

# AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC FOR BAHRAIN SMEs

Tamer M. Alkadash <sup>1</sup>, Fatima Alamarin <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Gulf University, Bahrain

<sup>2</sup> Student, Administrative Science Department, Gulf University, Bahrain

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to add insight to the integrative conceptual framework on employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic for Bahrain SMEs. The literature review indicates the effects of motivation, remote work environment, and employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic. A positivism research approach was used and data were collected through a literature review. The findings from the literature review indicate motivation, remote work environment, and employee satisfaction has a significant effect on employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic. Also, we addressed some potential guidance and suggestions to help future researchers study the other variables that could impact their employee performance during covid-19.

## Keywords

Employee Performance during the covid-19 pandemic, job satisfaction, motivation, remotely work environment, and Bahrain SME's.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globally COVID 19 moves from public health to an economic crisis, it will be a great opportunity for employees, entrepreneurs, policy decision-makers, and HR managers to identify new norm or trend under the pandemic of COVID 19, to forecast where to spend our energies and how others SMEs will react (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020).

In Bahrain, Entrepreneurs play an important role to recognize and react to opportunities to benefit from positive social change. COVID 19 also facilitated entirely of new business creation and new categories of business altogether. small and medium Entrepreneurs businesses that choose to capitalize on circumstantial changes will succeed and the ones that don't will get disrupted. (Serra, & Thiel, 2019).

According to (Zeebaree, Shukur, & Hussan, (2019) human resources consider one of the important for enterprise organizations because it is related to an important and effective element in achieving the goals of the organization, which is "the human being", as the human resources department states that the employee must be taken care of through the fulfillment of employee obligations this dealt with the human resources department responsibility because of this department's part to the employee's performance.

Performance can be defined as the result of work that a person or group of people can achieve in an organization (Eliyana, & Ma'arif, 2019), according to the authority and responsibility of each of them to achieve the goals of the SME's organization and often rely on the good performance of an employee. The performance of employees is important in all companies and that is because it affects the success or failure of the work as it has a great impact on reaching the goals of the enterprise organizations, and the needs of customers. When the Bahrain SME's, sets the goals and seeks to achieve them, the performance of the employees affects achieving these goals. And since the performance of employees and their pursuit to achieve the goals of the company has an impact on the success or failure of the organization, institutions seek to measure the performance of employees and the factors that affect performance to improve the performance of employees as much as possible and make it effective, quality and efficient, and we must put in a while. The consideration that the individual performance of an employee affects in one way or another the performance of other employees and thus the performance of the organization.

The study has its important significance in terms of the Business Sectors (SMEs) during the covid-19 pandemic, SME's can use them if they face any

problem related to the performance of employees, as this research includes a set of main factors that any company in SME's Bahrain should know that its affect performance of its employees in Bahrain SME's and they may affect their employees' performance, its importance lies in that it will help to overcome the problems that affect employee performance, and It may help avoid these problems as well. Also, The study contributes to future researchers by adding important data to carry out research and look at the effects of a covid-19 pandemic on human resources management practices in SMEs.

#### *Research Needs*

The COVID-19 virus originates from China, starting in December of 2019 in which has significantly affected the global economy, especially the startups and Small Business Sectors (SMEs) impacted violently, as they have scarcer funds to manage predicaments. The prompt prevention was taken by the government around the world to limit virus transmission that impact of prodigious disruption economically to entrepreneurship with all scale of businesses worldwide. Most enterprises are facing difficulty to operate, especially for small to medium-sized business. The problems are more critical than for another size of business as a result of the considerable decline in demand for service and goods. SMEs also have limited ability to counterattack the possibility occurred risks during the pandemic of COVID 19 and effort the costs due to slowed down business activities. The pandemic COVID-19, it leads to most startup newly formed businesses have dismissed their employees with consequences of the lake of productivity, widespread unemployment, and impacted the global supply chain of both goods and services in which resulted from the significant reduction in revenue that leads to the downturn of worldwide economies, especially for entrepreneurship and all small business sector. Most of the businesses are facing unprecedented challenges during a catastrophic time of COVID-19.

