



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS  
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# **Covid-19 pandemic effect on organizations**

**The study of**

**Balance between employee's  
productivity and loyalty in  
scenario of working from home**

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## Abstract

In this study, the main topic which we tried to study and understand is the qualitative study balance between employees' productivity and loyalty in case of working from home during the period of Covid-19 pandemic in which both companies and employees are facing many restrictions and lockdown situations to follow only to keep themselves safe and others as well along with keeping their work going as well. As employees are integral part of any of the organization which are also the back bone of any of the company for its process, development and achieving its goal but at the same time when they are providing their efforts into work, they also consider themselves to be treated as rear commodity and they want their work to be appreciated well in the form of promotion, benefits (both financial and non-financial) and provide professional development opportunities for them.

During this current pandemic environment in which all the organizations are fighting the battle of their survival have to be more concerned about them to keep themselves alive and running one way or the other, the same is true for the employees where they are only concerned about themselves and are not having the same motivation towards the organization and its goal, because of many factors which are the results of their such behavior. This thesis deal with these factors, we look at the synergy between employees and organizations, which is the integral part of any business organization, which is being affected by this pandemic, how much and to what extent is the basis of this thesis. The tools, which we are using to conduct this study, are questionnaire and face-to-face interview and personal observation. During the face-to-face interview which are done with the participants, the study sample which is selected for this study are very much diversified, and the basis of this diversification is in the form of different types and forms of organization from food industry, study institutions, non-profit organization to national and multinational organizations. The same is true for the employees that are the participants for the questionnaire and face-to-face interview. Our study samples consist of from managerial staff to low level of production line employees. Their responses are presented in the form of graphs and the discussion done is based on the results of their responses and later conclusion is based on this discussion.

The conclusion is the presentation of the correlation between variables, which are used for the development of this questionnaire, and how they represent the main topic of this thesis. The conclusion which came out from our study is very much a combination which depend on may factor such as type of the organizational field of work, type of employees, organizational business field, restrictions imposed by the country in which these organization are doing their business. Keeps in mind these factors the conclusion which came to be is combination as in some scenarios manages managers of organizations said covid-19 has not affected their business at all and it is running at it was before Covid-19, some organizations see an increase in their business, businesses as IT industry, in which employees are not bound with the location of work. But organizations which are production based for example home appliances production organization are being affected very much and their employees are effect same as. Our hypothesis, *"Pandemic has effect on production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home"* is accepted as Covid-19 has weakened the production of the firm/organization and loyalty of the employees towards their job and firm/organization.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Pandemic, Productivity, Loyalty, Employee Motivation, Organization Production, Raw Material, and Employee Working from Home

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*This is the introduction chapter of our thesis which will introduce our research topic. This chapter describes about effect of covid-19 in Bangladesh and Pakistan, background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions and finally the contribution of the study.*

## 1.1 Background

Employees are the integral part of any organization and backbone of any business success and its ability to achieve its goals and objectives, implementing the future plans and objectives which are set by the planning and RND of the organization.

By definition the productivity of the teams and different groups within the organization is what makes the difference between a successful, high performing, and strong production capacity organization in comparison with an average rating, normal performing, and lacking production capacity organization.

Every organization want to hire skilled, sharing and high productive employees, as the loyalty and trust of the employees is becoming more and more hard to obtain at the work place. In the past, employees were hired for the life and they knew it in the back of their mind that once they are hired by the organization, they will work there till the time they will retire, such conditions were present during 1980, but when companies and business environment became more (Anthony, R.N. et al., 2014) competitive and profit increased, then high productivity became the main objective and the lifetime employment perception of employees also shattered.

During this pandemic scenario where it has affected whole structure of our lives and have changed many concepts and forced us to redefine the way we use to think and do things, it has also affected the business environment as well, and has changed the productivity of the organization and loyalty of the employees towards their organization. Factors like downsizing, burden of work, no relaxing time, less social life and less opportunity of detoxification of the stress of work.

But at the same time given the opportunity to work from home, having less or no restriction, which are norms and part and partial of any organization, working from bedroom and ease of dress code is making employee reluctant and hesitant from following the same old routine of the normal business environment that use to be before the pandemic restrictions. This study will look at the scenario in which this current pandemic environment has affected the employee's productivity and how their loyalty has affected where they work more but with less employee benefits and fear of downsizing is constantly present.

The both concepts of employee productivity and employee loyalty has been studied. But their correlation during this pandemic scenario and their effect on the organization's financial aspect has not been studied yet.

This part explains about the background of the topic, which is being selected for the thesis, which is in current pandemic situation a qualitative study of the balance between employee's productivity and loyalty in case of work from home. As in current scenario much of the work is being done from home in almost all the sectors of different

organizations for ease of employers, employees and to lessen the effect of pandemic on the overall society and at the same time keep the employees motivated and loyal, and to maintain their productivity at the constant level. This background explains the purpose of the study.

With the huge impact of this current pandemic situation in the world, the overall scenario, situations, strategy, methodology, goals, productivity and loyalty and many other relationship factors between the employer/firm and its employees has changed and has been re-structured.

Starting from the industrial age which can be taken into account as the factor starting point of the relationship between organization/firm and its employees, based on the factors of how employee's contribution in the form of productivity or output set the overall forecast of organization/firm financial projections in the form of profit/revenue, and can be used for the future productions in the coming years. So, it can be said here that there is a positive co-relation between employees' productivity and firm in being able to achieve its objectives.

And the factors affecting this relationship impact the whole firm, which can be divided into two categories controllable factors and uncontrollable factors. Controllable factors are the work forces, quality of employees based on their skills, tools and facilities offered for the ease of work, overall firm/organizational environment, motivation from the employers, financial situation of the organization, location of the firm, and modernization of the firm based on new technological factors.

Now if we talk about the uncontrollable factors, they comprise of political situations of the country, availability of natural resources, law and order: overall security situation in the country, pandemic effect on a global scale and natural disaster on a major scale.

## **1.2 Background of the problem**

Much of the work and studies have been done for the explanation and understanding of these controllable and uncontrollable factors and their impact on any firm or organization and different strategies, tactics, methodologies and guidelines have been made to handle and deal with such scenarios but same cannot be said about the problem at hand as world is facing such problem on a global scale for the first time in present time where whole world is linked and interconnected with each other in such a way that impact on one section will impact overall global situation.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to generate a deeper understanding about how employee's productivity and loyalty are affected and how to balance it, when they are working from home due to pandemic situation. By doing survey analysis on different Pakistani and Bangladeshi national and multi-national companies, regional and departmental head we tried to find out the real scenario of the company's regular growth, when their employees are working from home due to current pandemic situation.



## 1.4 Research question

Depending on the background and problem formulation which is previously presented, the following research question has been raised:

*“Does pandemic affected employee’s productivity and loyalty in their firm/organization, when they are working from home”*

## 1.5 Contribution of the study

COVID-19 pandemic effect on the individual’s health and socio-economic condition. Agarwal, P. et al., (2021) find out by their study, for COVID-19 outbreaks a continuous surveillance of the psychological consequences should become routine. Vishakha, S. (2020) believes that working from home is destructive for our normal routine of the office and general lifestyle. Without any break remote working can create health problems like: back and neck pain, diabetes risk, poor digestion etc. It will also lead to social disconnection which increase people’s anxiety and depression. These factors may lead to decrease the employee’s productivity. Seva R.R. et al., (2021) try to show in their study the positive and negative impact on the productivity when employees are working from home due to pandemic situation. They find out from their study, that the productivity of people working from home improved by workstation suitability. The majority of the study finds out that the working from home effect on employee’s productivity through effect on the employee’s health and mental condition and on other necessary issues. The significant contribution of the current study is a deeper understanding of how employee’s productivity and loyalty are affected when they are working from home due to pandemic situation and how to balance it. This study will be going to help people by giving the survey results of whether the company should continue remote working or they should stop it or they can continue it in hybrid way like some days working from home and some days working from office based on the company’s growth in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

## 1.6 Why we are doing this research

As there are many highs while doing research but this reality cannot be disregarded that there are points coming when the research work appears to be daunting or tedious, or simply not worth the effort. Therefore, a researcher should time to time revisit or remind themselves the initial motivation and reasons for which they undertook research topic. That reason could be the hope of changing world of knowledge or could be a very small way of changing the understanding of the perception of things (Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M., 2010).

There are many researchers whose motivation of doing research are more personal circumstances as the topic which they undertook for the research is close to their personal like or present circumstances in which they are currently living in, but there can be one other reason as well which will help them move to the next stage of their education and achieving their desired goals which is completion of their degree or diploma. Whatever the reason be research should keep your focus and you should revisit the reason for the sake of motivation that why you initially took this topic for research. At a low point of doubt when you just want to stop the work and give up you should ask these questions to yourself (Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M., 2010).

- What are the personal rewards for completing this research?
- The knowledge that you will produce, how it will enhance further the understanding of perspective of understanding of others?
- Do you have some new understanding of knowledge that you are able to project as a result of your research, what new knowledge you have to present?
- Who will be the focus group of your research or to simply put it, which will be the beneficial of this research, At the same time, you should also keep in mind the focus group from which you will be collecting the data from.
- Then comes the collection of data, analysis and writing sections of the research. This has been very beautifully explained in the diagram below:

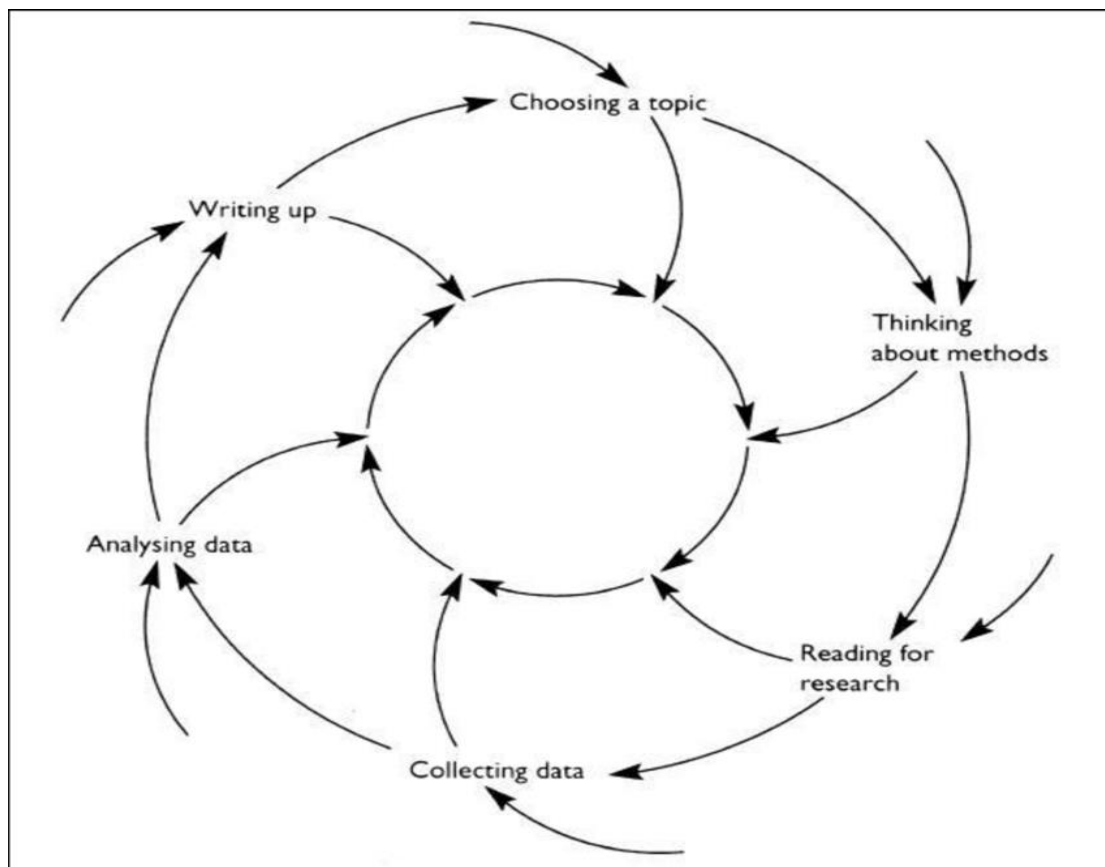


Figure 1: How to Research (Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M., 2010, p. 9)

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*Chapter two will present literature review, pandemic impact on the Pakistani GDP, pandemic impact on the Bangladeshi GDP, impact of Covid-19 on HRM department, agency theory, employees' productivity and loyalty from the agency theory perspective: impact on employees' productivity and loyalty and why we are doing this research.*

### 2.1 Literature review

The literature review shows that the past studies are primarily focused on the production, employee behavior in working environment, their acceptance and following the norms and principles of the organization.

How much employee productivity can be achieved while remaining in the norms and structure of an organization, such structure which is built upon rules, regulations, principles and norms which are too followed as they are part and partial of any job description that is advertised beforehand to announce and describe to attract particular type of employees who can be easily adjusted and get comfortable in their organizational structure and their ease to follow their principles and rules (Mehta, S. et al., 2010).

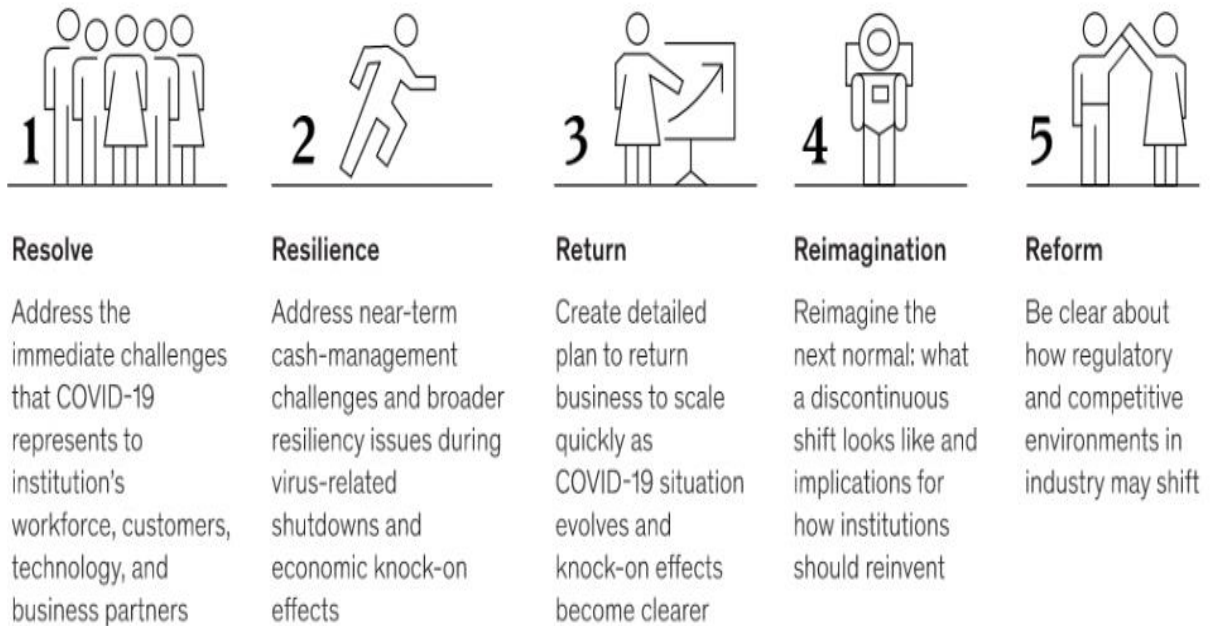
The ongoing spread of coronavirus and its different variants has become the biggest threat to global economy and financial market. The fast spread of the disease is throttling the global market and it is also causing a biggest economic and financial recession much severe than from 2008 economic crisis.

Economic problems in the global economy are all related with the phase of the spread of coronavirus in the world. The effects of this disease are expected to have impact on these sectors more as compared to others, which are domestic prices, tourism, service and manufacturing enterprises, which are particularly more vulnerable than any other sector. One of the solutions to counter the impact would be increase in domestic production and decrease in the import from other countries.

The measures which most of the countries are taking to decrease the impact of this global issue are also different based on their needs and desires. But they can be overall divided into five steps, which can be seen in this figure:

## Companies need to think and act across five horizons.

### The five horizons



McKinsey  
& Company

Figure 2: Coronavirus five strategies for industrial and automotive companies (Dertouzos, J. et al., March 27, 2020)

These steps are known as five horizons: Resolve, Resilience, Return, Reimagination and Reform. These are the five steps, which are being taken globally in current circumstances in order to reduce and eliminate the impact of the global crisis. Leading from the crisis today to the normal that will emerge from winning the battle from this global disease. Also, as the study of hundreds of the companies around the world on covid-19 has allowed compiling major steps, which main stream industrial companies are pursuing in this global crisis case.

- . **Work force protections**
- . **Supply- Chain stabilization**
- . **Customer management**
- . **Financial testing**
- . **Nerve center integration**

These steps can further be subdivided into policies that need implementation for the stabilization and management of any company.

## **Work force protection**

Policy and management  
2-way communication  
Personal and contractors  
Facility and onsite norms  
Health and governmental management

## **Supply- Chain stabilization**

Supply management  
Inventory management  
Production and operational management  
Demand management  
Logistic

## **Customer management**

B2B transparency  
Customer protection  
Customer outreach

## **Financial testing**

Scenario definition  
Financial Stress test

## **Nerve center integration**

Issue map and management  
Portfolio of actions  
Leadership

Companies must utilize their existing human resource, legal and operational potential to waiver in an accelerated manner, to lessen the effects of the current covid-19 impacts (Khotamov I.S., & Olimov M.K, 2020).

