

Return to offices in Singapore more likely if commutes are less crowded

Employees are more likely to want to return to their workplaces rather than continue working from home if MRT trains are less crowded, a survey has found.

By: Charles Chau (<https://hrmasia.com/author/charles-chau/>) | April 12, 2022

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They are also more inclined to work from office if journey times are shorter, according to the findings of a Nanyang Technological University (NTU) study published in *Travel Behaviour and Society* – a journal of the Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies – in January.

The study found that the degree of crowdedness in trains accounted for 12.8% of an employee's decision to work from home or the office, and travel time accounted for 10.7%.

Associate Professor Wong Yiik Diew from NTU's School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and final-year student Muhammad Sofian Mohamed Tahir polled 574 train commuters between December 31, 2020 and January 16 last year amid the pandemic to arrive at the study's results.

While acknowledging that there are several other factors which can influence the decision-making process, the researchers said they chose to focus on comfort and time.

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This was because their study, *To Go, Or Not To Go? Modelling The Effects Of Employment Decentralisation On Telecommuting Preferences*, identified the two factors as most likely to change with increasing decentralisation – moving business and economic activities away from the city centre to nearer homes.

Prof Wong said the finding was especially relevant given “the trend in urban planning to maximise the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport”, according to The Straits Times.

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