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**STUDY ON THE POTENTIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE
WORK SCHEDULE SCHEMES AS TDM-MEASURE IN METRO MANILA**

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Abstract:

Like the other big cities of developing countries, the growing number of work-trips has been dominating all other trip generators in Metro Manila. The combination of its sheer magnitude concentrating during certain (peak) periods and in well defined areas (CBDs) makes this work-trip the largest contributor to traffic congestion problems in the metropolis.

With this, the reduction in the demand for travel during peak hours has been long desired by transport planners, policy makers, and all others concerned who hope for the alleviation of traffic congestion problems, reduction in energy consumption and transport-related environmental problems.

In most developing countries, variable work schedules have been adopted not only as a working arrangement, but also as an accepted and effective alternative solution or strategy to reduce the demand for travel. As defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation, "Variable Work Hour" is one of the Categories of Action of Transportation Demand Management (TDM)-measures to ensure the efficient use of existing road space.

The experiences, however, in developing countries like the Philippines are quite different considering that measures being adopted are still limited to traditional approaches; thus, the effectiveness is limited to a certain extent. With the above development, at a broader context, this study is intended to investigate the possible adoption of various alternative work schedule schemes as TDM-measure in Metro Manila and to investigate and evaluate its impact.

One of the major factors in determining the potential acceptability of such a measure is the extent to which employees will adopt it, their level of participation, and likewise, to what extent it can be allowed and supported by the employers. For this purpose, this study is focused primarily on determination of factors affecting employees' and employers' decision to participate in the program. Specifically, it is focused on employees' and employers' perception and preferences.

The following are the summary of findings of the study:

- Consistent with the expected participation of employee respondents – that majority will favor the implementation of the program – three-quarters (70.5%) of the employees perceived that the program would be beneficial. Thus, they are expected to become involved in the scheme "if a dominant employer or an important employee of employee organization takes the initiative".

- From the employer's standpoint, the preliminary investigation indicated that they have a mixed opinion on this program. Interestingly, however, 40% of the employer respondents gave a favorable response with regards to the implementation of such a measure. The majority does not favor the concept because they perceived that implementation of such a program would adversely affect the performance of their employees.
- With regards to the modal share for work trips, small occupancy vehicles (e.g. jeepneys) constitute the biggest share. As mentioned, these findings that are quite alarming can be attributed to government policies concerning car ownership (e.g. low occupancy and affordable vehicles) which have serious effects on the overall transport system. These facts should be given preferential attention not only by the concerned agencies and institutions but, most of all, by the decision-makers (legislators) responsible for the metropolis transportation system development.
- In terms of potential impact, the researcher strongly believed that VWH-program could ease traffic congestion during peak hour traffic, but could also encourage stakeholders who usually commute to shift to auto use of single occupant as they are given opportunity to avoid peak hour traffic. However, this has yet to be investigated and evaluated in the future.

Although the study was limited in scope and samples, nonetheless, the above findings provide insights for a possible adoption of variable work hour's program in Metro Manila.

In light of these findings, the study thus presents one alternative solution to the worsening traffic congestion problems caused by work trips, which for years have been plaguing the metropolis.