

Impact of Remote Working Environment on Employee Motivation, Engagement, and Job Satisfaction: A Study of Service Sector from UAE

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Abstract

With the advancement in technologies and the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, significant changes have begun to take place in businesses, causing jobs to move from workplaces to homes indefinitely. For some, the transition from office to work was simple, while for others, juggling family and work has become a roller-coaster ride of emotions. Not all remote employees can sustain their remote working due to reduction in employee productivity and engagement. Targeting this aspect, the study focuses on examining the impact of remote working on employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction in case of UAE service sector. The empirical examination of 316 employee's perception shows that remote working has a positive as well as negative impact on employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. To sustain in a competitive environment, it is essential to mitigate the

shortcomings and create a motivating working environment for employees.

Keywords: Remote working, Engagement, Motivation, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, with growing digitalization, the concept of ‘workplace’ has evolved from being confined to a physical location to a state of mind. Remote working or work-from-home has become a norm aided by the growth of information technology. Today, employees are no longer required to commute to a single or central location (Shareena & Shahid, 2020). With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, this trend has become even more prevalent as companies want to ensure the safety of their employees. Growing popularity of work from home (WFH) culture led to introduction of various technologies like web conferencing with Skype, web-conferencing with Zoom, virtual facilitation with MURAL, collaboration with MS Teams, project and task management with Trello, and Brainstorming and ideation with miro (Deloitte, 2020).

In order to build a sustainable organisation, it is important for companies to avoid losing performing workers, derive better productivity from employees, maintain a job satisfaction rate, and increase their desire to stay with the company for a long time (Chandrakant, 2017a). In case of remote working, there is presence of more social isolation, less interaction between co-workers, and even possibility of reduction in productivity. Therefore, there is a need to keep employees engaged, motivated and satisfied (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). Hence, there is requirement of assessing employee motivation, engagement, and motivation in order to overcome the effects of low morale, absenteeism, less coordination, low performance, or less contribution to team in remote working environment (Mariza, 2016).

The UAE is second largest Arab country in terms of revenues and one of the most competitive economies in the world. It is an export-oriented service sector based economy and is mainly dependent on its service sector for the generation of employment and economic growth (Bank Audi, 2021; United Arab Emirates, 2007). With advancement in technology, there has been transformation in the business model and investment climate to support digital transformation, develop innovative systems, and foster a knowledge economy as engine for sustainable economic development (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Economy, 2019). The UAE has become one of the most prosperous countries in the region in terms of diversification efforts, which have been aided by investments in tourism and financial services. In the face of global macroeconomic instability, businesses focusing on the services sector are projected to do better than other sectors in terms of trade growth in the UAE (Augustine, 2016). However, as the outbreak of pandemic resulted in pushing the service sector economy into regression due to reduction in productivity and output, there is need to assess the service sector of UAE with reference to remote working environment. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to examine the impact of remote working on the employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction in the UAE’s service sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Challenges in Remote Working Environments*

The sophisticated advancement in technology has increased opportunities for employees working outside traditional office structure by providing the option of having more flexible hours of managing the productivity. Remote working is beneficial for employees as well as organization especially during the time of pandemic. However, this logistical shift has led to challenges in the form of adapting new technologies, establishing work life balance, or engaging with co-workers (Flores, 2019). For employees, collaboration with others, finding information, organization time, staying on top of informal development, and making technology work act as challenge, leading to reduce employee satisfaction and engagement with their respective jobs. Presence of lack of interpersonal relationship and clear communication hampers the employee engagement and commitment towards organization in the remote working environment (Benjamin, 2020).

Harbouring a working environment wherein communication with colleagues is only through online means, causes a decrease in feeling of belongingness among employees. The feeling of isolation, creation of threshold for employees to share their worries, and concern about security leads to reduction in employee job satisfaction (Virtanen, 2020). Moreover, issues in understanding speech pattern, developing personal rapport, efficient working, or selecting appropriate communication challenge due to remote working environment results in various negative results like decrease in morale, stress, reduction in productivity and satisfaction. Further, role ambiguity, social loafing, absenteeism, collaboration difficulties, lower team engagement, and difficulty in managing teams further reduce employee engagement and motivation in remote working environment (Shaik & Makhecha, 2019). Thus, although remote working environment in this technology driven environment has been a source of adding more flexibility in working structure and meeting the current need due to pandemic, the lack of accessibility to products, limited communication, lack of social interaction, isolation, and concern about job security resulted in adding challenges with regard to employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction.

