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Long Distance Job's Impact on Individual Work Performance

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, employees often have to endure long commutes to reach their workplaces. The reasons behind this trend are diverse. In situations where job opportunities are scarce, workers are more willing to travel long distances to maintain their employment, whereas in a competitive job market, employees are more selective about their commuting preferences. Commuting by motorcycle or car can be as stressful as being stuck in traffic for a long time. It can raise the anxiety levels of commuters. Those who rely on public transport to commute are more likely to experience physical and mental health issues, which can affect their work performance. Due to the high cost of living, many employees are willing to commute long distances for higher wages. The study aims to examine the impact of prolonged travel hours on work performance over time. This research study employs a deductive approach to test an established theory. The study focuses on employees who commute long distances to work. This study employs non-probability and convenience sampling as the technique. Around 450 Malaysian respondents were sent the questionnaires through various digital platforms, such as e-mail, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. The findings showed that hypothesis 1 is accepted with a p-value of <0.01 and that limited job opportunities have a significant relationship with individual work performance among Malaysian workers, but two more hypotheses were rejected. Hypothesis 2 was rejected with a p-value of 0.899, followed by Hypothesis 3, which was also rejected with a p-value of 0.618 due to rising prices for goods and services that can negatively impact household well-being and increase the cost of living. The study provides empirical and conceptual evidence to support the government's initiative on the conceptual framework of long-distance job literacy and individual work performance. It recommends reviewing the existing MBO policy and legal framework to cater to the needs of employees in both established and emerging nations towards long-distance working methods.

1. Introduction

Commuting long distances is a common practice that has far-reaching effects on businesses, communities, individuals, and their families. It has political, social, and economic implications. However, long commutes have been linked to negative impacts on health, poor work performance, unhealthy lifestyle choices, and stress [19]. When choosing a new career, consider the cost of living.

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If you're moving to a higher-cost area, your earnings should cover basic expenses. This study examines the link between commute length and job performance, provides businesses with ideas to reduce commuter stress, and motivates staff. Jobs in Chinese cities are primarily located in the city center. However, due to high housing costs, many workers live in lower-cost suburbs and rural areas. This results in longer commutes to work [23]. Studies have shown that personal health can affect how commuting impacts job performance and productivity. Commuting is associated with mental stress, which can spill over into other areas of life, such as work and family. This link has been established as a causal relationship by several studies, including [21], as cited in Ma *et al.*, [13]. Long commuting distances make it impossible for employees to commute to work daily. It leads to condensed work hours, on-site accommodations, and ample rest time at home. Long commuting hours have been shown in research to harm employees' job performance [3,14] Commute mode and distance affect job performance and absenteeism by influencing commute satisfaction and personal health. Commuting distance still directly impacts absence rates, even when indirect effects are considered [13]. A growing body of research indicates that the problem of workers being on the job but not producing at their usual output can cut individual productivity by one-third or more [5]. Associations between long commute times and health-related factors have been found, including shorter sleep duration, lower level of physical activity, worse mental health, poorer perceived sleep quality, lower psychological well-being (if commuting by something other than walking), higher level of health complaints and lower health satisfaction [7]. This study will improve long-distance travel productivity and help organizations attract and retain Gen Z and Millennials. It will suggest solutions or gaps for better job performance, such as creating work environments that motivate and retain skilled employees, giving companies a competitive edge. The study's findings can be compared to other academic frameworks that provide insights into job performance [15].

1. Literature Review

1.1 Global Perspective on Individual Work Performance

On average, people travel 38 minutes to work each day. Little research has been done to study how this affects work performance [2,20]. This study is essential for company success and work quality. In today's world, organizations are becoming increasingly competitive and able to adapt to changing operational conditions and personnel requirements. It has led to a greater need to identify the factors that affect employee performance. In today's highly competitive age, employees face immense pressure to meet job expectations and achieve the company's goals. Factors such as job insecurity, conflicting duties, poor work-life balance, and excessive workload can all contribute to work-related stress. Employees who experience job stress are more likely to fall ill, take more time off work, have lower work performance, and feel less motivated. In a work performance review, an employee's performance is evaluated, and management focuses on finding ways to improve it. The achievement and success of a company are directly proportional to the performance of its employees [12]. The performance of individuals can decrease when work-life balance is compromised, causing stress. Commuting times tend to differ depending on the state and the company, but there is a general trend of increasing commuting times all over the country. Spending a lot of time commuting means less time for essential activities such as family, exercise, education, and community involvement. Commuting for one hour each way can be stressful and affect motivation, health, productivity, and work performance.

