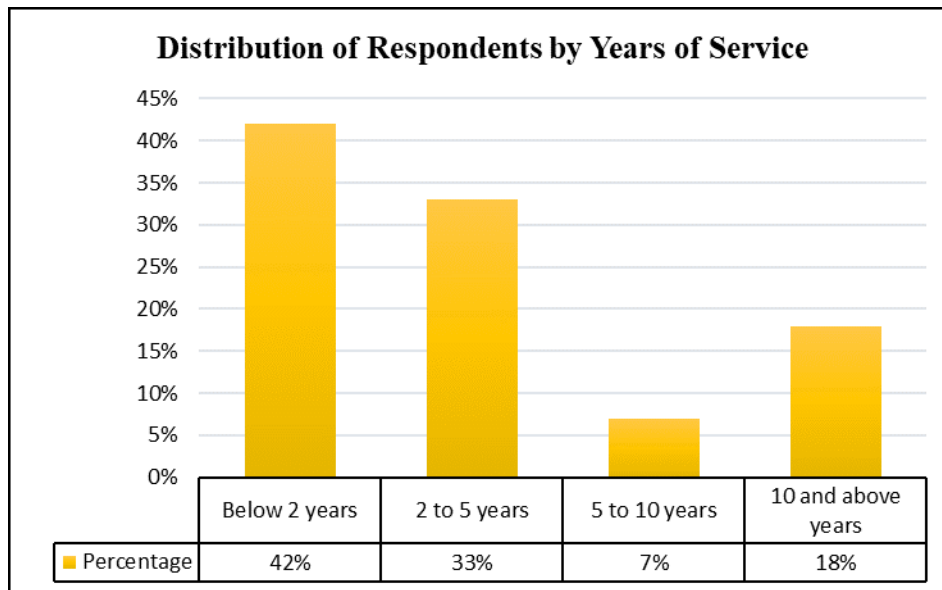
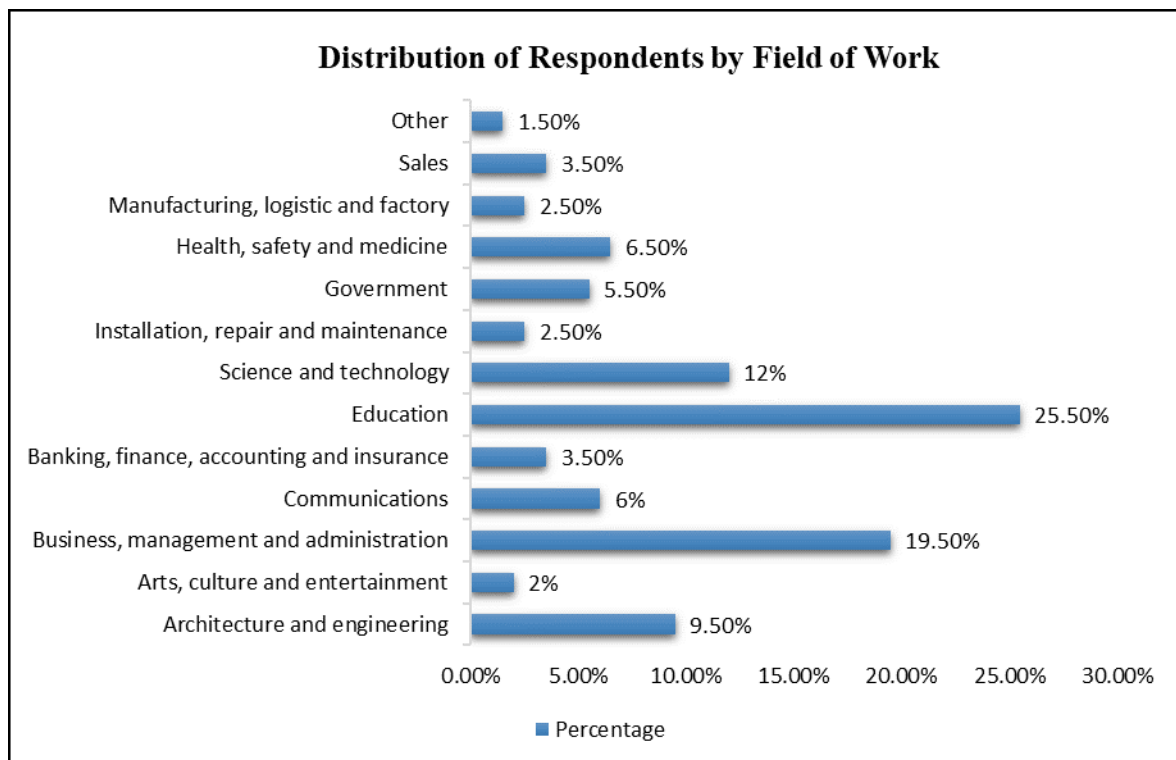**Figure 5:** Distibution of Respondents by Years of Service

