

# Telecommuting working condition due to COVID19 and its Effect to Employees Job Satisfaction Level.

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## Abstract

During COVID19 series of lockdowns were implemented all over Oman to control the overwhelming infections while companies were struggling how to continue the business operation. Telecommuting was the only option of many companies, but the challenge was how this arrangement will affect the level of job satisfaction. This study examined how telecommuting condition will affect the employees job satisfaction level. This employed thru online survey and captured 150 employees from different organizations. The variables perceived evaluative, cognitive, and affective component. Result showed that telecommuting has both positive and negative impact to the level of employees' job satisfaction, it was also found out that partly the management plays a very important role in increasing the satisfaction level would it be work form home or work from the site. In evaluative component was generally rated unsatisfied due to lack of support in terms of incentives from the management, while was generally rated as agree which indicated that in terms of recognition and feedbacks the management were very supportive however, in this component management have limited in providing trainings and seminars to their employees in which it is very useful to train the employees for the new technology or system being used those days. With regards to affective components findings revealed that employees were tented to be agreed on the theory that they can move, do, and perform better while working from home, however the anxiety is true due to lack of interaction with other colleagues. These findings and implications are clearly defined that generally working from home is significantly changed the level of job satisfaction pattern as perceived by the employees

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, Job, Telecommuting, Employees, Pandemic.

## Introduction

COVID19 has brought a drastic change to all organization in the world in terms of working procedures and system, work from home is the most common and popular working condition in the 2020 up to present. In order not to hamper its operation companies transferred their operation to every home of their employees, 70 percent of employees were working from home during the height of pandemic. However, the work from home condition might have an impact on employee's job satisfaction. Although both employers and employees may get benefits from work from home system. To employers it may lower the cost in terms of using of electricity, the use of office materials, building maintenance and other operational cost (Henseke&Felstead, 2017). For employees it gives them more autonomy, flexibility, mobility cost-effective and less distraction from subordinates. Although

there are advantages, it has disadvantage as well such it makes the employee to relinquish the operation most of the time, feeling isolated and it will decline the relationship with their colleagues and dynamism of the organization.

There is varied conclusion that has been reported whether telecommuting has negative or positive impact on employees' job satisfaction. Guimaraes et. al (1999), found out that linear relationship between job satisfaction and telecommuting, those employees who are working from home are more satisfied that those who are not, for a reason that they can do this household chores at the same time, they manage their time between family and work and no boss will observe you all the time. In contrast with the study of Cooper and Kurkland(2002) of the linear relationship that which they found out that those who are working remotely or from home were less satisfied due to conflict of task

between home and office in which both demands time or deadline and that they can no longer focus on their office task. Golden (2006) found out that an inverted u-shaped, the relationship between the extent of telecommuting and employees job satisfaction. He implied that telecommuting may increase job satisfaction; however it will only increase up to a certain point and time but not for a longer time because as human being employees need to interact dynamically and systematically to finish the given task as well as the organization which they need to achieve their vision, mission, goals and objectives, up to this time more researchers are gathering and scrutinizing information on the possible impact of telecommuting working condition in employee job satisfaction

More companies in Oman are now adopting the telecommuting in most of their business operation, it is the most advantage since the pandemic started. However, some companies have drawn their attention as to how the employee job satisfaction will be carried out while most of their employees are working from home. To gain more deeper knowledge in this issue this paper examines the effects of telecommuting working condition and the perceived job satisfaction of employees in three areas evaluative, cognitive and affective.

### Literature Review

**Golden and Veiga (2005)** assessed the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction among 321 professional-level employees. The researchers gathered and evaluated telecommuting work based on the number of hours they spent while working at home per week. They put forward using the curvilinear, they want to find out that high level of job satisfaction while at the remote working distance at lower levels of job satisfaction while at remote at work. They found out that the relationship between working from home and job satisfaction relent, and they found out that employee's job satisfaction level declined seriously at high level in work from home condition than those working is the company facility and the reason behind were employees wanted to have a social connection to each other, easy to communicate when there is a technical problem and easy to discuss or solve during critical situation. Respondent also added that

when they work from home, they feel isolated and limited social interaction with their co-worker which basically leads to lower level of job satisfaction

**Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015)** conducted a study on how effective is telecommuting in the scientific study found in a meta-analysis that telecommuting work was positively associated with job satisfaction, however, the correlation was only at small level  $r = .09$ . Moreover, they also found that the extent of work from home condition does not relate fairly to job satisfaction, which describes why there is association between remote work and job satisfaction is curvilinear. Specifically, they found out that employees preferred to work from home arrangement only if it is only 15 hour per week or on a limited basis because if the company is using the standard working hours basically the employees' level of job satisfaction will decrease, Allen et al. 2015 postulate that this curvilinear relationship might be due to limited social interactions and the perception of isolation. Another problem that respondents mentioned that in telecommuting even week end they have to work to finish the task. These drawbacks may affect the level of job satisfaction.