Covid-19 will have more profound effects on the developing countries rather than the other and thus making it difficult for them to implement effective stimulus without facing binding foreign exchange constraints (Sussangkarn, 2012).

From these developing countries the most vulnerable are the one which are with weak health infrastructure, heavily dependent on trade and tourism sector, heavily indebted and depend on unstable capital flows. Controlling the covid-19 outbreak and reviving the economy will be hard for such countries as the impacts of this disease will continue to stress very heavily even after 2020 and 2021 towards the coming years (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2021)

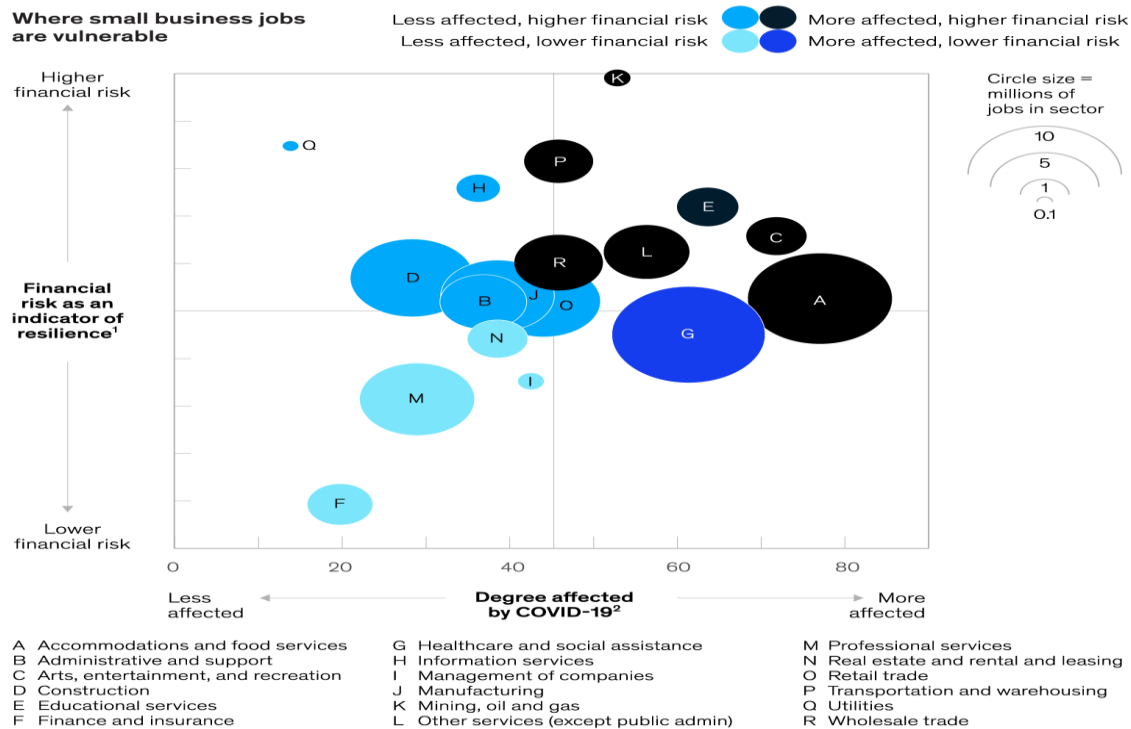
## 2.2 Correlation between GDP and research topic

As a macroeconomic indicator, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) captures the broadest combined value of all economic activities of a country, by which people can measure the economic performance of a country (Voumik, L.C. et al., 2019). So, our research topic is- “COVID-19 pandemic effect on organizations”, which concern with microeconomic indicators. For that reason, to know pandemic how much effect on organizations of Pakistan and Bangladesh, at first, we have to know the pandemic impacts on the Pakistan and Bangladesh economy. That’s why, for knowing pandemic how much impacts on Pakistan and Bangladesh economy, we have to know the GDP growth rate of those countries and how much pandemic impacts on those countries GDP.

## 2.3 Pandemic impact on the Pakistani GDP

In case of Pakistan, it is being reported that it has lost one third of its revenue and expected to drop by 50% due to covid-19 outbreak and lockdown (Sareen, 2020). Economists warn of recession amid virus lockdowns in Pakistan (Sareen, 2020). Similarly, the World Bank also warns that Pakistan will fall into recession (The World Bank, April 5, 2021). Based on the on-going crisis caused by the covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan’s real GDP growth in FY20 is expected to contract by 1.3% and in future this contraction will increase to 2.2% and somewhat recovery of 0.3% in FY21 (The World Bank, April 5, 2021).

### COVID-19 is especially threatening for several sectors.



McKinsey  
& Company

Figure 3: Which small businesses are most vulnerable to Covid-19 and when by Dua, A., Ellingrud, K., Mahajan, D., & Silberg, J., (2020).

As it can be seen from the figure the different aspect of the industries are being impacted by covid-19 in different way. In figure 2 is the graphical presentation of the such effects and the industry resilience towards these effects are shown, so on y-axis financial risk which is taken as resilience towards the effect of covid-19 is taken and on X-axis the degree of covid-19 effect is taken. Companies such as which were studied see the degree of the effect were, accommodation and food services, Administration and support, Art, Entertainment and recreation, Construction, Finance and Insurance, etc. as it can be seen all the companies have different impact of effect on them towards the covid-19 for example Finance and Insurance have very less effect, whereas Mining, oil and gas are in the middle of impact and the most effect industry is the accommodation and food services. According to study during FY 20 these industries are expected to contract about 1.3% and this contraction rate will further increase up to 2.2% and some indicator which shows and recovery 0.3% during FY21.

## 2.4 Pandemic impact on the Bangladeshi GDP

In Bangladesh, from 2017 to 2019 the GDP growth rate was increased continuously 7.28%, 7.86% and 8.15%. But in 2020, from the effect of the COVID-19 the GDP growth was dropped in 2.38%. It was declined more than 70%. The factories were opened again and the exports were started again over the first half of FY21. The Bangladesh's economic outlook is positive, though the uncertainty created by COVID-19 (The World Bank, April 12, 2021 & Macrotrends).

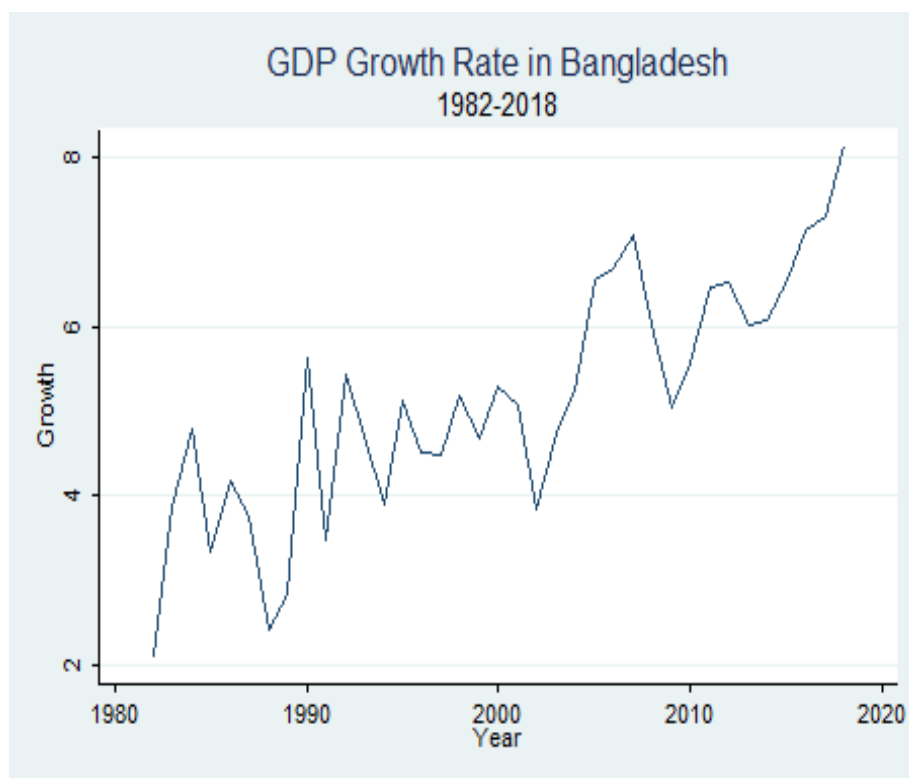


Figure 4: GDP Growth Rate in Bangladesh (Voumik, L.C. et al., 2019, p. 15)

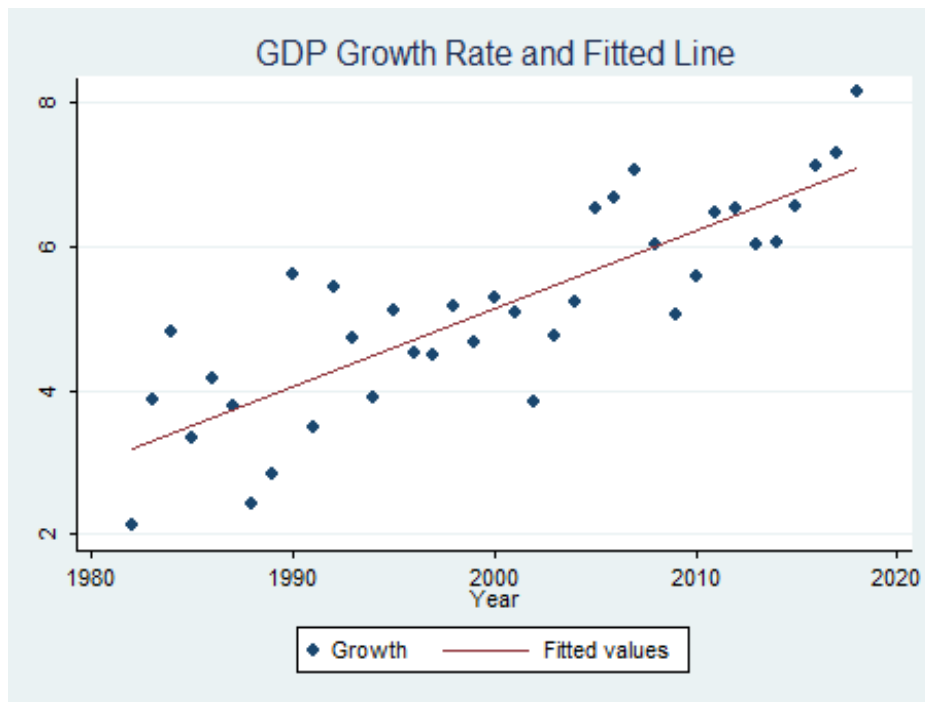


Figure 5: GDP Growth Rate and Fitted Line in Bangladesh (Voumik, L.C. et al., 2019, p. 15)

## 2.5 Covid-19 impact on HRM department

The human resource department has always played an important role in leading their organization through some of the toughest workplace challenges. The human resource operation is an effective tool to manage the employees and the work culture in an organization at any given point of time. The human resource department can be taken as the backbone of any of the organization.

The covid-19 pandemic has not only turned the human life upside down but also during the initial stages, no one has thought that how much the pandemic would affect the human life style. But with the time, every individual has now adapted to the new norms created by this virus. Every field starting from education sector, medical care, corporate organizations has mostly shifted from offline mode to online mode in performing their daily routine tasks.

One of the most effected departments in every organization is human resource department from this pandemic. This pandemic has made this department to rethink all its strategies and its roles that it has to adopt to counter the new norms such as social distancing at a workplace in order to counter the spread of virus. Companies have turned from normal work place to remote work model; more online meetings and video conference calls are done. In such situations the HR managers are not only concerned about the health of the employees but are also worried about how to keep them engaged, productive and motivated during such times. The steps, which are taken by HR managers, are as follows:



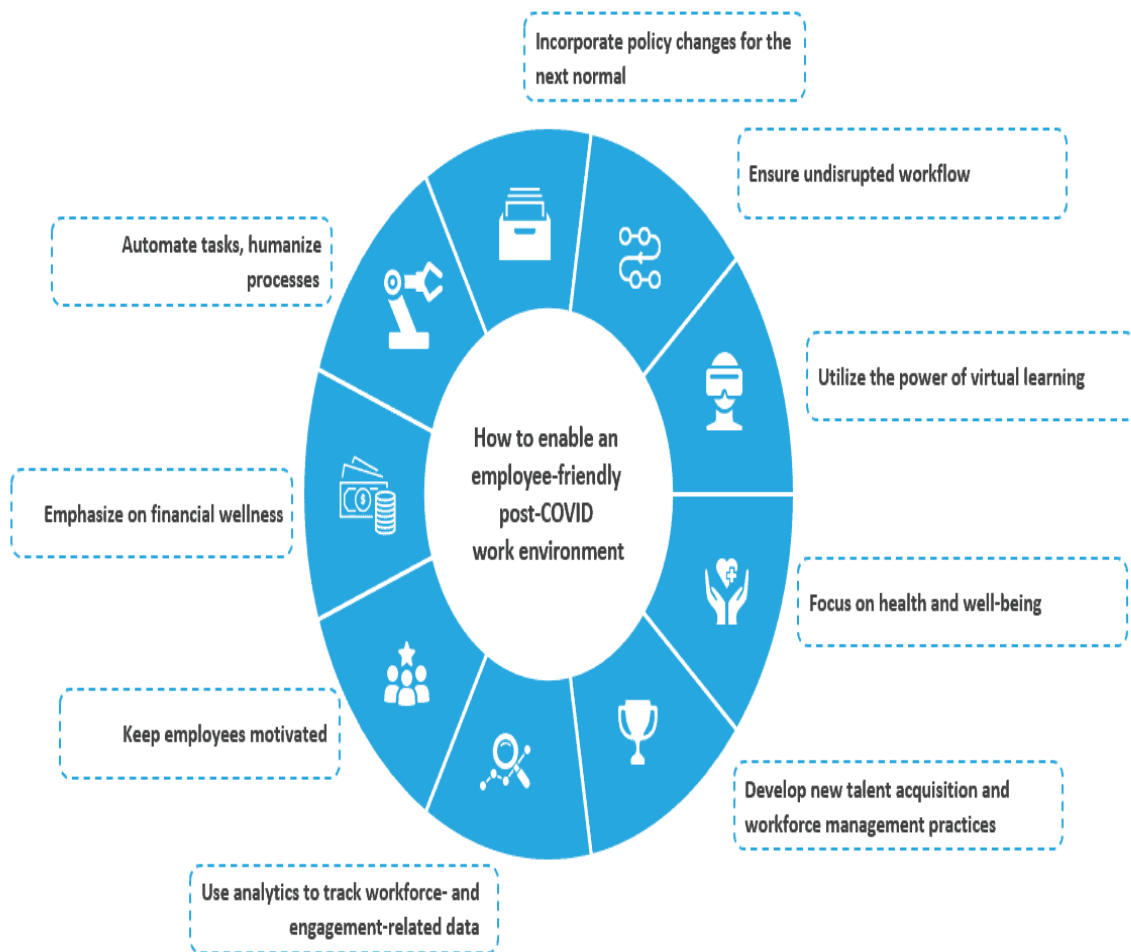


Figure 6: Preparing for the Future – COVID-19 Implications for the HR function (Mehrishi, R., & Mitra, P., May 20, 2020)

**Step 1:** Strategies and policies regarding the human resources under pandemic conditions.

**Step 2:** Covid-19 and future human resource management competencies is about how Covid-19 has been constantly influencing the organizational work culture and the human resource management.

**Step 3:** Navigating between the Clashing Rocks: Employee relations in the era of Covid-19 is about the employers who were under constant pressure due to COVID-19 to ensure that their business activities are not affected. On the other hand, the employees were concerned about their health and safety. The relationship between the employer and employee is being affected due to factors like social distancing, lockdown and introduction of the work from home concept.

**Step 4:** Is on 'I am not okay!' Employees' mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of Human Resource Management is helping their employees to deal with issues related to mental and emotional wellbeing. The Covid-19 has brought a lot of uncertainty, due to which the employees are worried about their job security and regular income. The employees now feel more stressed, anxious and depressed because of the remote work culture, frequent online meetings and the pressure to handle work and family at the same time.

**Step 5:** Innovative work practices for navigating the unknown. The new innovative ways which the HR professionals would introduce in order to ensure the continuation of their business activity. HR practitioners need to adapt to new workplace practices and policies to keep workers engaged and motivated while finding the right 'fit' for employees to complete their work tasks and maintain a work-life balance.

**Step 6:** HR practices during the COVID-19 pandemic: new HR policies to address several work places issues during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Step 7:** Redesigning the corporate learning to beat the pandemic, how the organizations have shifted to online mode of work culture during the time of the pandemic and the lockdown. Consequently, the HR professionals are also looking for ways to plan future learning interventions based on these existing digital tools with the fact that the learning attitude of an individual is deeply influenced by the environment.

**Step 8:** The impact of the pandemic on human resource management with specific reference to work arrangements and the ways to help its work force adjustment to the altered working environment.

**Step 9:** Lessons learned from the impact assessment of COVID-19 on public administration and human resources, the way Covid-19 has changed various administrators and HR professionals' work. The employers need to acquaint themselves with experimentation and trial-and-error to combine the regulation and the execution, which would help them to adopt and adapt to new conditions with a new mindset to address several workplace issues during the time of the pandemic.