2.2 *Importance of Employee Motivation, Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction*

The present business environment is one fast changing where the organizations that are able to adapt to these changes are the once which are going to survive. For this to happen organizations need to frame strategies so as to endure the challenging competition and thus sustaining longer than others in market. However, one of the greatest challenge faced by organizations these days is to manage their employee turnover rates which are generally caused by lack of motivation and commitment among the employees. Hence it has becomes crucial with respect to all the organizations where they need to align their policies and practices in order to understand as well as meet their employees expectations (Chandrakant, 2017b). For an organization to successful it needs to be backed by a committed employee base and this commitment is the direct outcome of three variables which includes employee motivation, engagement and their job satisfaction. These are important for any organization since they compel the employee energy towards the organizational objective and since it is

impossible for the organization to generate performance in the absence of commitment which is backed by motivation, engagement and job satisfaction. Employee motivation, engagement and job satisfaction tend to act as an important stimulation which directs the human behavior and thus encourages them to act in manner which is beneficial for their organizations (Mansfield, 2006).

2.3 Empirical Review

(Virtanen, 2020) conducted the study that focused on understanding the impact of remote working environment in employees job satisfaction and their work motivation. The study was based on survey approach where the respondent consisted of 250 employees of financial service company. The study pointed out that there are various benefits of remote working environment like it can increase the job satisfaction by providing employees with flexibility in their working hours, providing autonomy in terms of organizing schedules. Further it was found that this increased job satisfaction will help to retain more employees for the longer time period thus proving beneficial for both the parties. Also leaders by showing trust and support towards employees in remote working environment can increase their motivation levels.

(Schall, 2019) conducted the study where the purpose was to examine the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction level of employees. Further the study considered some of the characteristic features of remote work such as perceived autonomy, work life conflict and telecommunicating intensity and their impact on job satisfaction. For this an online survey approach was used where a total of 185 employees participated. The results pointed out that there is positive relationship between remote working and job satisfaction. The major reason behind this relationship that was discovered through this study is that remote working tend to influence employees by having higher perceived autonomy, less of work family conflicts and increased telecommunicating intensity which in turn positively influences their job satisfaction.

(Shaik & Makhecha, 2019) the study was based on review of literature of papers based on factors affecting the job satisfaction of employees in who are working in virtual workplace. The paper concluded that success of organization depends on job satisfaction of employees. This is important to understand to understand since encourages better employee output thus helps in increasing business activities. With mobile working becoming relatively famous concept in India it has become important to determine the factors affects the job satisfaction of remote workers. The major factor that was discovered was the workplace flexibility which is provided by remote working environment is what affects its employee job satisfaction.

(Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020) the study was based on understanding of employee engagement practices which organizations have been adopting in present remote working environment of COVID-19. Since it has become prominent primacies for the human resource managers. The present working environment has thus made organizations to constantly develop innovative as well as effective means of engaging employees since employee engagement is crucial when it comes to effective working of business and achieving competitive advantage. The authors in order to achieve the study objective has based their research on other articles, blogs,

online and newspapers. As per the findings of the study it was found that engagement activities like online family engagement, virtual learning and development, online team building activities, webinars with the industry expert, conducting online weekly alignment sessions, teams meet ups using video conferences, short online game sessions, virtual session, online courses, appreciation session, live sessions on communication exercise are some of the creative online engagement practices which can be adopted in order to increase employee engagement in the present remote working environment.

(Thorstensson, 2020) conducted the study where the focus was on understanding the benefits of work from home or the remote working environment for employees along with finding its impact on employee motivation and satisfaction levels. Some of the major benefits that were highlighted through the study included flexible scheduling which provides employees certain autonomy in terms of planning their daily lives which includes both employee and family activities as per their needs. Another benefit was saving time which earlier goes in commuting to office and avoiding the rush traffic hours. Thus elimination of stress related to driving in rush hours. Next benefit was in financial terms where employees can save money by dispensing with the commute to office like saving in terms of gasoline, appropriate office clothing and lunches. Where all these benefits together increased the employee's motivation levels and their job satisfaction.