Similarly in the study of **Gajendran and Harrison (2007)**, in meta-analysis they examined the correlation and impact of telecommuting on the individual level. The theoretical framework was based on three subjects namely, psychological control, work family interface, and the relational of telecommuting to the level of job satisfaction. They based their model on a multi-dimensional framework supported by Allen et al. (2003) and Feldman and Gainey (1997) which focused on how telecommuting design may affect the employee's work environment, lifestyle and outcomes through its effects on the social system. Based on this theory, the authors postulated that telecommuting have five individual outcomes: satisfaction, performance, turnover, stress, and perceived career growth and all of these outcomes are mediated moderated based on the perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, and relationship with supervisor and colleagues. After evaluating with 12,883 employees with different position from different company, they found out that telecommuting had a minimal, however,

beneficial effects on the employee's outcomes, such as that employees perceived higher autonomy, less work-family conflict, and good relationship with superior and colleague. They also found that it has a distal outcome, such as performance, job satisfaction, turnover, and stress were partially moderated by perception of autonomy. In conclusion the more the employees spent working at home the more they believe that they are empowered and control over their job without moving from one place to another.

Similarly, **Chambel et al. (2017)** also studied the role of work-to-life conflict and the relationship between job characteristics such as job demands, job autonomy, and superior support and well-being at work. In his study, the researcher examines the between part-time and fulltime employees of business outsource process in Portugal. He found out that employees perceived job demands, autonomy superiors support level it very important while employees working remotely. Relationship between the boss and employees needs to be solid to boost the motivation of the employees and reduce anxiety at the same time it will enhance the satisfaction level.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

A quantitative approach model was used derived from only survey thru google forms. The survey was conducted by adopting the numerical characteristics to explore the effect of telecommuting to the level of employee job satisfaction using closed ended questions with answers based on a Likert scale. To provide a concrete and factual numerical data analysis a statistical treatment was applied, data were collected, tabulated, and analyzed.

### Research Instrument

The study was comprised of three parts, and it has five survey questions every part which created by the researcher. The first part is evaluative component which measure employees satisfaction based on the support provided by the organization in terms of

equipment, compensation and task allocation, Second part is the cognitive component which measure agreeableness of the employees based on support provided by the organization in terms of recognition, promotion and system support, and lastly the third part is affective component which measure agreeableness of employees based on their personal experience in term of emotional feelings, work-effectiveness and motivation while doing work from. The instrument was using a closed ended questions with separate Likert scale. It was presented and administered thru google forms.

### Data Collection

The data collection thru online google forms was utilized to collect the. To maintain confidentiality all responses collected were tallied, tallied, and analyzed for data presentation.

### Data Analysis

A quantitative method was utilized to analyze and explore the effect of telecommuting to the level of job satisfaction. A descriptive statistical approach was also utilized to analyze the data.

### Research Respondents

In order to examine the effect of remote working condition on the employee job satisfaction, the researcher took a sample included employees from different industry sectors in Oman both professional and non-professional were 46.7% female and 53.3% were male with ages ranged from 18 to 55 coming from different educational background which composed of vocational graduate 10%, secondary school graduate 42%, diploma graduate 20.6%, bachelor 20% and lastly those who took master and doctorate degree 7.4%. Among of the sample there were 12% whose working from the respective organization with less than a year, and 20% works for about 2 to 3 years, while 31.4% who are connected for about 3 to 4 years and 28.6% with 5 to 6 years and 8% with 10 above working experience. In terms of functional position 13.33% occupied as managerial position, while 13.33% worked as engineer mostly from Oil Company, 13.33% worked as accountant or in

finance department, while 12% functions as system analyst. 10.6% coming from the academe, 13.33% come from medical practitioner, 12.66% from safety and security personnel and lastly those who worked as marketing staff with 14%. In terms of working per hour where the respondents have different work timings which might have an impact of their job satisfaction 55.4% are those who are working less than 40 hours per week, while 17.4% were 40 to 45 hour per week, 20% are those who work 46 to 50 hours per week including overtime with this kind of shifting were in even if it is at home still the employees

are still doing over time and lastly, 7.4% were those working more than 50 hours per week. The sample respondent were taken from different organization in which 10.6% were from academe, while 27% from banking and finance sector, 31.30% were from healthcare sector, 31.30% were from Oil and gas sector. Table 1 show the detailed respondents' characteristics.

