

Title: Telecommuting - An Information Technology Driven Work Practice For Government Departments In Malaysia

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Abstract:

Major problems arising from industrial revolution include wastage of productive hours to long distance and stressful commute to workplace, work/family conflict and parking problems in the city core. Traditional strategies seem to have failed to resolve these problems. One of the reasons for this failure has been the reluctance of the public and private organisations to make innovative use of information technology to restructure work as well as the hesitancy to adopt informal work structure. The purpose of this study was to assess the potential of telecommuting as an alternative work arrangement aimed at resolving work family conflicts and reduction of private vehicles driven daily to the office. To achieve these, an assessment of employee and employer attitudes toward telecommuting was undertaken. The primary source of data was personal questionnaire interview with employees and senior executive officers of government departments in Johor Bahru Malaysia. The questionnaires provided the means used to examine the presence of major telecommuting drivers and facilitators in Malaysia. The ability of the questionnaire to aid the prediction of telecommuting need was assessed using chisquare, t-test and multivariate analysis such as factor analysis. All the relationships were tested at .01 and .05 levels of significance. From the result of the analysis, family issues, staff productivity, transportation and travel, personal benefit and workplace interaction, and management support were the identified drives and facilitators for telecommuting adoption in the civil service sector in Malaysia. The absence of constraints is a necessary but not sufficient condition for telecommuting to be adopted by an individual. However, the presence of one or more drives assumed to be associated with some dissatisfaction is necessary to activate the search for a solution to that dissatisfaction. These factors demonstrate the need for telecommuting adoption as an alternative work arrangement in the civil service sector in Malaysia. The research outcome also provides indication that family responsibilities such as child care and family chores are the most significant reasons for employees decision to solicit for telecommuting work option. It was also found that telecommuting would reduce the number of private vehicles driven daily to the office which may result in a significant reduction in parking needs.