

LABOR MARKET TRENDS FOR TELEWORKER COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

This research aims to study the trends in the labor market and highlight the relevance of teleworker skills for competitiveness through the use of technology. The need to raise this study is to see the skills related to the activities of the teleworker. The research was conducted among 310 representatives of public institutions, cooperatives and collaborators of companies in the Amazonas region - Peru, to investigate their appreciation of the adoption of this work modality; a questionnaire was conducted consisting of 25 questions grouped into three dimensions, measured by a Likert scale, the reliability of the instrument was determined by the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha, where a value of 0.985 was obtained for teleworking. The results show that in the professional commitment of teleworkers should be instituted samples of loyalty and the development of innovative skills with the use of technology. On the other hand, the employers' perspective reveals that teleworkers must be committed, creative, responsible for their functions, and their experience allows them to develop their competencies in improving institutional competitiveness.

Keywords: Telework, Labor market, Competitiveness, Teleworker, Technology.

Introduction

The term telework has been highlighted in the characterization made by various authors, which are oriented from different points of view, the same that are delineated below. Etymologically, the term telework comes from the union of the Greek word “tele,” which means far away, and “work,” which means to perform a physical or intellectual activity that requires effort (Padilla, 2001: 3). Generically, Telework includes the performance of work, totally or partially, away from the office or the usual place of work, usually at home through the use of telecommunications.

In retrospect to the historical development of Telework, it is an idea that arose in the United States in 1957; however, as technology has evolved, it has focused mainly on tasks that have to do with information processing and that can be performed without continuous personal supervision. As a result, the term “telework” tends to be used more in Europe and some other countries, while “telecommuting” is more commonly used in the United States. However, it is important to note that in some other languages, such as German, Spanish, Italian or Scandinavian, there is no similar term, although translations of Telework are used, for example, in English: telecommuting, Telework, teleworking, home working, electronic homework, flexiplace; in German telearbeit, fernarbeit, elektronische; in French: télétravail, télépendulaire; and in Italian: telelavoro.

Telework is a way of working oriented to three potential conditions: 1) The workplace must have a different location to that of the headquarters of the company, mostly it is located in the worker’s home or an environment close to him; 2) It makes use of the technologies and to processes of digitalization of the information, this characteristic restricts the definition of Telework, indicating clearly that the manual or piecework should not be considered as Telework, even when this is realized in the domicile of the worker; 3) The accomplishment of the work at a distance is an essential element for the life of the worker, not only a sporadic activity (Belzunegui, 2001: 16). In this sense, essential characteristic elements stand out, whose orientations will always be in the construction of work, under integral approach.

A glimpse into the world of teleworking

Globalized environments require permanent contact of companies with their employees and the use of tools that come from information and communication technologies as an innovative element that increases the competitiveness of companies (Silveira et al., 2016) since these offer an environment conducive to the development of different work modalities to the classic ones (Micheli, 2005), Telework, teleemployment or digital employment, as it is known in other countries. Teleworking is conducive to improving the working conditions of the worker and for the efficient management of resources in organizations (Lila & Anjaneyulu, 2013).

Another of the strategies that allow institutional development is the firm training of human talent contributes positively to the fulfillment of institutional objectives when this principle is part of the advancement strategies; in fact, companies that have a training plan not only have this but also have a management model for their staff which generates competitive advantages. However, despite knowing the personnel's importance for a company's development, its principles, mission, vision, and values are not evidenced in its daily work (Agudelo, 2018).

Telework in its implementation required a new way of doing business was raised from the great opening of the digital world and the management of human talent is no exception, the use of technologies replaces physical spaces, breaking geographical barriers and reaching a greater number of people or customers which is reversed in economic benefits for companies that opt for the use of digital tools for their workers to work from home in the so-called "Teleworking"; this modality is a good alternative during economic crises that improve productivity as opposed to keeping them in a plant because the motivational factor for employees plays an important role trying to fulfill their functions in the shortest time possible. Moreover, this modality allows the increase of personnel without the complications of own facilities, including people with disabilities and the reconciliation of family life, personal life and quality of work life (Sanchez et al., 2019).

The research traced as an objective to analyze Telework as a trend in the labor market and trend of skills for competitiveness, which motivates employers to have as a priority the presence of the worker in the company, knowledge of technologies relevant approach from the virtuality of teleworkers who had this unexpected experience and within this virtual world is sought as to be competitive in the labor market (Castillo and Montes de Oca, 2021).

