

# Work Attitudes of Filipino Employees During the COVID-19 Crisis

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The purpose of this study is to explore attitudes of Filipino employees toward work during the COVID-19 crisis. Data was collected through an online survey distributed to workers in the Philippines, and qualitative responses from 106 participants were subjected to thematic analysis.

job and work tasks, work arrangements, employers, as well as work-life balance, health, and sustainability emerged from the data. These themes

of attitudes. Results of the study emphasize the importance of context

can help improve employees' experiences and perception of work during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

*Keywords:*  
behavioral

Working conditions and organizational contexts have vastly transformed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, likely impacting

exceptions, early empirical research on employees within the context of COVID-19 tends to be directed on the psychological health and experiences of medical frontliners (e.g., Liang et al., 2020; Liu et al.,

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Another issue that hounds telecommuting during the COVID-19 pandemic is work-life balance. Although working from home can lessen



person's emotions and behaviors. A person's attitude... his or



## **METHOD**

This research is part of a broader study conducted by a university-based research and organization development center about the experiences of organizations and employees in the Philippines during the COVID-19 crisis. An online qualitative survey was utilized to gather

follow up question: "If yes, please describe in what ways your attitudes towards work have changed." They were not given a limit to the number of words. The number of words per entry ranged from 1 to 211 ( $M = 34.50$ ,  $SD$

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Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Braun

data is coded independent of a pre-determined theory or framework. The researchers followed the steps prescribed by the same authors: First, the data was analyzed repeatedly and emerging patterns were

performed these independently to ensure reliability. After, the two researchers convened to review each other's coding and proceeded to organize them into themes. The themes were then presented to the



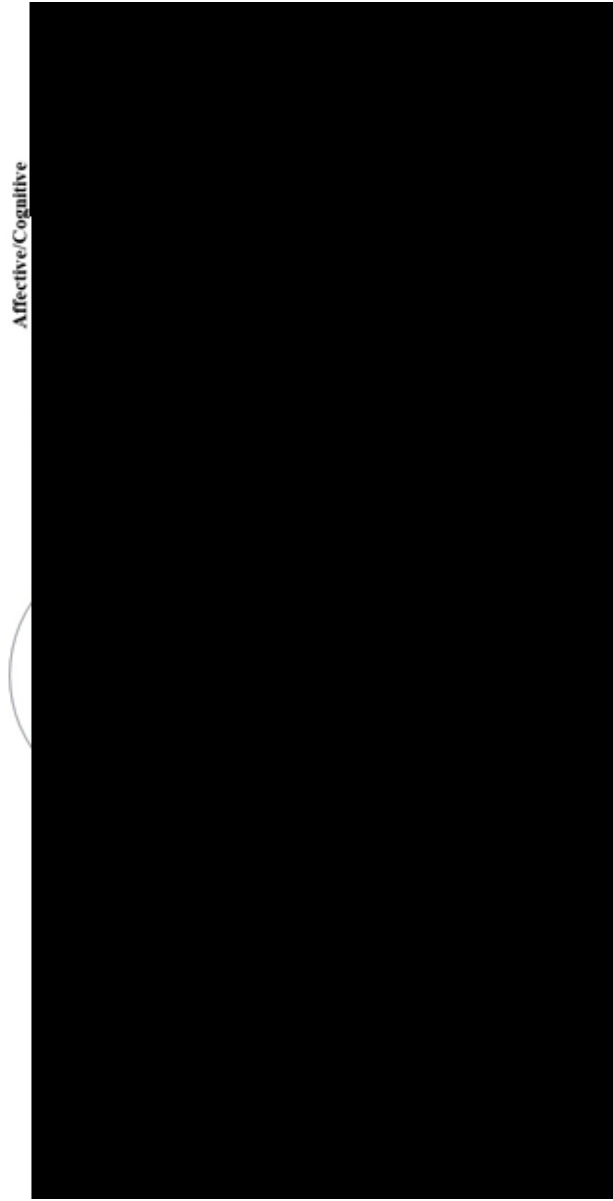


Figure 1. Employee Attitudes During the COVID-19 Crisis

Toward Company, Gratitude for Continued Employment, Increased Appreciation of Work, Increased Motivation to Deliver, Improved Disposition Toward Work, and Importance of Interpersonal Connectedness. In contrast, the theme Anxiety and Uncertainty

***Increased Appreciation Toward Company***

Participants reported feelings of gratitude toward their employer because of company actions that they perceive to be addressing employees' concerns and needs during the crisis [e.g., "I appreciate

Indeed, some respondents valued their companies more and felt "very

organization and society at large as seen in the following quotes: “I understood my role and the contribution I bring to our organization”

the respondents was the importance of having a “positive working

Thus, this sense of connectedness with other people made employees

***Prioritizing Family and Health Over Work***

challenges with virtual communication. For example, it was noted that

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Several themes included both behavioral and cognitive dimensions of attitude. Positive themes in this category include Openness to Work-

Achieving Work-life Balance, and Preparing for Contingencies. Conversely, negative behaviors and cognitions were noted in the themes Disappointment Toward Employers and Intention to Quit.

### ***Openness to/Viability of Work-from-Home Arrangements***

Employees reported “trying to work at home during this crisis”

adopted as a normal work arrangement even after the crisis.