Figure 6: Distibution of Respondents by Field of Work

Based on Figure 6, it is stated that various respondents from different field of work were working from home. The majority of the respondents were from the education field with 25.5% which represent 51 respondents followed by business, management and administration field of work with 19.5% with total of 39 respondents. The total of 24 number of respondents were from science and technology field with 12%. The other less than 10% out of the total of 200 respondents come from the other 9 field of work category with 9.5% which are 19 respondents for architecture and engineering, 12(6%) from communications work field, 7(3.5) from each banking, finance, accounting and insurance work field and sales work field, 11(5.5%) from government work field, 13(6.5%) from health, safety and medicine work

field, 4(2%) from arts, culture and entertainment work field and 5(2.5%) from each installation, repair and maintenance work field and manufacturing, logistic and factory work field. The least respondents come from the other field of work such as (farming, fishing and forestry) and (law and public policy) with the total of 3 respondents which were 1.5%.

In the Table 1, the validity and reliability test were done for Part B (Factors that influence employee motivation when work from home) and Part C (Employee Motivation). If the value of $r \geq 0.14$ then the statement items in questionnaire considered valid. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the value of 0.7 and more is considered acceptable and the variable is reliable suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

Table 1: Validity and Reliability Test of variables

Variable	Item	Pearson Correlation	Critical Value	Validity	Cronbach Alpha	Reliability	No. of Items
Technical Support	A1.1	0.812	0.14	Valid	0.790	Reliable	4
	A1.2	0.771					
	A1.3	0.816					
	A1.4	0.754					
Financial Support	B2.1	.0.772	0.14	Valid	0.919	Reliable	5
	B2.2	0.899					
	B2.3	0.885					
	B2.4	0.919					
	B2.5	0.876					
Training Support	C3.1	0.823	0.14	Valid	0.868	Reliable	5
	C3.2	0.884					
	C3.3	0.851					
	C3.4	0.734					
	C3.5	0.747					
Human Resource Support	D4.1	0.818	0.14	Valid	0.883	Reliable	5
	D4.2	0.833					
	D4.3	0.816					
	D4.4	0.821					
	D4.5	0.841					
Manager's Trust	E5.1	0.867	0.14	Valid	0.850	Reliable	4
	E5.2	0.726					
	E5.3	0.858					
	E5.4	0.883					
Employee Motivation	F6.1	0.750	0.14	Valid	0.840	Reliable	5
	F6.2	0.839					
	F6.3	0.866					
	F6.4	0.761					
	F6.5	0.695					

From the table 1, the test results show that all indicators used to measure the variables in this research have *r* value greater than the *r* table value. This means all indicators are valid as research instruments. The results of Cronbach's alpha for all the variables were 0.790,

0.919, 0.868, 0.883, 0.850, 0.840. Since all Cronbach's alpha coefficient is more than 0.7, it is a very good level of reliable. Hence conclude that the items are reliable and have high internal consistency.

3.2 Interpretation of Mean Score

The mean of technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manger's trust was interpreted. The mean score of these items was given a score level to determine the level of the motivation of the employee towards the following items. The score was given based on the interpretation of the mean score table by Konting (2000).

Figure 6: Interpretation of Mean Score

Based on Table 4.10, the mean score for the financial support was in the range of 2.60 – 3.39 which was 2.6760. Thus, it has an average mean score. We can conclude that the employee has an average motivation level towards financial support. All the other items were in the range of 3.40 – 4.19 such as 3.6675, 3.4720, 3.4720 and 3.7450. It is where we interpret that it has a high mean score. Thus, we conclude that the employee has a high motivation level towards technical support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust.

3.4 Independent *t*-test

Independent *t*-testing will obtain a significant value revealing that whether there is a difference in the mean of employee motivation among gender. Next the difference in mean of employee motivation according their marital status also evaluated. The equality of variance in this part will be assumed. The hypotheses are shown below.

Based on Table 2, the *p*-value = 0.49 is greater than the alpha value, $\alpha = 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is failed to reject. We can conclude that there is no significance difference in the mean of employee motivation between genders. The employee motivation is not affected by the gender. This shows that both male and female respondents' motivation towards work from home are the same. Next, the *p*-value = 0.342 is greater than the alpha value $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis is failed to reject. Therefore, there is no significance difference in the mean of employee motivation between marital status. We can conclude that the level of employee motivation when work from home for both single and married respondents are same.