**Step 10:** The COVID-19 pandemic and Hungarian human resources: challenges and responses is an effort to answer questions like: What challenges and changes have the corona virus crisis caused in Human Resource Management in Hungary?

**Step 11:** Work from Home (WFH) during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A new challenge to Human Resource Department in relation to women employees which is much more in the third world countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

## **2.6 Agency theory**

Agency theory is a useful theoretical framework for designing organization's systems of incentives and rules, which has been used to understand the failures in projects (Solomon, S.J. et al., 2021 & Mahaney and Lederer, 2003). It directed at a particular type of organizing problem, which called agency problem (Eisenhardt, 1988). It can be developed to the 1960s and 1970s (Fayezi, S. et al., 2012). From the work of Mitnick (1973) and Ross (1973) the modern form of agency theory was largely originated (Fayezi, S., et al., 2012). In the case of developing theoretical paradigms management accounting agency theory played an integral role (Boučková, M. 2015, p. 7). On the need for measurability of performance and for performance criteria agency theory emphasizes (Eisenhardt, 1988).

Agency theory explains the relationship and procedure between principals and agents, and the relationship between principal and agent is contractual (Boučková, M., 2015, p. 7). It uses for analysis economic risk where organizations and individual-group goal incongruence, which impact on risk-sharing behavior (Fayezi, S. et al., 2012, p. 557).

So many authors tried to explain agency theory's relations in different disciplines as like, economics and finance, information systems, management, supply chain management etc. (Sappington, 1991; Mahaney and Lederer, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1988; Shook, et al., 2009). The difference in the principals and agent's objectives is the main issue of the agency theory (Anthony et al., 2014, chapter 11). Agency theory also emphasizes on the compensation, which depend on a trade-off between the costs of evaluating behavior and the costs of bearing risk (Eisenhardt, 1988).

Based on the research title and question, in this study the principals are the company's owners and those who are responsible for the managerial post and the agents are the employees who work in managerial level and non-managerial levels. The principal expect that the agent will perform in line with the interest of the principal. On the other hand, the financial reward, flexible working hours, leisure etc. satisfy the agent for performing in line with the interest of the principal (Anthony et al., 2014, chapter 11). So, in the case of working flexibility the work from home is the main example in this pandemic situation, which can impact the employee's productivity and the company's profitability (Tunyaplin, S. et al., 1998, p. 178).

## **2.7 Employees productivity and loyalty**

### **2.7.1 Productivity**

According to the Bernolak (1997, p. 204) definition, the Productivity is – from resources used how well and how much we produce. Employees' productivity is the most important factor for the company. For running a company and increasing company's performance and sustainability it plays a vital role. The productivity increases, when from the same resources someone produces better and more products than before (Mohammad, J. et al., 2019, p. 730). Employees' productivity as the level of the employees' performance where employees' performance is related to the employees' attendance, working capacity and quality and employees' personal factors (Coker, B.L.S., 2011). According to the Coker (2011) study, the employee productivity will be affected more positively by the short time breaks spaced than one or two long time breaks during the workday. According to Massoudi & Hamdi (2017) study, employees' productivity referred to the efficiency of workers, which can be evaluated by depending on the output of employees in a specific time duration. Some tools can positively effects on employee's productivity. Like-

- Goal setting
- Performance feedback
- Defined processes
- Supervisor support

By setting specific goals organizations can motivate their employees to perform at higher levels of effectiveness, which is more effective than generalized goals.

Performance Feedback is an information exchange and conflict resolution process, where employee and supervisor both can gives their feedback regarding their requirements. Though it is a formal process, but for maintaining closer relations between employee and supervisor it can be perform informally, which also increases employees' motivations.

The organization's responsibility to explain its working procedures by using defined processes through the documenting and communicating systems. For motivating

employees, organizations can set up formal and informal rewarding systems, which can also be internal and external rewards.

To complete the employees' job, the supervisor's support is more important, which can encourage employees positively and also increase their self-confidence. (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017).

### 2.7.2 Loyalty

Loyalty is the reliability and faithfulness of a person about an object. The willingness of the employee to continue working with current company where he or she is already working from before, is the loyalty of an employee (Dhir, S. et al., 2020, p. 1697 & Waqas, A. et al., 2014, p.144). And employee's willingness to stay on his or her company reflects on the involvement of the employee with the company (Dhir, S. et al., 2020, p. 1697). Employee's loyalty is the reflection of the employee's attachment with the company and his or her interest to achieve the company's objectives. It's an organizational citizenship behavior, where an employee promotes organization's interest and image to outsiders with full fidelity (Waqas, A. et al., 2014, p. 143 & 144).

Every business aims to acquire loyal customers who spend more and return with orders repeatedly, additionally, they never think of leaving you for your competitors. The same way employees give their 100% to achieve your business objectives, they feel valued and appreciated in your company and are not willing to leave for other employees. (Medved, K. 2022)

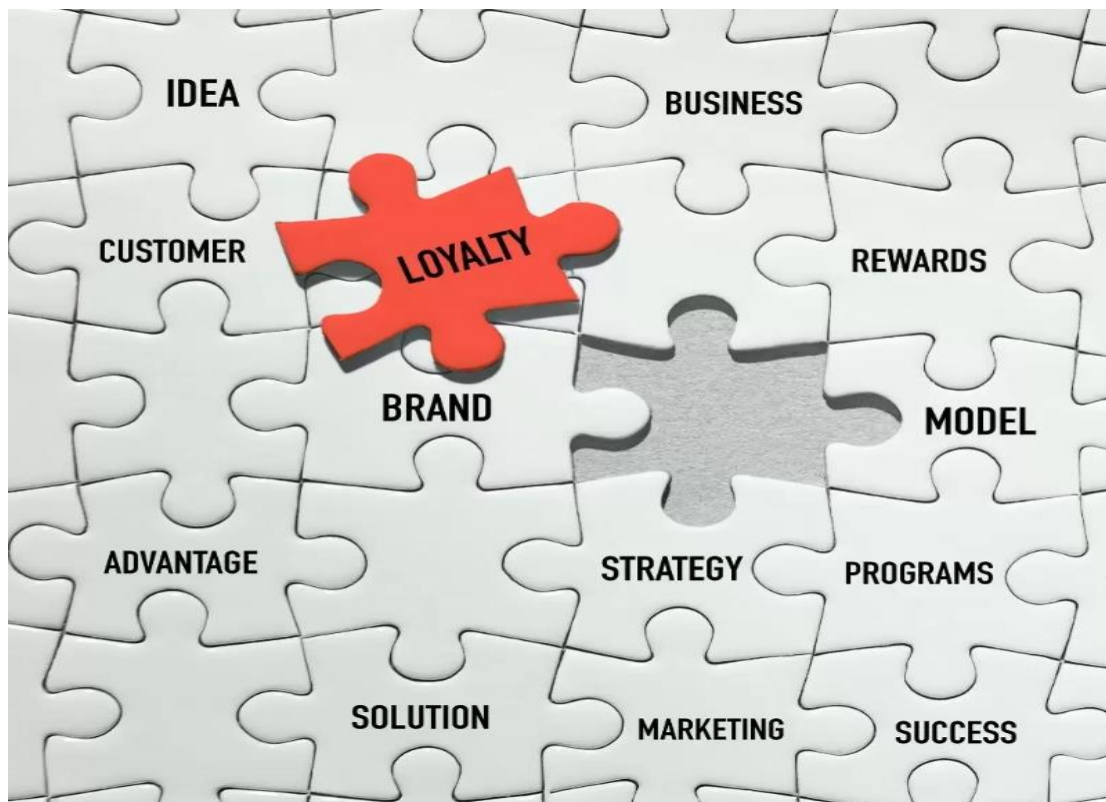


Figure 7: Understanding the local of Loyalty in whole organization, Medved, K. (2022, March 28).

All the businesses understand the importance of the employee's loyalty and its importance for the productivity of their organization, as employee's loyalty goes a long way to fulfilling organizational goals and it leads to many other benefits as well which are as follows:

- . More productive employees
- . Low employee turnover
- . Higher outputs and revenues
- . A better corporate image

Now the point is how to boost the employees' loyalty, the most common mistake, which is mostly done by the employers, is in thinking paying on time salaries and paying more salaries to show appreciation to the employees will create loyalty in employees towards the organization. This can be true to some extent but following points will be able to help you in improving the loyalty and enhance productivity: (Medved, K. 2022)

- . Understand your employees
- . Invest in learning and growth
- . Recognize good work
- . Stop micromanaging

### **2.7.3 Relation between employee's loyalty and productivity**

The employee is an important asset of a company and you need such assets to be in good shape to generate results and achieve high level of productivity. As a result, every organization should try to foster and appreciate loyalty of their employees to boost the productivity. Such approach leads to surge in revenues and reputations. (Medved, K. 2022)

### **2.7.4 From the Agency theory perspective: Impacts on employees productivity and loyalty**

The concept of Agency Theory focuses on the relationship between principal and agent, where principal expect that agent will perform on behalf of their objectives and goal (Boučková, M., 2015, p. 7 & Anthony et al., 2014, chapter-11). The conflicts between principal and agent's objectives are the main element of agency theory (Farsi, J.Y., & Kalatehaei, Z., 2013, p. 175). In this study, principals are all Regional and Departmental Heads and agents are all employees who are working under those regional and departmental heads. According to the agency theory hypothesis, agents are always interested in working for their own interest and for motivating those agents for performance on behalf of the principal's interest principal should provide some financial and non-financial benefits to the agents, like bonus, incentives, attractive leisure time, flexible working hours etc. (Anthony et al., 2014, chapter- 11).

According to the Brown et al., (2011) study, the employee's loyalty influences the employee's productivity or performance. There is a positive relationship between the employee's loyalty and employee's productivity, when employees are more loyal than the employee's productivity increases. On the other hand, when the employees are not that loyal than their productivity is also decreased.

In the principal-agent issue the employee's loyalty plays a significant role. The agency's cost will decrease, when the employees are more loyal to the company and the productivity will also be increased (Brown et al., 2011, p. 926 & 927).

With all other issues, in our study we also tried to find out the drawbacks of working from home which affects negatively on employee's productivity and loyalty and for which principal and agent's interests are conflicted with each other, as for example employees can be sleep on their work time, employees can cheat with the company, they can give less concentration on work and more concentration to their family, they can be wasting time, without any significant reason they can delay the due date, less productivity, in working time they can do some other personal work, for financial benefits employee can leak data easily and company culture and teamwork are impacted (*Appendix 2*).

## 2.8 CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

CSR is an old phenomenon that is about organizations' voluntary concern for the society and environment. It's a business approach that relates to the stakeholder view that has gained a lot of attention during this millennium. CSR concerns about the impact of the organization on its diverse number of groups of stakeholders. Due to increased media attention about environmental and sustainability issues, organizations increase their interest to work with CSR. In CSR work includes some formal and informal tools, such as- code of conduct, sustainability reporting, internal reporting channels, personal example, storytelling, training, intranet (Anthony et al., 2014, p. 80-86). From the last few decades CSR have investigated widely. CSR is a corporation's strategic adaptation that drives the corporation towards ethical and socially responsible behaviors (Russo, A., & Perrini, F., 2010). In the global economy, CSR attracted worldwide attention. In the case of CSR, business corporations have an obligation to work towards their stakeholders. Recently, in globalization and international trade the increased interest in CSR affected in increased business complexity, transparency and corporate citizenship. Through the engagement of CSR activities in the business operations, the progressive companies tried to differentiate themselves. CSR is a set of management activities on legal, ethical, commercial and public expectations that minimizes the business harmfulness and maximizes the positive impacts on the society (Jamali, D., & Mirshak, R., 2007).

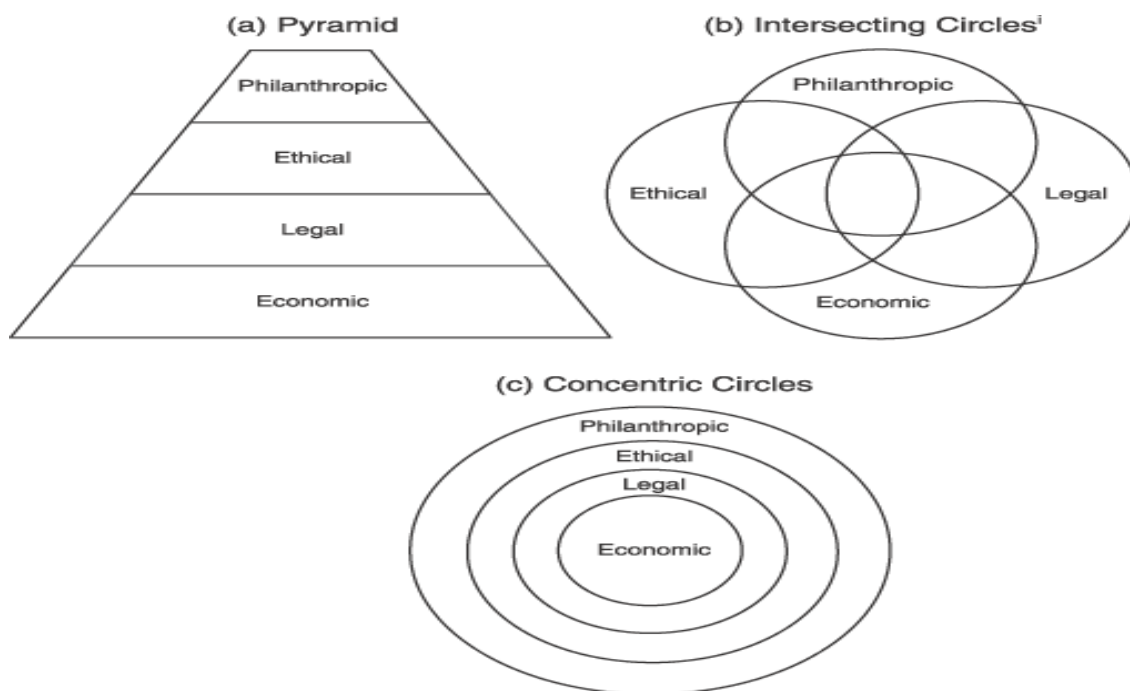


Figure 8: Three basic models of CSR (Geva, A., 2008, p. 5)

Three basic models of CSR are- pyramid, intersecting circles and concentric circles (Geva, A., 2008).

Carroll's four-part pyramid model categorizes the different responsibilities hierarchically depend on importance. It's a CSR's leading model (Carroll, 1991). According to the pyramid model CSR built on the basis of four hierarchical components of social responsibilities- economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. In economic components business corporations' responsibilities are to maximizing earnings per share, to being as profitable as possible, to maintain a strong competitive position, to maintain a high level of operating efficiency, and to maintain consistence in profitability (Carroll, 1991).

In legal components business corporations' responsibilities are to follow government roles, regulations and laws, to be a law-abiding corporate citizen, need to fulfill its legal obligations, and to provide goods and services which meet at least minimal legal requirements. In ethical components business corporations' responsibilities are to follow societal and ethical norms, to respect new or evolving ethical or moral norms which adopted by society, to prevent ethical norms from being compromised for achieve corporate goals, and with laws and regulations to recognize corporate integrity and ethical behavior go beyond mere compliance. In philanthropic components corporations' responsibilities are to working for the philanthropic and charitable expectations of society, and to assist the fine and performing arts (Carroll, 1991).

Intersecting circles model is opposite of pyramid model. The intersecting circles model accept the interrelationships among CSR domains and rejects the hierarchical order of importance of CSR domains. Though corporations are designed for business, but these corporations are depending on the willingness of the society to endure and support them, which means that social responsibilities of the corporation are not less important than economic responsibilities. In the intersecting circles model, among CSR domains the managers' attentions are overlapping and among them sets the running of interrelationships. Flexibility is the most important advantage of the intersecting circles model (Geva, A., 2008).

The concentric-circles model is corresponding with the pyramid model. Because as like the pyramid model shows the economic role of the business is the core social responsibility. And concentric-circles model is also similar to the intersecting circles model. Because, as like the intersecting circles model, here emphasizes on the interrelationships among the CSR domains. Where in the economic circle focuses on the fundamental call on business to be a profit- making enterprise. The legal circle focuses on two responsibilities. Where the responsibility 1 refers to the letter of law and the responsibility 2 refers to the spirit of law. In ethical circle, the ethical domain of CSR refers to those standards and norms of business behavior, which are expected by stakeholders and society. In philanthropy circle, the corporate philanthropy refers to the business firm's contributions to the humanitarian and social causes (Geva, A., 2008).

The whole concept of CSR is related to business ethics. For performing CSR work the company have a moral obligation. How the company act on the responsibilities identified towards its stakeholders that determines by the ethical norms of a company, for which business ethics is an integrated part of CSR (Goel & Ramanathan, 2014).

For COVID-19 pandemic, in Business Corporation increased the risk of losing customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. In this case, for reducing those risks in Business Corporation increased the demand for corporate social responsibility. In the pandemic

crisis government is responsible for protect the health and welfare. But government and business responsibilities are not same; business responses have been predominantly philanthropic. Like, for support to the medical care workers, food, banks and schools many business corporations have engaged in philanthropy by making dollar contributions (Manuel & Herron, 2020).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a type of corporate strategy that looks at how the business can better society as a whole. These can target moral issues such as environmental protection and animal testing, to more ethical acts such as charitable fundraisers. The general aim is to improve public relations and the firms brand image.

Corporate Social Responsibility have a cost, with some businesses diverting 1% on their profits to charity, Employee development, employee entertainment, and their social betterment, while others give their employees time off to help local charities.

