

Received: 26.03.2024
Accepted: 06.06.2024
Published Online: 30.06.2024
DOI: 10.18613/deudfd.1459049

Dokuz Eylül University
Maritime Faculty Journal
Vol:16 Issue:1 Year:2024 pp:71-100
E-ISSN: 2458-9942

Research Article

THE RELATIONSHIP AND THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ARRANGEMENTS ON FREIGHT FORWARDERS' JOB PERFORMANCE, SATISFACTION, AND MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

Remote work arrangements have become a critical argument both for employees and employers, particularly during the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis. The continuity of remote work arrangements has come into question as the pandemic disease diminished. Several industries and companies have recognized the advantages of remote work and made remote or flexible work a permanent part of their operations. Additionally, certain employees, perceiving the more favorable conditions provided by remote work, have refused to return to the office or have requested permanent remote work arrangements. Still, many employers are questioning the pros and cons of remote work. In this context, this research focuses on freight forwarder employees who are assumed to be adaptable to work remotely due to the nature of their work. The research aims to determine current working arrangements and the effect of working remotely on the productivity, satisfaction, and motivation of freight forwarders. Data on these variables were collected through an online survey. Through statistical analysis, the impact and factors influencing remote work arrangements on employee performance are explored. The effects and relationships between job performance, job motivation, job satisfaction, and work arrangement were examined by regression, correlation, and mediation analysis methods. Findings revealed that remote work arrangements directly impacted the job satisfaction, motivation, and performance of freight forwarders. Employees reported being able to work in environments that suited their individual preferences and needs, leading to increased work motivation and engagement. The digital nature of their work and the frequent interaction across time zones render the adoption of remote work valuable.

Keywords: *Remote work, Freight forwarder, Job satisfaction, Work motivation, Job Performance*

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UZAKTAN ÇALIŞMA DÜZENLERİNİN NAKLİYE İŞLERİ KOMİSYONCULARININ İŞ PERFORMANSI, MEMNUNİYETİ VE MOTİVASYONU ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

ÖZ

Uzaktan çalışma düzenleri, özellikle COVID-19 koronavirüs krizi sırasında hem çalışanlar hem de işverenler için kritik bir argüman haline gelmiştir. Pandeminin etkileri azaldıkça ise uzaktan çalışma düzenlerinin devamlılığı sorgulanmaya başlamıştır. Birçok endüstri ve şirket, uzaktan çalışmanın avantajlarını fark etmiş ve uzaktan veya esnek çalışmayı operasyonlarının kalıcı bir parçası haline getirmiştir. Ayrıca, uzaktan çalışmanın sağladığı çalışma koşullarını daha uygun olarak algılayan bazı çalışanlar, ofise dönmeyi reddetmiş veya uzaktan çalışma düzenlerinin kalıcı olarak devam ettirilmesini talep etmiştir. Ancak birçok işveren hala uzaktan çalışmanın avantajlarını ve dezavantajlarını sorgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırma, işlerinin doğası nedeniyle uzaktan çalışmaya uyum sağlayabilecekleri varsayılan nakliye işleri komisyoncuları çalışanlarına odaklanmaktadır. Araştırma, mevcut çalışma düzenlerini ve uzaktan çalışmanın iş performansı, memnuniyeti ve motivasyonu üzerindeki etkisini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu değişkenlere ait veriler, çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla katılımcılardan toplanmıştır. İş performansı, iş motivasyonu, iş memnuniyeti ve çalışma düzeni arasındaki etkiler ve ilişkiler, regresyon, korelasyon ve aracı analiz yöntemleriyle incelenmiştir. Bulgular, uzaktan çalışma düzenlemelerinin iş memnuniyeti, motivasyonu ve performansını doğrudan etkilediğini göstermiştir. Çalışanlar, bireysel tercih ve ihtiyaçlarına uygun ortamlarda çalışabildiklerini belirterek iş motivasyonunun ve katılımının arttığını bildirmişlerdir. İşlerinin dijital doğası ve farklı zaman dilimlerinde sık sık etkileşimde bulunmaları, uzaktan çalışma düzenlerinin uygulanmasını değerli kılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Uzaktan çalışma, Nakliye işleri komisyoncu, İş memnuniyeti, İş motivasyonu, İş performansı*

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a global transformation in working arrangements, profoundly impacting numerous sectors. Restrictions implemented to reduce the effects of the pandemic have disrupted the routine operations of many industries, including education, healthcare, and transportation. The necessity for social distancing and the sudden onset of lockdowns propelled remote work into the spotlight, forcing organizations and employees to adapt to new work arrangements. As a result, remote work (working from home) has become a noteworthy precaution (Kniffin et al. 2021).

The term "remote work" describes a work arrangement in which employees carry out their duties away from the typical office setting, such as by telecommuting from home. It is used synonymously with remote work by many workplaces to reflect the location of the job other than the office. However, remote work is a more comprehensive category that encompasses the possibility of working from any location, not necessarily one's home. According to Syihabudhin and Kinanti (2022) and Groen et al. (2018), these arrangements include full remote work, non-traditional office hours, and multiple hybrid systems for remote work. Flexible working or hybrid work are also notable arrangements in which individuals structure their job activities. Those arrangements are often influenced by factors such as job requirements, industry standards, and personal preferences. All these working arrangements are considered factors that directly impact the daily lives of employees and thus have several potential implications for influencing job satisfaction, job motivation, and job performance.