The Law and its regulation approved by Supreme Decree 017-2015-TR. "Exposición de Motivos del Reglamento de la Ley N° 30036, Ley que Regula el Teletrabajo" points out the following: Considering the particularities of the public sector, the Regulation provides for standard provisions applicable to the public and private sector, as well as special provisions applicable only to public entities. Additionally, other types of provisions are foreseen, and rules have been established that favor the application of the modality of teleworking to specific sectors of the population (mothers of the family, and disabled persons, among others). Also, among other provisions, the Regulation develops new cases of labor infringements related to teleworking.

Telework and productivity: Their linkages

One of the most visible consequences of technological development and telecommunications is undoubtedly the impact they have had on the organization of work, from the new forms of decentralization that have displaced the Fordist model to the destruction of the myth of the unity of space and time at work (Thibault, 2000).

Companies develop their activities in increasingly dynamic and competitive environments, which require transformations in organizations and, therefore, the systematic adaptation of managers, employees and customers to new ways of working, among which teleworking stands out. However, the introduction of Telework in the organization requires a decision-making process that organizations can face from the participatory perspective or authoritarianism (Silvia et al., 2007). Likewise, traditionally, the provision of work was understood as that which was developed in a specific work center and a regular schedule; however, the different technologies, as well as the growing flexibility in the way of performing work, have opened new possibilities, blurring the conceptual limits previously conceived. One of these alternatives that have gained importance is teleworking, which combines communication and information technologies with flexibility in organizing work about place and time.

In the diverse concepts that exist from productivity and competitiveness when analyzing the causes and repercussions of the division of labor, labor flexibilization, technological development and innovation, the authors point out that the division of labor is the most important cause of progress in the productive faculties of work so that the aptitude, skill and wisdom with which it is performed is a consequence of the division of labor.

The Internet has enabled new ways of working and coordinating on a large scale and has replaced linear and centralized chains of command with self-programmable work characterized by trained, flexible and self-organizing occupations (Vilaseca & Requena, 2004).

For a better understanding, Telework would imply the passage from a context characterized by labor and wage stability to a productive and work system based on flexibility. This flexibility, variable work patterns, diversity in working conditions and individualization of labor relations are the main characteristics of the labor market in the information and knowledge society (Castells, 2001).

Catillo (2010) mentions a series of good practices when the individuals have a telework relationship, which recommends strengthening and implementing each organization with a telework program. This allows for inserting Telework within the internal regulations of work, considering the risks that teleworking promotes and differentiating both accidents and occupational diseases, such as accidents and diseases that can be generated at home and how to promote the generation of codes of ethics for teleworkers, among others.

Studies have proven that space savings by implementing a teleworking program can reach up to 45% (Sage, 2010). This proves that teleworking is an option for properly using business resources. However, for example, 73% of Spanish companies consider that working in the office instead of applying a telework methodology increases production costs (Mart, 2010). Other studies report a 35% increase in the productivity of organizations that use Telework (Lister & Harnish, 2011).

Methodology

The research was characterized in the region Amazonas 2021- Peru. 310 representatives of public institutions, cooperatives and collaborators of companies were circumscribed. The main objective was to analyze teleworking as a trend in the labor market and the importance of skills for competitiveness. The productive activity, the generation of projects, trade, the insertion of public activity and agrotourism are one of the most traditional economic sectors of the region, which favorably identifies the economic dynamics of this sector. This scenario poses to organizations the need to develop and introduce innovations in their products constantly and innovatively (Bowen et al., 2010) in order to find a competitive advantage in the face of new market players and with the approach of new strategies that allow the development of an organization (Porter, 2001).

The research is descriptive with a quantitative analysis. The design of the measuring instrument was based on the documentary review and the application of a questionnaire composed of 25 questions grouped in three dimensions, measured by a Likert scale; the reliability of the instrument was determined by the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha, where a value of 0.985 was obtained for Telework. From this, it can be mentioned that the characterization of the instrument of measurement was focused on the measurement of descriptive elements of the organization, which allows identifying the skills of the teleworker that the different institutions and companies contemplate the labor market demands. Furthermore, the statistical techniques used were descriptive to analyze the information and contextualize the sample.

Results

One transcendental factor that affects institutional strengthening is a progressive process of institutional mechanisms of the companies that use the experience of workers in the same sector at the international and national level as resources and capacities for institutional strengthening (Heinrich, 2010).