Others may invest in creating a more environmentally friendly product and reducing the CO2 footprint of its supply chain. For instance, in 2014, Google committed to investing **\$1 billion** into renewable energy.

Due to the costs associated, Corporate Social Responsibility is largely a strategy for big businesses. By contrast, small and medium sized businesses do not have the same profitability to allow them to divert resources on a large scale.

The examples of the CSR are:

CSR is where businesses look at how they can better serve society as a whole, thereby improving its public image and relations. Examples include Google that invested \$1.5 billion into renewable energy, and Disney, which invested \$100 million in children's hospitals.

Now the question is- why CSR is so important?

CSR is important for a number of factors such as:

1. It can improve employee morale knowing it works for an ethical company with a purpose.
2. Society as a whole benefit from the generous activities and fundraisers of big businesses.
3. Improvement of brand image. (Boyce, P., 2022, February 3).





Figure 9: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ACTION: THE GOOD AND THE BAD. (VICTORIA UNIVERSITY, 2020, February 04)

As CSR is Corporate Social Responsibility in which they have to be concern about the betterment of employees, employee development, their social betterment, as pandemic huge impact on employees or the organizations as in some cases employees are fired from their work, in some situations they are have cut in their salaries, restrictions of movement, impact of their on-job and off-job life, so CSR is very highly connected with our thesis, so explain the role of the organizations and their impacts on their employees.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

*Chapter three is the methodology chapter. This chapter will discuss about the subject choice, ontological standpoint, epistemological standpoint, research design, research hypothesis, interview guide structure, description about the company, focus group selection, overview of the site, pilot study, survey, data collection, data analysis and ethical and social consideration.*

#### **3.1 Subject Choice and Author's Preconceptions**

For COVID-19 pandemic most of the company switched their operations into remote work instead of physical work, for this reason we saw a new opportunity to study this field. Our research area is the national and multi-national company of Bangladesh and Pakistan. The subject of our study is the balance between employee's productivity and loyalty in the case of working from home in current pandemic situation and due to the timeliness of current situation we chose this subject. And even both of our teams prefer to work remotely for the pandemic. So, for this situation we think this is the best subject to do research and our research can help to find out the effect on employee's productivity and loyalty, when they are working from home. That is our main reason to choose this subject.

#### **3.2 Ontological standpoint**

In research, ontology is a philosophical view that shows that how the study's assumptions deal with the reality and the research question and ontology have correlation. Ontology has two different views: objective or quantitative in approach and subjective or qualitative in approach (Long et al., 2000, p. 190). In the case of objective view the reality is external to the individual and in subjective the reality is cognitively constructed on an individual basis. Objectivism is the pro-natural sciences approach and subjectivism is the anti-natural sciences approach (Long et al., 2000, p. 190-192).

In our study, which ontological standpoint we will take is that, the reality is subjective to the social actor and on an individual basis perspectives of the reality are cognitively constructed (Long et al., 2000, p. 190-191). The research purpose and questions of this study requires qualitative method of data collection based on the ontological standpoint (Long et al., 2000, p. 191).

#### **3.3 Epistemological standpoint**

Epistemological assumptions are the fundamentals for qualitative and quantitative both methods. Epistemology is the researchers' beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the theory of knowledge; they have the relationship between study and authors (Hansen-Ketchum & Myrick, 2008, p.206 & Carter & Little, 2007, p.1317 & Braun & Clarke, 2006). Epistemological views are positivism, interpretivism, realism (Saunders et al., 2009). Positivism contributes in hypotheses (Bryman, 2018). Positivism and realism are conducted with the theory of knowledge and interpretivism is conducted with observation. Positivism and realism are related with objective standpoint and interpretivism is related with subjective standpoint (Saunders et al., 2009).

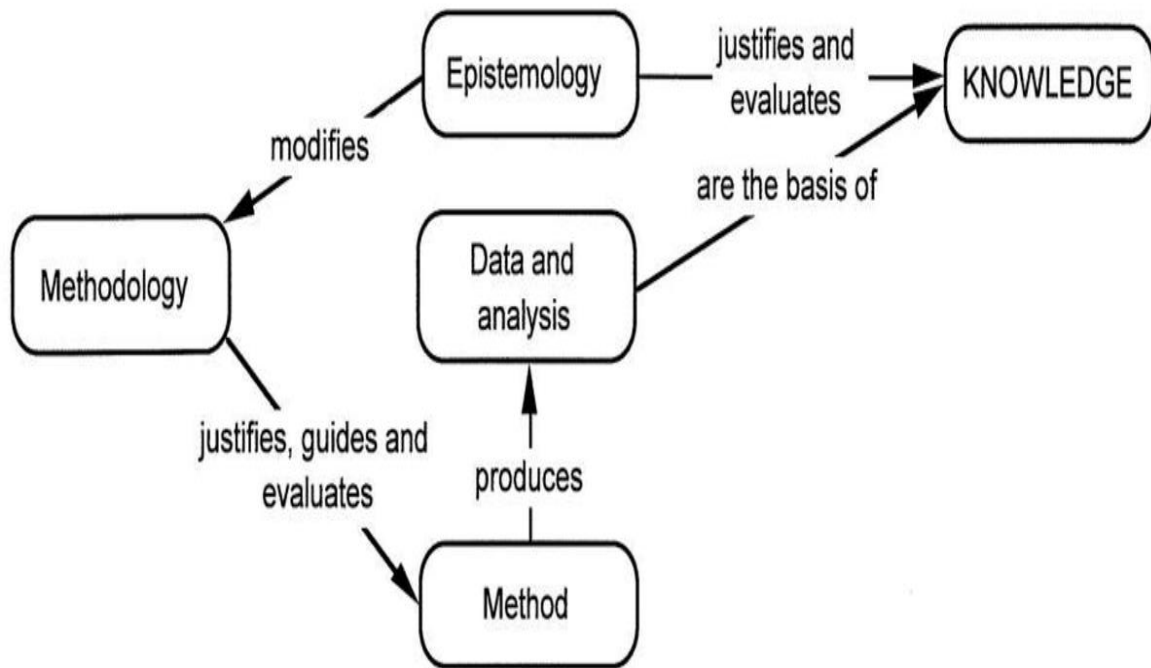


Figure 10: The Simple Relationship Between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method (Carter, S. M., & Little, M., 2007, p. 1317)

In our study, we will apply the interpretivism approach of epistemological views. Because, our thesis purpose is to find out how organizations are balancing between employee's productivity and loyalty when employees are working from home for pandemic. And we think, as subjective approach interpretivism is more appropriate for our study.

### 3.4 Research design

To support this study the primary and secondary data both will be used. And mainly by primary data the research will be constructed and by secondary data will be complemented. In order to gather real and productive information the primary data will be collected by face-to-face and telephone interviews and secondary will be collected from credible sources. A sampling plan will be set out to collect primary data. (Ghauri, P. & Gronhaug, K., 2010)

#### 3.4.1 Qualitative research design

The research methods are the research actions or practical activities and these activities or actions are sampling, data collection, management and analysis and reporting (Carter, S.M., & Little, M., 2007, p. 1318 & 1319). On the objects and nature of the researcher's assumptions the choice and adequacy of a method is dependent which relate to the ontological, epistemological and methodological nature of society and social science. If the perspectives of the research are highly objective in approach, then the following method will be quantitative and when the perspectives of the research are highly subjective in approach then the following method will be qualitative (Long et al., 2000, p. 190).

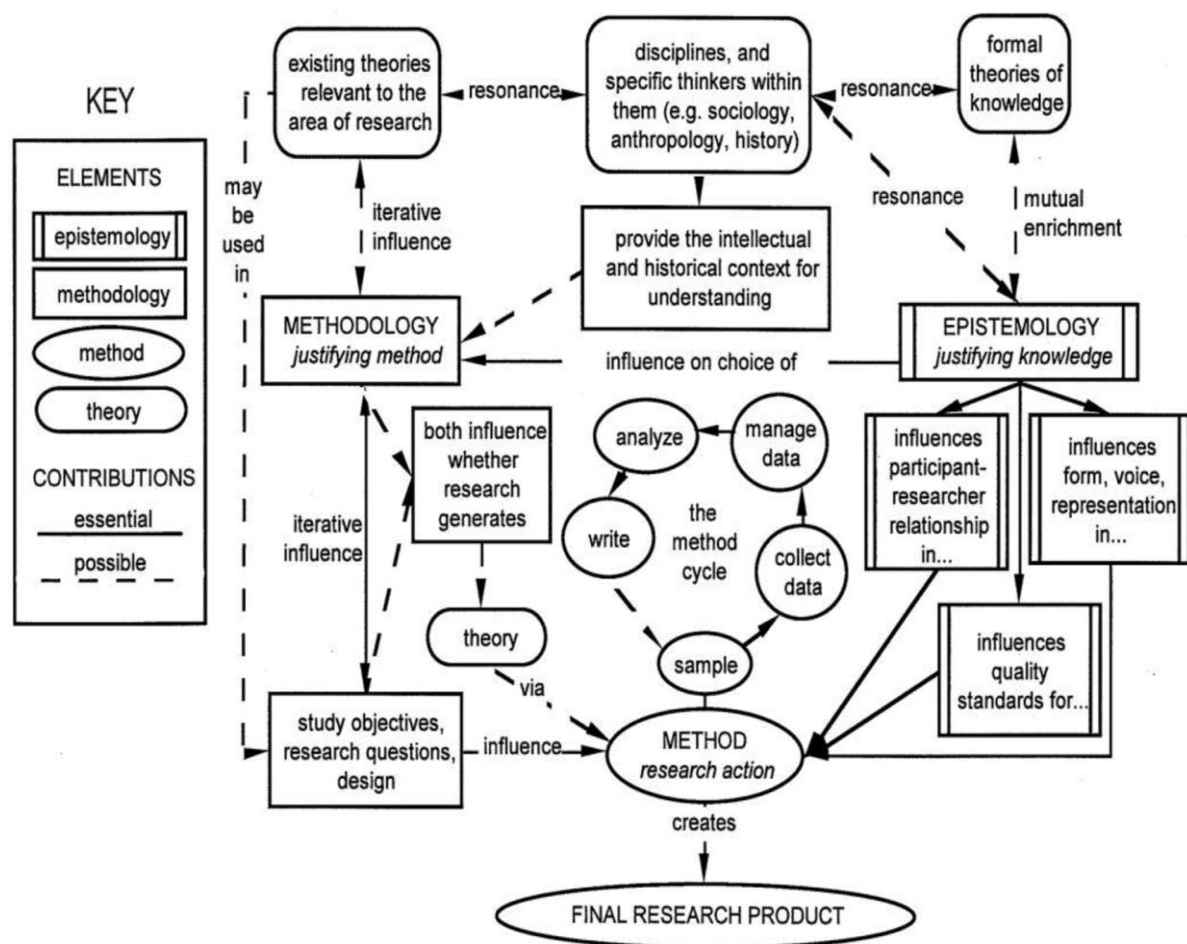


Figure 11: The Contributions of Method, Methodology, and Epistemology to Qualitative Research (Carter, S. M., & Little, M., 2007, 1320)

The origination of a new language for research and the first main wave of qualitative literature happened in 1980s (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In qualitative research method, in the case of sampling activities samples should be selected for an investigative purpose where include theoretical sampling, sampling for maximum variation and time or place based sampling; in the data collection activities cover observation, interviews, focus groups, collection of extant texts, elicitation of texts and collection or creation of images; in the case of data management cover recording, transcription, transcript checking and software use; the data analysis activities cover constant comparison, memo writing and theory building which can be narrative or micro linguistic analysis techniques; and the final part of qualitative research method - reporting is also consider as a part of the analytic process which cover articles for peer-reviewed literature, advocacy, conference presentations, performances and creative writing (Carter, S.M., & Little, M., 2007, p. 1318 & 1319 & Gioia et al., 2013).

Our study is highly subjective in approach where to serve an investigative purpose we followed those sampling, data collection, management and analysis and a reporting activity, which is included in qualitative research design.

### **3.4.2 Choice of qualitative method**

For our study we chose qualitative method, because we tried to get deeper understanding of our concepts. Qualitative approach is highly subjective which is anthropology, by which person creates a better understanding about social world. But in the case of business research, only considering the social forces in the environment is not enough, here it is also needed to consider the level of contextual adjustment, historical-contextual patterns and the probability of change (Long et al., 2000, p. 190-193). The qualitative scholars spend much time on concept analysis as like the philosophers. On the other hand, quantitative scholars spend much time on operationalization, aggregation and resulting datasets and use the data for their statistically representative of the nature and quality of quantitative measures (Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J., 2012, p. 206). The challenges in case of knowledge generation in qualitative method are related with fuzziness where it may have partial degrees of membership in conceptual sets. The discussions and debates in qualitative method are semantics where concern is about the definition of the concepts and to try to specify the characteristics of the concepts that make it unique. In qualitative approach, scholars are independent in the case of discussion and debate about their concepts and defining attributes. But one problem that exists in this freedom is that, it can increase the complexity of the concepts. In extreme modes of simplification qualitative scholars provide restriction. The researcher measures the meaning of the concept in qualitative approach. Between the qualitative and quantitative approach researchers have an argument, the qualitative researcher assumes the subject to have the least amount of measurement error but the quantitative researcher assumes the subject to have the highest amount of measurement error. In qualitative method, scholars discuss about the difficulty of accurately coding particular cases with assessing it to the extent to which a case corresponds to an ideal-type or provide a pure and complete example about the concept (Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J., 2012, p. 206-211).

Finally, we can say that in the qualitative approach, concepts are constructed with a semantic process in which by identifying it's attributing the researcher specifies the meaning of the concept and also in this approach by thinking more about the issues of measurement and error the author can benefit from it (Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J., 2012). That's why we chose qualitative method, because we think it's a more appropriate method for our concept.

### **3.5 Research hypothesis**

Pandemic has effect on production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home.

### **3.6 Division of the hypothesis**

Pandemic has effect on production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home. This hypothesis has two variables one is production, which is the numerical part of the hypothesis, which will be measured in numbers, and the other part of the hypothesis is the loyalty of employees, which is the psychological part of the variable and it is measured in form of, employees' motivation and satisfaction while working for the firm/organization through home, in this overall current pandemic environment. For the analysis these two main variables are further subdivided into questions, which are asked from the selected sample group. And based on the replies of the sample group hypothesis can either be rejected or accepted.

### 3.7 Interview guide structure

In the case of qualitative data collection process, the interview system is the most common and familiar way (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). By taking interview, researcher can get rich and in-depth information about the study's focus area from the individual's knowledge and experiences. Interviewing strategies have some variations, as like, highly structured survey interviews and questionnaires, less structured survey interviews and questionnaires and semi-structured. In DiCicco & Crabtree (2006) study authors applied qualitative interview method, that's why they focus on unstructured and semi-structured interview strategies, because on the other hand highly structured interview is applicable for quantitative data collection. In interview methods relevant ethical issues must be considered for protecting privacy of the participants. Any interview cannot be considered as unstructured, but the variations have following more or less guideline. From ethnographic tradition of anthropology, the unstructured interview originates. Through the respondent's observation and record field notes ethnographers collect data. In this interviewing process, interviewer identifies key informants and can take short notes in the time of interviewing. In this interview strategy about the meaning of observed behaviors, interactions, artefacts and rituals the interviewers provide key information from their knowledge and experiences (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). On the other side, in qualitative research method the most widely used interviewing format is semi-structured interviews. Semi structured interviews are considered as a sole data source and this interview method takes time from between 30 min to several hours to complete the interview. In this method the interviewer has designated time and location. With some general questions from the interviewers and interviewees dialogues, the interview questionnaires are organized with a set of predetermined questions. It can be in-group or it could be an individual interview. The individual interview allows discussing about social and personal matters deeply. To explore the meaning of terms, use free listings are more controlled in semi-structured interview (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315-316).

The in-depth interview is a personal and close interview where open, direct and verbal questions are applied for getting effective and necessary information about the research focusing area. Individual in-depth interviews are able to inform a wide range of research questions. In questionnaire the ineffective and unnecessary questions should be dropped and new questions can be added (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 316-317).

According to Bryman & Bell (2017), the interview guide should consist of a number of questions and they should provide the guideline about how the questions should be designed and answered. As for example, these questions should be related with the study's chosen area, questions should be well planned, questions should be simple and easily understandable to the respondents, questions should not be too much specific, and lastly questions should be started from the introduction question about respondent, like what is respondent's name, age etc. which will make it more comfortable for the respondent in answering rest of the questions, it works like an icebreaker questions (Bryman & Bell, 2017).

Some ethical issues should be considered in unstructured and semi-structured interview process, like informing interviewees about the nature of the study, protecting the privacy of interviewee's information, reducing the risk of unanticipated harm and exploitation etc. (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 319). The interviewer's main responsibility is to encourage respondent to speak and gather information from them in the given time and should listen to them attentively. But if the interviewers keep speaking themselves and don't let the respondent speak, then respondents can lose interest and courage to speak which will

result in unintended harm. In the interviewing time, if the interviewee shares any information that could jeopardize his/her life, then that information should be protected from those who can cause trouble to the interviewees. That's why; this information must be kept anonymous. In an on-going study process, the respondent should have adequate communication and they should be effectively informed about the nature of the study, because at any time they have the right to withdraw from research study. Finally, the interviewee should be ensured that for interviewer's personal gain the interviewee will not be exploited (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 319). As we have mentioned before that, our study method is qualitative research. That's why we follow the semi-structured interview strategies in our study. This study's main area of focus is, employees' productivity and loyalty affected by the pandemic, when they are working from home. And all our questions are related to this for example like, how pandemic has affected on company's growth, how it has affected employee's productivity, effect on cash flow, effect on supply chain and sustainability of remote working etc.