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Beyond feeling increased motivation, there were also improvements in the way employees viewed and actually performed their tasks [e.g., “I’m more focused and take extra miles to be

arrangements led to the realization that “some tasks apparently are

### ***Achieving Work-life Balance***

Respondents also shared the realization that “one can be work domains. Participants recognized that “the work really never work-life balance, participants mentioned communicating and setting boundaries as being helpful:

balance the two. Communicating with the rest of the family members of the need to do both helps get their collaboration to make this happen. It is also fair for all who have the same

I realized that I can actually say no to unrealistic deadlines or the times I was being obliged to do the work overtime which were must just stay on that time frame for the sake of my well-being.

### ***Preparing for Contingencies***

The crisis emphasized the importance of managing risks by level of the individual, this is highlighted in the following response: “I valued available resources and try to stretch it as much as I could level, respondents noted the importance for companies to “prepare/ should accept that crisis will happen in the future. Thus, we need to have crisis plan and how it works must be institutionalized in the work crises with appropriate and timely measures will be avoided [e.g., “we





feelings and actions of employees to prevent being infected by the virus while Complacency and Lower Productivity describe negative feelings and underperformance of one's tasks.

***Complacency and Lower Productivity***

Some respondents reported lowered productivity and feelings of complacency in performing their tasks. This includes being “more

sometimes led to negative attitudes toward the self: “Sometimes, I still

***Keeping Safe From COVID-19***

need to keep oneself and others protected from the risk of contracting the virus. This includes behavioral changes such as “frequent hand

feeling more cautious when facing other people as seen in the following



loss. Previous studies point to the tendency to demonstrate depressive symptoms due to heightened job insecurity amid the crisis (Gasparro

Participants likewise shared favorable and unfavorable thoughts, have shown, some participants felt an increased sense of gratitude toward employers that demonstrated care and concern for their workers. They also appreciated the preparations made by their organization to manage the impact of crises such as COVID-19. These thoughts and feelings may have contributed to the motivation and productivity of most of the participants. Prior studies have pointed out

work performance.

Nonetheless, these positive organizational responses were not experienced by all respondents. Some have developed negative perceptions of their employers due to the seeming lack of support, perceived inequalities, and inadequacy of organizational response

behaviors such as not going the extra mile for the organization or the lack of desire to demonstrate organization citizenship. These attitudes and their corresponding relationships with behaviors (as

Being forced to transition to a remote work arrangement that seemed to have engendered varying attitudes toward working from home, interpersonal relationships, and the use of technology at work. Employees now see telecommuting as a viable work arrangement even beyond the pandemic as this allows people to be productive

that demonstrate how working from home enhances performance and increases productivity. Perhaps the realization and hopeful anticipation that telecommuting can be the work arrangement beyond the COVID-19 crisis were also shaped by contextual factors. The

annually because of lost productivity, commuting related sickness,

of family and health as well as of achieving greater work-life balance

the importance of health and family. Employees now seem more conscious about engaging in behaviors that will protect themselves

ensure everyone's safety. Working from home has also emphasized the

evidence from existing literature as well as the current study highlight the importance of examining employee attitudes amid collective experiences of disruptions and crises as this may enable understanding of both current and future behaviors/behavioral intentions of people in organizations.

For example, thoughts and feelings about telecommuting and technology as well as social connectedness may have shaped organizational responses and employee coping strategies during the COVID-19 crisis. To illustrate, social coping behaviors (that include employees and organizations to adapt to the challenges brought by the

crisis. Employees may prefer telecommuting given its perceived viability and the employee's desire to achieve work-life balance.

working on-site.

The results of this study may also orient organizational initiatives that promote employee motivation, productivity, engagement, and retention during and even beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings of this study surfaced how showing care and concern toward employees engender performance and commitment. It is imperative for organizations to reach out, understand the needs of employees (and

give whatever support that it can provide. This is especially true in crisis situations where employees experience a multitude of challenges

also encourage employees to articulate the help that they need.

Ensuring good health and safety became salient in the minds of employees during the pandemic. There is awareness that contracting

protocols and engage in protective behaviors. Given these, employers need to make sure that it has/will have programs and systems in place to assure employees that they will be protected from COVID-19 when asked to work on-site.

All the points mentioned regarding providing support, having ensuring health and safety highlight the need to have business continuity/sustainability plans that will allow the organization to more cover actions in response to various possible future scenarios given the COVID-19 pandemic and other possible future disruptions. Preparing for contingencies and having business continuity/sustainability plans in place will not only save the business but ensure that employees are cared for. Engaging employees in conversations about future plans, creating opportunities for them to share their thoughts and feelings, and ensuring that they are listened to will help make sure that they are onboard and will commit to future organizational directions.

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Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, the data collection used a cross-sectional design and was conducted at the onset of the pandemic. A longitudinal design may be used in future studies to locate evolving work attitudes during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis. Also, it would have been more meaningful if the data gathering clearly captured employee attitudes prior to the pandemic and the changes that occurred during COVID-19 to better examine attitude change. Second, given the objective of the study, the data was examined as a whole

number of participants and gather additional demographic data

their attitudes toward work did not change during the pandemic were not prompted to expound on their response. Future studies can ask these participants to also elaborate on their answers to provide greater

understanding of which attitudes have and have not shifted during the crisis. Finally, to address limitations inherent to using a qualitative



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