For this purpose, it is essential to distinguish the resources and capabilities of a firm or institution that are the building blocks of its competitive strategy. In planning strategy, it is essential that managers know a resource or organizational capability and how to leverage the firm's entire set of resources and capabilities (Thomson et al., 2012, p. 95)

In line with the above, this orientation allows guiding the assessment of internal aspects and observing the most relevant scenarios of the main activities of its economy that allow guaranteeing an analysis of reasonable profitability and that the social focus of the company is not lost, taking into account that most companies and institutions are sensitive to the current environment since they lack good and timely information as well as a tool that allows determining the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization, which allows it to carry out good management. The only way to achieve competitive advantages in the market and that are sustained over time is through the development of capabilities with a differentiated methodology that allows for adequate management (Table 1).

Table 1. Assessment of teleworker skills by the surveyed employers

Teleworker skills assessment	Percent
Responsibility	89.6
Fulfillment of their duty	88.4
Contribution of ideas	88.7
Participation	82.2
Contributions to problem-solving	83.5
Innovative	81.3
Contributor	82.7
Creative	82.9
Handling of office tools	79.2
Good social relations	80.2
Acting freely	74.6
Interact with peers virtually	72.4
Good communicator	70.1
Decision-making autonomy	71.3

Source: Diagnostic of the situation in the Amazonas region.

Poor access to information and a lack of update of management documents from the process of vulnerability can be a weakness. This situation is evidenced in the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. In this context, companies have difficulty making changes in all management within this transition as possible answers to a policy to support employers and workers in introducing and maintaining effective Telework.

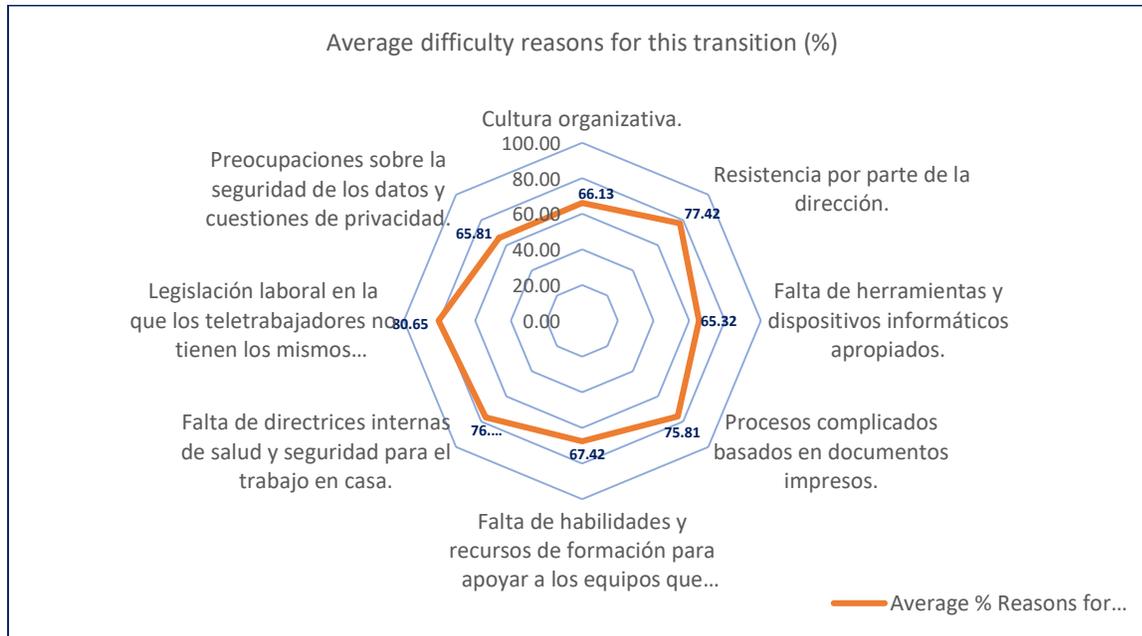


Figure 1. Policy considerations in maintaining effective teleworking

Source: Adapted from the Practical Guide Teleworking during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. (International Labour Office - Geneva: ILO, 2020)