The remote work arrangement has gained significant traction in recent years, driven by advancements in technology, globalization, and a shifting perspective on work-life balance. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a catalyst for the global shift towards remote work. The question now arises as to the sustainability of remote work arrangements as the pandemic's impact recedes. With the decreased effects of the pandemic and restrictions, employers have largely started to abandon remote work arrangements, and employees have been encouraged to return to their designated workplaces. Some industries and organizations, however, have embraced remote work as a permanent alternative, recognizing its potential benefits.

Before the pandemic, working in an assigned workspace was the standard of work in many industries. Businesses across various industries had to swiftly adapt to ensure the continuity of their operations (Ratten, 2020). It's important to note that a considerable number of global workers had no prior experience with remote work before COVID-19 (Vyas, 2022). Although these practices are now commonly adopted, their implementation has not been consistent, differing not only in the extent to which they are embraced and practiced but also in their application across various industries and job levels (Hansen et al. 2023).

Remote work presented an effective solution to the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic. Organizations rapidly implemented remote work policies, enabling employees to work from their homes or other remote locations. This shift highlighted the potential benefits of remote work, including cost savings through reduced office space and

overhead, improved work-life balance, and increased flexibility in work hours. Employees discovered that they could remain productive and efficient while working in the comfort of their own homes. However, since a significant number of workers are forced to work from home, many challenges in different aspects also arise from this situation, such as teamwork, management, leadership, performance, satisfaction, and motivation. From an organizational perspective, the shutdowns and policy changes fundamentally altered some industries, expedited trends that were already in progress, and created opportunities for the emergence of novel industries (Kniffin et al. 2021).

The principal objective of varying work arrangements is to facilitate employees in attaining a more advantageous work-life equilibrium, consequently amplifying their welfare and job-associated consequences (Nijp et al. 2012; Wahab and Tatoglu, 2020). According to Wahab and Tatoglu (2020), there is a claim that flexible work arrangements enhance work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. Moreover, it was discovered to be correlated with higher worker well-being, performance, and productivity (Subramaniam et al. 2015). Employees who work remotely experience a heightened level of independence and autonomy, as they have the freedom to determine their own approach to completing tasks. This sense of control is further increased by the ability to personalize their work environment to suit their preferences, enabling them to create their own optimal working conditions (Wang et al. 2021). This circumstance can help businesses and organizations draw in and keep highly qualified workers who value flexibility in their work schedules and a good work-life balance (Sánchez-Hernández et al. 2019).

Depending on variables like the extent of telecommuting, task interdependence, job discretion, and organizational support, the effects of these work arrangements typically vary (Allen et al. 2015). Moreover, the specific context and industry components frequently influence how effective flexible work arrangements are (Groen et al. 2018). Depending on the company and the individual needs of the staff, these elements could change. Therefore, the nature of the job plays a crucial role in determining job performance in remote work settings. Therefore, several disadvantages also arise such as; when the employees become unable to find or organize proper working locations or conditions. Working in a crowded space without a personal or designated work area in suboptimal conditions could lead to undesired effects (Wang et al. 2021). Employees may not receive the recognition and support they require, which can result in dissatisfaction (Newman and Ford, 2021).

Balance between work and life is another area that is impacted. It can be challenging for employees to keep their work and personal obligations separate when they work from home. The boundary between work and personal life becomes blurred, and employees become more susceptible to interruptions and disturbances (Zhang, 2016). As a result, they may struggle to concentrate on their work and fulfill their role within the organization effectively.

Although electronic communication is widely used and easily accessible today, findings show that it might not be as effective as face-to-face communication (Marshall et al. 2007; Zhang, 2016). One significant drawback of electronic communication is its limited information richness. With all communication occurring electronically, it becomes more challenging for employees to demonstrate their work ethic and have their accomplishments acknowledged by their employers. Consequently, some employees may put in extra hours, but their efforts are only evaluated based on the outcome, without consideration for the challenges they faced during the process (Susilo, 2020).

In this context, this study takes specific focus on freight forwarders within the logistics industry. Freight forwarders play an essential role in coordinating and facilitating the transportation of goods, ensuring their efficient and secure delivery. Freight forwarders arrange the movement of cargo and handle a variety of logistics services while acting as a liaison between the shipper and the carrier to source different transport solutions (Doğrucu, 2006; Huang et al. 2019). Their work involves extensive communication, documentation, and coordination with various stakeholders, making the industry a potentially adaptable one for remote work. This specific nature of work highlights the importance of understanding how remote work arrangements impact the job performance of freight forwarders, who serve as the primary research group in this study.

The research delves into the relationships between job performance, work motivation, job satisfaction, and work arrangements in the context of freight forwarders. The research aims to investigate the perceptions of freight forwarder employees regarding remote work arrangements they have encountered in both the past and present. We seek to understand how these perceptions relate to job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. In light of these, the outcomes of this research may provide valuable insights into the management and implementation of remote work arrangements and their impact on freight forwarder employees.