(Ward, 2017) the study was based on assessing the impact of remote working on employee's motivation and performance level working within the organization. The study adopted the qualitative approach which was then carried out using the semi structured interviews. As per the study findings it was highlighted that motivation has huge role to play in increasing the employee satisfaction while they are working from home. This was due to the fact that employees who are working from home will be motivated to complete their work in order to have flexibility and freedom to things which are not related to their work. Further employees being motivated and focused to their work will have better work life balance as well.

(Felstead & Henseke, 2017) the study was directed towards assessment of growth of remote working environment and how it could certainly prove a win-win situation when it comes to both employer as well as employee. The study first explained the factors that has made or making organizations to shift towards remote working like the movement towards the knowledge economy, increase in flexible employment and better organizational responses to changing demographic make-up of employed labor force. The article also stated that remote working has been positively related with factors such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and professional well-being. However it was also highlighted that all these things tend to come on cost of factors such as work intensification and inability to switch off.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

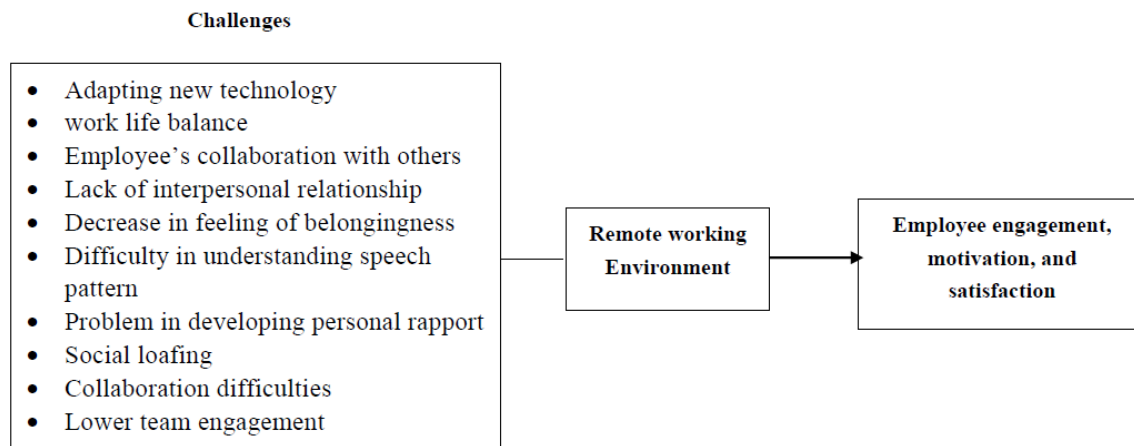


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of study

Above figure shows that remote working environment in this competitive environment though helps in adding flexibility in working structure but due to challenges like lower team engagement, social loafing, decrease in feeling of belongingness, issue in work life balance, lack of interpersonal relationship, or collaboration difficulties; remote working environment tends to influence the employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction level of employees.

3. Research Methodology

Primary data was used for fulfilling the aim of this study, i.e. to determine the impact of remote working on employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction in the UAE's service sector. Quantitative method of data collection involving the survey method was employed, wherein the target population included employees working in service sector companies of the UAE. Herein, using the simple random sampling method was applied to select the respondents in this survey. This method refers to the process of selecting respondents in random from the sample population to minimise the chances of bias in the dataset. In case of this study, the researcher initially approached 10 service sector firms (from hospitality, IT and healthcare industries). After explaining them the purpose of the research, they were requested to participate in the survey. Out of the 10, 4 firms affirmed their participation. A sample size of 100 respondents per organisation (total 400) was targeted. However, over the course of the data collection process, only 316 employees eventually participated.

A structured, close-ended questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire consisted of three sections i.e., demographics, general background and inferential analysis wherein demographic section present the information on demographic characteristics of considered respondent, background provide details about their knowledge level with reference to concept, and inferential section about the linkage considered for study. 5-point Likert scale was used for inferential section. It was administered through Google Forms form to the respondents. The data collection process took over three weeks to complete. The responses were thereafter

extracted in MS Excel form, and the data was further processed in SPSS software. Frequency analysis was used for assessing demographic characteristics and knowledge level of respondents, followed by the inferential section analysis using correlation and regression tests for testing below stated hypothesis i.e.

H₀₁: Remote working environment does not have significantly positive impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

H₀₂: Remote working environment does not have significantly negative impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

H₀₃: Physical factors, financial factors and social/psychological factors does not affect the job satisfaction in remote working environment.

