

Understanding Employee Performance During The Pandemic For Better Sustainability

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Abstract

This study aimed to study employee performance during the pandemic and to understand if there is any significant difference between males and females working remotely during the pandemic. Also, it was aimed to understand if there is any significant difference in employees' performance working in different sectors. A descriptive study was conducted using convenience sampling and data was collected using Google Forms. Independent t- test and one-way ANOVA were performed for hypothesis testing. It was found that there is no significant difference between the performance of males and females working during the pandemic in the digital/remote mode. Also, it was found that employees working in different sectors had the same performance during the pandemic. The results of the study indicate that males and females had faced similar kinds of issues and hence have no significant difference in their performance levels. Also, employees from different sectors experienced similar kinds of issues while working remotely in the digital mode. Working remotely in the digital mode was a different way of working rather than the old style of working. Employees had to adapt to this new style of working due to the pandemic and it paved the way for discussions about new ways of working in the future and in uncertain times. So the study helps understand employees' issues and problems and helps in resolving those problems for devising organisational policies for a successful and sustainable business in the future.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Remote Working, Sustainability, Digital Working.

1 Introduction

Employee Performance is an important measurable aspect that helps in knowing how well the employees are completing their assigned tasks and responsibilities and it is linked with organisational performance and success. During the pandemic, everything was turned upside down including the way of working. It was a completely different way of working and employees and organisations had to adapt to it despite a new array of challenges. To understand the employee's perspective regarding this new mode of working and to have an idea about their performance during that time a descriptive study was conducted.

It is especially important to remain competitive in the era of globalization. Also, to be sustainable in the future it is very important to manage human resources efficiently and effectively. And for that it is important to understand employee performance and how it got affected during the pandemic in the digital/remote working mode. Besides acquiring the best human resources, it is also especially important to use them optimally. They need to be recruited very carefully after due consideration of their merits and thus they are developed to achieve an acceptable level of performance. Therefore, organizations should find ways to encourage and improve employee performance because their performance will ultimately affect the company's performance.

Employee performance is the successful completion of tasks by selected people, as determined by the leader or organization according to predetermined standards, while effectively and efficiently using resources available in changing environments (Tinofirei, 2011). Employee performance is defined as the extent to which an employee performs his or her duties and completes required tasks. It refers to the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of their production. Performance also measures an employee's value to the organization. An employee is a valuable investment for the company and therefore the return on investment of each employee should also be large enough.

Employee performance is a broader term that includes both economic and operational aspects. This includes almost all competitive and manufacturing excellence goals, whether

related to reliability, punctuality, quality and relationships, interpersonal cooperation, etc.

Furthermore, employee performance can be described as an umbrella term for all the concepts considered. like the success of a company and all its activities. Employee performance is determined by emotional, physical, and practical factors, but in general employee performance includes measuring some quantitative metrics such as profit, profit per employee, and output per employee. Furthermore, measuring employee performance based on quantitative parameters gives misleading indications because it only serves as a partial measure of performance.

2 Literature Review

Hoque and Hussain (2002) reported on the performance management practices of four Japanese banks. They also explained why banks adopt non-financial performance measures. Their research was qualitative. For the study, data were collected using a multi-site study, comparing different sites of multiple cases. From the larger list, four banks were selected, namely urban and cooperative banks. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the bank's senior management and they were asked to rate the non-financial performance measure against the financial performance on a three-point scale according to their respective ratings. Four different banks concluded that different institutional factors forced them to use non-financial performance measures. The researcher identified many factors, which are economic conditions, competition, technological advances, bank characteristics, central bank control, political pressure, professional limitations subjects, strategic management, costing practices, senior management culture, and international financial standards. Of these, economic constraints are considered the most important factor, followed by central bank control over banks and the tendency for organizations to copy the best practices of others.

Sims (2002) explored the area of employee satisfaction and performance and evaluated the KC Hotel in New Orleans and also studied measures to improve employee satisfaction and motivation. This study was qualitative. It applied and tested a model in the restaurant industry in which individual career orientation measures the influence on employee performance, i.e. high job performance or low job performance, has a deeper

impact on job satisfaction, i.e. high level of satisfaction or low level of satisfaction. For research purposes, secondary data was used. The first was a satisfaction survey of 4,444 employees and the second involved performance appraisals of 4,444 kitchen employees. Then, the researcher collected data and discussed it with all employees to conclude. Finally, it was concluded that there is a relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance. It was further concluded that communications have contributed significantly to improving this relationship.