With this perspective, the capacity of reaction as a result of the identification and application of questions related to the difficulty in the process of transition post-pandemic allows realizing a conjunctural analysis in the application of management tools as improvement in the institutions and companies. Where 80.65 % of administrative of the different institutions indicate that of must affect the strengthening of the labor Legislation in which the teleworkers do not have the same rights and protections as the workers of office. Also, 76.61 % indicate that it is necessary to generate internal health and safety guidelines for work at home. For this, it is necessary to explore the culture in organizations as it allows to determine to what extent the integration of these levels of observation help in the creation of a higher level of culture, aspects that serve through this research as a starting point in the observation and study of organizational culture (Pedraza et al., 2015). According to the estimation, 66.13 % reveals the lack of an organizational Culture. It is conceived as the freedom and hierarchy of any institution subject to the responsibility, independence and opportunity that employees have to exercise initiative in the organization as part of the principles related to the structure of the company and the methods of work performance.

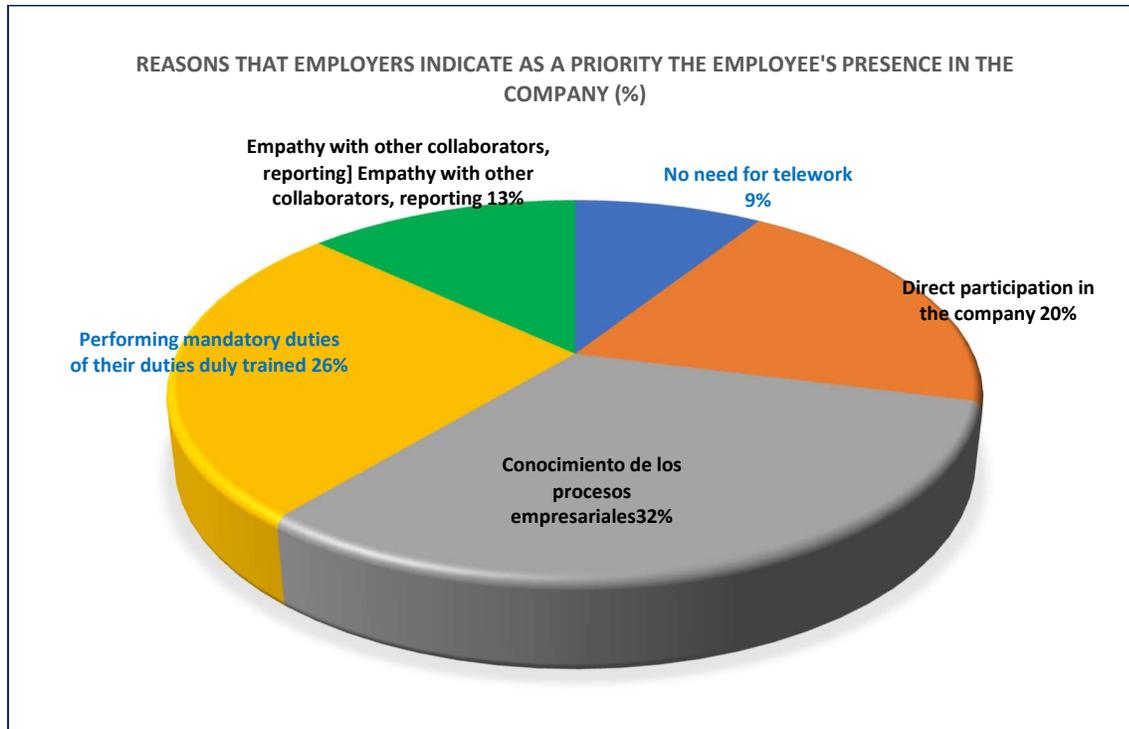


Figure 2. Prioritization of impulses in the presence of the worker in the company.

Source: Own elaboration

The characterization of labor market trends today indicates a prioritization of the skills that should have the teleworker which presents a percentage distribution of the reasons and perspectives that tend employers and that is emerging as a trend in the labor market and are accompanied by the skills of the teleworker who become a priority for the presence of the worker in the company with the levels required for proper management. In that sense, it is possible to highlight the main activities required by employers for teleworking. From the results, relevant indicators are derived; among the findings, it is detected that 32% of employers highlight the importance of the knowledge of business processes, being of relevance this aspect for its professional significance and contribution to the institution. On the other hand, 9% highlight or downplays the importance of the tasks that affect teleworking, and 26% indicate that they must perform the mandatory tasks of their functions adequately trained.