**Table 1:**  
**Respondents of the study**

**Table 1.** The descriptive statistics of respondents' characteristics.

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency Counts</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	70	46.7
Male	80	53.3
<b>Age</b>		
18–25	21	14
26–30	53	35.3
31–40	46	30.6
41–50	23	15.4
51–55	7	4.7
<b>Educational Achievement</b>		
Vocational School	15	10
Secondary School	63	42
Diploma	31	20.6
Bachelor	30	20
Master and above	11	7.4
<b>Organizational Tenure</b>		
Less than 1	18	12
1–2	30	20
3–4	47	31.4
5–9	43	28.6

10 Above	12	8
<b>Functional Position</b>		
Manager/ Head	20	13.33
Engineer	20	13.33
Accounting and Finance staff	15	10
System Analysis	19	12.66
Lecturer	16	10.66
Medical Practitioners	20	13.33
Safety and Security Staff	19	12.66
Marketing/ Sales	21	14
<b>Working Hours Per Week</b>		
Less than 40	83	55.4
40–45	26	17.4
46–50	30	20
More than 50	11	7.4
<b>Organization Type</b>		
Education/ Academe	16	10.60
Bank/Financial Services	40	27
Hospital and Healthcare Services	47	31.30
Oil, Petroleum and Gas company	47	31.30

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### Analysis and Result

The purpose of this quantitative presentation is to investigate the effect of telecommuting

**Table 2.**

Satisfaction level based on evaluative component

Indicator	$\mu$	<i>INT.</i>
1. The company gives allowances for internet and electricity consumption.	2.45	U
2. Superiors communicate and relay information without gap or delay of any updates or new rules of work online in a timely and effective manner.	2.51	S
3. The management invested in all necessary tools, equipment, and other needed materials to their employees for the success of work from home system.	2.60	S
4. The company distributed the task evenly across the team.	2.52	S

5. The management give incentives and motivation to employees.	2.00	U
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>U</b>

**Legend:**      Range:  
Interpretation:

3.26 – 4.00	Very Satisfied
2.51 – 3.25	Satisfied
1.76 – 2.50	Unsatisfied
1.00 – 1.75	Very
Unsatisfied	

Table 2 contains the degree of satisfaction of employees based on the evaluative component towards the level of job satisfaction. As assessed by the respondents as displayed by the total mean of 2.41 taken in which generally unsatisfied, employees were generally not satisfied on how the manage and provided at the height of pandemic. Specifically, the indicator related to giving of allowances to the employees to subsidize the internet and electricity consumption of the employees while working from home. In this regard, during the time of work from home condition employees experience a significant increase of their monthly bill in electricity, employees urging that at least the company provide a tantamount financial support to compensate their bills. Regarding relaying information and updates from the superior was deemed to be satisfied with the factor mean 2.51 as assessed by the employees, superiors in most of the

organizations are immediately have a quick actions in dissemination of information regarding policies changes, memos and strategies and plans. Likewise, the management invested on in all necessary tools, equipment and materials needed was rated to be satisfied with the factor mean 2.60, when most of the employees are working from companies allocated huge amount of budget to put the necessary technologies needed for the operation and avoid hampering on it. The factor mean of 2.52 indicated that the company distributed the task evenly among the employees, in order avoid adding stress and anxiety responsibilities were lighter while working from home, the management created a program to support the employee’s adjustment during the work that even they are away from their office management provided a call center or hotline to response of theemployee’s query during specially when the system down and failure. Lastly, the factor mean of 2.00 management give incentives and motivation to their employees were deemed to be unsatisfied. The management should create a program plan to at least reward the or motivate employees if not financially maybe by other program to boost the morale during this pandemic.