Having the analysis of above stated hypothesis at 5% level of significance, the results derived from the study as are free from biasness and effectively computed, thus, the study is valid, reliable, and ethical.

4. Data Analysis

Demographic analysis is a strategy used to build up an understanding of the age, gender, education, marital and experience. This frequency analysis provides the basic information on the respondents who participated in the study; thus, the result of analysis is shown in below figure.

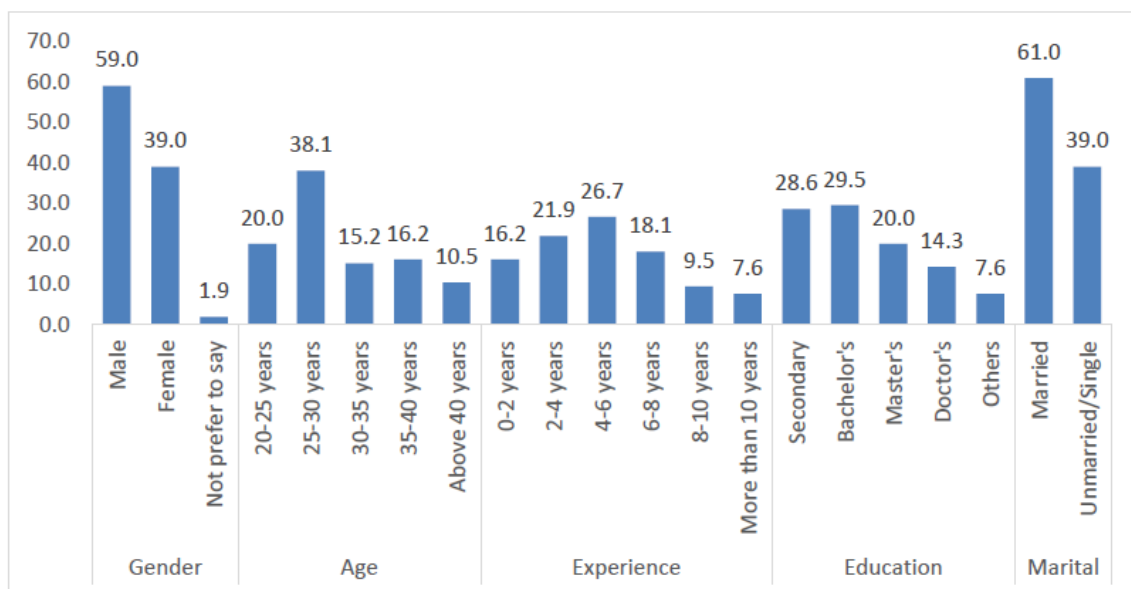


Figure 2. Demographic Analysis

Above figure shows that among the surveyed population considered for this study, about 59% of the respondents are male, and 39% of them are female. Age based characteristics of respondents reveals that majority of the employee are young i.e. 38.1% of the respondents are

in age group 25-30 years, 20% of them with age 20-25 years, and 15.2% have age between 30-35 years. Work experience parameter reveals that only 16.2% of respondents have 0-2 years' experience. Education based characteristics of respondents reveals that 29.5% are at bachelor's level, 28.6% at secondary level, 20% at master's level, and 14.3% at doctor's level. Lastly, the marital status of the respondents shows that 61% of the respondents are married and the remaining of them are unmarried or single. Thus, respondents included in study are young, experienced employees.