The 20% consider that the teleworkers must have direct participation in the company and not only work in the virtual modality; the reasons they give to justify this statement is that the actions merit a follow-up and monitoring to achieve the established requirements in the institution with direct communication. It also highlights that 13% of the statements of the business people and administrators of the different institutions indicate that empathy and compliance with the activities are related to the knowledge of the business processes to achieve an optimal result. For this, it is

necessary to know the organizational structure and know about the evolution of the projects being executed.

In this sense, the employee must attend and comply with the tasks entrusted to him/her in the position: submit reports that allow achieving the results expected by the institution, have an evaluation of his/her performance, interact with other workers and even with managers in order to achieve some improvements, initiatives and get directly involved in the development and improvement of processes such as active participation in work meetings vital for decision making, the contribution of ideas and training within the organization such as training that contributes to the increase of good results.

Teleworking in the public sector

The purpose of the regulation, which the legislator has been concerned with encouraging its application in the public sector, grants the powers to apply this modality when required. Even more so when the regulation entrusts the Civil Service Authority (Article 148°- D.S.N° 040-2014-PCM) the definition of the minimum quota of positions in the public sector entities to which Telework will be applied. Therefore, it is a best practice to promote its implementation in the public sector, possibly guided by the advantages of this regime and the cost savings it represents, provided it is ensured that it is governed under the same general rules apply to the private sector. An example of teleworking in Latin America's public sector is Argentina and Colombia, which have protocols for their application in this sector.

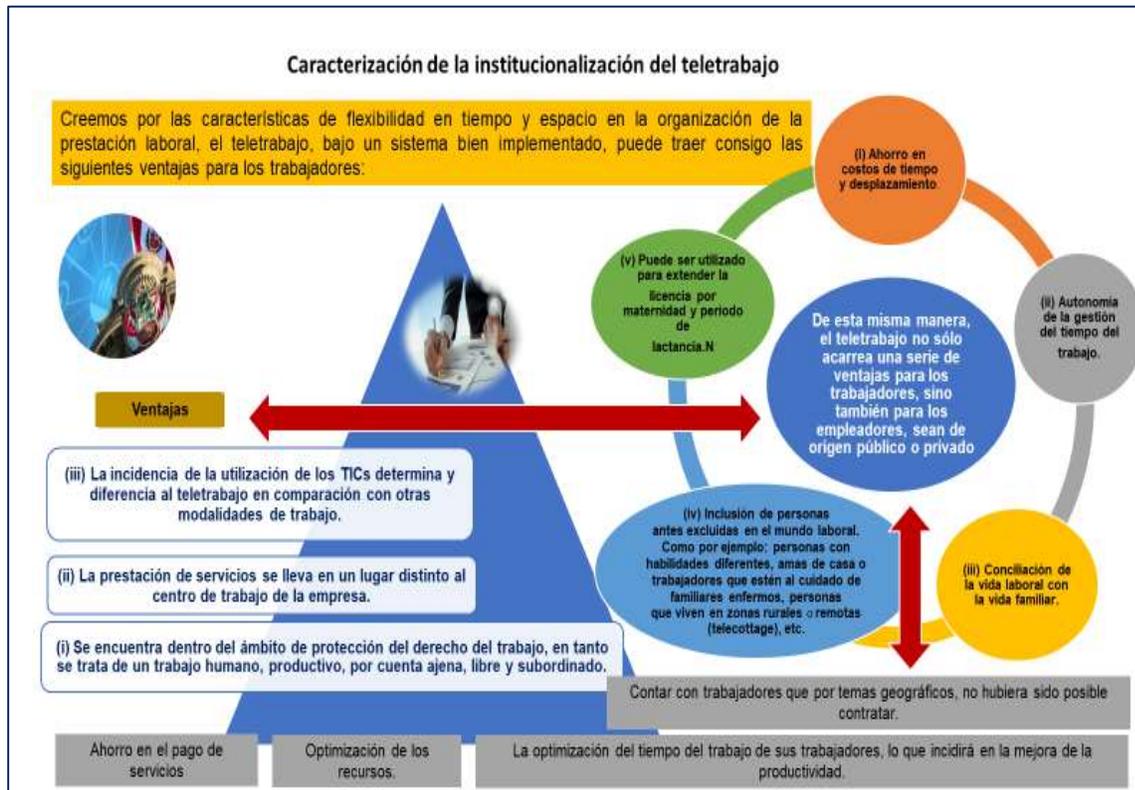


Figure 3. Prioritization of actions in telework institutionalization

Adapted: Rev. Derecho & soc. 46-Asoc. Civil Art. 6-Reg. Telework Law (Culqui & González, 2016).