Table 2: Independent *t*-test for Gender & Marital Status

Factor	Gender			Marital Status		
	t- stat	df	Sig (2 tailed)	*t*- stat	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Employee Motivation	1.984	198	0.49	0.952	198	0.342

Based on Table 2, the *p*-value = 0.49 is greater than the alpha value, *α* = 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is failed to reject. We can conclude that there is no significance difference in the mean of employee motivation between genders. The employee motivation is not affected by the gender. This shows that both male and female respondents' motivation towards work from home are the same. Next, the *p*-value = 0.342 is greater than the alpha value *α* = 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is failed to reject. Therefore, there is no significance difference in the mean of employee motivation between marital status. We can conclude that the level of employee motivation when work from home for both single and married respondents are same.

3.3 Correlation

This section will discuss on the correlation between employee motivation and factors that influence work from home, which is technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust. The test is used to evaluate the strength of relationship between those variables.

It can been seen in Table 3 that all factors have a strong positive and significant relationship between all dimensions of superior support and employees. This conclusion is supported by earlier studies (Iqbal, Teik, Tiffany, Kok, & Tah, 2017; Chen, 2020; Wood, 2020) that also show positive influence of work-life balance, employee stress, and employee stress with employee engagement

Table 3: Table of Correlation

	Employees Motivation	Technical Support	Financial Support	Training Support	Human Resource Support	Manager's Trust
Employees Motivation	1.000					
Technical Support	0.460*	1.000				
Financial Support	0.428*	0.762**	1.000			
Training Support	0.516*	0.716**	0.760**	1.000		
Human Resource Support	0.560*	0.673**	0.715**	0.681**	1.000	
Manager's Trust	0.460*	0.629**	0.665**	0.676**	0.685**	1.000

*Correlation is significant at the 5% level.

3.4 Regression Analysis

In this section, regression will show the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. This analysis is to determine the best regression model of the employee motivation (Y) as dependent variable with the factors that influence employee motivation which are technical support ($X1$), financial support ($X2$), training support ($X3$), human resource support ($X4$) and manager's trust ($X5$) as independent variables.

This is done to detect if the independent variable in regression model is correlated because independent variable should be independent. This is to prevent any problem to occur during fitting of the model and interpretation of results. The variance inflation factor is a method that used in this study to detect the present of multicollinearity.

Table 4: Collinearity Diagnosis

	Collinearity Statistics
	VIF
Technical Support	1.439
Financial Support	1.510
Training Support	2.173
Human Resource Support	2.246
Manager's Trust	1.428

This factor is used to measure how much the variance of the estimated regression coefficients is enlarged as compared when the independent variables are not linearly related. Table 4 shows the value of variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF for all five dimensions are less than 10, indicates the presence of no multicollinearity in the model.

Based on Table 5, the p-value = 0.000 is less than the alpha value, $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. We can conclude that not all βi are equal to zero. There is a linear relationship between employee motivation (Y) and all the factors that influence employee motivation (Xi).

Table 5: ANOVA of Regression Model

Analysis of Variance						
	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R^2
Regression	5	68.224	13.645	26.775	0.000	0.509
Residual	194	98.863	0.510			
Total	199	167.088	Durbin-Watson		1.765	

Since the null hypothesis is rejected, the test for coefficient will be conducted. The model summary show the result of $R^2 = 0.509$ which indicates that all the independent factors are having a medium effect on the employee's motivation. According to Hair (2012), the coefficient of R^2 which having a range value of 0.25 - 0.49 is considered a weak relationship, 0.50 – 0.74 as a medium, and above 0.75 as strong relationship towards their dependent variable. The value of R^2 is 0.509, indicating that about 50.9% of the variation in employees otivation is explained by the dimension of superior support, the rest 49.1% comes from the other factor.

Next, the autocorrelation was tested by using Durbin Watson's (DW) statistics. The value is always between 0 and 4. The DW of less than 1.5 indicates positive autocorrelation, while the DW of more than 2.5 indicates negative autocorrelation. From the result, the DW

statistic yields a value of 1.765, which is outside of the Durbin Watson analysis range of 1.5 to 2.5. As a result, the explanatory variables in this model did not have any indication of multicollinearity or autocorrelation.

The coefficient of the independent variable is analzed in this section. The coefficient of the independent variables is called as Beta Coefficient (β). Table 6 reveal that the technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust have a significant value less than the alpha value 0.05. Hence, all the independent factors have a relevant effect towards the motivation of employees. This result is in line with several researcher from previous study that good support system form the superior is positively related on how the motivation in work life. This is similar to the findings of (Boss, 2014; Kwenin, Muathe, and Nzulwa, 2013; Reilly,2014; McMullen, 2013; Trus, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, Delbridge, 2013) both in manufacturing and services companies.