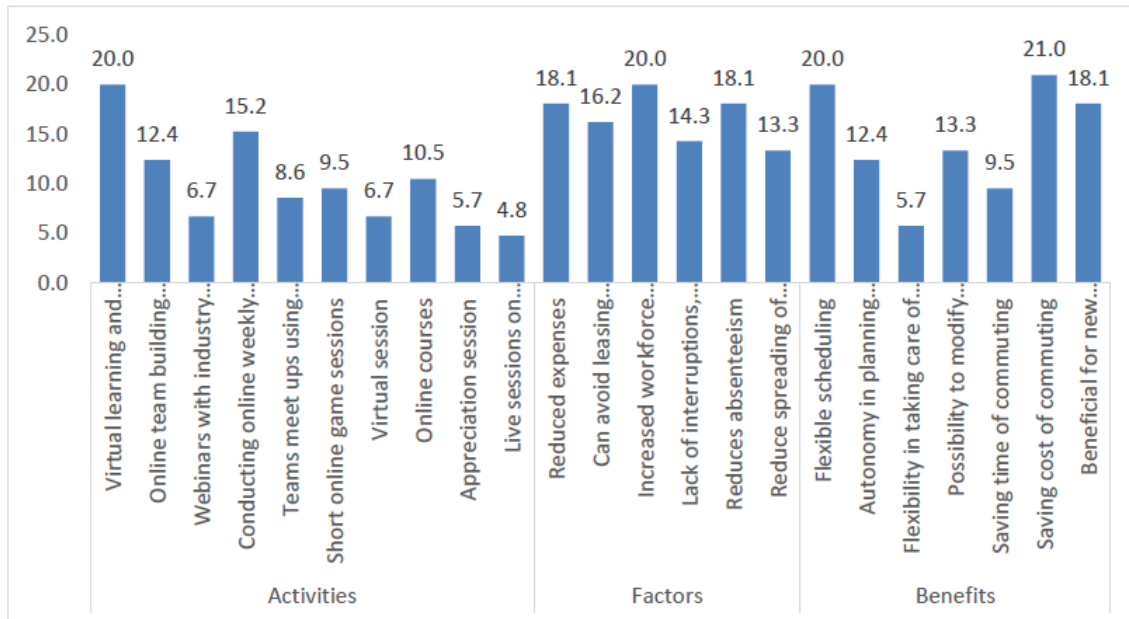


Figure 3. Background Analysis

The next section of the questionnaire pertained to the general background. Herein, questions related to activities undertaken by their organisation in remote-working setup, factors motivating their organisation to adopt remote working, and benefits for employees. Above figure shows that engagement-based activities adopted in period of remote working are virtual learning and development (20%) and online weekly sessions (15.2%).

Increased workforce productivity, reduced expenses and reduced absenteeism are the major reasons for adopting work-from-home format. Lastly, about the benefits of remote working the analysis showed 21% consider it helps in saving cost of commuting, 20% about flexible scheduling, 18% mentioned benefits for new mothers or physically handicapped, 13.3% stated modify the working schedules, 12.4% consider its role in autonomy in planning daily lives, 9.5% about saving time of commuting and remaining 5.7% mentioned flexibility in taking care of children's as benefit of remote working environment.

4.1 Positive Impact of Remote Working on the Employee Motivation, Engagement, and Job Satisfaction

In order to understand whether remote working led to improvement in employee motivation,

engagement, and job satisfaction below stated are the coding for statements considered for analysis.

Table 1. Coding for positive impact

Statements	Code
Remote working environment significantly have positive impact on employee engagement, motivation and job satisfaction level	PEEMJS
Possibility to choose the workplace.	P1
Possibility with respect to work time.	P2
Possibility to organize work independently.	P3
Possibility to increase work balance and personal life	P4
Time saving in terms of commuting.	P5
Limits the unnecessary interactions.	P6
Possibility to avoid dress code and appearance related requirements at workplace.	P7
Helps to keep up with selected wellness program.	P8
Increases ability to work independently.	P9
Increases digital literacy.	P10
Improves personal leadership.	P11
String personal responsibility for one's work.	P12

Based on above stated coding, the linkage between the statements need to be studied for drawing relationship. Results of correlation analysis are shown below

Table 2. Correlation analysis for positive impact

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
EEMJS	1.00	
P1	0.65	0.00
P2	0.51	0.00
P3	0.56	0.00
P4	0.54	0.00
P5	0.61	0.00
P6	0.30	0.00
P7	0.45	0.00
P8	0.64	0.00
P9	0.68	0.00
P10	0.66	0.00
P11	0.65	0.00
P12	0.68	0.00

Above table shows that the significance value for all the statements is less than the required significance of 0.05, thus there is possibility of having significant linkage between variables. Pearson correlation determine the magnitude of linkage wherein all statements except P6 and P7, has value greater than 0.5, thus except these all statements would be considered for further analysis to represent relationship between variables

Based on the linkage, below stated hypothesis would be assessed at 5% level of significance i.e.