The first section of the questionnaire starts with some general questions, like name, company name, country, department, gender, factors to be considered in calculating personal budget during pandemic and do they take any survey during pandemic etc.

The second section was designed with the background questions. Like – firm location, department, post or position in the department, how long has it been while working with this firm etc.

The third section was designed with those questions which were related with the impact of pandemic, as like, how productions and operations are affected by the pandemic, how it affected on recruitment, how it will effect on employee's health, and question about the drawback of working from home.

And the final part was designed with those question which were related with the strategies to tackle the impact of pandemic situation, for example action for reducing cyber threats, effect on cash flow and how the company can overcome it, effect on ongoing current status, plus side of pandemic and sustainability of working from home etc.

### **3.8 Descriptions about the Companies and the Participants in the Interview**

The following companies we have chosen for Bangladesh site. We provide some information about personal post and information about companies in below-

Company-A, had started their journey from 1851. It started its business as sewing related products manufacturing company, gradually that became the world leader in the manufacturing and distribution of sewing related products and around the globe this brand became famous. In the British era, this company came in Bangladesh for operating their business. It started its operation in Bangladesh in 1905 and opened two shops in 1920, at that time Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan. In Dhaka and Chittagong both big cities of Bangladesh they opened their first two shops. Gradually they increased their product diversification. From the beginning with the sewing machines till now they have introduced several home appliances, electronics and other consumer durables and wide range of products for home. Now a days Company-A became a household name. As a home appliance retailers and manufacturers Company-A became one of the leading companies in the country. In 2019, an Istanbul-based home appliance company acquired 57 percent stakes of the Company-A. From this company two members participated in our

interview for the study. First person was responsible as a Regional Head for this company. We did a pilot study with him. Second person was working as an Assistant Manager for Company-A.

Company-B, was established in June 2, 1999. The main aim of this company was to significantly contribute to the financial system of Bangladesh for the sustainable economic growth of the country. By providing reliable services to the customers, it has been able to achieve its customers trust and loyalty, and has been able to establish itself as a leading third generation private commercial bank. From this company two members participated in our interview. First respondent was responsible as a Head of the Branch of Company-B, Chowmuhani Branch, Noakhali, Bangladesh. And second respondent from this company was an Assistant of the same branch.

Company-C, is a public limited company of Bangladesh. It was incorporated on 24th January 1973. With four diversified strategic business units Pharmaceuticals, Consumer Brands, Agriculture business and Retail Chain, it became one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh. This company contributed significantly to the national exchequer. From this Company-C, one member participated in our study interview. He was working as a Brand Development Manager in this company.

Company-D, is the leader of south Asian e-commerce. They provide their services in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar. In 2018, another giant company acquired Company-D from Asia's pre-eminent e-commerce leader. After acquisition Company-D became an important piece of this giant company's global strategy. From Company-D two members responded to our study interview. First respondent was responsible as an Assistant Manager of this company. Second respondent was responsible as a manager of this company.

Company-E, is one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh as an agriculture business & plastic product manufacturer. This company was established in 1981. From this company, one member participated in our interview. He was responsible as an Assistant Manager in the Company-E

Company-F, is one of the luxury vehicles and motorcycle manufacturer company. It was founded in 1916. From 1928, this company started to manufacture automobile. After World War I they started to produced motorcycle engines and motorcycles. From this Company-F, one member participated in our interview. He was responsible as a manager of this company.

Company-G is one of the largest telecommunication operators in Bangladesh. It was founded in 1997. Under its network coverage area, its being able to cover almost 98 percent of country's population. One participant responded to our interview from this company. He was an Assistant Manager in Company-G.

The companies that we have taken from Pakistan are as follows, some information about the personal post and information about the companies.

1. Company 1. (Participant 1, was a Northern Regional Manager Pakistan of a Thailand based paper company which have many working sites in Middle East and Pakistan. His current profession, as a Lecturer in University of Lahore)



2. Company 2 (Participant 2, Manager HR)  
Company 2 is Pakistani based companies that have many working sites in Middle East and Pakistan
3. Company 3 is Restaurant Manchester Branch (Participant 3, Owner of the Restaurant)  
Company 3 is a Restaurant, which is Manchester, based.
4. Participant 4 (Assistant Registrar of a University)  
University is Lahore based University.
5. Participant 5 (Professor University, former Manager at Vehicles Production Pakistani Based Company).
6. Participant 6 (CEO Transportation company in Lahore)  
Lahore based Transportation Company that provides transport services.
7. Participant 7 (Former Owner of a Restaurant)  
Umeå City based Fast Food Restaurant and Sports Bar.
8. Participant 8 (Manager at Umeå branch)  
Catering Company European based which provide services in Hospitals and different Universities.
9. Participant 9 (Professor at University)  
University is Lahore based, Pakistan
10. Participant 10 (Secretary General at Non-Profit Organization)
11. Participant 11 (Senior General Manager) IT services providing company which provide services such as web development, virtual assistant and telecom. It is a Lahore based company.

### **3.9 Focus group selection (sample selection)**

Focus group selection is based on the need and desire of our study and based on the hypothesis need. Based on the problem research at hand and as explained in section of problem background the selection of the sample is done through managerial and departmental head of different departments so that they would give us an overall picture of the effects of the pandemic on the firm/organization, through which it will enable us to collect such quality data against which we will test our hypothesis at the end and then be able to make solid conclusion.

### **3.10 Overview of the site**

Bangladesh is a South Asian country. The total area of Bangladesh is 130,170 Km<sup>2</sup> and the current population until 20th december, 2021 is 167,091,154 (Worldmeter, Bangladesh Population). The total coronavirus infected people are 1,581,343 until 20th December 2021 and the total deaths are 28,050 (Worldmeter, COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC).

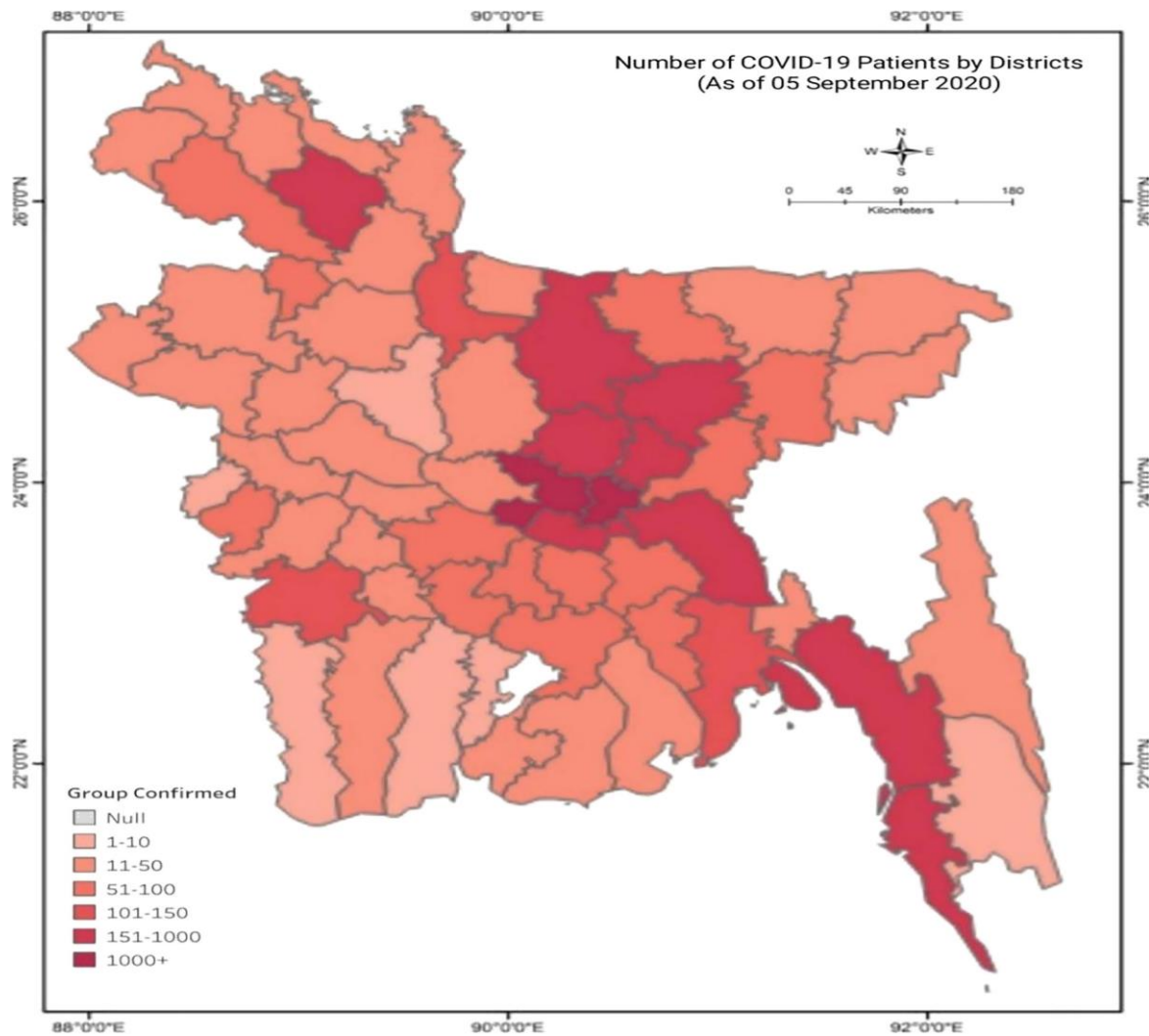


Figure 12: Number of COVID-19 Patients by Districts in Bangladesh (Kumar, B., & Pinky, S.D., 2021, p. 3)

Pakistan is also a South Asian country. Pakistan's total area is 770,880 Km<sup>2</sup> and the current population of Pakistan until 20th December 2021 is 227,164,999 (Worldmeter, Pakistan Population). The total coronavirus infected people until this time in Pakistan are 1,291,467 and the total deaths are 28,878 (COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC).

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic until now, almost all of the countries of the world including Bangladesh and Pakistan, their most of the big, medium and small companies have adopted the method of working from home to decrease the rapid spread of coronavirus (BBC NEWS, 2020)

### 3.11 Pilot study

Pilot Study is a small-scale research study that is done to understand and test the methodology before the full-scale study to see that the parameters and methods that are designed for the full-scale study are fulfilling the requirements and producing the results that can be used in making conclusions.

For the purpose of our thesis, we did the pilot study of the questionnaire which we developed to check that either it will be the right one for our study and will using this questionnaire will produce such results which will help us in making a conclusion for our

thesis. One thing which is worth mentioning here is this, that the pilot study was not conducted in such a manner for achieving desired results rather than making sure that we are covering all the aspects of our study as to see that the data which will be collected through this questionnaire will be comprehensive enough to cover the most part of our topic, hypothesis and all the variables which are the basis of our study. So that we will be able to produce the detailed conclusion on the basis of which either we will be accepting or rejecting our hypothesis that we have developed for our study.

We applied our pilot study on two managerial post holders of two different companies of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

First, pilot study of our questionnaire was done with a participant, who was the Northern Regional Manager of Company-1 in Pakistan, from 2008-2017. Currently, he is working as a Lecturer in a University of Lahore, for Marketing and Entrepreneurship.

And second, pilot study of our questionnaire was done with a respondent from Company-A. He was responsible as a Regional Head of Company-A of Rajshahi region in Bangladesh. He started his work in this company from 2020.

We presented our questionnaire to them and based on their feedback, guidelines and answers to our questionnaire, we were able to make productive changes that are further comprehensive and circumstantial for our study.

### **3.12 Survey**

What is survey? It is a type of research strategy that involves an overall decision-making, way of gathering and analyzing data. We gather information from whole samples involved in the focus group: it is usually people or individual and we ask them questions. Method for the collection of data should suit the research and its topic based on which we will be collecting the data from the focus group, then analyzing it and will be making conclusions based on the analysis towards our hypothesis acceptance or rejection. Surveys involve systematic observation or systematic interviewing, in which you ask the questions from the focus group for which researcher wants the answers for.

The survey question indicates, how the survey is associated with the topic at hand, which research approach has been used to ask the questions.

Questionnaires and interviews are the heart of survey so selection of any one of the methods for the collection of data will make a huge impact on the quality of the data that will be collected and analyzed. There is not a thumb rule, that which method or technique is the best, which is the best one that will suit your research and the method through which you will be able to collect desired data for the analysis and solid conclusion making for the research topic at hand. So, simply saying the selection of the method depends on your research needs.

Whatever the method we have selected, we then have to see whether this method is acceptable by us or not. So, based on our research topic, we have decided the survey method in which we will be collecting data through questionnaire and some through face-to-face online interviews. Based on our understanding, the combination of these two approaches best suits our topic for the collection of data.

### **3.12.1 Survey Questionnaire design and preparations**

This section includes questions regarding the company's growth and barriers, employee's performance, motivation, productivity and loyalty in case of working from home due to current pandemic situation. As a social process by interviewing, in this study, interviewing, in this study, used survey to measure the impact of the current pandemic on employee's productivity and loyalty and to find out the potential strategies to tackle the impact of pandemic situation (Cowles & Nelson, 2015, p. 7).

The questions were divided into four sections. In the first section the focus is on the general part, for example name, residency, division, gender, company name, salary expenditure, the following method for taking survey during pandemic, educational background. The second section includes the background area, for example the location of the firm, what industry it belongs to, department, and designation, how long has it been since working in the firm. The third part covers the impact of the pandemic, for example impact on production and operations, decisions about increasing work force, effect on recruitment, effect of remote working on mental and physical health and effect on employee loyalty and drawbacks of working from home. And the final part covers the strategies to tackle the impact of pandemic situation, for example why and how many hours are preferred for working from home, does a person have enough space and technical support for remote working, the way of communication with superiors and subordinates, actions for reducing cyber threats, effect on new employees, effect on cash flow and how to overcome it, effect on ongoing current status, ways to decrease the pandemic impact, plus side of pandemic, effect of government policies against pandemic, estimated growth of the first quarter of this year and the sustainability of working from home.

In the survey questionnaire some questions are related with each other. In terms of language of the question and the structure of the choices given to the interviewee, there are very less limitations in the questionnaire. And at the end, customized an invitation message and attached the questionnaire with this message for sending to the target people.

### **3.13 Data collection**

In our study, we collected data from primary and secondary both sources. Primary data was collected via interview. The interview was taken from those people who were responsible for the company's managerial position. By using social media platforms and invitation email the survey questionnaires were send and the interview was taken via face to face, phone call, zoom call, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp call for collecting information. But for following COVID-19 regulations and avoiding crowd most of the communications were happened remotely. Based on the research topic the interview questionnaire was prepared. For the comfort ability of interviewee, the interviews were conducted in English language. Based on semi-structured interview approach the interview was taken.

The interviews were taken from twenty-one participants, in which 11 members were selected from Pakistan and 10 was selected from Bangladesh. Among this sample of 21 members, we took face-to-face interview from 5 members (3 members from Pakistan and 2 from Bangladesh) and from rest of the members we took interview via virtual meeting, like- zoom call, phone call, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp call. We collected secondary data from books, relevant articles from the university database, company's official websites, company's annual reports, news channels, online newspapers, and previous publications, Wikipedia.

### 3.14 Data analysis

To investigate the primary data for presenting high qualitative data, a thematic analysis has been used. Thematic analysis is widely used qualitative analytical method. We have used the translation of the data by simplifying it through the information gathered by using questionnaire, face-to-face interviews and with the help of graphs to understand and to present the outcome of the information and results.

### 3.15 Ethics and Social Consideration

In a qualitative study gaining appropriate consent from participant and participant's identity is the most important part (Stenfors et al., 2020). In the case of promoting qualitative data, researchers face some unique and often ambiguous ethical dilemmas (Kaiser, 2009). In high-quality qualitative study one should have a clear and justified research question which expose the value of the study. Ethical considerations are the central part of high-quality qualitative research (Stenfors et al., 2020). In formal research one should have a clear statement about ethics committee approval and renunciation. According to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) ideas, the trustworthiness provides an opportunity for the naturalistic inquirers to explore the new ways of expressing validity, reliability, and generalizability of a rationalistic paradigm (Tobin, & Begley, 2004, p. 391 & Lincoln, 1995).

To determine the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability these four criteria are used. The chosen research methodology should be justified and well explicated which is required in research credibility (Stenfors et al., 2020, p. 597). Credibility is one of the key criteria and one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness of qualitative research that is used by the positivist researchers and it deals with the question, '*How congruent are the findings with reality?*' (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). That means, depending on research question and observations, the data collection methods and volume of data should be justified to the chosen methodology and the sample and sample size is also linked to the methodology. It is comparable with internal validity which addresses issues from both respondents' and researchers' point of views (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 391). In the case of assessing the credibility of high-quality research, the number of respondents or the length of observations are not necessarily the key markers, but the key markers can be the depth, richness and appropriateness of the data. By the auditing process researcher get dependability which is comparable with reliability, where researchers are responsible for ensuring about the research process is logical, traceable and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). It refers to the constancy of data in same conditions and this can be achieved by audit trail (Cope, 2014, p. 89). In the case of address dependability issue, the processes of study should be reported in detail so that future researcher enables to know about the study (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). The conformability criteria mention about the objectivity or neutrality of data which establishing that data and interpreting findings clearly (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). For conformability authentication-auditing process can also be applied, which may be represented diagrammatically. By audit trail observer can trace the course of the research step by step (Shenton, 2004 & Tobin and Begley, 2004). In the case of naturalistic qualitative inquiry, the authenticity is a unique feature by which researchers can show the realities or fairness range. Authenticity is the researcher's ability and extent. By the authenticity in a faithful manner researcher can express respondent's emotions and feelings (Cope, 2014). Authenticity has some variations – ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. In a qualitative study the transferability criteria addressed about the

external validity that means the generalizability of qualitative inquiry (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p.392). The findings of transferability applied to other settings or groups who are not involved with the study. In transferability researchers should provide adequate information on the information and the research context so that readers or external users can associate the findings with their own experiences (Cope, 2014, p. 89).