Table 6: Regression Coefficient				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		t	Sig.
	Beta Coefficient	Standard Error		
(Constant)	0.751	0.268	2.805	0.006
Technical Support	0.190	0.069	2.738	0.007
Financial Support	0.120	0.054	2.235	0.027
Training Support	0.117	0.075	1.553	0.022
Human Resource Support	0.232	0.078	2.979	0.003
Manager's Trust	0.147	0.071	2.081	0.039

Dependent variable: Employee Motivation

A multiple regression model was developed to study the five-dimensional effect of the supports for superior on employess motivation while working from home. The explanatory or independent variables (IV) used in this study was the namely technical support, technical support, financial support, human resourse support and manger's trust. The dependent variable (DV) used was employee motivation. The following equation can be used to express the multiple regression models:

$$\text{Employee Motivation} = b_0 + b_1\left(\text{technical support}\right) + b_2\left(\text{financial support}\right) + b_3(\text{training support})$$
$$+ b_4\left(\text{human resource support}\right) + b_5\left(\text{manager's trust}\right)$$

The next phase is to apply the model to describe the mechanisms of the processes under study. Based on the findings, H_1 (Technical Support), H_2 (Financial Support), H_3(Training Support), H_4 (Human Resource Support) and H_5 (Manager's Trust) are supported with a significance of 0.007<0.05 for Technical Support, the significance of 0.027<0.05 for Financial Support, the significance of 0.022<0.05 for Training Support, the significance of 0.003<0.05 for Human Resource Support and significance of 0.039<0.05 for Manager's Trust. These findings suggest that all dimensions of superior support system have a positive association with employees motivation. The relationship between the response and explanatory variables are statistically significant.

Human resource support has the highest beta at 0.232, indicating that this dimension has the most influence on employees motivation during pandemic and all the employees have to working from home. This finding is consistent with earlier studies (Hanim & Aina, 2021; Subha & Ananya, 2021), in which was found to have the greatest effect on employee

motivation . In summary, the following is the link between customer satisfaction and all of the Logistic Service Quality (LSQ) dimensions in the courier service industry:

$$\text{Employee Motivation} = 0.751 + 0.190(\text{technical support}) + 0.120(\text{financial support}) + 0.117(\text{training support})$$
$$+ 0.232(\text{human resource support}) + 0.147(\text{manager's trust})$$

Based on the regression equation, $\hat{Y}$ is the predicted of employee motivation. The interpretation is shown below:

- The employee motivation is expected to increase by 19% for increase by 1% unit of technical support, holding the other variable constant.
- The employee motivation is expected to increase 12% for increase by 1% unit of financial support, holding the other variable constant.
- The employee motivation is expected to increase 12% for increase by 1% unit of training support, holding the other variable constant.
- The employee motivation is expected to increase by 28% for increase by 1% unit of human resource support, holding the other variable constant.
- The employee motivation is expected to increase by 16% for increase by 1% unit of manager's trust, holding the other variable constant.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examine the factor that contribute to employee motivation during movement control order. A total of 200 respondents was involved in this research. The analysis revealed that the employee has high motivation level towards technical support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust. High motivation of the employees towards the factors will lead to high motivation when work from home. However, the employee has average level of motivation towards financial support which lead to average motivation of employees when work from home.

Independent sample *t*-test analysis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean of employee motivation between genders and marital status. This explains that the male and female respondents and the single and married status respondents are motivated with work from home. Besides, analysis of variance test was conducted to determine the difference in mean of employee motivation between age groups, race, field of work and years of service. Next, that there is no significant difference in the mean employee motivation between age groups, race, field of work and years of service. Based on Pearson correlation test suggest that employee has positive correlation towards technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust. Thus, all five factors are concluded as the related factors that influence employee motivation.

The last objective of this case study is to determine the best fit of regression model of the employee motivation between the influencing factors when work from home which are technical support, financial support, training support, human resource support and manager's trust. Firstly, the variance inflation factor test is conducted to find if there is the presence of multicollinearity, This test is done to identify if the independent variables are correlated. Based on the analysis, there is no presence of multicollinearity using all the factors that influence employee motivation. Since the test for multiple regression shows that there is a linear relationship between employee motivation and the influencing factors, so test for coefficient conducted.

Organization the implemented work from home has to initiative to improve the quality of the support they provide to their employees in order to increase employees' motivation. The employee will have more confidence in their ability to work efficiently from home when they are provided with the needed support.

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