1.1.1 Asian perspective on individual work performance

Companies can gain a competitive advantage and higher productivity by recognizing work performance. For example, Malaysians commute to work in Singapore daily. Staying in Malaysia and working in Singapore is a highly cost-effective option if suitable employment is offered. Malaysians who go to Singapore for employment daily are well-known. They often reside in Johor, Malaysia, where living expenses are lower and the currency rate is favorable. Every day, nearly 300,000 Malaysians cross the Johor-Singapore Causeway, making it one of the busiest overland border crossings in the area. Traffic is often high for car drivers and bus passengers traveling towards Singapore between 8 and 10 a.m. and between 6 and 8 p.m. for those travelling towards JB. From 5 a.m. until 7 a.m., Singapore-bound traffic is often busy. Hundreds of bikers endure sweltering, humid weather while waiting in line, breathing in exhaust fumes. Many Malaysians cross the border for work daily due to improved job opportunities and currency gains in Singapore. The Malaysian ringgit and Singapore dollar were equal in value in the 1970s. However, the city-strong state's economic growth has doubled the exchange rate. According to Ng *et al.*, [16], 56 percent of Malaysian employees are unskilled or semi-skilled and work for a low wage. They work in various jobs, including cleaners, security guards, bus drivers, hotel and food service employees, manufacturing workers, and machine operators in Singapore. Daily commutes from Johor to Singapore, as well as personal demographics such as marital status, gender, and age, may have an impact on job performance.

1.1.2 Discussion of gaps

The review discloses several new insights and gaps in the existing literature, such as (1) existing literature is insufficient to determine the acceptable commute time to work [22] and (2) existing literature is insufficient to describe the interrelationships among the primary determinants causing decreased work performance because of long-distance jobs. Long-distance work has become increasingly common due to high living costs, limited career opportunities, and other factors. There is a growing discussion in academia and industry on how commuting affects employee productivity. Studies have shown that workers with long commutes are more likely to experience burnout, stress, and illness [4, 14]. Gender, car ownership, employment position, travel distance, and the primary purpose of the trip were significant predictors of mode choice during COVID-19 [1]. Experiences and emotions towards public transportation have a significant impact on mode choice in Scotland, UK. It reflects an individual's attitude and personal viewpoint toward travel [6].

1.1.3 Analytical framework

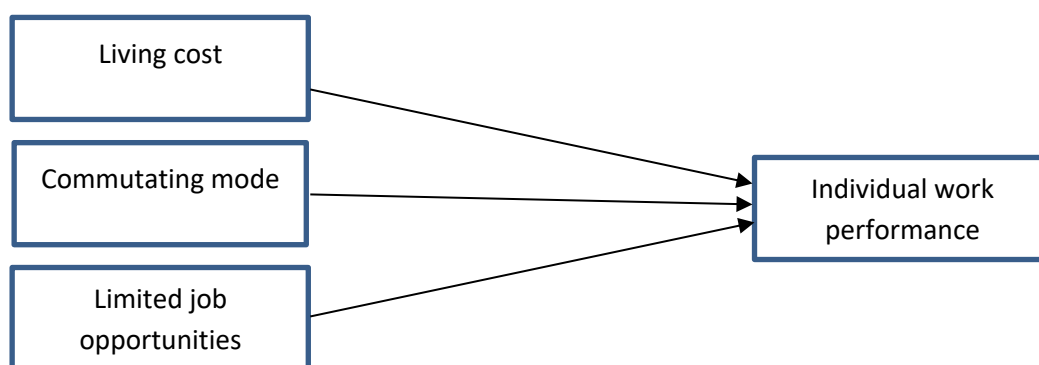


Fig. 1: Conceptualize of long distance job's impact on individual work performance

Figure 1 employs a robust conceptual framework that integrates key elements from diverse theories, such as living costs, commuting modes, and limited job opportunities, by providing a comprehensive understanding of individual work performance. Numerous research studies, including [8, 17], have established that job performance is the result of a person's skills, experience, sincerity, and the amount of time they invest in carrying out assigned tasks. The job search theory suggests that workers use different search strategies depending on their reservation utility, which can be observed through factors such as wage rates, commuting patterns, and other relevant characteristics. This theory explains why workers prefer job locations over others. Labor market issues like unemployment, immigration, and commuting have multiple explanations. Job search models' fundamental element is that finding a job is a dynamic sequential process. Individuals need to decide when to stop this process in a state of uncertainty and misinformation. It is in line with expectations that arise from habit theory, which suggests a stabilizing effect of habits on travel choice [18]. Employees' environmental values can have an impact on their sustainable mobility habits. Workplace relocations can disrupt daily routines and reshape mobility practices.

