

“Workplace in COVID”

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ABSTRACT:

The study aimed to critically evaluate the changes that have taken place in the Saudi Arabian workplaces due to COVID-19. Descriptive design method was used in this study. The sample consisted 52 employees working in private sector Jeddah. The questionnaire was used to collect data. SPSS program to analyze the data used the descriptive analysis (Mean and Standard deviations) are the primary statistics used in the study. Results showed that 42.3% of the sample perceived neutral agree that there is really too little chance for promotion on job, and the benefit package is equitable. Moreover 44.2% satisfied received to Covid-19, 48.1% feel satisfied with chances for salary increases, 50% stated that when do a good job, receive the recognition for it that receive, 32.7% prefer working in workplace in COVID -19, 28.8% of participants were enjoy work at home, and 19.2% find that they have to work harder in work because of the effects that took place in the COVID-19. Also results showed that 40.4% working longer hours from home and the company direction about the workplace in Covid-19 increase productivity. 36.5% feel that they more productive working from home than working at work-place and have concerns about commuting to work. 32.7% they were healthy enough to return to work and feeling safe and supported to work. 17.3% have concerns about commuting to work. The results indicated that Covid-19 practices increased to some extent employee job satisfaction and productivity. Study recommended that Organizations that perform at high quality must come together from the Covid-19.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1-1 Background of Research

COVID-19 has a serious impact on the world, including economies, healthcare systems, and workplaces. The sudden attack of COVID-19 has affected the socio-economic and demographic condition of the industries of Saudi Arabia. The workplaces have changed a lot to cope up with the situation. Firstly, the workplaces got closed during the lockdown, and workers were bound to work from home. Besides, expatriates workers have left the jobs or taken leaves to return to their countries. Many companies were forced to laid-off employees due to the economic crisis which has enhanced the workload on existing employees. Then, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development has issued guidelines that are being strictly followed in the workplace after workers return to the workplace. These changes are affecting the workplace culture and performance of workers in this country.

1-2 Problem Statement

Due to changes in the workplace because of COVID-19, the performance of workers is getting impacted. As a result, the overall performance of the businesses is suffering which can negatively impact the national economy. This is the main problem that in this research explores. This research aims to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the workplace in private sector in Saudi. The changing dimension of work must be examined in order to analyze its possible impact on employee satisfaction and productivity.

1-2-1 Research Questions

- What are the changes that have taken place in the Saudi Arabian workplaces due to COVID-19?
- What are the challenges faced by workplaces during COVID-19?
- What are the positive and negative impacts of workplace changes due to COVID-19 on the job satisfaction and productively?

1-3 Research Objective

- To critically evaluate the changes that have taken place in the Saudi Arabian workplaces due to COVID-19.
- To understand the positive and negative impacts of workplace changes due to COVID-19 on the job satisfaction of employee and productively.
- To recommend practical solutions that help organizations to respond affectively for COVID-19.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is essential to measure the impacts of COVID-19 on the workplaces in Saudi Arabia. Analyzing the impacts can help different organizations to set a framework and proper policies to reduce the impacts and adopt changes to get acquainted with the new situation.

CHAPTER 2: LITRATURE REVIEWAND CONCEPTRUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 and lockdown has forced people to stay at home to maintain a physical distance. Stadtlander & Sickel (2021) said that remote working has shifted the workplace from office to home. The pandemic has impacted the workplace dynamics as both employers and employees are facing a new reality and adjusting to the rapidly changing scenarios. Different practices have changed in the workplaces that include conducting meetings virtually, working from home, and managing teams virtually. Moreover, Kniffin et al. (2021) argued that for maintaining the health of employees different aspects of workplaces have changed. This includes short and long-term modifications to maintain the well-being of employees. Modifications have been done on shifts of employees and the total capacity of employees reduced to maintain social distancing. In addition, different norms have been introduced in the workplaces such as temperature checking, awareness training, and wearing protective equipment such as masks and gloves. On the other hand, Lee (2021) contradicted that COVID-19 has serious impacts on unemployment as different organizations have suffered economic impacts. Different firms are forced to reduce the staffing levels due to economic impacts and many workers are laid off. This has increased stress levels in the current workers and these workers have also faced inequality regarding pay and benefits such as promotions.

During the pandemic, different firms are facing various challenges to managing the workplace. As mentioned by Kaushik & Guleria (2020), collaboration is the biggest challenge the organizations face to manage the employees during working from home. Maintaining collaboration helps to create innovative solutions in the workplace. Workplaces, with poor remote working frameworks such as lack of chat apps and data sharing software, have faced this challenge. Ho et al. (2020) argued that security is another essential concern because a firm has to deal with lots of essential and confidential information. Sifting the workplace at home has loosened the control of management in maintaining the security of data. COVID19 has also created different mental health problems in the workplace. Giorgi et al. (2020) said that lack of preventive measures, fear of getting infected is creating stress among employees. Stress level is high for those employees in the workplace who have a greater risk of exposure and limited resources. Workplaces related to healthcare have faced this issue severely as health workers are facing a huge workload and their risk of getting infected is quite high.

2.2 Covid-19 and job satisfaction

Despite the pandemic, economic crisis, mass layoffs, and an increase in unemployment, job satisfaction did not decline in 2020, and instead reached its highest level in 20 years, according to the Conference Board's job satisfaction survey in November 2020. It does not appear that switching to remote work has also affected job satisfaction, and overall job satisfaction has increased for the tenth year in a row (<https://www.world-heart-federation.org/2020>)

There is often a strong relationship between job satisfaction and labor market conditions. When labor market conditions are weak and the risk of job loss is higher, people are more likely to stay or end up in a job they do not like, while wages, benefits, and employee-related spending are more likely to be hurt. . Indeed, satisfaction in these categories declined in 2020, but less than expected. Amid the recession caused by the pandemic, the labor market has not behaved as usual when unemployment is so high. Instead, finding qualified workers is difficult, the resignation rate is high, and wage growth has not slowed significantly (Cartmill, C., 2020) .