H_{01} : Remote working environment does not have significantly positive impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

H_{A1} : Remote working environment does have significantly positive impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

Table 3. Regression analysis for positive impact

EEMJS	Coefficient	T-statistic	p-value	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F ratio
Constant	-0.79	-7.23	0.00	0.86	0.85	185.53
P1	0.14	5.57	0.00			
P2	0.08	3.04	0.00			
P3	0.09	3.47	0.00			
P4	0.12	4.76	0.00			
P5	0.14	5.98	0.00			
P8	0.11	4.13	0.00			
P9	0.12	4.42	0.00			
P10	0.13	4.83	0.00			
P11	0.17	6.85	0.00			
P12	0.17	7.00	0.00			

Above table shows value of R² is 0.86 and adjusted R² is 0.85 depicting 85% of variation in the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level is depicted by positive role of remote working environment. F-ratio value is 185.53 which is more than the required value of 1, thus, more precision in the model computation could be derived by including remote working environments as independent statement. P-value test state that as all the statements have value less than the required value of 0.05, thus, the null hypothesis that remote working environment have no positive impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level is rejected. Coefficient value of the model represents the strength of relationship i.e., with 1% increase in P1 (Possibility to choose the workplace), P2(possibility with respect to work time), P3 (possibility to organize work independently), P4 (Possibility to increase work balance and personal life), P5 (Time saving in terms of commuting), P8 (Helps to keep up with selected wellness program), P9 (Increases ability to work independently), P10 (Increases digital literacy), P11 (Improves personal leadership),and P12 (String personal responsibility for one's work) there is increase in positive impact of remote working environments on the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level by 0.14%, 0.08%, 0.09%, 0.12%, 0.14%, 0.11%, 0.12%, 0.13%, 0.17% and 0.17% respectively. Hence, there is presence of positive impact of remote working environments on the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

4.2 Negative Impact of Remote Working on the Employee Motivation, Engagement, and Job Satisfaction

For examining the whether negative influence is there of remote working on employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction below stated is the coding for selected statements.

Table 4. Coding for negative impact

Statements	Code
Remote working significantly have negative impact on employee engagement, motivation and job satisfaction level	NEEMJS
Lack of face to face interaction with colleagues.	N1
Lack of face to face interaction with manager.	N2
Less possibility to build mutual trust.	N3
Lack of trust between employees and manager.	N4
Lack of team spirit.	N5
Increased expectations from manager and employer without taking in consideration the work load.	N6
Communication issues.	N7
Complicated access to work-related information's.	N8
Lack of feedback.	N9
Less and blurred boundaries between work and personal life.	N10
Increased distractions.	N11
Lack of an inspirational work environment.	N12
Issues with respect to self-organization and maintaining work routine.	N13
Self-motivation related challenges.	N14
Lack of understanding from family member's side.	N15

Based on above stated coding, the linkage between statement is drawn via correlation analysis results of which are shown in below table

Table 5. Correlation analysis for negative impact

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
NEEMJS	1.00	
N1	0.76	0.00
N2	0.67	0.00
N3	0.72	0.00
N4	0.65	0.00
N5	0.67	0.00
N6	0.12	0.04
N7	0.39	0.00
N8	0.67	0.00
N9	0.69	0.00
N10	0.69	0.00
N11	0.39	0.00
N12	0.70	0.00
N13	0.59	0.00
N14	0.63	0.00
N15	0.66	0.00

Above table shows that the significance value for all the statements is less than the required significance level of study i.e., 0.05, thus there is possibility of having significant linkage between variables. Pearson correlation magnitude depict that except for N6, N7, and N11 all statements value is more than the required value of 0.5. Thus, there is possibility of atleast moderate relationship and all statements except N6, N7, and N11 will be considered for further analysis.

Based on the linkage, below stated hypothesis is assessed at 5% level of significance i.e.