The first preventives to lock down the country with the concrete result is a hard knock on the grounding of a large mass of operations, i.e. restriction of the consistency of buoyancy of the food retail, retailer, and agricultural sector in traveling domestically and abroad. Like many

markets, tourism, aviation, sports, arts, architecture, event management, construction, consumer goods, utilities (personal care), and transport were all seriously affected. The upheaval arising from the dissemination of COVID-19 is disastrous for small companies. An analysis of the evidence on the effect of COVID-19 on micro, small and medium-sized businesses shows that the economic effects of this pandemic will intensify for small enterprises and their workers until it improves. (Liguori, & Pittz, 2020). According to Kawakami, et al., (2020), a positive correlation between the number of activities and fear and anxiety about COVID-19 could indicate an increased understanding of COVID-19 among employees as a result of the action taken. To minimize disruption, we studied the change in HR practices to maximize employee performance for SME's in Bahrain. However, there is a pure need to study the impact of employee performance during covid-19 in the context of small and medium enterprises employees in Bahrain.

This study presents realistic and tactical alternatives to HR, policymakers, managers to overcome the confusion of employee performance in small and medium enterprises especially in Bahrain, and hazards that are increasingly widespread in a pandemic market climate today.

## **2. Literature review**

The importance of literature review is that it can provide the foundation for knowledge about the research to be worked on, and to Identifying gaps in previous research. The literature review can identify the differences and conflicts between researchers in other researches, and attempt to answer open questions that have not been answered in previous researches.

### **Motivation and Employee's Performance**

**Motivation:** Motivation needs to be improved to make the employees feel more confident and they feel that their supervisory is believe in their capability so that they move to perform more, to feel that they deserve this motivating, which will provide a positive impact on developing employee performance.

Motivation is the process of supporting and motivating employees to take measures that would achieve goals, and inform employees of their importance and effective role in the organization,

to make them feel a good psychological feeling. Results indicate there was a good relationship between motivation and employee performance and the research results showed that employee motivation influences employee performance (Bangun, et al., 2018; Ciobanu, Androniceanu, & Lazaroiu, 2019; Lestari, et al., 2020; AlMaamary, et al., 2021). The results of correlation analysis in this study have demonstrated that the motivation of employees has a positive relationship with employee performance. The results reveal that monetary rewards, job enrichment have significant and positive effects on employee performance while training has a strong negative and highly insignificant correlation on employee performance also results indicate there was a good relationship between motivation and employee performance and The research results showed that employee motivation influences employee performance of Hormuud Company in Mogadishu Somalia. The results of correlation analysis in this study have demonstrated that the motivation of employees has a positive relationship with employee performance, which is statistically significant ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ). This means that enhancing employee motivation positively improves employee performance. Some employees were very little motivated as there is no recognition after a good performance and no feedback after the performance of duties so the organization, has to come up with a strategy that can be the result which the organization, can use competitive strategy in the market and also their workers become satisfied and loyal then the point of the study be reached which was employee performance those produce more and that cannot be true unless the quality of human resource management has a critical influence on the performance of the company. (Mohamud, Ibrahim, & Hussein 2017).

The effect of motivation on employee performance during covid-19 is positive and significant (Lestari, et al., 2020). Thus, it can be said that work motivation has a direct positive effect on employee performance. The results of this study reinforce the theory that the right motivation for employees will have an impact on the employee's performance (Oren et al., 2013). The results of this study are also consistent with research conducted by Pancasila who said that motivation is closely related to the emergence of a

tendency to work and perform well to achieve goals (Pancasila et al., 2020). John's research results also show that work motivation affects employee performance (John et al., 2012).

Additionally, Siddiqui, (2019) reviews the impact on job efficiency of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The research study aimed to explore how extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can inhibit or improve employee motivation levels. In this post, some motivational ideas have also been explored, seeking to better explain when and how workers are motivated. It is claimed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has a huge influence on the success of workers. To research the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on employee efficiency, his study analyzed 60 female and 143 male respondents ( $n = 203$ ) from the banking sector to explore the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the success of workers. There has been a positive relationship between workers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their performance. Employee efficiency also continues to improve with the rise of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Some of the future directions and suggestions have already been addressed so that future scholars can help study the other constructs that can influence the efficiency of workers. The following hypothesis is accordingly developed based on the mentioned literature review

*H1: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.*

### **Remotely Work environment and Employee's Performance**

Remote working environment: The employee work environment needs to be improved to make the employees feel more safe and secure, and thus will make the employees feel good while they are working and that make them seeks to achieve more, which will provide a positive impact on developing employee performance.