**Table 3.**

Agreeable level based on cognitive component.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>μ</b>	<b>INT.</b>
1. The company conduct a mechanism to evaluate the employee’s performance while you are working at home.	2.52	A
2. The managers values your feedback during meetings	2.60	A
3. The company value your contribution to the organization.	3.00	A
4. Adequate opportunities for promotion and career development offered by the company while working at home.	2.40	D
5. The company provide activities, trainings and seminars to their employees while working at home.	2.00	D
<b>Total Mean</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>D</b>

<b>Legend:</b>	<u>Range:</u>
	<u>Interpretation:</u>
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree
2.51 - 3.25	Agree
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree

Table 3 contains the summarized data on the agreeable level based on the cognitive component. As revealed with the general mean of 2.50 were generally rated as disagree. Therefore, the employees were generally not agreed their company is doing their best to uplift the employee's morale during pandemic. The needs a clear mechanism on how the company should support their employees just like how they support the employees before COVID19. The factor mean of 2.52 indicated that the company conducts a mechanism to evaluate the employees performance while working from home was assessed to be Agreed, it only show that despite of online working still the management find ways to conduct performance evaluation according to standard. Likewise, the managers value the employees feedback during

the meetings was also rated as agree with the factor mean of 2.60. Regarding the company that value employee's contribution was rated Agree with the factor mean of 3.00. employees believe that with the amount of support showed by the employer it's enough to concluded that employer valued their contributor before and during pandemic. While adequate opportunities for promotion and career development offered by the company was rated disagree, therefore, the company while employees working from home, they added that that the company did not offer enough promotion nor career development even online programs. Therefore, the company at least provide the necessary as part of motivation. Lastly, the company provided seminars, trainings and activities to their employees was rated disagree with the factor mean of 2.00. Even if it is online work the company should provide appropriate training and seminars to maintain and improve the employee's knowledge specially during the remote working operation and there are some necessary changes from the standards and policies.

**Table 4.**

Agreeable level based on affective component

<b>Indicator</b>	<b><math>\mu</math></b>	<b><i>INT.</i></b>
1. Feeling of connection with your colleagues and customer while working from home.	2.50	D
2. Maintain the dynamism, work active and energetic while working from home.	2.48	D
3. Feeling easy to do both task work and household chores at one time.	3.21	A
4. Less anxiety and pressure while working at home.	3.00	A
5. Easy and fast in solving a work-related problem while working at home.	2.50	D
<b><i>Total Mean</i></b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>A</b>

<b>Legend:</b>	<u>Range:</u>
	<u>Interpretation:</u>
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree
2.51 - 3.25	Agree
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree

Table 4 shows the data on the agreeable level based on the affective component. As revealed with the general mean of 2.73 or agree taken from the five indicators. The factor mean of 2.50 or disagree in the indicator on feeling of connection with your colleagues and customer while working from home. The employees do not feel that while working from home they were able to maintain the connection with their colleagues and customer. Likewise, in maintaining the dynamism, work, active and energetic was rated as disagree with the factor

mean of 2.48. There are some issues in this indicator due to work from home set-up which sometimes you feel alone and no one to talk with specially when you have questions regarding the job employee feels that less dynamic, energetic, and not motivated. With regards to feeling easy to do both task the work and household chores together was rated agree with the factor mean of 3.21. Thus, respondents agreed that while working from home it is very easy to perform your job at the same time. Likewise, the feeling of less anxiety and pressure while working from home was rated agree or 3.00. respondents agreed that work from home style was less anxiety and pressure compare on working in the office daily in which you will see your boss every day. And lastly, for the easy and fast in solving a work-related problem while working at home was rated disagree with the factor mean of 2.50. according to the respondents there are sometime that they experience technical problem on the system and the management delays on the giving the solution on it, problems in the operation management response is not on time.

## Conclusion

All organization still have long way to go in battling this pandemic, many organizations have been reduced their number of employees and closed. However, some organizations are quite tough enough to face the challenges to remain the business and operating thru online or work from home. When the COVID19 infection soar high the government declared a series of lockdowns across Oman, all companies were needs to find ways to remain in business. Therefore, they adopted telecommuting strategy where employees still can continue their work at home. However, while working from home both management and employees are facing some challenges with regards to the level of job satisfaction if it was maintained or improve. Based on the above presented data it was found out that in some perspective telecommuting decrease the level of jobs satisfaction such as evaluative, cognitive, and affective components were rated evenly but some criteria were rated unsatisfied. In this pandemic were employees experiencing anxiety and afraid to be contracted with COVID19 virus while working from home. In this pandemic the normal working condition is totally different before, therefore, it is highly suggested that the

management must determine the revisit their current motivational strategy and come up of appropriate plan to fit in every strategy during this pandemic.

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