H₀₂: Remote working environment does not have significantly negative impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

H_{A2}: Remote working environment does have significantly negative impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

Table 6. Regression analysis for negative impact

NEEMJS	Coefficient	T-statistic	p-value	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F ratio
Constant	-0.51	-4.95	0.00	0.85	0.84	140.75
N1	0.20	5.77	0.00			
N2	0.07	2.00	0.05			
N3	0.05	1.03	0.30			
N4	0.04	1.20	0.23			
N5	0.06	1.51	0.13			
N8	0.02	0.60	0.55			
N9	0.09	2.71	0.01			
N10	0.10	2.80	0.01			
N12	0.15	5.13	0.00			
N13	0.01	0.31	0.76			
N14	0.17	6.51	0.00			
N15	0.22	8.17	0.00			

Above table depicts that the value of R² is 0.85 and adjusted R² is 0.84 wherein value of adjusted R² depicts that about 84% of variation in the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level is depicted by negative role of remote working environment. F-ratio value is 140.75 which is more than the required value of 1, thus, more precision in the model computation could be derived by including remote working environments as independent statement. P-value test shows that for N1 is 0.00, N2 is 0.05, N9 is 0.01, N10 is 0.01, N12 is 0.00, N14 is 0.00 and N15 is 0.00 which are all less than or equal to the required value of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis that remote working environment have no negative impact on employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level is rejected. Coefficient value of the model represents the strength of relationship i.e., with 1% increase in N1(Lack of face to face interaction with colleagues), N2 (lack of face to face interaction with manager), N9 (lack of feedback), N10 (Less and blurred boundaries between work and personal life.), N12 (Lack of an inspirational work environment), N14 (Self-motivation related challenges), and N15 (Lack of understanding from family member's side) there is increase in negative impact of remote working environments on the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level by 0.20%, 0.07%, 0.09%, 0.10%, 0.15%, 0.17% and 0.22% respectively. Hence, there is presence of negative impacts of remote working environments on the employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction level.

4.3 Physical, Financial, and Social/Psychological Factors Impact on Job Satisfaction in Remote Working Environment

For understanding the influence of different factors influencing job satisfaction, below stated

is the coding of considered statements.

Table 7. Coding for factors

Statements	Code
Factors affects job satisfaction in remote working environment	JS
Working extra hours due to virtual nature of work.	F1
Unavailability of office space.	F2
Assess to office equipment's	F3
Long working hours due to transition from traditional office to virtual office.	F4
Need to educate themselves in terms of technology.	F5
Wait for counterparts to complete their work.	F6
Limited access to comfortable chair, designated work area.	F7
Increased use of personal resources like data usage, computer, cell phones	F8
Save huge amount of transit fare and also in terms of gas expenses.	F9
Opportunity of cost saving related to eating out.	F10
Personnel beliefs	F11
Salary and related benefits	F12
Participation in organizational decision making	F13
Interaction with colleagues	F14
Need of socialization	F15
Sense of leadership	F16

Based on coding, the linkage between statement is drawn by correlation analysis i.e.

Table 8. Correlation analysis for factors

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
JS	1.00	
F1	0.60	0.00
F2	0.36	0.00
F3	0.63	0.00
F4	0.61	0.00
F5	0.60	0.00
F6	0.12	0.03
F7	0.59	0.00
F8	0.70	0.00
F9	0.66	0.00
F10	0.68	0.00
F11	0.28	0.00
F12	0.58	0.00
F13	0.38	0.00
F14	0.56	0.00
F15	0.57	0.00
F16	0.56	0.00

Above table shows that the significance value for all the statements is less than the required significance level of study i.e., 0.05, thus there is possibility of having significant linkage between variables. Pearson correlation that for F2, F6, F11 and F13 the value is less than 0.5, thus, all statements except F2, F6, F11, F13 has possibility of moderate relationship and thus,

would be considered for further analysis.

Based on the linkage, below stated hypothesis would be assessed at 5% level of significance i.e.

H₀₃: Physical factors, financial factors and social/psychological factors does not affect the job satisfaction in remote working environment.

H_{A3}: Physical factors, financial factors and social/psychological factors does affect the job satisfaction in remote working environment

Table 9. Regression analysis for factors

JS	Coefficient	T-statistic	p-value	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F ratio
Constant	-0.24	-1.48	0.14	0.68	0.67	54.69
F1	0.19	4.22	0.00			
F3	-0.06	-0.99	0.32			
F4	-0.10	-1.68	0.09			
F5	0.09	1.58	0.12			
F7	0.11	2.58	0.01			
F8	0.22	4.21	0.00			
F9	0.13	2.19	0.03			
F10	0.23	4.19	0.00			
F12	0.05	0.89	0.37			
F14	-0.03	-0.61	0.54			
F15	0.10	2.36	0.02			
F16	0.16	3.75	0.00			