According to Bryman & Bell (2011), researcher need to consider four ethical criteria-harming participants, invasion of privacy, lack of informed consent and deception is involved. Mainly the ethical principal refers to the participating respondents should not be harmed which can affect on the respondent's carrier or can causes of the respondent's physical damage. In MRS Guideline (2020) interpret about the MRS Code of Conduct which should be follow strictly in the case of carried out research project where main priority gets the rights of privacy of participants. According to the MRS Code of Conduct's principles, the researcher's professional activities can be understood in a transparent manner that should be ensure and also need to ensure that their professional activities will not influence participants opinions unfairly and participants will not be harmed by their activities (MRS, 2020, April).

According to the DiCicco & Crabtree (2006), as we mention before in the case interviewing process four ethical issues we considered in our study- unanticipated harm risk reduced, interviewee's provided information protecting, about the nature of the study effectively informing interviewees and exploitation risk reduced.

### **3.15.1 Anonymity**

It is the most important part of our study as for keeping the information, which we have collected, from the participants for this study. The information that we have collected will only be used for the purpose of this study only, not for any other purpose. Secondly the identity of the participants will be kept anonymous they will be refereed as "participants" throughout of this study.

The information, which has been collected, will only be kept for and during the time of this study and after which it will be deleted and will not be used for any other study without the consent of the participants.

The information will be handled with due respected and no personal opinion and personal preference will be added in the information, which collected to minimized the baseness of the information.

The information is collected from a group of diversified participants to get a broader picture of the industry to see the effect of the covid-19. And these participants are not only diversified based on the industry they belong to but also, they are diversified geographically.

We will take full responsibility of keep the information safe and secure which we have collected from the participants and making sure that this information in no case end up on any social media platform which will put identity of the participant in any Jeopardy.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*This chapter will answer the research question, which was the base of the study; we will analyze the questions and Responses of the participants, based on their response we will discuss and analyze the outcome.*

### 4.1 Results

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the situation that was created all over the world specially in Pakistan and Bangladesh by exploring those practices which were adopted by the different organizations and companies both in Pakistan and Bangladesh with the perspective of Covid-19 to see how firms and organizations were able to meet their goals and objectives.

Scale: The responses of the participants are taken based on the percentage of particular questions for example how many of them have replied to a particular question. The time during which this questionnaire was conducted was during tough lockdown situations and in the middle of the covid-19 pandemic. So, the responses and their analysis are done and are based on during that time and is not based on the current scenario.

#### 4.1.1 Research questions

1. What factors you would consider to calculate the personal budget against your salary, mention all that apply.
  - a) Transportation/traveling to and back from work
  - b) Cost of living
  - c) Health and medical expense
  - d) Additional cost of living during pandemic
  - e) Entertainment
  - f) Others (Please specify) .....

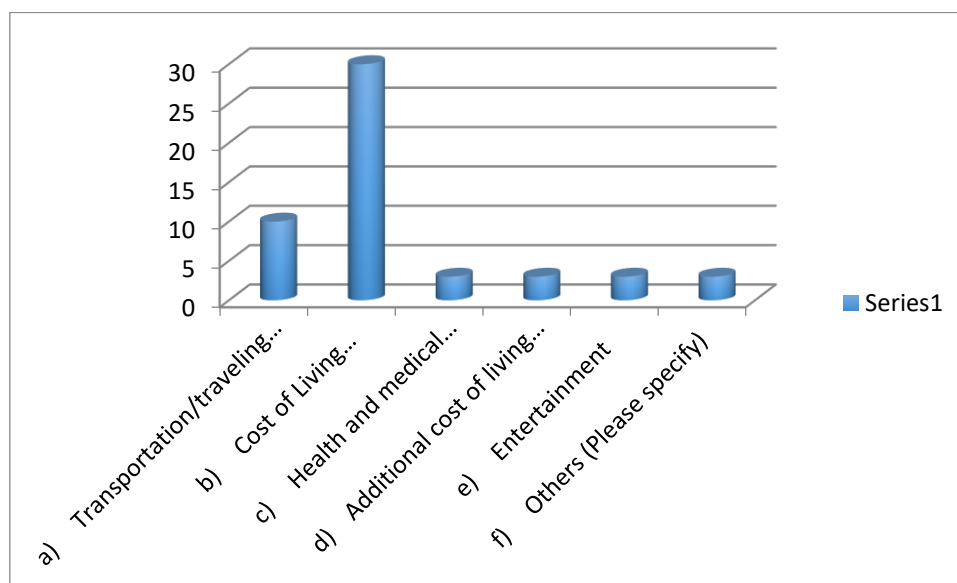


Table: 1

As it can be seen from the outcome of this questionnaire, the major effect of this pandemic is on the cost of living, which is highly increased in comparison with other factors which were indicated in this questionnaire. Almost 30 % of the participants replied to the questionnaire. At the time during which this questionnaire was conducted there were tough lockdowns and it was in the middle of the covid-19 pandemic, during which whole society was in panic and they were bulk shopping and saving them in shelter storage. Which not only created shortage of things, but also became the factor for the increase in the cost of living.

## 2. According to your knowledge to what extent do you think the production and operations of your firm has been affected by the pandemic?

- a) Very high impact, leading to serious difficulties in firm's operations and bankruptcy
- b) Impact which is not that high but still: operations were barely maintained
- c) Small impact, some difficulties in business operations, but overall stability
- d) No significant impact
- e) Positive impact, providing new opportunities for development

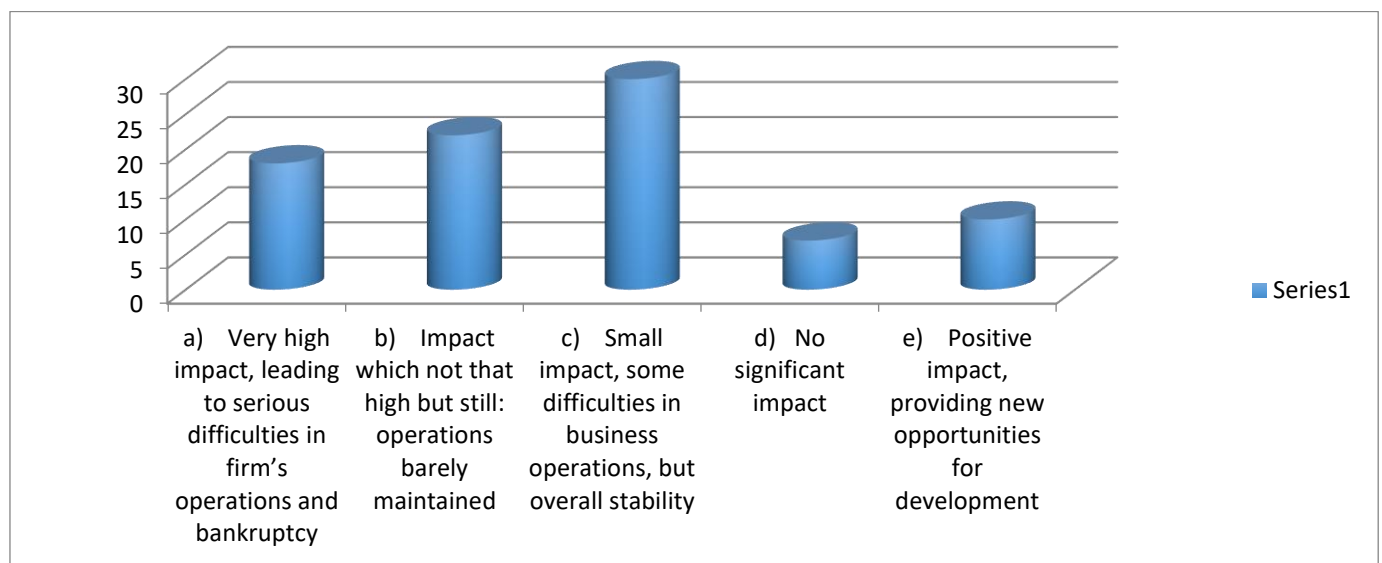


Table: 2

As whole economy of the country was on hold also 29 % of the participants from whom we took the interview from, told us that during this current time they are adopting the strategy of wait and watch, as no one knows what will be the outcome, as how and what sort of new restrictions and laws or lockdowns could be implemented by the government. So, they are just running their operations as before the way they use to but just with some minor changes. So, overall, there is stability in business right now and wait and watch strategy for the future.



3. What were the reasons for suspension of production and operations of your firm?

- a) Shortage of raw material
- b) Shortage of work force
- c) Transportation difficulties
- d) Following pandemic restrictions
- e) Operations of firm are normal as before pandemic

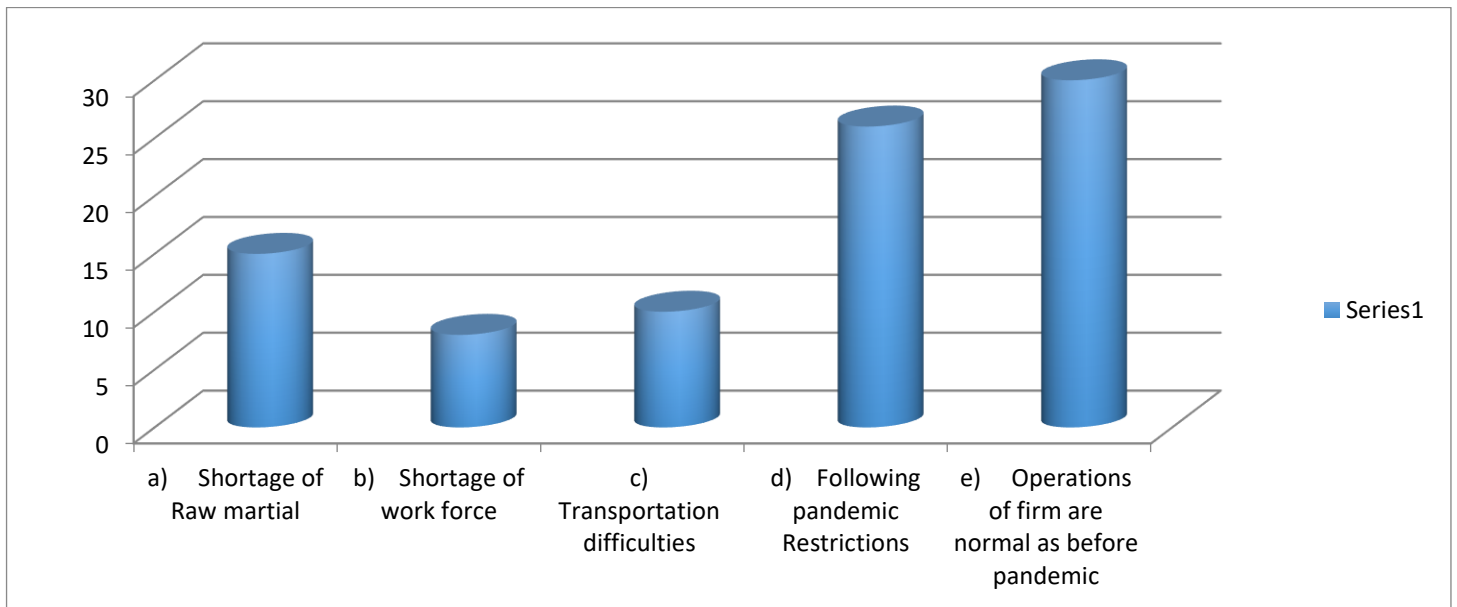


Table:3

At present the firms are just following and implementing the strategies for controlling and restricting the impacts of Covid-19. So, they are clearly unable to analyze the impact and effects on the firm and employees on the long-term basis, so they are seeing not much changes. But as we know that it is going to have a huge impact in the coming days, but in the present scenario there is not much change.

4. What are different operational pressures, which you being as a head of department are facing?

- a) Employees' salaries, and benefits
- b) Building and Equipment Rent (Depreciation)
- c) Loan payments
- d) Cancelations of Orders
- e) High operational cost as have to incur new expenditure for pandemic accessories
- f) Normal as before the pandemic

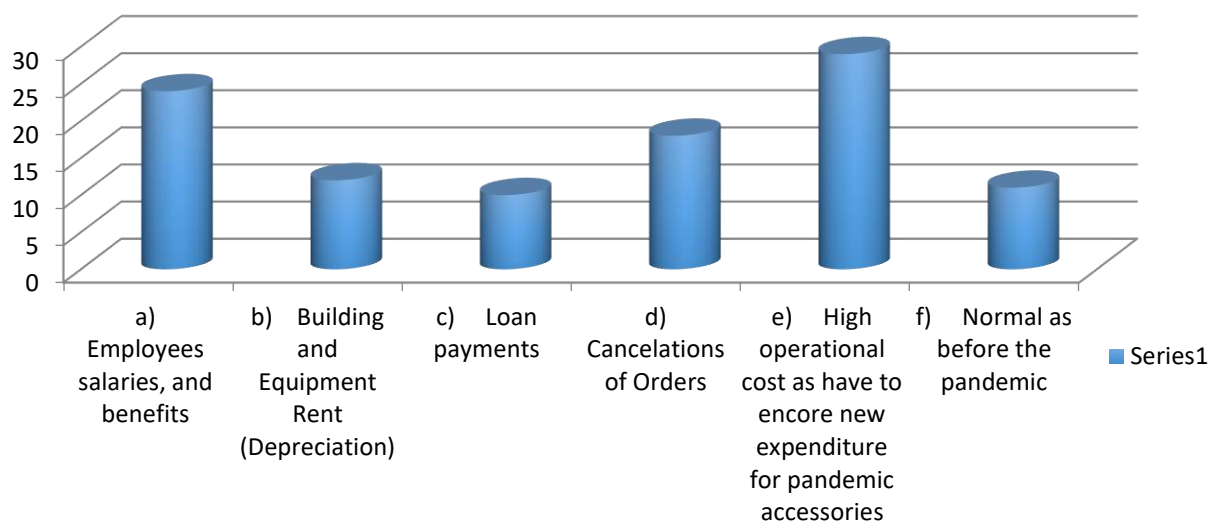


Table: 4

Based on the projections of the coming years, what organization are seeing is the impacts of the world-wide pandemic which are expected to be coming in the coming years are the high production cost and expenditure in the form of employee's salaries and benefits. Production cost such as high operational cost, new expenditures for new equipment and raw material which are needed during this pandemic time to keep the production going and at the same time to keep the spread of pandemic at a minimum level. Secondly, paying the employees' salaries and benefits even though the outcome of the firm is low because of which they are generating low level revenues.

5. What do you think is situation of the raw material and supply chain and other production and operational material in your firm?

- a) Total disruption
- b) Very low
- c) Almost satisfactory
- d) Normal as before

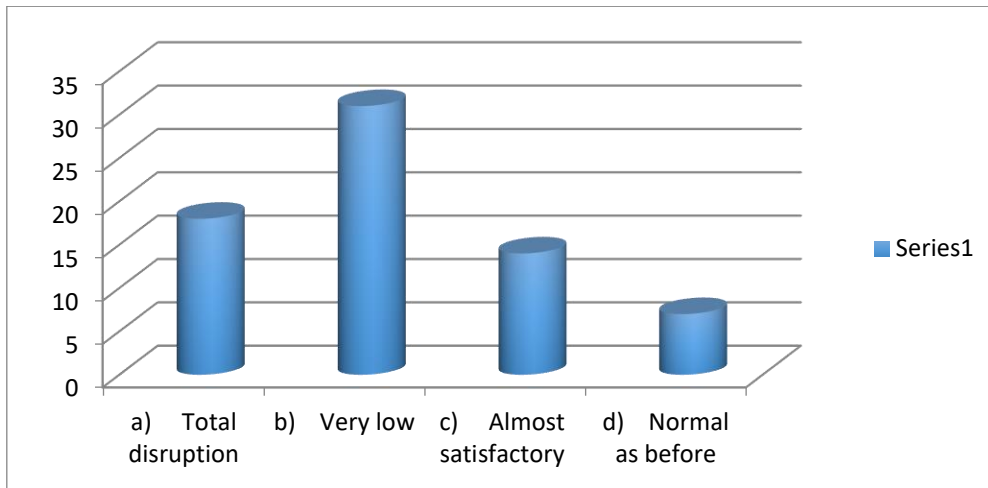


Table: 5

As the supply chain of all the firms have been affected because of the restrictions and lock downs, so the raw material of the firm is currently running very low and it is going to go further down in the coming years, at the same time the prices of the raw material are going to go high. This is what is being predicted to happen in coming years.