While high unemployment usually means there are many job seekers for each vacancy, this has not been the case in this crisis. Many people on the list of the unemployed do not actively or seriously look for a job for various reasons, including: hope of returning to old jobs, generous unemployment benefits, fear of injury at work, and lack of childcare. As a result, the impact of weak labor market conditions on job satisfaction has been less severe than usual (Cartmill, C., 2020) .

At the same time, companies have dedicated more efforts and resources to supporting the well-being of their employees, which has helped maintain the overall job satisfaction rate of workers at a high level. In 2020, many factors of employee job

satisfaction that companies directly control, such as health plan, performance review process, flexible time plan, family and sick leave plan, supervision, and more, have improved significantly in 2020 (Bick, R. et al. 2020) .

While one of the biggest changes brought about by the pandemic has been the massive shift to remote work, the results of the job satisfaction survey indicate that remote workers were no more satisfied with their jobs than other workers. Balancing factors may have prevented remote working from affecting job satisfaction, and while some respondents appreciated the increased flexibility and lack of daily commuting, others may have experienced a lack of personal interaction and possibly a less than ideal working environment at home, either due to poor equipment, or Lack of space, or insufficient childcare and other dependent care options (Pratt, L. 2020) .

A noticeable improvement is expected in the economy in 2021 and beyond, to raise the level of job satisfaction. Given the availability of the vaccine and the vaccination of a large number of people, it is expected that the number of people infected with the Corona virus will decrease, and the economy is expected to begin to improve and the number of jobs will increase at an accelerating pace (Reisenwitz, C. 2020.) .

Strong growth in demand for employees is also likely to bring the unemployment rate down to nearly 4 percent by the end of this year. When the pandemic hit, the labor shortage seemed to be running out, but they were already back in action in 2021. According to a survey conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business in March, 42% of companies said they had vacancies so far, and in such an environment, the risk of Layoffs are less, more workers will look for and find the jobs they enjoy, and wages will rise. Reducing pressure on employees as the pandemic fades, and dealing with childcare crises may increase job satisfaction, too. In addition, most of the new jobs will be in professional jobs that tend to be more satisfying than manual services and routine office jobs (which are gradually being replaced by technology), which in turn will lead to increased job satisfaction overall. Many of the currently unemployed are likely to find work next year. And for those who work, their job satisfaction is likely to improve, not only in 2021, but thereafter. Many should hope for a reduction in unemployment, and an improvement in job satisfaction (Smith, J. 2020).

2.3 Covid-19 and Productively

With a comprehensive framework in place for key areas that affect employee well-being and the performance of individuals and teams, organizations may be more willing to adapt work arrangements to protect workers and contribute to government efforts to flatten the curve of new cases of disease, thus slowing the spread of the virus. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread around the world, its impact on labor markets is widespread, affecting most people to varying degrees. For many workers, the introduction of physical distancing measures, closures and related restrictions to flatten the infection curve has had dire consequences, including mandatory vacations (of uncertain duration), regular vacations, reduced working hours and wages, layoffs and job losses, as well as closures. However, for a significant portion of workers, the pandemic has led to a sudden increase in workload, as well as significant changes in work arrangements and working conditions, such as telecommuting or short-time work. With telecommuting, a certain number of aspects of work organization must be considered and respected to ensure employee health and safety (Alexander, D. 2020).

Research in the field of remote work has shown time and time again that employees who work from home tend to work longer hours than when they were working on the premises of the employer, partly because commuting time to the workplace has been replaced by work activities, and also because of changes in routine. To work and blurring the boundaries between paid work and personal life. Telecommuting can, in general, lead to longer working hours and moreFrom work during evenings and weekends (Eurasia Review. 2020.)

Qualitative research on the working hours of employees working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic also showed that home workers work overtime, with 38 percent of respondents saying they are more likely to work longer hours. One in four workers (27 %) who work from home as a result of the pandemic report that they work in their spare time to meet work requirements, and also according to a recent study, employees spend more time in individual meetings or team check-ins, due to dismissal. The physical between teams (Gómez-Jordana Moya R., 2020.)

Maintaining team performance and fulfilling commitments to stakeholders, customers and beneficiaries is one of the most important sources of stress (stress) for any remote team manager. For remote work to be effective, it must be based on dialogue and cooperation between management and workers and this becomes even more important when working remotely It is mandatory and occurs on the basis of full-time employment.

Studies show that the best way to manage remote employees is through a process called results-based management, in which the manager and employee alike agree on a common mechanism for measuring productivity; This can include setting goals, tasks, and milestones, and monitoring and discussing progress without reporting an excessive burden, giving workers the

flexibility and independence to organize their work without the manager having to constantly check on progress. Actions to consider could include (McParland, Cliona & Connolly, Regina. 2020).

Be very clear about the highly anticipated consequences of potential ambiguity and potential for misunderstanding, which, on the other hand, also leads to more empowerment and independence for remote workers in completing their tasks.