2. THE ROLE OF FREIGHT FORWARDERS IN THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

A freight forwarder is an individual or company that, on behalf of a shipper, arranges for the transportation of products and the necessary documentation (Shang and Lu, 2012). They serve as a point of contact between the shipper and the carrier and arrange different delivery services to earn money by connecting the shipper with the carrier (Huang et al. 2019). Forwarders act as agents, representing either the carrier or the owner of the cargo (Saeed, 2013). They also handle a variety of logistical tasks like cargo insurance, packaging, customs clearance, storage, distribution, and consolidation. Moreover, these entities maintain an active business network to keep up with these diverse logistical responsibilities (Çancı and Erdal, 2003; Doğrucu, 2006).

International and domestic transportation, export-import transactions, customs clearance, transportation management, carrier selection, document preparation, insurance, and storage and handling are the primary business activities of forwarders (Özen, 2006). FIATA (2007) defines freight forwarding services as any type of service about the carriage, storage, consolidation, packing, handling, or distribution of goods, as well as any ancillary or advisory services in connection therewith. Proficiency in the areas of transportation methods, technical, operational, and transportation characteristics of the goods, as well as appropriate decision-making approaches, are prerequisites for performing freight forwarding (Özen, 2006). From the sender to the delivery of an item to its recipient, freight forwarding handles every logistical task involved in shipping. (Çancı and Erdal, 2003). Given their expertise in logistics, freight forwarder companies are prepared to modify their terms of service at any time should an unforeseen issue arise while providing their services. They give the companies they deal with a built-in guarantee mechanism with these features (Eski and Kaya, 2018).

Motives behind companies working with freight forwarders are lowering the cost of logistics; preventing issues with logistics-related activities; eliminating costs like control, correction, and recycling; increasing agility in the face of flexible and variable market conditions; forming strategic alliances and offering strategic solutions; improving stock and inventory speed; increasing proficiency with information and communication technologies; conducting operational activities; and converting fixed costs into variable costs (Çekerol, 2013: 87).

The advantages of freight forwarder services from a customer perspective are spending more time on core skills, reduction in the total cost of business, transferring investments to core talent, fast delivery of partial goods, reducing the number of transactions, sharing transportation, reasonable freight charges, ease payment in operational transactions, leveraging forwarder's experience, etc. (Koban and Keser, 2011; Kaya, 2018). Some disadvantages from customer perspectives are usually listed as; low customer representation skills, loss of control in logistics activities, violation of privacy, loss of price advantage, insufficiency of sub-carrier (Tek and Özgül, 2005; Kaya, 2018).

Freight forwarders typically work in a fast-paced environment. Several key aspects of a freight forwarder's role naturally lend themselves to a remote work setting. Their tasks are largely information-driven, relying heavily on communication, negotiation, and data analysis. This inherently digital nature eliminates the need for constant physical presence in a centralized office. Nature of their work requires frequent interaction with stakeholders across time zones, making the use of remote communication tools a crucial skill set. Moreover, the dynamic and unpredictable nature of the logistics industry necessitates independent decision-making and self-motivation, qualities often fostered by remote work autonomy.

3. JOB PERFORMANCE, SATISFACTION, AND MOTIVATION IN REMOTE WORK SETTINGS

Performance is the result of an activity successfully attaining its goal. Job performance refers to an individual's efficacy and efficiency in carrying out responsibilities and tasks related to their job (Motowidlo et al. 2014). Job performance has also been described as the role-prescribed conduct that progresses organizational goals (Campbell et al. 1993). Job performance refers only to behaviors that can matter to achieving the goals of the organization (Motowidlo, 2003). Job performance has various dimensions, such as productivity, quality of work, and overall efficiency, and it is a function of knowledge, ability, skills, and motivation (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2000). An individual's performance may fluctuate over time due to alterations in motivational, environmental, personal, and situational factors and constraints. Based on the literature, a hypothesis was established for this study which states that job satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on job performance (H9). The hypothesis that the work environment has a favorable and significant impact on job performance was developed in this study based on the findings in the

literature (H7). Remote work can affect job performance in different ways. The first factor to consider in this context stems from the necessary technical skills necessary to manage the new way of working (Toscano and Zappalà, 2021). Remote work also creates challenges as well as benefits regarding organizational communication with telecommunication. Numerous work systems are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably the workplace system. Under the direction of superiors, the online idea is used in the WFH implementation. Using online media platforms like Whatsapp, Telegram, Zoom, Google Meet, and the firm website, employees perform their work-related tasks (Arifin et al. 2023). This study makes the case that job motivation is positively and considerably impacted by remote working (H4).

Job performance, work overload, increased responsibility, and task variety are noted as the reducers of job performance in remote work settings (Elshaiekh et al. 2018). Several factors, including job satisfaction and job motivation, are also closely intertwined with job performance, and may be influenced by the nature of remote work.

Job motivation is another pivotal factor that influences employee performance. Motivation is the factor that propels individuals to engage in a specific activity, frequently perceived as the driving force behind their actions (Kleinginna Jr and Kleinginna, 1981). According to Reijseger et al. (2017), motivated workers typically exhibit higher levels of productivity and performance. The question is how remote work arrangements affect job motivation. Working from home can positively affect employees' work motivation due to two main factors: productivity and personal life. Remote work arrangements can influence job motivation through various mechanisms. Factors such as the work environment, the perception of autonomy, alignment with personal and professional goals, and the support provided by the organization all play a role in shaping an employee's motivation. The ability to telecommute allows individuals to enhance their productivity by avoiding traffic congestion and transportation costs. Moreover, they can choose to reside in more affordable locations, even if these are not close to the office. This flexibility not only reduces the stress associated with commuting but also contributes to a more conducive work environment. According to this study, remote working is favorably and significantly impacted by the work environment (H1). This study makes the case that job motivation is positively and considerably impacted by remote working (H3). At the same time, it is assumed in this study that job satisfaction is positively and significantly affected by work motivation (H6). However, several other factors could also diminish the motivation of employees and job satisfaction. Understanding how these elements interact

within the context of remote work is vital for comprehending the impact on job motivation among freight forwarders.