6. Based on future strategy specific to your department will you be increasing the work force?

- a) No plan in this situation
- b) Will see after couple of months
- c) Will keep same number of work force as before
- d) Yes, to meet the production demand

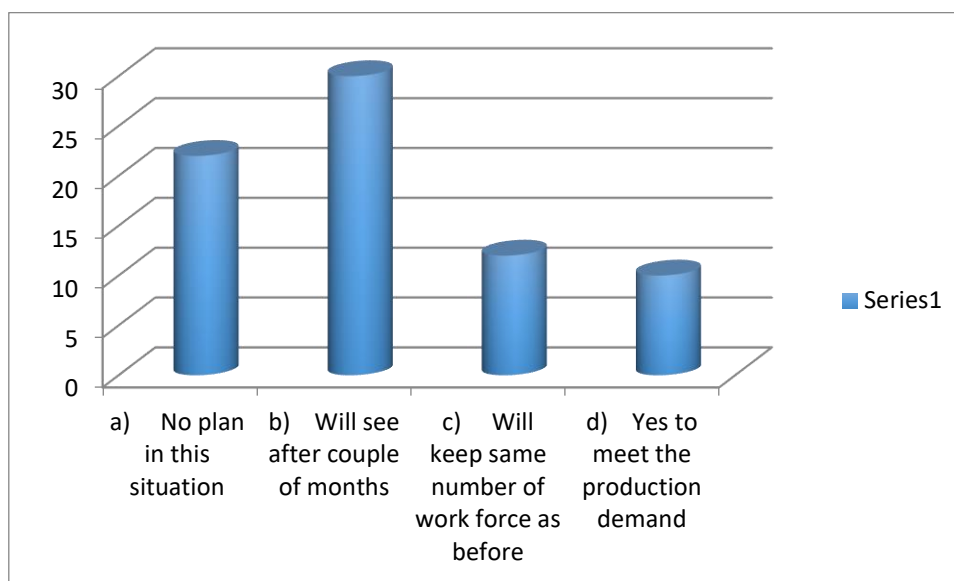


Table: 6

During our interview when we asked them will you be increasing the work force in the coming years, participants replied that as our firms are on wait and watch strategies, and facing high production cost so we do not think we are currently be increasing our work force. We will review the strategy in coming months and based on our analysis we will decide accordingly whether to increase the work force or not.

## 7. How this pandemic has affected the recruitment?

- a) Has closed it for further notice
- b) Will conduct if needed
- c) As more employees are needed to meet the requirement of productions, so recruitment process in on going.

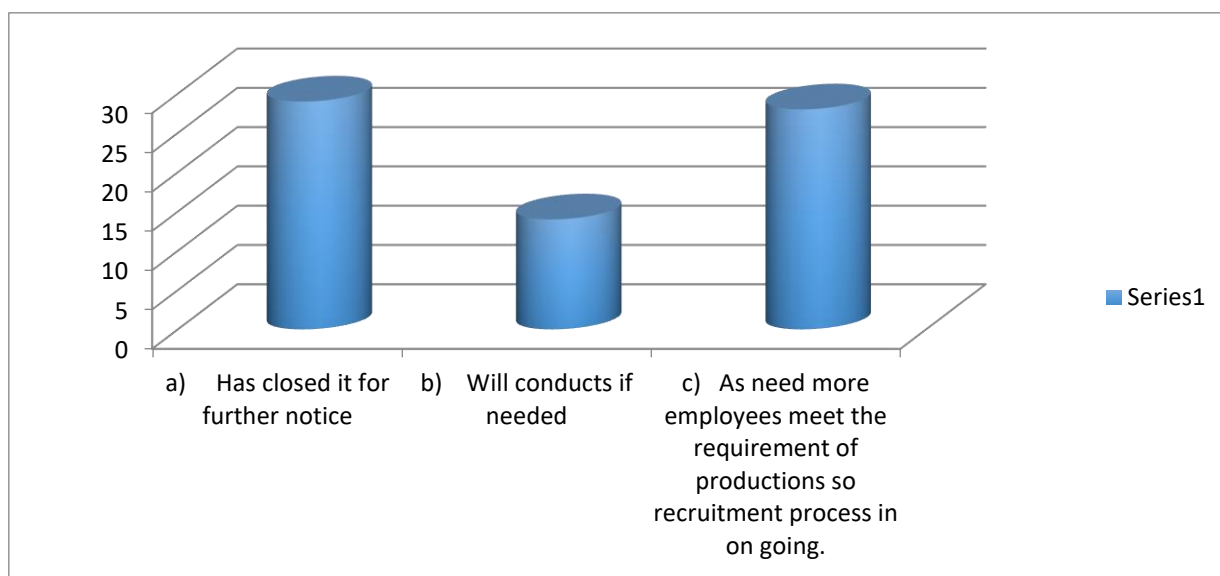


Table: 7

Where this pandemic has effected most of the operations of all the firms and has effected the jobs of most of the employees, it has also created some new opportunities for which some of the firm employees from whom we took the interview from, told us that they are planning to hire new employees with specific skill sets which are suitable for their current needs but at the same time majority of the participants said that their respective firm has closed the recruitment process till future notice.

## 8. Based on your understanding what is the clearest impact this pandemic has on your department/firm?

- a) Production
- b) R&D of the department
- c) Supply chain
- d) Operations

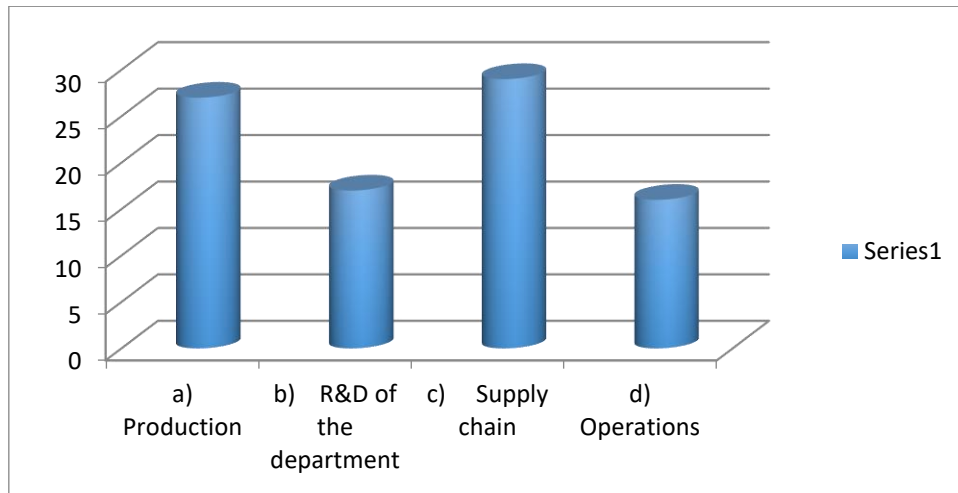


Table: 8

This pandemic has overall impacted on the whole firm and its employees but according to our participants most impact came on supply chain and productions of the company/firm.

#### 9. How does it effect on mental or physical health?

- a) Weight gain
- b) Anxiety
- c) Depression
- d) Poor sleep
- e) Increase in back and neck pain
- f) Increased risk of diabetes
- g) Others etc.

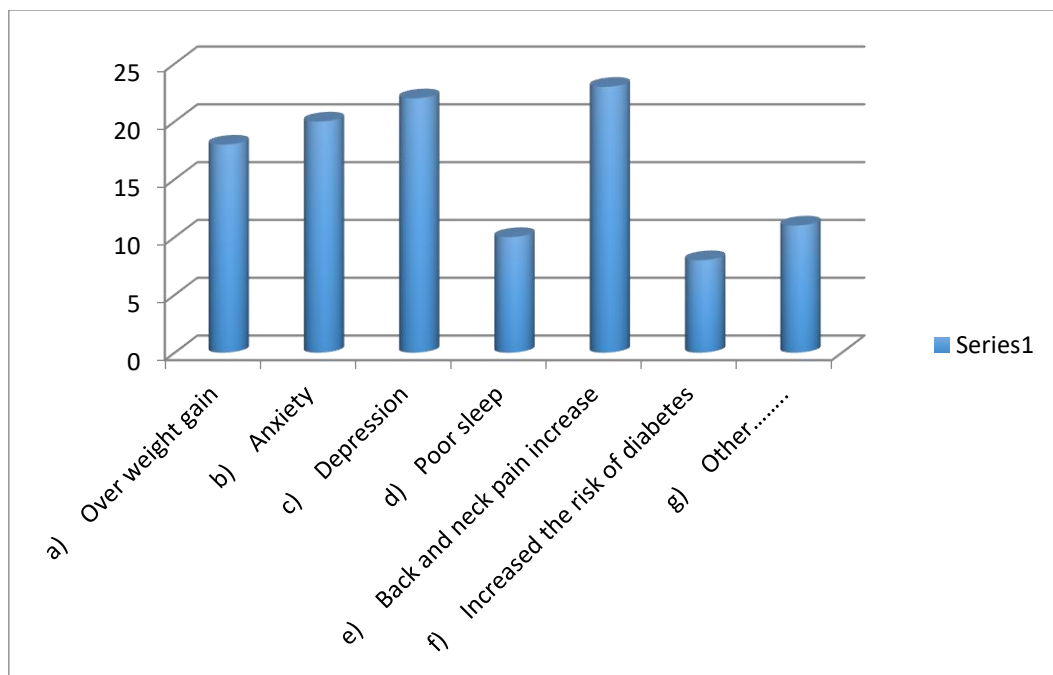


Table: 9

When asked from participants, what sort of effects are they seeing on their employees of this pandemic, according to them it is mix of both mental and physical which can be seen in the presentation of table 9 in which back and neck pain hold the same impact as depression.

#### 10. Are you willing to switch to online operations?

- a) High cost to install IT operations
- b) Work force does not have the required skills to perform firm operations online.
- c) Right now, accessing the cost of IT installation
- d) Firm operations cannot be operated online
- e) Yes, firm operations can be performed online and they are already being done online.

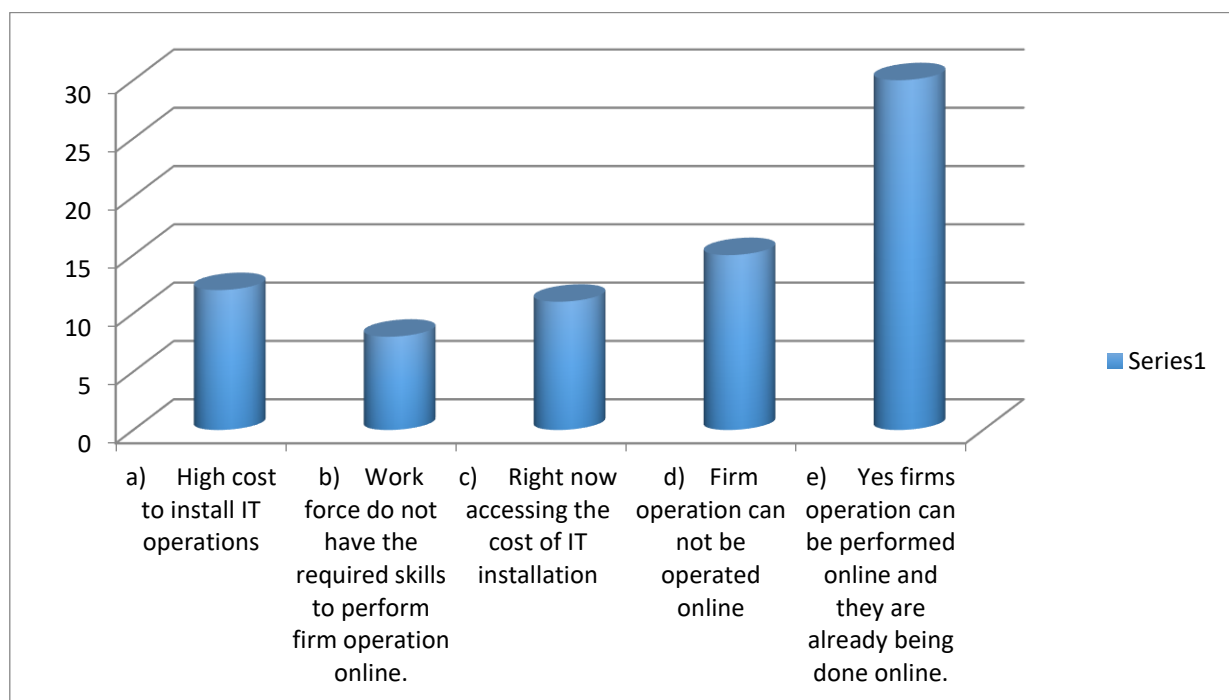


Table: 10

Almost all the participants replied positively about implementing this strategy of performing almost all the operations of the firms online using different IT platforms such as Zoom meeting and virtual tool. But in some organizations based on their type of work it is not possible, such as service-oriented firms which provide services to their customers, in such firms they are unable to perform their operations using online tools.

11. What is your thinking about the sustainability of working from home?

- a) It can be continued in future (full time work from home)
- b) It should be stopped now
- c) It can be done alternatively (some days working from home and some days working from office)

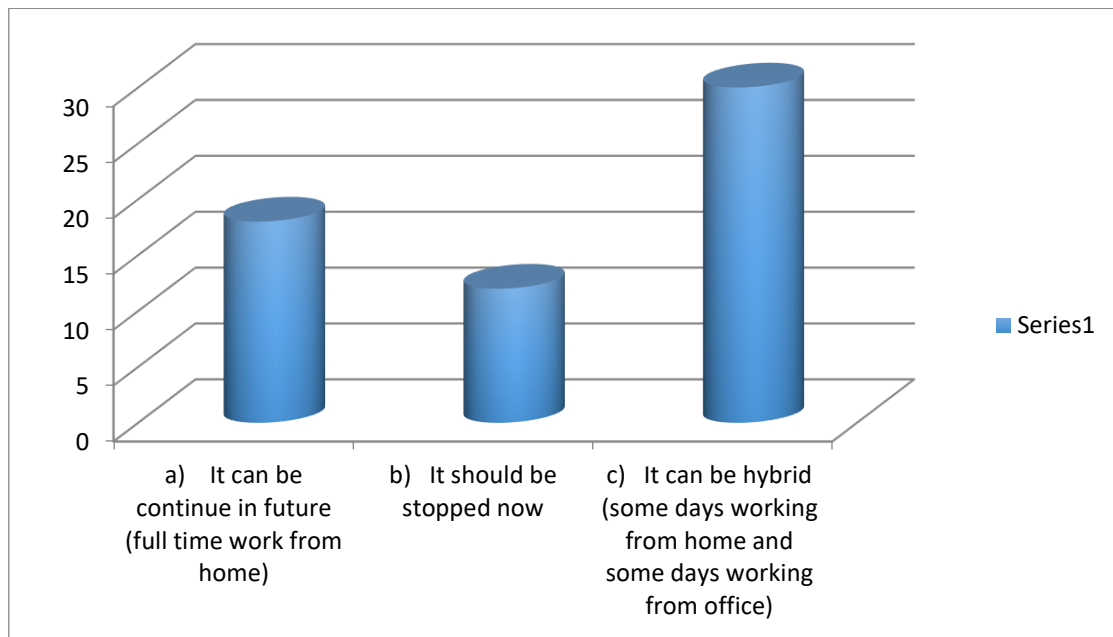


Table: 11

Our participants replied to this question as they are thinking of implementing an alternate system in which some days the employees will be working from home and during some days, they will be physically present on site. According to them this strategy will have two-fold impact, one it will allow the supervisors to see how their workers are performing their work, as it will be easy for them to set deadlines which can be met and at the same time good for the employees to have loyalty towards the organization by creating for them a friendly atmosphere at work which will make them feel a sense of belonging and attachment towards their firm.

## 12. What are the drawbacks of working from home?

- a) Employees can be sleeping in their working time
- b) Employee can cheat with the company
- c) Give less concentration on work and more concentration on family
- d) Misuse of time
- e) Without any significant reason delay the due date
- f) Less productivity
- g) In working time doing some other work
- h) For financial benefits employee can leak data easily
- i) Others etc.

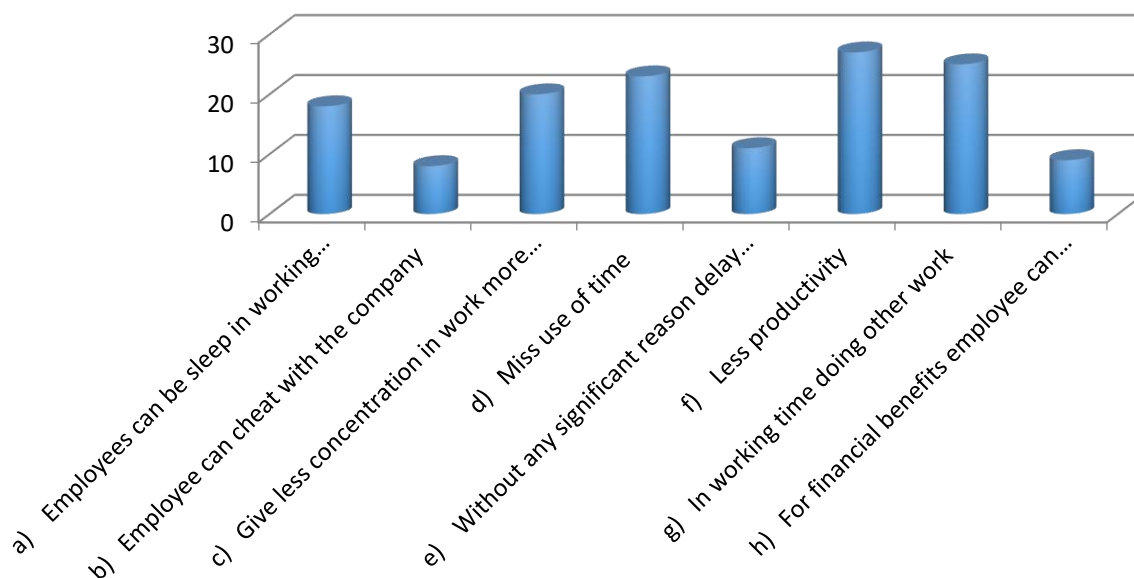


Table: 12

When asked about what they think are the drawbacks of working from home strategy are, majority of our participants replied that there are many of them but the ones which have high percentage are less productivity, in working time doing something else meaning less concentration on the work, misuse of time not properly being able to arrange the time and sleeping during work time etc.