- Consider the following questions that can help determine the expected results from employees Can I recognize a completely satisfactory end product if I see it? What are the achievement criteria?
- Ensure descriptive, regular, and timely feedback to workers, by describing what workers have done, and focusing on those changes that will lead to the most significant improvement of the task and have the expected impact.
- Don't forget to give positive feedback about a job well done.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

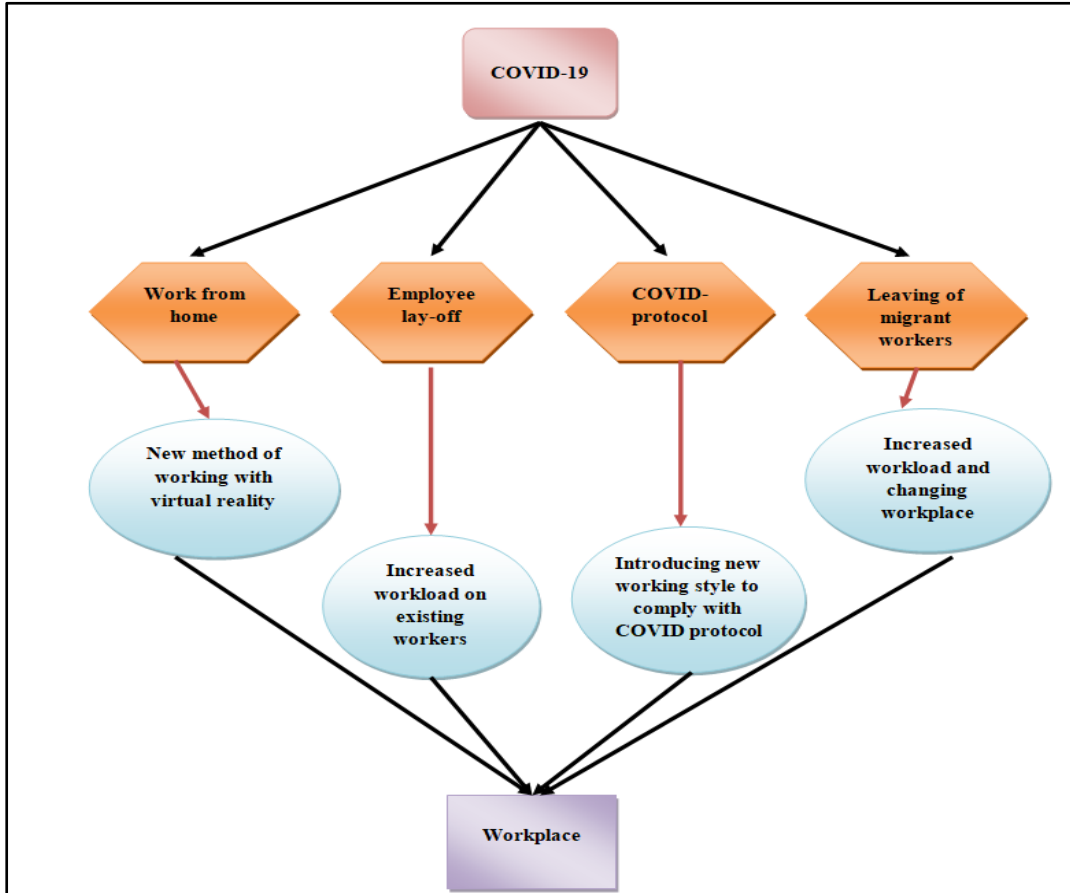


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

(Source: Created by the Author)

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 Research methodology

This research will follow the quantitative research method. According to Fryer, Larson-Hall & Stewart (2018), this method allows researchers to explain relationships between the variables. Moreover, it is helpful in gathering reliable data based on the practical experiences of participants.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This study is aimed to measure different aspects of COVID19 in workplaces that require obtaining factual data and proper interpretation. Thus, positive research philosophy is appropriate for this research as it depends on quantifiable observations, which requires statistical evaluation. Moreover, this philosophy allows researchers to collect a large number of samples. Additionally, this philosophy allows researchers to remain independent that means minimal interaction with research participants is required.

3.3 Research Approach

For conducting this research deductive approach will be appropriate. Azungah (2018) mentioned that this approach helps researchers to set hypotheses and analyze data to prove the hypotheses. In this study different hypotheses are set regarding the impact of COVID19 in workplaces of Saudi Arabia and data will be collected to prove those hypotheses. Adopting this research approach can help the researchers to move from a general perspective to a more specific one.

3.4 Research Strategy

This research study will use the strategy of survey for collecting data. Surveys can help to collect large amounts of fresh data from the target population (Knoke, Marsden & Kalleberg, 2017). In this study, a survey will be used to collect data regarding different impacts that workplaces are facing due to the occurrence of this pandemic. The survey is required to involve a large number of working individuals and collect their experience regarding the impact of COVID19 in their workplace. A questionnaire will be used to collect data that will be mailed to selected individuals.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The collected quantitative data will be statistically analyzed with the help of SPSS and EXCEL software. Graphical and tabular representation of data will be able to help the researcher to explain the demographics of the participants and their practical experience of workplace change due to COVID-19. Demographic analysis and evaluation of views by participants can help to test the hypothesis.

3.5.1 Population and Sample

In this research, a random sampling technique will be used to select the respondents. Here the target population of this research will be the workers of Saudi Arabia. A survey of at least 500 Saudi Arabian workers will be initiated. As per Sharma (2017), random sampling technique is an effective sampling process that provides equal opportunity to all individuals of a population to get selected in the research process. Participants will get detailed information about the purpose and the protocol of the study. After obtaining the written consent from the participants via Email, the data will be collected. Ethical considerations will be maintained while collecting data. Confidentiality of data and anonymity will be maintained.

3.5.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire contains three parts. First part is the sample profile, second part is Covid-19 and Job satisfaction (8 items), and part three is Covid-19 and productivity (7 items). The items options are (strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree).

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Sample profile

52 employees working in Jeddah participate on this study . Majority of respondents their work experience was in Up to 3 years 62.2% (n=36), 38.5% their educational level was High school (n=20), almost all were Saudi 73.1% (n=38). The vast majority of the respondents' were male 84.6% (n=44) . Almost all respondents (n=43) were in age group (20-30) years 82.7% . Most of respondents their department was (Engineering, Insurance, Military. Petroleum. Produce, Psychology) 28.8% (n=15). 42.3% (n=22) their job level was General manger (See Table 1).