Job satisfaction is a multifaceted concept with both cognitive and affective dimensions (Fisher, 2010). It is characterized as a feeling of well-being that arises from assessing one's work experiences. It encompasses the perceptions and emotions that employees have regarding their jobs (Pugliesi, 1999). It is a subjective assessment of individuals to what degree their job needs and expectations are fulfilled. Job satisfaction is not only connected to the specific characteristics of the job but also extends to institutional compensation factors such as wages, opportunities for advancement, and future career development (Ko et al. 2021). Several models have established a connection between job design and job satisfaction, distinguishing between individual, group, and organizational levels. (Tietjen and Myers, 1998; Fisher, 2010; Yousef, 2016; Winkelhaus et al. 2022). Job satisfaction is a pivotal determinant of employee well-being and performance. It holds the potential to impact the mental and physical well-being of employees. Satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged, productive, and committed to their work (Bruce and Blackburn, 1992; Anandhi and Perumal, 2013). Remote work arrangements can have a profound impact on job satisfaction. Employees working remotely often report experiencing increased autonomy, reduced stress related to commuting, and an improved balance between their professional and personal lives (Beckel and Fisher, 2022). The premise put forth in this study is that job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by telecommuting (H2). According to a Smith and Johnson (2020) study, workers who could work remotely expressed more job satisfaction than those who could only work in an office setting. This result agrees with the findings of Brown et al. (2019). The linear correlation between telecommuting and job satisfaction has also been supported by other studies. A meta-analysis carried out in 2019 synthesized data from multiple studies and demonstrated a consistent positive relationship between telecommuting and job satisfaction across a variety of industries and occupations. On the other hand, job dissatisfaction can lead to reduced performance, increased absenteeism, and a higher likelihood of employees seeking alternative employment (Davidescu et al. 2020). It is important to note that remote work settings can affect job satisfaction if employees feel isolated, disconnected from their colleagues, or unsupported by their employers. Thus, examining how remote work arrangements influence job satisfaction within the context of the freight forwarding industry is crucial.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a cross-sectional research design to comprehensively investigate the current remote working arrangements within the freight forwarding industry and assess the implications of remote work on the job performance, satisfaction, and motivation of employees in this sector. It is aimed to determine post-COVID-19 working arrangements while also considering the impacts of the pandemic. We explore the differences in variables of job performance, satisfaction, and motivation including the perceptions of the freight forwarders regarding remote work.

Data for this study is gathered by distributing an online survey through industry channels and social media groups to target employees of freight forwarder companies in Turkey. The convenience sampling method is adopted to gather a robust foundation for data analysis. However, several limitations on participant nationality and industry were set. Only Turkish nationality participants were included to reduce the effects of cultural differences that might arise in the study. We also only included the freight forwarding private companies within the industry. The survey is distributed to more than 150 freight forwarder employees across the country. 83 individuals responded the survey. However, responses of four outlier participants were eliminated from the dataset due to their inconsistent and conflicting answers. Therefore, the final dataset consists of 79 samples. Participants were guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their answers, and participation was completely voluntary. The survey was open for a predetermined period and data collection has been carried out from late February 2024 to early March 2024.

The distributed survey was adapted from the previous work of Susilo (2020) where the design, validity, and reliability study of the scale was conducted. The survey had statements on the work arrangement, work environment, job satisfaction, job performance, and job motivation variables.

Data analysis was conducted from the quantitative data collected from the survey. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize demographic data and current remote work practices while providing a contextual backdrop and providing foundation for comparison.

The research model is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 adapted from Susilo (2020). The research hypotheses constructed based on the research model are provided below.

H1. The work environment is positively and significantly impacted by remote work.

H2. The job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by remote work.

H3. The work motivation is positively and significantly impacted by remote work.

H4. The job performance is positively and significantly impacted by remote work.

H5. The job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by work environment.

H6. The job satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by work motivation.

H7. The job performance is positively and significantly impacted by work environment.

H8. The job performance is positively and significantly impacted by job satisfaction.

H9. The job performance is positively and significantly impacted by work motivation.

H10. The relationship between remote work and job performance is mediated by the work environment.

H11. The relationship between remote work and job performance is mediated by the job satisfaction.

H12. The relationship between remote work and job performance is mediated by the work motivation.

H13. The relationship between work environment and job performance is mediated by the job satisfaction.

H14. The relationship between work motivation and job performance is mediated by the job satisfaction.