Figure 2 displays structural equation modelling (SEM) as a statistical method that examines links between unobserved (latent) and observed (indicator) variables. A structural model evaluates hypothesized connections between long-distance jobs (limited job opportunities, commuting mode and living cost) and work performance.

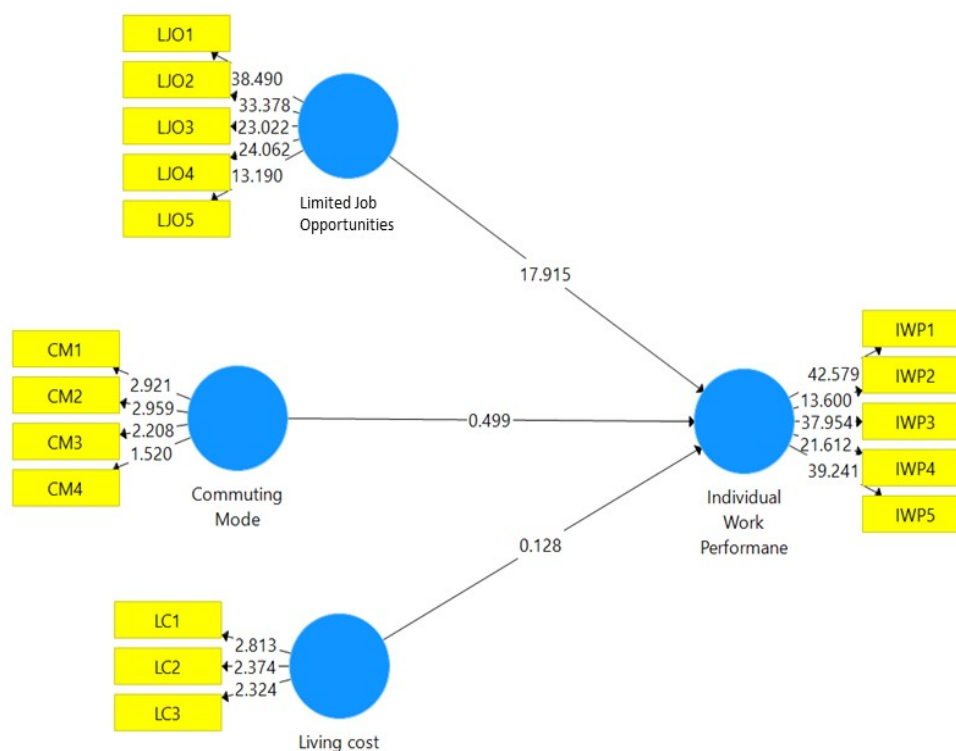


Fig 2. The structural model path coefficients from the PLS output

2. Methodology

It is a deductive study testing an established theory among employees who travel long distances to work. The sample group consists of lower- to upper-level employees who commute daily by any transportation mode. In May 2022, the number of employed persons increased by 46.5 thousand (+0.3%) to reach a record 15.90 million individuals. The data surveyed using a 5-point Likert scale

questionnaire sent via e-mail, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Raw data was collected through a Google online form to identify factors contributing to long-distance commuting. The study analyzed Malaysian workers who commute daily and distributed 155 questionnaires using non-probability and convenience sampling techniques. An estimated sample size would be 130 respondents. The PLS method typically uses samples ranging from 51 to 274. The study analyzes how remote work affects the performance of white-collar employees aged 24–60 in Malaysian organizations. Convenience sampling involves selecting easily accessible individuals for a study. It is done in public locations, such as malls, schools, and workplaces, based on specific criteria that are considered essential. G Power was used to determine the sample size for a study. Around 300 questionnaires were distributed among Malaysian employees.

2.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In Table 1, 60% of respondents were females and 40% were males. The age group of 31-40 had the highest percentage (57%), while 21-30 had the lowest (11%). Executives made up 90% of respondents, while non-executives were only 10%.