Table.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents (n= 52)

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Work experience(years)		
Up to 3 years	36	69.2*
(3 to 5) years	8	15.4
(5 to 10) years	5	9.6
(10 to 20) years	3	5.8
More than 20	0	0.0
Educational Level		
High school	20	38.5*
Diploma	7	13.5
Bachelor Degree	18	34.6
Master degree	4	7.7
Doctor of Philosophy	2	3.8
Professional qualifications	1	1.9
Other	0	0.0
Nationality		
Saudi	38	73.1*
None-Saudi	14	26.9
Gender		
Male	44	84.6*
Female	8	15.4
Age (years)		
(20-30) years	43	82.7*
(30-40) years	5	9.6
(40-50) years	2	3.8
(50-60) years	2	3.8
Department		
Finance	3	5.8
Market	12	23.1
IT	9	17.3
Operation	5	9.6
Human Resources	8	15.4

Other(Engineering, Insurance, Military. Petroleum. Produce, Psychology)	15	28.8*
Job Level		
General manger	22	42.3*
Manager of Department	8	15.4
Supervisor	10	19.2
Analyst / Specialist	5	9.6
Other(Graphics design, Salesman, secretary, Teacher, cashier)	7	13.5

*indicates the highest percent

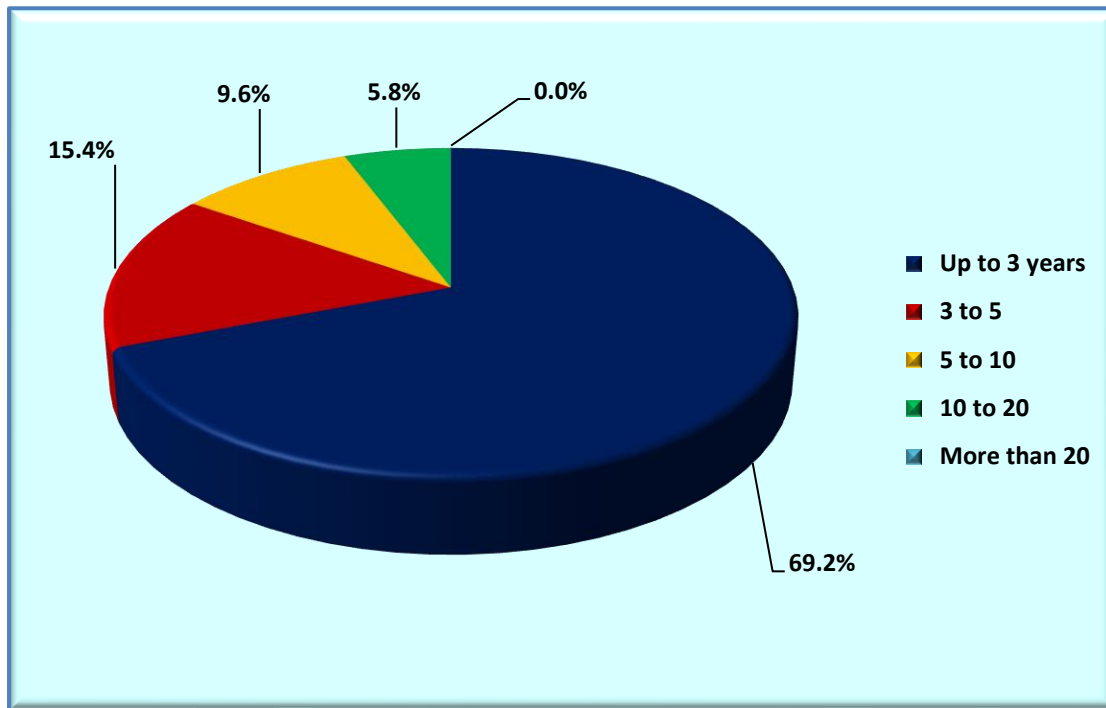


Fig.2 Work Experience

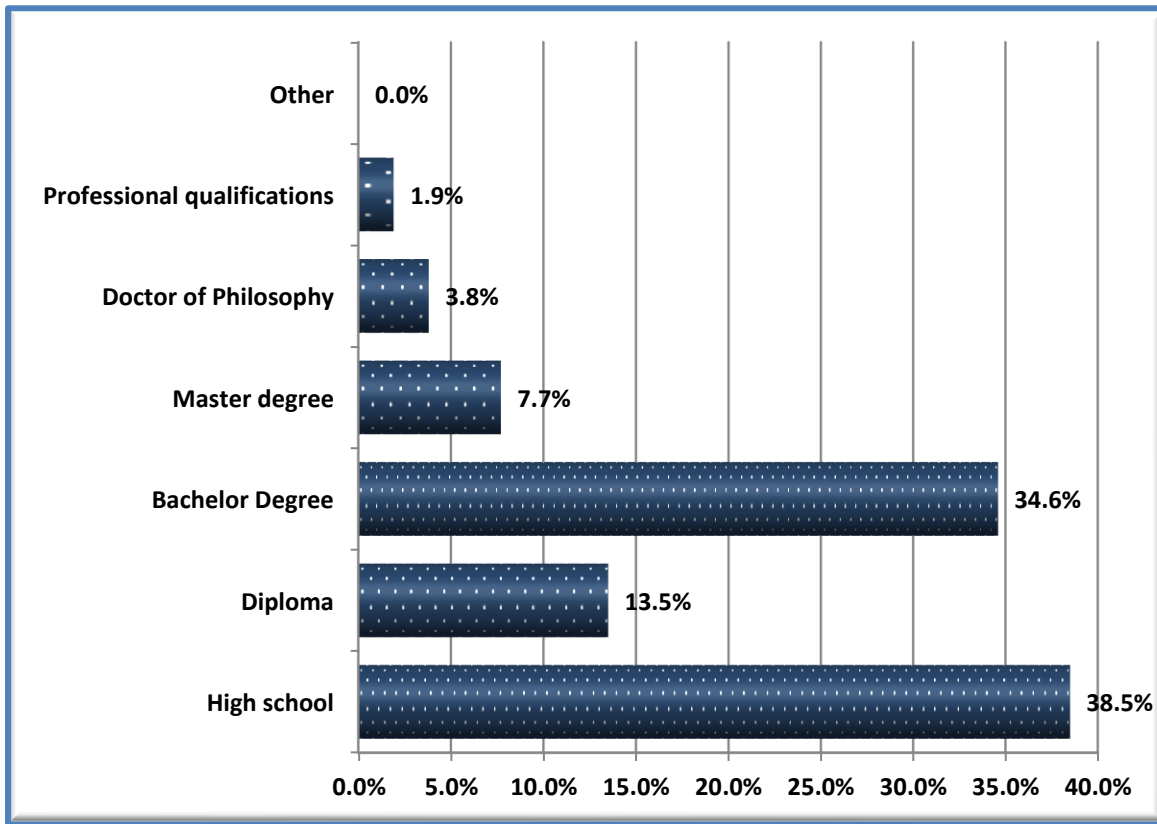


Fig.3

Educational Level

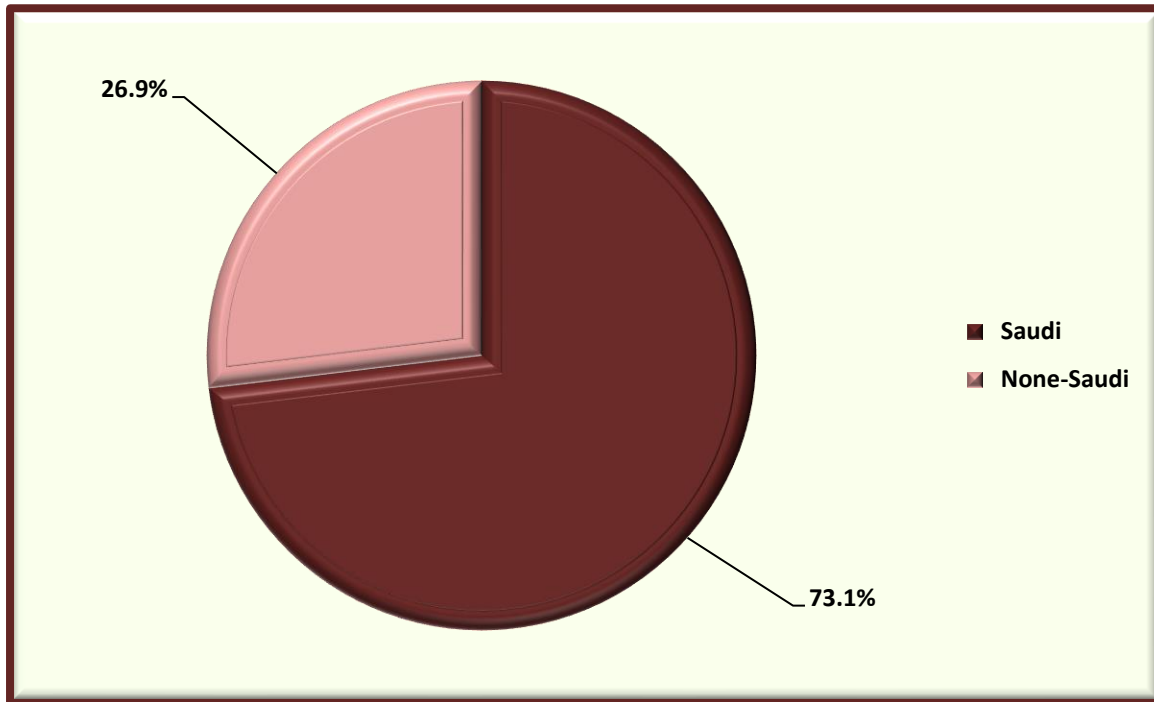


Fig.4

Nationality

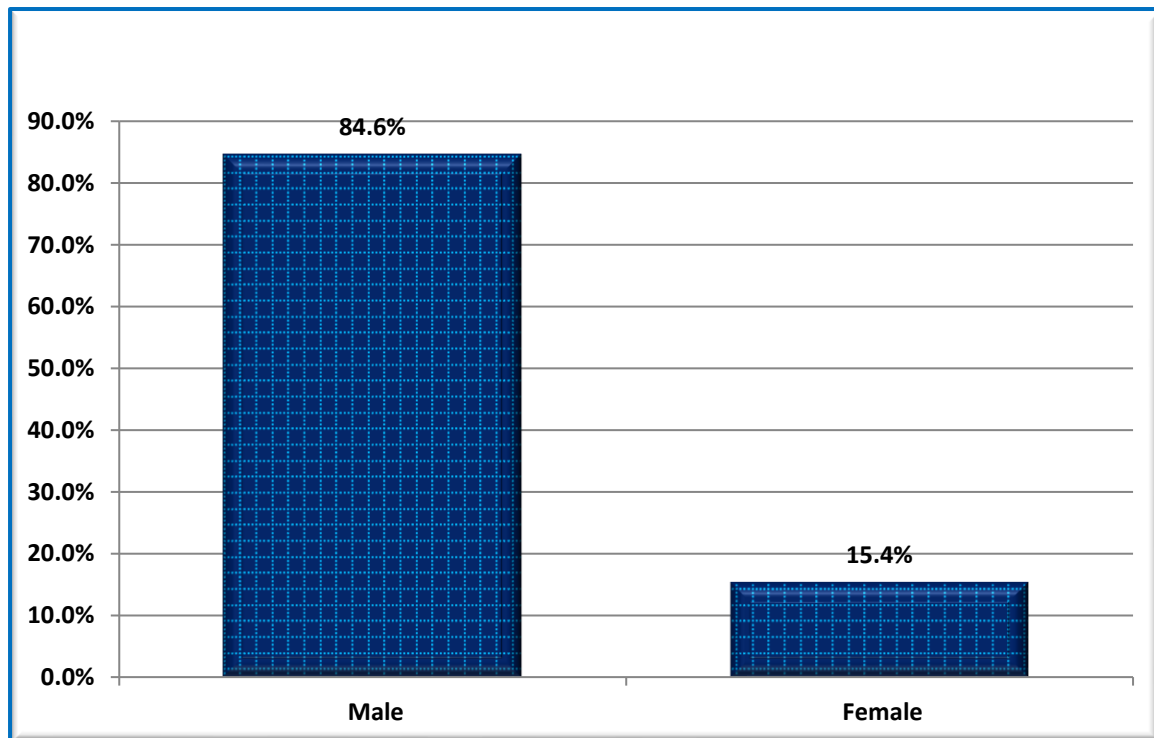


Fig.5 Gender

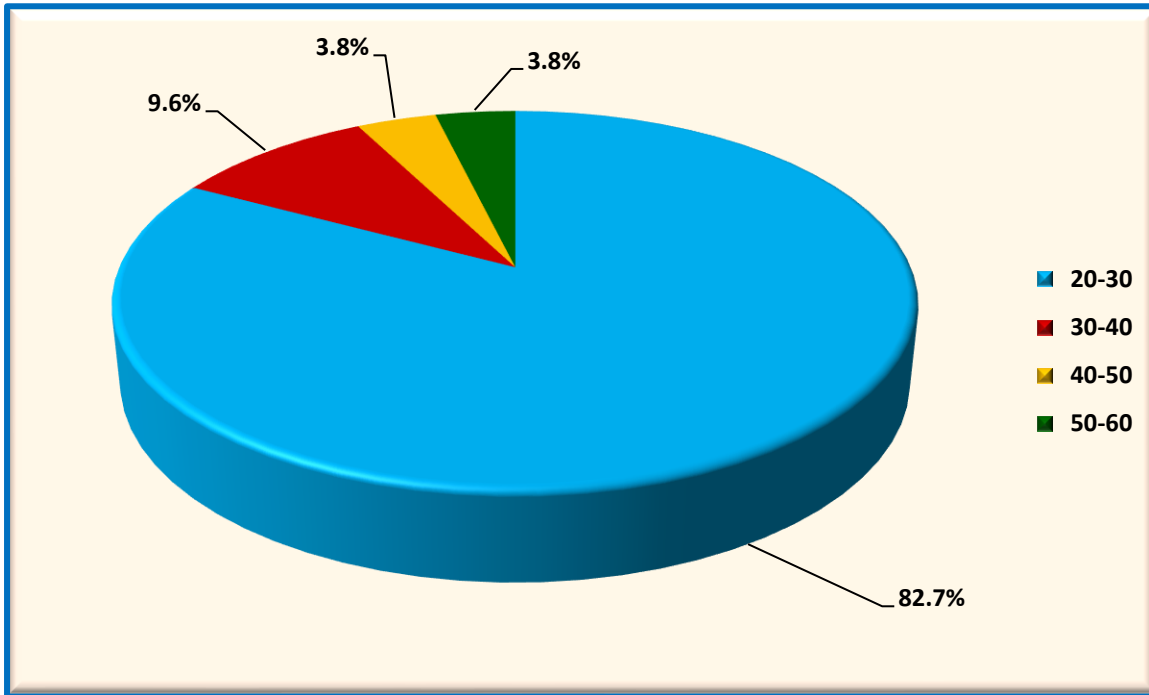


Fig.6 Age

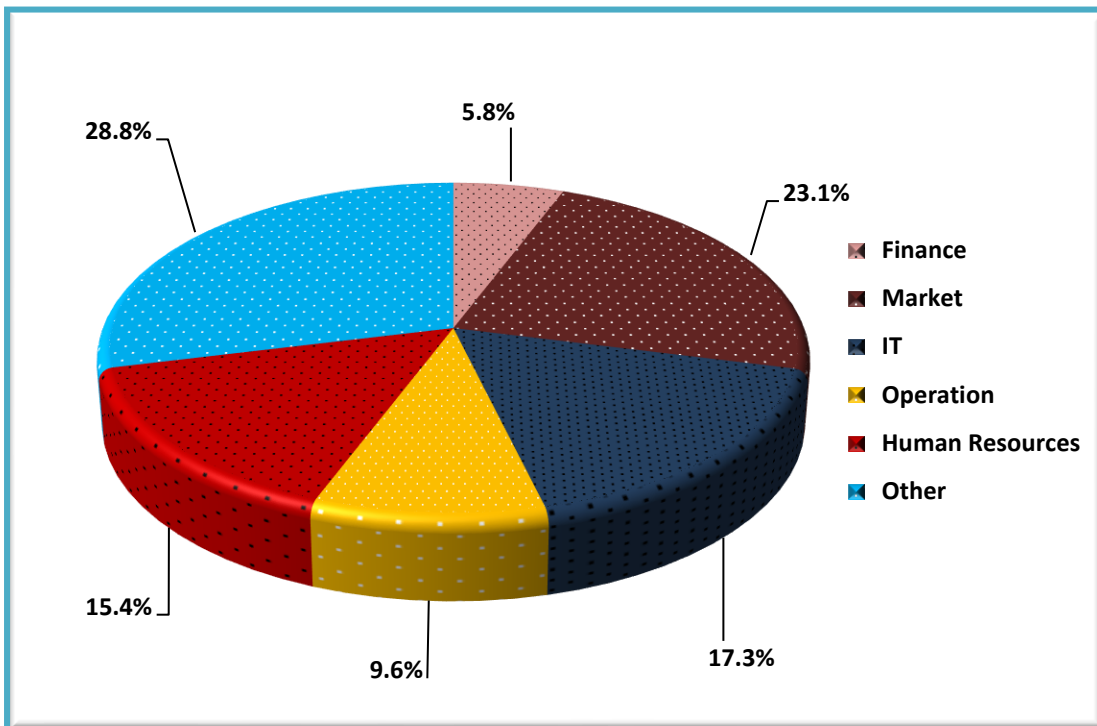


Fig.7 Department

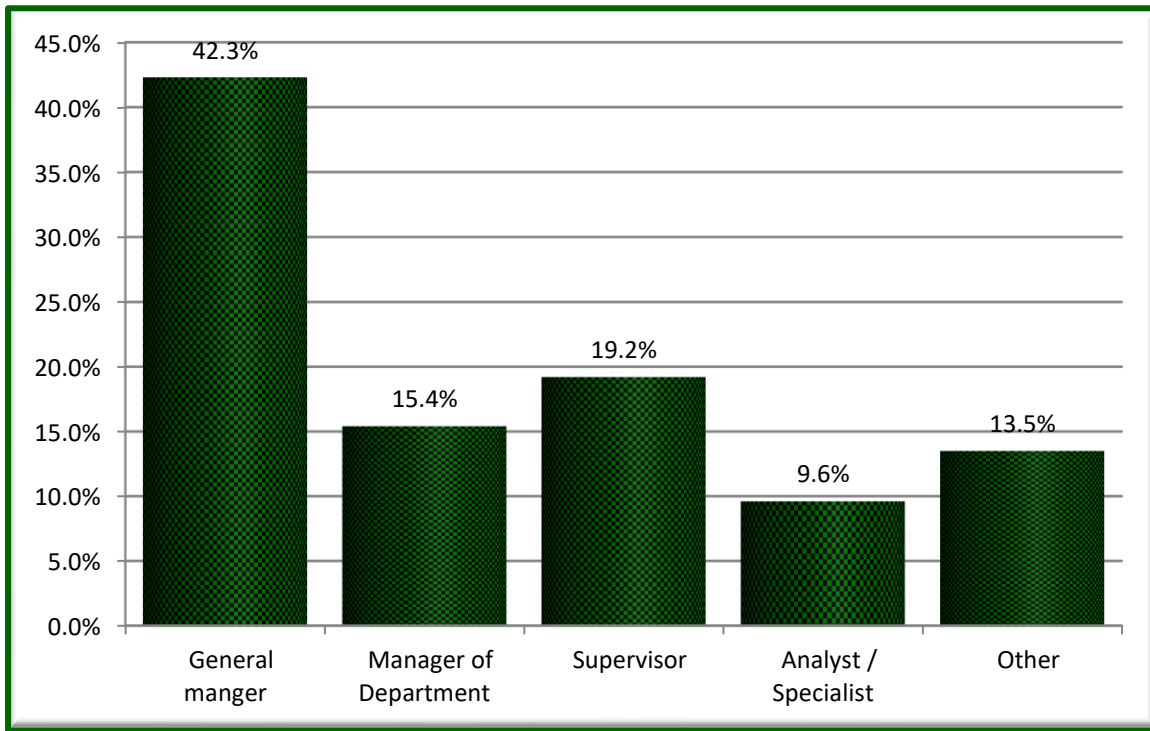


Fig.8 Job Level

3.6 Covid-19 and Job satisfaction

The respondents agree with " There is really too little chance for promotion on my job " with mean of (3.44 ± 1.13) , while they were neutral to "I prefer working in workplace in COVID- 19", "I find that I