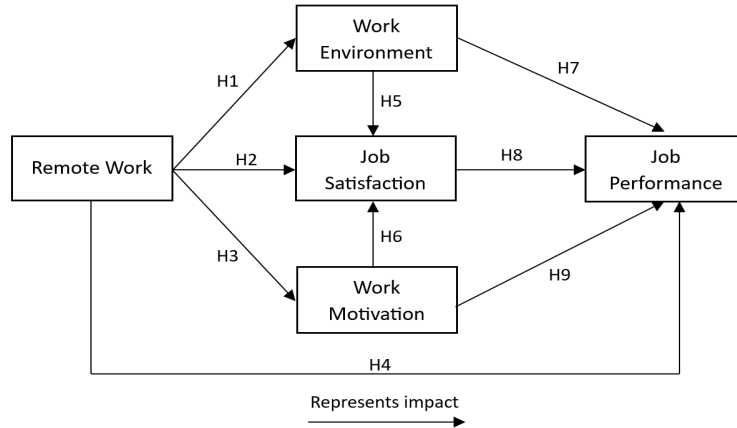


Figure 1: Research Model

Regression analysis was used to assess the binary effects of the nine hypotheses that were developed to examine the significant impacts between work motivation, work environment, remote work, job satisfaction, and job performance. These impacts are depicted in Figure 1. Inferential analyses, including regression and correlation methods, are employed to test the hypothesis and to explore the relationships between variables.

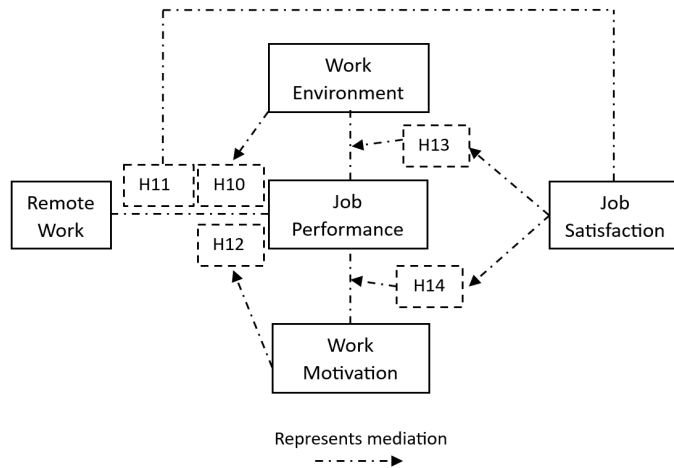


Figure 2: Mediation Model

Mediation analyses were used for hypothesis test and to determine if the impact of the independent variables is influenced by the differences in the mediating variable (Figure 2). The mediation models analyze the relationship between the independent and dependent variables by defining it with partial or full mediation and using a third hypothetical variable, the mediator variable (Yılmaz and Dalbudak, 2018). Simple mediation analysis is based on linear regression. In its most basic form, linear regression looks at the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In investigating this relationship, mediation analysis contributes to the model by including the impact of the relationship between one or more independent variables and the other independent variable(s) as well as the effect of the independent variables themselves (Kaynak, 2021).

A model must comply with Baron and Kenny's (1986) steps in order to discuss the presence of a mediating variable in it. These actions; (a) In order to explain the dependent variable (Y), the independent variable (X) must be significant. (Coefficient of C), (b) In order to explain the mediator variable (Y), the independent variable (X) must be significant. (a coefficient), (c) The effect of the independent (X) variable on the dependent (Y) variable should diminish if the mediator variable (M) is added to the linear regression model made up of the independent (X) and dependent (Y) variables. ($c' < c$) and (d) The full mediation effect is mentioned if the relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y) is not significant while the mediator variable (M) is included in the model.

The observed relationship between the dependent and independent variables may be fully or partially represented by the mediating variable. Full mediation occurs when the relationship is fully reflected; partial mediation occurs when only a portion of the relationship is reflected. When the mediator variable is included in the analysis in a full mediation scenario, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is anticipated to become statistically insignificant or to deteriorate. The mediator variable is unable to assess the full relationship between the dependent and independent variables when there is partial mediation. The significance level has decreased, but the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is still significant (Yılmaz and Dalbudak, 2018).

5. FINDINGS

Initially, the demographic distribution of the 79 participants were examined. The acquired data set was subjected to a frequency analysis to

ascertain the demographic distribution of freight forwarder employees in the sample. Table 1 displays the obtained values, indicating that 44% of the participants are female and 53% are male. Additionally, 86% of the participants hold a bachelor's degree. In terms of departmental employment, 36,7% are employed in the operations department, 31,6% in the sales department, and 12,7% in the finance/accounting department.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	%	Department	Frequency	%
Female	35	44,3	Operation	29	36,7
Male	42	53,2	Sale(s)	25	31,6
-	2	2,5	Finance/Accounting	10	12,7
Education	Frequency	%	Documentation	9	11,4
High School	8	10,1	Pricing	2	2,5
Associate degree	1	1,3	Procurement	1	1,3
Undergraduate	68	86,1	Regional Manager	1	1,3
Master	2	2,5	Other	1	1,3

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage values of the employees' responses to the nominal questions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 64,6% of the workers did not work in a different department, and 54,4% of the workers' working hours were altered during this time. Moreover, 55,7% of the participants' daily routines were affected by the pandemic process and 70,9% of the individuals were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant number of participants who contracted Covid-19 stopped working during the quarantine. The participants stated that a hybrid approach to working during this process proved to be the most effective.