Hakala (2008) studied various aspects of performance to measure the performance of 4,444 employees. The researcher came up with indicators to evaluate employee performance. These 16 indicators are Quantity, Speed, Quality, Profitability, Absenteeism, Creativity, Policy Compliance, Personal Appearance, Gossip, Supervisor Evaluation, Self-Evaluation, Peer Review, Group Review, Review Center, 360 Degree Review and Management by Objectives.

Kazan and Gumus (2013) have measured the performance of the employees of the public sector Banks. To measure the performance of the employees they considered the impact of a few factors like salary, promotions, institutional commitment, relation with administration, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Opinion of employees, and Physical work environment on performance. To carry out the study, a sample of 500 employees out of a population of 20,000 people was selected. Data was collected using pretested questionnaires. Collected data was analysed using regression analysis and correlation analysis. They concluded that salary, job satisfaction, promotion, and employee relationships do not have statistically significant effects on employee performance. According to research, a unit change in motivation and engagement will lead to an increase of more than 50% (0.556 units) in performance and management will lead to an increase of 0.14 units in efficiency. The budget has no significant impact on performance.

Koopmans (2014) worked on developing various indicators to measure the individual performance of employees in the workplace. He developed an individual job performance questionnaire and to develop this questionnaire he identified the existing literature on the topic. Existing questionnaires, interviews, and consultation to get the best results for the final

scale development. Testing of the questionnaires was carried out in the field to obtain the best results. It also systematically reviews the literature on individual job performance to study it in detail and integrates the conceptual framework to arrive at a heuristic conceptual framework of individual job performance. To evaluate, a total of 2867 studies were considered, and of these, only 107 were considered eligible. 4,444 of these 65 articles, 11 book chapters, and 31 theses were present. Based on 4,444 assessments, it found four key dimensions, namely task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. The questionnaire was tested with blue, pink, and white employees and the final questionnaire was developed on this basis. Furthermore, it achieved its goal by developing and validating a short, comprehensive questionnaire covering items out of 18 on the IWP and benefiting everyone as it covers all aspects. The individual job performance policy applies to all 4,444 workers in the professional field.

Pradhan and Jena (2017) studied the perspectives of business researchers and practitioners to understand their perceptions of the concept of workplace performance. Based on this, they attempted to create a 42-item scale and validated it empirically. During the empirical testing, 4 items were derived and the final scale of 38 items was used to collect data from 361 executives of manufacturing and service organizations. Data were collected using Google survey forms, Linked In, Personal survey interviews, and by sending personal emails. They achieved three separate scores, which are: Task performance; Adaptive performance; and Contextual performance through exploratory factor analysis. The collected data was analysed using structural equation modelling. The study has revealed that there is a positive association between the demographic variables; age, gender, years of experience in the present organization, managerial levels, and employee performance, and stated that the three factors of employee performance have been independently validated. It has also been suggested that we can cross-validate the instrument in different industries and different cultures. Moreover, further suggestions were made to include moderators and mediators to extend the scope and the present coverage of the study.

Chatzoglou and Diamantidis (2018) examined the correlation between several factors such as business factors, job factors,

and employee factors, and their impact on employee performance. For research purposes, they used 4 factors related to the company, 6 factors related to employees, and 3 factors related to work. These factors were analysed using a structural equation modelling approach. Data were collected using self-structured questionnaires. They concluded that work factors, organizational climate, and management support have significant direct and indirect effects on employee performance. Results-oriented performance includes on-time production, technical acquisition, goal achievement, quality compliance, customer management, and job retention due to office needs. Social performance concepts include teamwork, reliability, cooperation, and interpersonal relationships.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study employee performance of working professionals working during the pandemic in the digital/remote mode.
2. To compare and analyse employee performance during the pandemic in different industries.
3. To understand the employees' perspective on working in digital/remote mode for better sustainability in the future.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

(H0): There is no significant difference between employee performance scores of males & females working during the Pandemic in the digital/remote mode.

(HA): There is a significant difference between employee performance scores of males & females working during the Pandemic in the digital/remote mode.

Hypothesis 2

(H0): There is no significant difference between employee performance of employees working in different sectors during the pandemic in digital/remote mode.

(HA): There is a significant difference in employee performance of employees working in different sectors during the pandemic in digital/remote mode.