have to work harder in my work because of the effects that took place in the COVID-19", "The benefit package we have is equitable", "I enjoy work at home", "I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases", " When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive" and "I am satisfied with the benefits I receive to working in Covid-19" accounted (3.33 ± 1.23) , (3.29 ± 1.32) , (3.25 ± 1.24) , (3.06 ± 1.34) , (3.04 ± 1.14) , (2.96 ± 1.10) , and (2.88 ± 1.25) respectively (See Table 2).

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std.
	F(%)						
There is really too little chance for promotion on my job	11(21.2)	12(23.1)	22(42.3)	3(5.8)	4(7.7)	3.44	1.13
I am satisfied with the benefits I receive to working in Covid-19	8(15.4)	4(7.7)	23(44.2)	8(15.4)	9(17.3)	2.88	1.25
The benefit package we have is equitable	10(19.2)	10(19.2)	22(42.3)	3(5.8)	7(13.5)	3.25	1.24
I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases	7(13.5)	7(13.5)	25(48.1)	7(13.5)	6(11.5)	3.04	1.14
When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	5(9.6)	8(15.4)	26(50.0)	6(11.5)	7(13.5)	2.96	1.10
I prefer working in workplace in COVID -19	11(21.2)	12(23.1)	17(32.7)	7(13.5)	5(9.6)	3.33	1.23

I enjoy work at home	9(17.3)	11(21.2)	15(28.8)	8(15.4)	9(17.3)	3.06	1.34
I find that I have to work harder in my work because of the effects that took place in the COVID-19	11(21.2)	15(28.8)	10(19.2)	10(19.2)	6(11.5)	3.29	1.32

Table.2 Frequencies, percentages, mean and Std. of respondents' job satisfaction(n=52)

Mean (1.0-1.80 =Strongly disagree, 1.81-2.60=Disagree, 2.61-3.4=Neutral,

3.41-4.2=Agree, and 4.21-5.0=Strongly agree)

Std. = Standard Devotion. .