Table 2: The Effect of COVID-19 on Employees

	Frequency	%
Have you held employment in a different department from the one you were employed in during the Covid-19 pandemic?		
Yes	28	44,3
No	51	64,6
Have your working hours changed in any way both before and after the Covid-19 pandemic?		
Yes	43	54,4
No	36	45,6
What effects did the Covid-19 pandemic have on your daily schedule?		
Positive	19	24,1
Negative	44	55,7
No Changes	16	20,3
Have you become ill with COVID-19?		
Yes	56	70,9
No	23	29,1
If you said "yes," did you carry on with your work during the period of quarantine?		
Yes	20	25,3
No	40	50,6
Which workplace during the Covid-19 pandemic period do you think was more productive?		
Office	15	19
Remote work	24	30,4
Hybrid	39	49,4

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha, Mean and Standard Deviation Values of the Investigated Variables

Code	Variables (Cronbach Alpha=0,823)	Mean	Standard Deviation
RM1	I carry out my entire work process from home.	2,29	1,49
RM2	I use remote communication to interact with clients and coworkers.	3,95	1,4
RM3	I make extensive use of the internet to perform my job as effectively as possible.	4,67	0,9
RM4	I often work away from colleagues.	2,62	1,56
RM5	I don't take trips at the start and finish of my workdays.	3,75	1,56
WE1	Other than my coworkers, I have family members sharing my workspace.	2,44	1,68
WE2	I am free to set up my workspace however I see fit, free from corporate interference.	4,11	1,32
WE3	An internet connection that functions properly is essential to the healthy growth of my business.	4,43	1,12
JS1	I am pleased to be able to do my job without risking my health during the Covid-19 period.	4,28	1,2

Code	Variables (Cronbach Alpha=0,823)	Mean	Standard Deviation
JS2	I am glad that I was able to fulfill my duty despite the intense layoffs and negative economic conditions during the Covid-19 period.	4,48	1,07
JS3	I am satisfied with the promotion opportunities offered to me during the Covid-19 period.	2,99	1,2
JS4	I am glad that I can receive a regular salary during the Covid-19 period.	4,47	1,13
WM1	The organization I was employed by during the COVID-19 pandemic provided me with the chance to safeguard my health by providing flexible work schedules. (Working from home or the office, scheduling, etc.)	4,39	1,2
WM2	The company I worked for allowed me to choose my own working hours and order during COVID-19.	2,97	1,32
WM3	The company I worked for allowed me to work independently without strict supervision.	2,44	1,5
WM4	I can work more efficiently when I don't need to travel to the office.	3,44	1,16
WM5	My employer permitted me to stay on the job in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic's detrimental effects on the economy.	4,44	1,06
WM6	The company I work for allowed me to get promoted while protecting my health during Covid-19.	3,63	1,4
WM7	During Covid-19, the company I worked for gave me the opportunity to improve myself.	3,87	1,26
JP1	During the Covid-19 period, despite working remotely, I successfully completed all of my tasks in accordance with the performance indicators set forth by the company.	4,38	1,09
JP2	During COVID-19, despite working remotely, I completed my tasks without experiencing any significant issues.	4,34	1,07

Table 3 displays the Cronbach Alpha, mean, and standard deviation values of the responses provided to the scale's variables. The reliability of the scale questions was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, and all variables included in the scale showed a high correlation coefficient. The internal consistency was high because the Cronbach Alpha values were greater than 0,70, demonstrating the scales' dependability. The reliability analysis revealed that the scale's Cronbach Alpha value was 0,823, indicating high reliability.

The average response from the participants was "I make extensive use of the internet to perform my job as effectively as possible." Participants stated that they wholeheartedly agreed with this statement. It is evident that working from home relies on internet technology, which is

one of the steps taken to stop the epidemic from spreading in the maritime industry, heavily relying on information and communication technologies. For remote work, forwarder employees require internet access. The second-highest response was "I am glad that I was able to fulfil my duty despite the intense layoffs and negative economic conditions during the Covid-19 period" with an average score of 4,48. With an average of 4,47, "I am glad that I can receive a regular salary during the Covid-19 period" comes in third. Workers are content to get paid and not have to report to work in order to do their jobs, considering the current state of the economy where the majority of people are unemployed.

Table 4: Independent-samples T-Test analysis on the effects of COVID-19

T-Test		t	Sig(2-tailed)
Have you become ill with COVID-19?	Work Motivation	1,099	,281
	Job Satisfaction	2,436	0,017
	Work Environment	1,039	,302
	Remote Work	1,355	,179
	Job Performance	1,965	0,053

Independent-sample T-test analysis was used to examine the COVID-19 history of participants and their perception of work motivation, work environment, job satisfaction, and remote working. It has been discovered that participants who had become ill during COVID-19 pandemic had significantly more different perception regarding the job satisfaction than those who didn't. Participants who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic indicated in their responses that they were very satisfied with their jobs during this time (Table 4).

The study employed regression analysis to investigate the potential correlation between remote work, work environment, work motivation, job satisfaction, and job performance. Table 5 displays the analysis's findings, indicating that all hypotheses, except H5, were accepted. H5 was rejected.