Table 1
Profile Respondents

	Total items (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Age		
21-30	11	11%
31-40	57	57%
41-50	15	15%
51-60	17	17%
Gender		
Male	40	40%
Female	60	60%
Job Position Level		
Executive	90	90%
Non-Executive	10	10%

2.2 Response Rate

Survey responses in Table 2 refer to the number of completed surveys divided by the total number of participants. A low response rate can lead to biased results if nonresponse is uneven among participants.

Table 2
Response rate

Total Questionnaire Distributed	Total questionnaire Obtained	Usable questionnaire	Unusable Questionnaire	Response Rate
155	130	129	1	83.22%

2.3 Reflective Measurement Model

Each model variable has a reliability value of over 0.6 in Table 3, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.614 to 0.950 and Composite Reliability values ranging from 0.638 to 1.294. To assess

the dependability of a research questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha is used. A value greater than 0.6 is considered credible, while a value less than 0.6 is unreliable.

Table 3
Construct reliability analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Individual work performance	0.730	1.294
Limited Job Opportunities	0.950	0.912
Commuting Mode	0.614	0.638
Living Cost	0.887	0.891

2.4 Convergent Validity

The outer loadings in Table 4 illustrate the correlation between each latent variable item and the parent construct. The values can range from -1.0 to +1.0, with a higher absolute value indicating a stronger correlation between the item and the underlying component. The lowest outer loading in the table is 0.438 (CM4), while the highest is 0.950 (CM1). Manifest variables with outer loadings of 0.7 or higher are considered highly satisfactory, while 0.5 is considered acceptable. Outer loadings of 0.4 should be acceptable as well.

Table 4
Outer loadings of the Construct

Items	Commuting Mode	Individual Work Performance	Living Cost	Limited Job Opportunities
CM 1	0.950			
CM 2	0.646			
CM 3	0.559			
CM 4	0.438			
IWP 1		0.898		
IWP 2		0.758		
IWP 3		0.871		
IWP 4		0.836		
IWP 5		0.893		
LC 1			0.774	
LC 2			0.657	
LC 3			0.802	
LJO 1				0.874
LJO 2				0.863
LJO 3				0.829
LJO 4				0.834
LJO 5				0.747

2.5 Discriminant Validity – Fornell- Larcker Criterion

AVE's square ceiling must be greater than its correlation value with all other constructs. The square root of AVE is higher than its correlation with other constructs in Table 5.

Table 5
Discriminant Validity – Fornell- Larcker Criterion

	Commuting Mode	Individual Work Performance	Living Cost	Long Distance Job
Commuting Mode	0.675			
Individual Work Performance	0.293	0.853		
Living Cost	0.401	0.158	0.747	
Long Distance Job	0.410	0.833	0.223	0.830

2.6 R - Square

Table 6 showed that the R2 value in the structural model represents the amount of variance that the independent variables (Commuting mode, Living cost, Limited job opportunities) explain through their relationships with the dependent variable (Individual work performance). In this case, the calculated R2 value was 0.697, which means that the PLS regression model can explain 69.7% of the variance in individual work performance. Generally, an R2 value of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02 are considered strong, moderate, and low. The R2 values in this study were 69.7% and 68.7%, which indicates a substantial and moderate level of influence on individual work performance.

Table 6
R square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Individual work performance	0.697	0.687

2.7 F - Square

The F-squared value indicates the magnitude of the effect when an external variable is removed from the model. A small effect is represented by a value greater than 0.02, a medium effect by a value greater than 0.015, and a large effect by a value greater than 0.035. According to PLS algorithm results, the commuting mode and living cost variables do not affect the R-squared value when removed. However, limited job opportunities have a significant impact with a value of 2.010, greater than 0.35 in Table 7.

Table 7
F square

	Individual Work Performance
Commuting Mode	0.007
Limited Job Opportunities	2.010
Living Cost	0.000

2.8 Q - Square

The Q-Square metric applied to determine whether a model has predictive relevance or not. A score of greater than 0 indicates good predictive relevance. According to the results presented in Table 8, the Q-Square value is 0.493, which is above 0. It suggests that the research model has

demonstrated good predictive relevance, and the prediction of the construct holds considerable significance.