The work environment can be defined as all factors that surround the employee at work, as the work environment includes psychological and well-being aspects as well as the physical environment, and the work environment is a major element in influencing the employees within the organization. Chandra & Priyono (2015) study indicates the results of the analysis proved a significant influential work environment on performance which says that the work

environment is one that exists surrounding the workers or everything who wants someone who can affect the work itself in implement tasks—tasks that are charged. Many factors affect the performance of employees in a work such as the working environment. To implement the job effectively and efficiently required the existence of a working environment capable of supporting implementation work properly. Adjustment of a good system of production one is not supported with a satisfying work environment within the school. The student in a work environment will have a direct influence against an employee who worked in the schools. The emergence of a reaction in the form of attitude, intensive turnover, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction are decreased over the existence of the perception of job insecurity, found that job insecurity or unsafety is correlated negatively with the performance and positive with the presence of security and safety in the work environment.

Additionally, Ramli, (2019) has studies on the work environment, job satisfaction, and employee performance in health services, The study used a quantitative approach where the for sample = 82 employees of Rumah Sakit Swasta in Jakarta. The result indicates work environment has a positive effect on job satisfaction and employee performance, and job satisfaction does have a positive involvement on the employee's performance of Rumah Sakit Swasta in Jakarta. The following hypothesis is accordingly developed based on the mentioned literature review

*H2: There is a significant relationship between remote work environment and employee performance.*

### **Job satisfaction and Employee's Performance**

Job satisfaction: It is imperative to try to obtain the highest level of job satisfaction with the employee because it affects the achievement of the company's goals, where when the employee's job satisfaction is at a high level, which will provide a positive impact on the employee's performance.

Job satisfaction or what is called employee satisfaction is defined as the emotional response that an employee faces when he is directed at work or when he is doing his job. Job satisfaction is an essential element in all organizations, and we

must bear in mind that job satisfaction varies from one employee to another.

Job satisfaction has an influence on employee performance, from hypothesis testing then analyze the results show that job satisfaction has an effect on employees on performance. The study of (Chandra & Priyono 2015, Shibami, et al., 2019) shows that the job satisfaction influence toward Performance marked positive indicates job satisfaction's direct effect on performance, which means an increase in job satisfaction will lead to the increased performance.

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*H3: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.*

### **3. Conclusion, Recommendation, and Limitation**

The purpose of this study is to examine the integrative conceptual framework on employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic for Bahrain SMEs. The literature review indicates the effects of motivation, remote work environment, and employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic. The previous studies indicate that motivation, remote work environment, and job satisfaction affect employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic. As the motivation has significantly affected the employee's performance, the more motivating the better employee performance during the covid-19 pandemic. The work environment significantly affects the employee's performance, so the safer the environment, the better the employee performance. Job satisfaction significantly affects the performance of employees, so the higher implantations of job satisfaction, the better the performance during the covid-19 pandemic.

The researchers recommended SEM's companies in Bahrain to expected to place the motivation,

work environment, and job satisfaction factors at the center of attention because they have great importance in influencing employee performance and thus affecting the achievement of the company's goals. Constant and continuous motivation is important to develop the employee's spirit of giving and make him aspire to more achievement. Work environment safety is an important factor that helps the employee feel comfortable at work and thus makes him move forward to achieve the company's goals, and as for job satisfaction, it is a factor that has a great impact on the performance of the employee because the employee's sense of job satisfaction gives the motivation to increase the performance and thus achieve the goals of the organizations.

Research design, lack of studies, and language barriers consider the main limitation of this study face other researchers also can use different research designs and use From the above, another independent variable that affects employee performance is the remote work environment. The results suggest that small and medium-sized enterprises need to pay attention to the morale, remote work atmosphere, and job satisfaction variables to sustain optimal employee efficiency, especially by online working during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study also has practical implications for Small Business Sectors SMEs in Bahrain during the COVID-19 period: it was important to implement strategic steps related to motivation, the remote work environment, and job satisfaction on employee performance.

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