3.6.3 COVID – 19 and productivity

The respondents agreement degree was neutral, the highest mean was (3.19 ± 1.17) in favour of " I feel that I am more productive working from home than working at my work-place", while "I am healthy enough to return to work", "I have concerns about commuting to work", "The company direction about the workplace in Covid-19 increase productivity", "I feel safe and supported to work", " My productivity improved compared to before CVID-19", and " My productivity improved compared to before CVID-19 " accounted (3.13 ± 1.36) , (3.02 ± 1.21) , (2.98 ± 1.15) , (2.98 ± 1.32) , (2.87 ± 1.09) , , and (2.85 ± 1.47) respectively (See Table 2).

Table.3 Frequencies, percentages, mean and Std. of respondents' COVID and productivity (n=52)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std.
	F(%)						
I feel that I am more productive working from home than working at my work-place	7(13.5)	14(26.9)	19(36.5)	6(11.5)	6(11.5)	3.19	1.17
I am working longer hours from home	4(7.7)	9(17.3)	21(40.4)	12(23.1)	6(11.5)	2.87	1.09
The company direction about the workplace in Covid-19 increase productivity	5(9.6)	11(21.2)	21(40.4)	8(15.4)	7(13.5)	2.98	1.15
My productivity improved compared to before CVID-19	7(13.5)	15(28.8)	9(17.3)	5(9.6)	16(30.8)	2.85	1.47
I have concerns about commuting to work	7(13.5)	10(19.2)	19(36.5)	9(17.3)	7(13.5)	3.02	1.21
I am healthy enough to return to work	11(21.2)	9(17.3)	17(32.7)	6(11.5)	9(17.3)	3.13	1.36
I feel safe and supported to work	9(17.3)	8(15.4)	17(32.7)	9(17.3)	9(17.3)	2.98	1.32

CHAPTER4: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND RESEARCH'LIMITATION & RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter include the Summary of the findings about Covid-19 and job satisfaction , productively and recommendations Limitations of the research.

4.2 Summary of the key findings

The finding of the study clarify the responses of participants for items that measure the Covid-19 job satisfaction and productively.

4.2.1 Covid-19 and job satisfaction

42.3% of participants neutral agree that there is really too little chance for promotion on job, and the benefit package is equitable, 44.2% satisfied with the benefits receive to working in Covid-19 , 48.1% feel satisfied with chances for salary increases , 50% stated that When do a good job, receive the recognition for it that receive, 32.7% prefer working in workplace in COVID -19, 28.8% of participants were enjoy work at home, and 19.2% find that they have to work harder in work because of the effects that took place in the COVID-19.

4.2.2 Covid-19 and productively

Results showed that 40.4% working longer hours from home and the company direction about the workplace in Covid-19 increase productivity. 36.5% feel that they more productive working from home than working at work-place and have concerns about commuting to work. 32.7% they were healthy enough to return to work and feeling safe and supported to work. 17.3% have concerns about commuting to work.

4.3 Recommendations

1. Organizations that perform at high quality must come together from the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Interrelationships are crucial to organizations to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment.
3. Home technology can be enhanced through the information environment and review of the company's internal laws, regulations and rules.
4. providing a psychological and financial support to employees, such as emergency assistance, additional insurance coverage, regular payroll payments.
5. Focus on organizing a safe work environment: purchase of medical equipment and supplies (e.g., thermometers, antibacterial products), self-monitoring of employees' health, and disinfection of workplaces.

4.4 Limitations of the research

Due to pandemic situations, direct face-to-face interviews cannot be conducted, which is essential for collecting in-depth knowledge about the study area. Thus, this is a major limitation of this study that can be conducted in future studies. Future researchers can focus on different sectors in terms of investigating the impact of COVID-19 on different workplaces. Moreover, this research will be limited to the perspective of workers. Future researchers can evaluate the perspective of managers in this regard also.

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"مكان العمل في COVID"

إعداد الباحث:

سعد عبدالله العتيبي

الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى تقييم التغيرات التي حدثت في أماكن العمل في المملكة العربية السعودية بسبب COVID-19. تم استخدام طريقة التصميم الوصفي في هذه الدراسة. تكونت العينة من 52 موظفًا يعملون في القطاع الخاص بجدة. تم استخدام الاستبيان لجمع البيانات. تم استخدام برنامج SPSS لتحليل البيانات، حيث كانت التحليلات الوصفية (المتوسط والانحراف المعياري) هي الإحصائيات الأساسية المستخدمة في الدراسة. أظهرت النتائج أن 42.3% من العينة يشعرون بالحياد ويوافقون على أنه لا توجد فرص كافية للترقية في العمل، وأن حزمة الفوائد عادلة. علاوة على ذلك، كان 44.2% راضين عن استجابتهم لـ COVID-19، و 48.1% يشعرون بالرضا عن فرص زيادة الرواتب، و 50% صرحوا بأنه عندما يقومون بعمل جيد، يتلقون الاعتراف لذلك، و 32.7% يفضلون العمل في مكان العمل خلال COVID-19، و 28.8% من المشاركين يستمتعون بالعمل من المنزل، و 19.2% يجدون أنهم يجب أن يعملوا بجدية أكبر في العمل بسبب الآثار التي حدثت خلال COVID-19. كما أظهرت النتائج أن 40.4% يعملون لساعات أطول من المنزل وأن توجيه الشركة بشأن مكان العمل خلال COVID-19 زاد من الإنتاجية. يشعر 36.5% أنهم أكثر إنتاجية عند العمل من المنزل مقارنة بالعمل في مكان العمل ولديهم مخاوف بشأن التنقل إلى العمل. 32.7% كانوا بصحة جيدة بما يكفي للعودة إلى العمل ويشعرون بالأمان والدعم للعمل. 17.3% لديهم مخاوف بشأن التنقل إلى العمل. أشارت النتائج إلى أن ممارسات COVID-19 زادت إلى حد ما من رضا الموظفين عن العمل وإنتاجيتهم. أوصت الدراسة بأن المنظمات التي تعمل بجودة عالية يجب أن تتعاون بعد COVID-19.