Above table depicts that the value of R² is 0.68 and adjusted R² is 0.67 stating about 67% of variation in job satisfaction is from physical, financial, and social/psychological factors. F-ratio value is 54.69 > 1, thus, more precision in the model computation could be derived by including as physical, financial, and social/psychological factors as independent statement. P-value test shows that value of F1 is 0.00, F7 is 0.01, F8 is 0.00, F9 is 0.03, F10 is 0.00, F15 is 0.02 and F16 is 0.00 is less than the required value of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis that the physical, financial, and social/psychological factors have no affect on job satisfaction in remote working environment is rejected. Coefficient value of the model represents the strength of relationship i.e., with 1% increase in F1(Working extra hours due to virtual nature of work), F7 (Limited access to comfortable chair, designated work area), F8 (Increased use of personal resources like data usage, computer, cell phones), F9 (Save huge amount of transit fare and also in terms of gas expenses), F10 (Opportunity of cost saving related to eating out), F15 (Need of socialization) and F16 (Sense of leadership) there is increase in job satisfaction in remote working environments by 0.19%, 0.11%, 0.22%, 0.13%, 0.23%, 0.10% and 0.16% respectively. Hence, physical, financial, and social/psychological factors have affect on job satisfaction in remote working environment.

5. Conclusion

One of the challenges brought about in the ongoing pandemic is the decrease in productivity of employees due to an upheaval in companies' operational systems, particularly remote

working format. This challenge is amplified in case of the service sector which is greatly dependent on human face-to-face interaction for effective outcomes. In case of the UAE, one of Middle East's largest economies, companies have been struggling to sustain in the competitive market and sustain growth and productivity driven by enhanced employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. This study therefore aimed at determining the impact of remote working on the employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction in UAE service sector.

A combination of primary and secondary sources of data was used to this end. Survey of 316 employees from 4 service sector organisations revealed that remote working increases work life balance, saves time, increases ability to work independently, improves personal leadership and personal responsibility for one's work; therefore remote working has a positive impact on employee motivation, engagement and satisfaction. However, with lack of face-to-face interaction with colleagues, blurred boundaries between work and personal life, self-motivation related challenges, lack of an inspirational work environment and understanding from family member's side; there is also presence of negative impact of remote working on employee motivation and job satisfaction level. Different physical, financial, and social/psychological factors like working extra hours due to virtual nature of work, limited access to comfortable chair, designated work area, increased use of personal resources like data usage, computer, save huge amount of transit fare, opportunity of cost saving related to eating out and sense of leadership influence the job satisfaction; hence organizations need to focus on these aspects.

These findings from primary data correspond with those derived in the secondary data, i.e. remote working environment provides autonomy, provide flexibility, saving time, and promotion of knowledge economy. Regions across the UAE are witnessing digital transformation, there is scope of expanding the market, having reduction in associated cost, connecting people, efficient delivery, and creation of innovative business environment for the UAE's service sector i.e. promoting e-retail and home deliveries, having development of remote software's, usage of digital media, digital services, more investment in healthcare and education sector, and enhancement of telecom and internet providers. Thus, these behavioural shifts and working structure would lead to cost saving benefits for organizations across the UAE (reduction in capital investment for IT infrastructure) and movement towards sustainable economy.

Innovative strategies could be adopted for improving working structure and employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. Firstly, companies must ensure the availability of critical infrastructure including relevant physical devices such as wifi and computer systems for reducing the burden on employees. Regular informal sessions and meet-ups such as Fun Fridays should be organized virtually for having one-to-one interaction or playing games and improve engagement and satisfaction. Flexibility should be provided in the working structure with day-oriented deadline and not time oriented to prevent the restrictions in work from culture wherein it becomes difficult to balance work and family. Lastly, a communication portal should be designed or updated for keeping a track of all discussion and enabling easy flow of information without each time need of video meets.

One of the limitations of this study is the inclusion of a limited sample size and only 4 service sector companies for representing the whole service sector. Since the service sector is defined by a number of industries, each with its unique traits and methods, there is lack of generalization of the primary data findings. This aspect of sample size thus, is a major limitation faced in this study. Future studies could be directed towards inclusion of more service sector industries across UAE. They can broaden the scope of the study to include challenges in remote working environment to have targeted working on reducing them. Lastly, researchers can also focus on the assessment of policies in major countries with employee-friendly economy like New Zealand to have more employee engagement promoting strategies.

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