Table 8

Q square

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Individual work performance	495	250.98	0.493

3. Results

3.1 Findings of the Hypotheses Tested

The results highlighted those of tests carried out with the statistical program SMARTPLS. Based on the evaluation of the structural reflective measurement model, only one latent exogenous variable—limited employment opportunities shown to have a significant result on the endogenous variable of individual work performance in this study. On the other hand, living costs, commuting mode, and adherence to the structural model of coefficients have no statistically significant impact on an individual's productivity at work.

Table 9

Summary of the hypotheses tested

Path	Hypothesis	T Statistics	P value	Decision
H1	There is positive relationship between Limited job opportunities and individual work performance.	17.915	0.000	Accepted
H2	There is positive relationship between Commuting mode and individual work performance.	0.128	0.899	Rejected
H3	There is positive relationship between living cost and individual work performance.	0.499	0.618	Rejected

H1: There is positive relationship between limited job opportunities and individual work performance

Based on the hypotheses tested in Table 9, the result of the path analysis shows that limited job opportunities were positively associated with individual work performance ($\beta=0.048$). The p-value result <0.01 shows that limited job opportunities have a significant relationship with individual work performance among Malaysian workers. With the recent COVID-19 epidemic, a health crisis has evolved into a global economic crisis, endangering the lives, jobs, and health of millions of people worldwide. The International Labour Organization [10] anticipates a global decrease in working hours of 14% between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020. It equates to about 400 million full-time jobs, assuming a 48-hour workweek. The unemployment rate increased to 5.3% in May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers are compelled to reduce their losses as the epidemic continues to affect the economy by removing hundreds of thousands of jobs. A decrease in the likelihood of skilled employment and a rise in job opportunities would follow the potential loss of employment for 2.7 million own-account workers [11]. This study used job search theory as the underlying theory to examine and understand the relationships between the exogenous variable of limited job opportunities. The job-search theory simulated people's choices to enter the labor market and when to remain in their current positions or seek a new employment. It is assumed that those

who are unemployed are trying to obtain work, but due to incomplete information, they may run into unsuitable offers before doing so.

H2: There is positive relationship between commuting mode and individual work performance

The structural model path analysis showed that hypothesis 2 was rejected because the p-value of 0.899 was greater than the 0.05 threshold. Table 9 shows a negative correlation ($\beta = -0.086$) between commuting mode and individual work performance, which is not statistically significant ($p = 0.899$). The impact of commutes on worker productivity has surprisingly gained insufficient study despite being a substantial contributor to the well-being of the workers. The new combined model, known as the urban efficiency wage model, contends that employees must choose between their job and leisure time, and employees who drive a considerable distance would be less productive or avoid work altogether. Commuting may impact productivity through moods, emotions, and even psychological well-being. It affects one's health. Active transportation options like walking and bicycling are less "stressful and uninteresting" than driving a car or taking public transportation can significantly improve population health [9].

H3: There is positive relationship between living cost and individual work performance

The path analysis revealed that living cost was negatively associated with individual work performance ($\beta = -0.011$), according to the hypotheses tested in Table 9. As a result, hypothesis 3 was rejected because the p-value = 0.618 was greater than the threshold of 0.05, resulting in a statistically insignificant result. The entire amount of money needed to cover basic expenses like housing, food, and medical care is what is referred to as the cost of living. People are open to working in any field because of the high cost of living. It is no longer essential to have a successful career. The need for money to pay for needs has increased. They contend that salary increases boost productivity, which improves a business's bottom line.

4. Conclusions

The objective 1 is confirmed, and individual job performance and opportunities are positively related. The study's path coefficient result indicates a substantial relationship between limited job possibilities and individual work performance. Specifically, it reveals that for every unit increase in limited job chances, individual work performance improved by 0.858. The study showed no correlation between commuting mode and individual performance for research objective 2 and 3. Based on the research objective, commuting mode and living costs do not seem to influence individual work performance. It can be because there are several options for commuting. Depending on their needs, individuals might pick either private or public transportation. Long commutes usually result in higher rates of tardiness and absenteeism among new hires, but according to the study, this has a negative influence on job performance. It may be because the individual is willing to travel frequently as part of their job or because the company offers an attractive benefits package. Nevertheless, the employee still needs to work to survive, regardless of whether living costs are rising or remaining stable. A healthy work environment includes a better work-life balance. Indirectly, keeping a healthy work-life balance lowers stress and prevents burnout at work. Burnout is an essential concern for workers who put in a lot of overtime.

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