Table 5: Results of Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable(s)	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coefficients	t	Sig
			B	Std. Error	Beta		
H1: Accepted	Work Environment	Remote work	,503	,123	,421	4,0	,000
H2: Accepted	Job Satisfaction	Remote work	,309	,129	,263	2,3	,019
H3: Accepted	Work Motivation	Remote work	,384	,111	,366	3,4	,001
H4: Accepted	Job Performance	Remote work	,585	,157	,392	3,7	,000
H5: Rejected	Job Satisfaction	Work Environment	,202	,110	,206	1,8	,069
H6: Accepted	Job Satisfaction	Work Motivation	,842	,084	,753	10,0	,000
H7: Accepted	Job Performance	Work Environment	,409	,135	,327	3,0	0,003
H8: Accepted	Job Performance	Job Satisfaction	,811	,112	,637	7,2	,000
H9: Accepted	Job Performance	Work Motivation	,982	,117	,691	8,3	,000

H10, H11, H12, H13, and H14 were tested with mediation analysis (Table 6). The observed relationship between the dependent and independent variables may be fully or partially represented by the mediating variable. Full mediation occurs when the relationship is fully reflected; partial mediation occurs when only a portion of the relationship is reflected. The analysis showed that the work environment completely mediates the impact of remote work on job performance, while the impact of remote work on job performance is partially mediated by work motivation and job satisfaction. The impact of the work environment on job performance is not mitigated by job satisfaction. Work motivation's effect on Job Performance is partially mediated by Job Satisfaction.

Table 6: Results of Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Variables
H10: Full Mediation	Dependent Variable: Job Performance Independent Variable: Remote Work Mediator: Work Environment
H11: Partial Mediation	Dependent Variable: Job Performance Independent Variable: Remote Work Mediator: Job Satisfaction
H12: Partial Mediation	Dependent Variable: Job Performance Independent Variable: Remote Work Mediator: Work Motivation
H13: No Mediation	Dependent Variable: Job Performance Independent Variable: Work Environment Mediator: Job Satisfaction
H14: Partial Mediation	Dependent Variable: Job Performance Independent Variable: Work Motivation Mediator: Job Satisfaction

The work environment completely mediates the impact of remote work on job performance, according to the results. The impact of remote work on job performance is partially mediated by work motivation and job satisfaction. The impact of the work environment on job performance is not mitigated by job satisfaction. Work Motivation's effect on Job Performance is partially mediated by Job Satisfaction.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employers are increasingly attentive to employee job satisfaction due to its significant impact on the overall performance of freight forwarder companies. Implementing strategies to enhance job satisfaction is essential for organizational success (Susilo, 2020). The evolving landscape of work, especially in light of recent global events, necessitates a deeper understanding of how remote work arrangements affect various aspects of employee well-being and performance.

Remote work provides employees with a better working environment, promoting a positive workplace atmosphere (H1). Working from home saves commuting costs and allows employees to spend more time with their families, contributing to a better work-life balance, especially for those living in urban areas. These benefits are particularly significant for employees with families, who find that the flexibility of remote work allows them to better manage their personal and professional lives. This enhancement of work-life balance is critical for maintaining

high levels of job satisfaction and is supported by the findings of Susilo (2020).

We observed a clear and significant correlation between remote work and job satisfaction (H2), influenced by factors such as compensation, advancement opportunities, and the nature of the work itself (Lee, 2009). The availability of mobile apps and software facilitates clear communication, further enhancing job satisfaction among remote workers. This technological facilitation helps bridge the gap between remote and in-office work, making it easier for employees to collaborate and stay connected with their teams. However, this finding contrasts with those of Mustajab et al. (2020), Güzel and Aydın (2021), and Susilo (2020), suggesting that the impact of technology on remote work satisfaction may vary across different organizational contexts and employee demographics.

The analysis also indicates that remote work boosts work motivation, suggesting that policymakers should support remote work to enhance employee motivation (H3). This finding is consistent with Susilo (2020), Arifin et al. (2023), and Sivaprakash and Venkates (2023), though it diverges from Jacobs (2017) and Mustajab et al. (2020), who reported lower motivation due to multitasking demands. The flexibility afforded by remote work allows employees to structure their workdays in ways that best suit their personal productivity rhythms, which can lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.

This study aims to inform organizations about the effects of remote work arrangements on job performance, job satisfaction, and motivation. The findings can guide employers in designing workplaces that maximize productivity, improve job satisfaction, and enhance employee performance. Our analysis indicates that remote working has a positive and significant impact on employees' job performance (H4). Remote work, implemented as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, reduces anxiety related to commuting and interacting with numerous customers, thus boosting productivity. Employees working from the safety and comfort of their homes experience less stress and distraction, which translates into improved job performance. This finding aligns with previous studies by Güzel and Aydın (2021), Susilo (2020), Arifin et al. (2023), and Qu and Yan (2023), though it diverges from Sarpkaya and Bayraktar (2023).

Contrary to some research, this study did not find significant evidence of multitasking behaviors such as simultaneously working and doing housework, which could lower motivation and performance (Mustajab et al. 2020; Jacobs, 2017). It is possible that participants might

have been reluctant to report such behaviors due to their perceived undesirability by employers. This raises important questions about the accuracy of self-reported data in studies on remote work and suggests that further research using more objective measures might be necessary to fully understand the dynamics of remote work environments.

Interestingly, our study found no significant correlation between job satisfaction and the physical work environment when considering remote work (H5). Instead, performance appears to be influenced more by employees' skills and competencies, alongside a motivating work environment (Sonnetag et al. 2008; Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2018). This suggests that while the physical environment is important, the key drivers of job satisfaction in remote work settings may be related to personal and professional growth opportunities, support from management, and the ability to balance work and personal life. Enhancing the work environment remains crucial for improving job performance and motivation (H6), supporting findings similar to Susilo (2020).