Within the perspectives of the main actions of work, the article presents Telework as the latest transformation of work through the history of economic thought, to contribute to improving organizational and institutional processes, giving to the regents of these institutions timely information that favors the development and within its innovative perspectives have strategies in all areas that allow a dynamic and operability of their goods and services, through the implementation of teleworking. Entrepreneurs emphasize that teleworker skills are oriented towards time management, resource management, development of critical thinking and operational skills (concerning office automation) to ensure their performance, allowing the company to be competitive in the sector (Guzman et al., 2017).

A critical conceptual painting is observed from various aspects, such as its conception and offering a proposal highlighting its systematization, labor law, participation, motivation and profile of teleworkers, characterized in its field of intervention. Although Teleworking is a current labor trend that is transforming and providing the innovative idea that the human being must leave home and resettle bodily to a suitable place to work, today, the professional commitment with the entity

can be done anywhere where there is a computer and internet access; this fact requires considering the arrangements and planned actions in economic and administrative matters.

Teleworking contributes to increased productivity, and the modality of teleworking represents a labor contracting alternative that favors the organization in improving its performance against the competition (Graizbord, 2015). Among the advantages offered by Telework for organizations is a decrease in pollution because vehicular displacements are avoided (Handy & Mokhtarian, 1995, Lila & Anjaneyulu, 2013); an increase in flexibility for the optimization of time, and a reduction of turnover of workers, providing the increase in the effectiveness of employees and decreasing absenteeism and discrimination (Boell et al., 2013; Frolick & Urwiler, 1993; ILO, 2013); and ease of performance, without disregarding the fact that propitious times must be established for their development (ITA, 2014).

Lila & Anjaneyulu (2013) state that companies can discover advantages that can mean improving the efficiency of the company with the implementation of teleworking. Two factors are directly related to the tasks performed under the telework modality: the contextual ones, which refer to the corporate culture, thoughts and familiar environment, and the formal ones, which are related to the work performed in the organization increasing profits (Beham & Poelmans, 2015).

From this, the study's results on the potential of teleworking in institutions and companies are highlighted. This section presents some of the results of the processing of the questionnaire sent to the social actors and managers of the companies. These results are presented with the characterization of the institutionalization of Telework, whose valuation is its identification in the flexibilization in time and space, with a better valuation highlighting its advantages i) Savings in time costs and travel; ii) Autonomy of the management of the time of work; iii) Reconciliation of work and family life; iv) Inclusion of people previously excluded from the labor market, for example, people with different abilities, housewives or workers who are caring for sick family members, people living in rural or remote areas, etc.; and v) It can be used to extend maternity leave and breastfeeding period. The application stands out for its interest in many teleworkers, being its valuation of each indicator within the application of Telework which represents the interest of diligence for the sector or sectors to which it is directed, as the receptivity of employers towards its implementation.

On the other hand, the efficiency and positioning of a company are a function of the differentiated resources and capabilities it possesses and controls, which constitute a source of synergy and competitive advantages.

Conclusions

These results show the importance given by the various institutions under their vision and perspectives of profitability in the short and medium term according to their incursions and planned objectives, taking into account their organizational culture and difficulties,

characterization in the other sectors where leadership is vital to lead and implement the applications identified in this study.

One aspect that should be taken into account when determining the lines of action of the action plan is the support by the state in strengthening labor legislation and training facilities for teleworkers, as well as the dissemination of such applications and actions that allow better access to them.

Finally, the study allowed to determine the contributions of teleworking as an alternative of improvement from its guidelines of action; which must go hand in hand with the criteria held by employers in keeping teleworkers in their companies and that it is necessary for its insertion both in private and public activity expanding new horizons of improvements within teleworking. With this adjustment to the research method is possible to propose policies that are subject to study by governments so that teleworking is considered a dignified, competitive and legal form of work, both regionally, nationally and around the world.

Critical thinking can highlight the necessary skills that the teleworkers develop their activities inappreciably, which are related to the operational skills making viable the strategies in the management of resources with the management of the time, with activities specified by the same organization; which involves having a level of high valuation for each one who works in the company. Propitiating this way that the employee optimizes the resources of a more efficient form in his work, of this way the to carry out operative diligences implies that it develops his critical and innovative thought at the moment of acting, consenting that the teleworker is competent for the company.

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