3 Research Methodology

The present study aims to understand employees' performance during the pandemic in the digital/remote mode. The paper aims to understand employee's perspectives regarding working in digital/remote mode. The study also helps in highlighting the problems faced by the employees while

working in digital/remote mode. An online survey was conducted 98 filled responses were obtained through Google Forms. Convenience sampling was used to get the responses from the respondents. Employee performance Indicators include Quality of the work done, Quantity of the work done, Timeliness of the work done, the effectiveness of the work done, and Independence (Robbins 2006:260)

4 Data Analysis

Respondents' Demographic Profile:

- 60.2% of respondents were males while 39.8% of respondents were females.
- 75.5% of respondents were married whereas 24.5% of respondents were unmarried.
- 45.9% of respondents were working from Home, 42.9% of respondents were working in a hybrid manner (a combination of working from the office and working from home) and just 11.2% of respondents were working from the office.
- 31 respondents are from the IT Sector, 27 are from the Department of Revenue, 20 are from the Education Sector, and 20 are from the Banking Sector.

5 Result and Discussion

• Reliability Statistics

To measure the internal consistency Cronbach's alpha was calculated. For the current study, the value of Cronbach's alpha came out to be 0.77 which is between 0.70 and 0.79 which is considered as an acceptable value of the Reliability of the scale.

• Cronbach Alpha

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.777	.974	15

Objective 1

The mean Employee Performance score of males is 57.44 with an SD of 11.320 whereas the mean employee performance score of females is 54.36 with an SD of 14.725.

Table 2. Group statistics.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Employee Performance	Male	59	57.44	11.320	1.474
	Female	39	54.36	14.725	2.358

Table 3. Independent t-test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance s		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total employee performance	Equal variance s assumed	.567	.453	1.169	96	.245	3.082	2.637	-2.152	8.316
	Equal variance s not assumed			1.108	66.811	.272	3.082	2.781	-2.469	8.632

To test Hypothesis 1, Inferential Statistics was applied, and an independent t-test was applied to test the difference between employee performance of males and females working during the pandemic in the digital/ remote mode. Levene's statistic for the test came out to be 0.453 which is more than 5% level of significance so equal variances are assumed. The t-statistic 0.245 is greater than 0.05 so we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between employee performance scores of males and females working during the pandemic in the digital/ remote mode.

Objective 2

Respondents were taken from four sectors namely the IT sector, the Department of Revenue, the Education sector, and the Banking Sector. As there were more than two groups to

test the difference between employee performance of employees working in these sectors, One-way ANOVA was performed.

ANOVA

Table 4. Total Employee Performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	756.978	3	252.326	1.567	.203
Within Groups	15137.522	94	161.037		
Total	15894.500	97			

One-way ANOVA was applied to test the difference between employees' performance working in different sectors during the pandemic in the digital/ remote mode. The F statistic came out to be 1.567 which is significant at 0.203 which is greater than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference between employees' performance working in different sectors during the pandemic in the digital/ remote mode.

Objective 3

To understand employee's perspectives on working in digital/remote mode various aspects of job performance were assessed. Working remotely was a different kind of working experience and it came with its own set of challenges. For a better sustainable future, it is important to understand employee concerns and their performance aspects also. Interpersonal relations were affected while working remotely. Employees faced technical issues while working in digital mode. Education sector employees faced technical issues while adapting to working in digital mode. Banking sector sales employees had lowered sales and operations employees had to work in a hybrid manner and transportation issues were faced during the lockdown. Department of Revenue employees were working in a hybrid manner and also had to face transportation issues during their travel to their offices during the lockdown. IT Sector employees adapted to remote working in a relatively smooth manner as they were familiar with the remote working technologies.

6 Conclusion

The present study aimed to study employee performance while working in digital/remote mode during the pandemic. It was found that males and females had faced similar kinds of issues and hence had no significant difference in their performance levels. Employees from different sectors had their peculiar issues while working in digital/remote mode during the pandemic. Considering their performance aspect, employees working in different sectors had the same performance during the pandemic. Working in different sectors does not have a major difference in their performance levels. Although initially, employees faced certain problems while adapting to this new form of work it helped them learn new technologies, remote work applications, and software and make themselves more productive. The present study highlighted the specific problems faced by males and females and also of employees of different sectors. Employees are a key to an organization's success and to remain relevant, sustainable and competitive in the future, it is important to understand employee issues and an effort must be made to resolve their issues for optimum performance and a sustainable future.

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