Remote work allows employees to manage personal matters during working hours, promoting a balance between professional and personal life, thus enhancing job satisfaction and motivation (Shockley and Allen, 2012; Susilo, 2020). This balance is essential for long-term employee well-being and can lead to higher retention rates, as employees who feel their personal needs are respected are more likely to remain loyal to their employers.

The analysis shows a strong and positive correlation between enhancing the workplace and better job performance among employees (H7). Therefore, policymakers must enhance working conditions to boost workers' job performance, although the findings are comparable to Susilo's (2020) study but differ from Güzel and Aydın (2021) study.

Higher job satisfaction is linked to better job outcomes, emphasizing the need for policies that enhance job satisfaction to improve performance (H8). Job performance encompasses various dimensions such as productivity, quality of work, and overall efficiency, influenced by knowledge, ability, skills, and motivation (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2000). During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work helped maintain job satisfaction by allowing employees to work safely and retain employment, supporting findings by Susilo (2020) and Güzel and Aydın (2021). The ability to continue working during the pandemic, despite the challenging circumstances, also helped maintain a sense of normalcy and purpose

among employees, which is crucial for sustaining high levels of job satisfaction.

Higher levels of work motivation also correlate positively with job outcomes, suggesting that enhancing employee motivation is key to improving job performance (H9). While our findings align with Susilo (2020) and Arifin et al. (2023), they differ from Güzel and Aydın (2021). This discrepancy highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of work motivation and suggests that different organizational contexts and individual differences may influence how remote work affects motivation and performance.

When implementing remote work policies, employers should consider the suitability of the home working environment. The workplace mediates the relationship between job performance and remote work (H10). Therefore, when employers want to improve job performance by allowing remote work options, they should consider job satisfaction since it is a prerequisite for better job performance. Susilo's (2020) study concluded that job satisfaction plays a full mediating role in the relationship between job performance and remote work (H11). Enhancing job satisfaction is crucial for better job performance (Susilo, 2020).

The study underscores the importance of remote work in enhancing job satisfaction and performance (H12). This aligns with Susilo's (2020) findings but differs from Arifin et al. (2023). Work motivation is a set of energizing forces that originate from an employee's inner or outer self and direct them to begin engaging in work-related behavior (Pinder, 2015). The findings suggest that the relationship between the work environment and employee performance is mediated by job satisfaction (H13). This result implies that the association between performance and work environment is the result of a complex mechanism, aligning with Sundjoto et al. (2024). Employee job satisfaction can be raised by creating a positive work environment, which includes supportive leadership, effective communication, and an inclusive organizational culture. Employees are then inspired to perform better when they are happy in their jobs (Bourini et al. 2019). Employers should prioritize job satisfaction to enhance work motivation and performance, as it plays a vital mediating role in these relationships (H14) (Susilo, 2020).

To summarize, employers should carefully design remote work policies that consider the diverse needs of their workforce. Future research should continue to explore the nuanced impacts of remote work, particularly how different demographic groups and job roles may

experience remote work differently. Additionally, further investigation into the long-term effects of remote work on career development and organizational loyalty would provide valuable insights for shaping future workplace strategies.

7. CONCLUSION

The transition to remote work arrangements which was significantly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has resulted in a great impact on the workforce, especially on freight forwarder employees. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the effect of remote work on the productivity, motivation, and satisfaction of freight forwarder employees. Through online surveys, we analyzed the perceptions and experiences of freight forwarders who worked for private companies in the industry, with a primary focus on Turkish individuals.

Our findings revealed that remote work arrangements directly impacted the job satisfaction, motivation, and performance of freight forwarders. Employees reported being able to work in environments that suited their individual preferences and needs, leading to increased work motivation and engagement. This, in turn, contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees. Remote work options were positively correlated with work-life balance and employee engagement, leading to higher productivity levels. For freight forwarders, whose tasks hinge largely on communication, documentation, and coordination, the adaptability to remote work has shown promise. The digital nature of their work and the frequent interaction with various stakeholders across time zones render the adoption of remote work feasible and valuable.

The implications for freight forwarders in adopting remote work are significant. Companies within the industry can leverage these flexible arrangements as a strategic advantage to attract and retain skilled employees who value the ability to work independently and maintain balance across their professional and personal lives. It is therefore essential for employers to consider how to implement and regulate remote work practices effectively. Results emphasize the need for organizations in the freight forwarding industry to understand and optimize their remote work policies. By doing so, they can enhance employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall job performance. It is also recommended that organizations explore the long-term effects of remote work on freight forwarders

Further investigation into the specific challenges and benefits of remote work for freight forwarders in different cultural and geographical contexts would provide valuable insights for the industry. In conclusion, remote work has proven to be a beneficial arrangement for freight forwarder employees. By implementing and optimizing remote work policies, organizations can create a conducive work environment that promotes efficiency, productivity, and job satisfaction among their employees.

Author Contribution

CONTRIBUTION RATE	EXPLANATION	CONTRIBUTORS
Idea	Pointing out the research idea or forming hypotheses	Author 1
Review of Literature	Conducting the literature review for the study	Author 1 & Author 2
Research Design	Forming the research design, including research methodology, deciding on scales and samples	Author 1 & Author 2
Data Collection and Editing	Data collection, editing, and analyzing	Author 2
Findings and Discussion	Reporting and discussing the findings	Author 1 & 2

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Financial Support

The author(s) has not received any financial support for this study.

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