

Smart working perception in bank and insurance companies employers during the Covid-19 pandemic: a cross sectional pilot study

Aim

The aim of the study was to describe the perception on the Smart Working (SW) in the workers in the banking and insurance companies and finding the characteristics of subjects that consider SW an opportunity or not.

Methods

A cross-sectional study, according to the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology statement was carried out [1]. The research conducted in the period from May 2020 to April 2021. The setting of the study was the bank employers and workers in the insurance companies.

A validated questionnaire on Smart Working (SWQ) was administered online [2,3]. SWQ was administered in anonymous way via a Google form. Seventeen dichotomous items were considered as outcomes in the study. These items cover different aspects of smart working: effect on quality of life, costs, feasibility, difficulties, reduction of absences, performance, company and personal profit, career progression.

The items were considered as independent variables into logistic multivariate regression models. The ORs with 95%CI were computed. Hosmer and Lemeshow's test (H-L) was used to estimate the goodness of fit of the models. The significant level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

A total of 4850 workers in banking and insurance services have been invited by email to the research survey. A sample of 1588 questionnaires was collected (response rate =33%). 54% of the subjects was male; 71% aged from 36 to 55 years; 64% was married; 60% was with high school licensed; around 7% lived more than 50 km from their workplace. For the sake of brevity I shall highlight just five models.

1) The workers who were significantly more interested in SM were female (OR=1.71;95%CI:1.24-2.07), aged ≤ 45 years (OR=1.69;95%CI:1.30-2.22), with higher educational level (OR=1.37;95%CI:1.05-1.79) and with home-work distance ≥ 50 km (OR=3.57;95%CI:1.79-7.14). H-L p-value 0.649.

2/3) Who referred that SW improves the quality of life was younger (OR=1.85;95%CI:1.43-2.33), with higher educational level (OR=1.45;95%CI:1.43-2.33) and lives close to the workplace (OR=3.33;95%CI:1.78-6.25).

Who thought that working in smart mode was penalizing and

complicated for the teamwork was older than 45 years (respectively: OR=1.39, 95%CI: 1.12-1.73; OR=1.58, 95%CI:1.28-1.95), lived near the office (respectively: OR=1.86,95%CI:1.16-2.99; OR=1.98, 95%CI:1.26-3.10). H-L p-values were respectively 0.995 and 0.971.

4)The item that asked if the SW could be useful to increase the company profits showed that who agreed had the following characteristics: not married (OR=1.30; 95%CI:1.04-1.61), higher education level OR= 1.30; 95%CI:1.04-1.61), living near the workplace (OR=1.92; 95%CI:1.20-3.03). H-L p-value was 0.998.

5)The characteristics associated to those who declared SM to have a medium-long term effect on workplace mobility costs were: male (OR=1.28; 95%CI: 1.03-1.67), aged ≤ 45 years (OR=1.67; 95%CI:1.28-2.13) and living far away from the office (OR=4.54; 95%CI: 2.08-10.00). H-L p-value=0.992.

Conclusion

The results underline that the digitalized or remote work could increase the chance for workers to find a balance between work and private life. Moreover, it modifies the traditional working activity and the professional and organizational structure. On the other hand, it could introduce the risk of solitude that does not increase the professional/human dimensions and the culture of the subjects.

Not every worker had the same disposition towards smart working. The companies should investigate the attitude of their workers, with a special attention to older employees, and invest on the education, ad-hoc training for technological skills and on the digital literacy. The employers can also take advantage of the flexibility intrinsic in the SW method to meet the requests of workers expressing specific needs.

References

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