#### 4.1.2 Responses of different respondents during our discussion

When we asked from respondent “A” from company “A” about, *“Does working from home effects on employee’s loyalty?”* the respondent “A” replied, *Yes, working from home has effected the loyalty of the employees towards the organization as they have freedom of work and location to perform their task and at the same time they have more chances to look for other job opportunities as more and more firms are adopting the work from home strategy, which gives employees opportunity to switch their jobs as and when they please and for employers who are geographically located to some other location. So, according to respondent “A”, what is more important for the employees are the financial benefits of jobs which they will be able to earn, and not their association to a particular company or firm.*

From company “B” and company “C” respectively, when we asked from both the managerial staff and also the working staff, both of them had different responses like, when we asked from respondent “B” and “C”, about *“What are the drawbacks of working from home?”* the respondents from the managerial side responded, *as the drawbacks of working from home mostly effects on employee’s loyalty toward their firms/organizations. Like, employees can be sleeping in their working time, employees can cheat with their company, give less concentration in work and more concentration towards family matters, misuse of time, without any significant reason delay the due date, less productivity, in working time doing some other work and for financial benefits employee can leak the confidential data easily to other companies, company’s culture and teamwork are impacted. Which also decrease their productivity also.* And employees side responded, *as their salaries and benefits being cut, getting more work responsibilities, long working hours, unscheduled meetings, team work being affected because of other team members, not getting appreciated for their work which is causing less motivation towards the work and organization and uncomfortable working conditions as working from home is not very suitable for work.*

Next question, which we asked from both the managerial staff and also from the working staff was, *“What are the steps so far taken by your firm to decrease the impact of pandemic?”* When asked from respondent “D” and respondent “F” who were from company “D” and company “F” respectively, the respondent from the managerial side responded, *“as this pandemic is very new, we lack knowledge about it and the effect of this pandemic is very much severe. So, we are trying to educate our employees so that they will be able to save themselves from the effects of this pandemic and also continue to work as well. But when we asked from the staff the same question, they responded like this, “whatever is being done by the organization/firm is done just to save their own resources so that they can be able to survive on their own, they are not concerned about the employees, the first thing the organizations/firms are concerned about is how they will be able to save their resources and for it they are even ready to lay off employees, even those who have been with organization/firm for very long time”, this is creating concerns in the lower staff and their loyalty towards the organization/firm is being questioned when employees see that their organization/firm is more concerned about themselves and not about them.*

From company “1” when we asked to participant “1” about, *“What are different operational pressures, which you being as a head of department are facing?”* the participant “1” replied, *they have a lot things to consider such as, employees’ salaries and benefits, building and equipment rent (Depreciation), loan payments, cancelation of orders, high operational cost and to encore new expenditure for pandemic accessories. All*

*these expenses put stress on company's financial side and is making situation tough to keep their business progressing and running.*

When asked from participant “2” from company “2” about, “*Does long time remote working effect on your mental or physical health?*” the participant “2” replied, *the effect of this pandemic have very deep and long-lasting effects of both physical and mental health for the whole staff that is working in an organization. The effects are, as such over weight gain, anxiety, depression, poor sleep, increase in back and neck pain and increased risk of diabetes, which decreased employee's productivity. These factors as told before are affecting every staff member of the organization managerial side and employee side.*

And when we asked from participant “6” and participant “11” about, “*Does remote working effects on handling the onboarding of new hires?*” the participant “6” and the participant “11” both replied respectively almost same answers. Like, *yes, as during the current pandemic environment it creates double side effects on the new hired personals, as firstly their training is not done in such a way that they are able to understand their full role in the organization/firm. And secondly, they do not hold such connection with the organization/firm that they feel like giving their 100 % efforts for achieving organizational goals as they feel like unwelcomed, unconnected with the organizational environment, and also, they feel like under-trained for fully utilizing their potential. So, according to participant “6” and “11”, the important things in such matters are the on-job training programs which give newly hired employees a feel of being the part of the organization/firm, be loyal regarding their job role, understanding their role fully and seeing what and how they are contributing in achieving organizational goals so that they can get the sense of importance about their work, to know how much it is important for the overall development and growth of the organization/firm.*

## 4.2 Discussions

This part of the chapter is divided into different parts to highlight the effects of the pandemic on them from production to HRM, financial, R & D to marketing. Based on the research and response that we got from our participants of the questionnaire and face-to-face discussions with them, as it can be seen from the responses which are presented in the form of graphs in the previous sections it can be seen that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected almost every part of all the firms (organizations) regardless of sector of the business and type or the form. In our perspective by form we mean the size or them being national or multinational. Some organizations are affected more as compared to some others. The one which are most affected are the ones which are involved in such business in which employees are in close contact with each other and the ones which are less affected are the ones in which employees work individually with robotics or IT.

As given in the highlight where the firms were analyzed as such how much employee productivity can be achieved while remaining in the norms and structure of an organization, such structure which is built upon rules, regulations, principles and norms which are followed as they are part and partial of any job description that is advertised beforehand to announce and describe to attract particular type of employees who can be easily adjusted and get comfortable in their organizational structure and their ease to follow their principal and rules (Mehta, S., et al., 2010).

But currently in technological advancement this description has changed and more concentration is given to the advancement of IT and technological implementations through which IT can be used to get desired objectives and goals.

From our study we came to the understanding that the pandemic has affected not only the employees' work life but their personal and social life as well, in most of the cases employees are the one who are the most effected, as in some cases they are fired from their jobs without any previous knowledge or notice, and in other case because of less work force one person has to bear the responsibilities of two or more people at the same time. Which has highly affected their motivation towards the organization and loyalty as well, which are forcing them to keep their focus on individual goals rather than teamwork, employees are more interested in their personal gain let it be financial or experience rather than concentrating on the development of the organization or firm.

As we have seen in literature review economic problems in the global economy are all related with the phase of the spread of coronavirus in the world. The effects of this disease are expected to have impact on these sectors more than compared to others which are domestic prices, tourism, service and manufacturing enterprises are particularly more vulnerable than any other sector. One of the solutions to counter the impact would be increase in domestic production and decrease in the import from other countries.

Now from the prospect of the organization (firm) they are also in a state of limbo in which they are being affected internally and externally. Within the organization they are facing problems like shortage of work force, less production, high running cost, affected delivery system, non-motivated employees who are more concerned about themselves as compared to the organization and implementing new methods of doing work, implementation of the strategies such as working from home. And the external factors are the crashing country economy and stock market of the country, Shortage of raw material, effect on supply chain, due to high price of raw material as compared to the past, cancelation of the order and implementation of the restrictions and lock downs by the government, are some of the

internal and external factors which are affecting the different organizations. Some companies are dealing with them more efficiently than others because of their organizational structure and type of their work, which made them flexible enough to adopt these changes. And others are following the strategy of wait and watch.

As explained in Companies five horizons: Resolve, Resilience, Return, Imagination and Reform (Dertouzos, J. et al., March 27, 2020). These are the five steps being taken by most of the world organizations for reducing and minimizing the effects of this current pandemic and any of the organizations/firms who are lacking in taking these steps, they are unable to create a balance employees' productivity and loyalty. So, either they are lacking in terms of productivity in which they are unable to produce the right quantity of the products which they would have in the normal situation. The reason of that would be supply-chain stabilization as they are lacking the availability of the raw material which they need to produce the products, or financial testing in which they lack the knowledge of scenario definition and financial stress test, as most of the organizations/firms are lacking the knowledge in this scenario because none of the world organizations/firms have faced such pandemic in last 100 years which they are facing presently. On the other hand, the effects which would be seen in organizations which are unable to follow these five steps are issues of map and management, portfolio of actions and leadership.

From our study, we also found some results, which are included in CSR activity, and which shows us, pandemic impact on employees financial, social, physical and mental betterment, on their development, like organization can cut their salaries, restrictions of movement and sometime they are fired from their job, which impact on their both on-job and off-job life (*Appendix 2*).

As also explained in earlier study, Agency Theory focuses on the relationship between principal and agent, where both can have conflicting goal or objectives, which can affect on employee's loyalty and productivity toward their organization (Boučková, M., 2015, p. 7; Anthony et al., 2014, chapter-11; Farsi & Kalatehaei, 2013, p. 175 & Brown et al., 2011, p. 926 & 927). In our study, we found some drawbacks of working from home, where principal and agent's goals are conflicting, and which effects on employee's productivity and loyalty negatively, toward their organization/firm. For example-employee can be sleeping on their working time, they can give less concentration to their office work and more concentration to their family or personal work, without any significant reason they can delay the due date, for financial benefits employee can leak data easily, company's culture and teamwork are impacted etc. (*Appendix 2*).

Those created a gap between the employees and management, which is making hard for them to take the right steps for organizations/firms and at the same time building or maintaining the right balance and boundaries between an organization and its employees which in return will effect on *production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home*, as such organizations/firms are unable to implement work force protection, which consist of policy and management, 2-way communication, personal and contractors, facility and onsite norms, health and governmental management. This causes the employees to see themselves as expendable, so the employees see their organizations/firms more concerned about themselves and their survival and not about their human resource that result in de-motivation of the work force. Lacking of input or guidance effects towards the achievement of the assigned goals and tasks, given the freedom of working from home motivating employees of such organizations/firms to keep on working from home and not having the urge of returning to the normal working environment. It is also motivating them to look for other opportunities, which are more

suitable for them, both financial and personal development wise. Which at the end results in the imbalance between *production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home*.

More or less, it can be concluded here is this, one way or the other this pandemic has affected both firms and employees, as according to Khotamov I.S., & Olimov M. K. (2020) companies must utilize their existing human resource, legal and operational potential to waiver in an accelerated manner, to lessen the effects of the current covid-19 impacts. (Khotamov I.S., & Olimov M.K., 2020)

One aspect of this dependency is organization relying on their employees, at the same time it has also tested the motivation and loyalty of the employees to see will they be with their respective organizations during these tough times or they are only concerned about their personal goals and personal gains.

Some light of hope can be seen with the development of vaccinations and implementation of the governmental and financial policies, which are providing hope for both the organizations and employees. But like during our face-to-face discussions, both managerial personals and employees are following the wait and watch policy to know what future holds for them.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND END DISCUSSION

*Chapter five will provide discussion about the concluding part of the study. And the following sections will discuss about the theoretical contribution, and the limitations of the study.*

### 5.1 Conclusion

In this pandemic situation a qualitative study of the balance between employee's productivity and loyalty in case of working from home was our study topic. Through our study we have seen that the effect of this pandemic has far deeper effect on the organization and employees and have made almost all the organization to rethink and rebuild their strategies and pattern of conducting their businesses that they used to follow in the past or that were their principles for a long time. Now new approaches and new patterns of thinking, meaning thinking outside the box approach is more widely been adopted.

As we have seen from our research that this pandemic has affected the internal and external departments of the organization like supply chain, raw material availability, cost of the raw material, production orders, production, work force availability, governmental restrictions, lockdown implementation by the government etc. and effect on the employees, their personal development, financial situation, job security, ability to be motivated have shown similar productivity scales even without any supervision on them.

In some situations, companies and employees are able to follow their routines and are able to do the work as they used to do, but in most of their part they are unable to cope with the new situation which is resulting in low productive outcome which in the end is resulting in shut down of the businesses or employees losing their jobs.

At the same time people who are now working from home are reluctant to come back to work and feeling themselves bound to working in the office environment or from 9 to 5 job.

For them working free from the office environment is more attractive and beneficial, where at the same time it is difficult for the organization to have a check on such working patterns and activities, they are able to allow or follow such patterns for short times but unable to implement such patterns for long terms.

Because based on the understanding employees are not following their set patterns or procedures that they have implemented to achieve their goals. And this is a forcing employee to look for such opportunities that are more comfortable to follow the rules and have independent location, and office free environment that allow them to set their own goals and deadlines which employees are comfortable in achieving.

So, it can be concluded here that it is hard to balance between employee's productivity and loyalty in case of working from home and is very much hard to implement specially in pandemic situation. As it is a constant struggle between organizational principles which are there for very long time, and this new situation which is the outcome of this pandemic in which employees got the freedom of working from home, and it has become very

suitable and attractive for them in very short period of time. Based on our research we can say that our hypothesis, *“Pandemic has effect on production and loyalty of employees in a firm/organization in case of working from home”* is accepted as Covid-19 has weakened the production of the firm/organization and loyalty of the employees towards their job and firm/organization.

## **5.2 Theoretical contribution**

In this study we have investigated on the impact of employee’s productivity and loyalty, where companies have applied the working from home strategy and our focused area was the national and multi-national company of Bangladesh and Pakistan. In the case of adaptation process of working from home, from this study the companies of Bangladesh and Pakistan will get the idea about how to balance between employee’s productivity and loyalty and about the management of remote work. This study also provides knowledge about pandemic crisis and how to overcome the pandemic crisis. It also contributes to the drawbacks of more digitalization and the security management of digitalization. It also contributes to principal (management) and agent (employee) conflict in working from home and management approach to balance this conflict. It also contributed to the COVID-19 impact on HRM from the perspective of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and also provide the knowledge about the pandemic impact on GDP of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and also impact on the companies CSR activities.

## **5.3 Social contributions**

The social contribution of our study has investigated the impact of the governmental policies and how they have contributed and restricted policies of those organizations that we took for our study. For example, implementation of the lock down policy, restriction of the numbers of the on-sight employees, distribution system, implementation of the limited import of the raw material and limited withdrawal of finance from financial institutions like banks and loaning companies etc. Such policies limit the production of the organizations and on the other hand this also limited the employee ability to maximize their productivity, as they do not have access to those resources that were required. This forces the high-level employers to favor the distribution to scarce to such employees whom they think have better ability to utilize them, and such policies in return create the sense of un appreciation in lower level of employees and question their loyalty towards the organizations, its goal and their impact and their role in achieving these goals. Our thesis highlights this impact, how the high level of management perceives it and how they try to implement, and how it is perceived and is taken by the lower level of the employees.

## **5.4 Limitations of the study**

We acknowledge that, this study is just only for limited area and limited time period. Our research area was only the national and multi-national company of Bangladesh and Pakistan, who allowed their employees to working from home, to avoid crowding in COVID-19 pandemic. We didn’t focus on that sectors that are not capable to work from home, for example doctor, chef, and other sectors that need to do their work while being physically present and not from home. And we did survey on large and medium sized companies and not on small size companies.

Due to pandemic travel restrictions and to avoid the crowd we took less face-to-face interviews, most of the interviews we took are online. And due to the pandemic

restrictions, lock downs and also due to time limitation we couldn't cover more companies in our survey. That's why, we think, if it will cover more companies and for longer period of study, that will give more accurate result than our study.

Our study was based on companies' point of view, not on employees' point of view, that means, we just focused on how pandemic effects on company's growth and operations or which types of problems company facing due to pandemic, but we don't focus on how pandemic effect on employees or which type of problems employees are facing due to pandemic. Another main limitation in this study is that, our survey questions respondents were the owners and managers of the companies, so for maintaining company's privacy policy some of them skipped some questions while giving answers. COVID-19 pandemic is a totally new concept in research area, that's why there are not enough articles and sources available in this area.



## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

*And the final chapter of this study is chapter six. This chapter will discuss about the recommendations and future work part.*

### **6.1 Recommendations**

This study is intended to provide a deeper understanding of how the companies are being affected when their employees are working from home to avoid crowd in COVID-19 pandemic. For the company it was a challenge to maintain a balance between employees' productivity and loyalty when they are working from home due to pandemic. Coronavirus comes with a big challenge for the whole world. It has drastically affected the economy of the whole world. In this unexpected pandemic situation, it was a big challenge for the companies to survive.

So, by this study, mostly the large and medium sized companies benefited by getting the idea about how a company can handle their employee's productivity and loyalty when they will work from home. And also, by this study, the company's owners and managers can get the idea about how they can reduce their office cost by performing their daily tasks from home by working online in a proper way.

### **6.2 Future research**

This study has so many limitations. And for the future research this study's limitations may work like inspirations. For example, the first limitation in this study is that, this study covers only a limited area, as it only studies the working of national and multi-national companies of Bangladesh and Pakistan during pandemic. So, in future this research can cover broad areas, like survey on Asian or South-Asian companies, or on Asian and European companies. Then it can provide more accurate result on this concept.

Secondly, in our study we just did the survey on large and medium sized companies, but in future this study can focus on small companies as well, due to which small and newly established companies can get benefit by getting ideas and new discoveries.

Finally, in this paper we did study only on the company side, for example due to pandemic which type of problems companies are facing and how it effects on their growth and operations, but we didn't cover the employee side for example pandemic effect on their daily life and work. So, further research in this area can cover this and from this research new companies can get benefits by getting more ideas about how they can motivate employees in crisis situation and it can encourage them for more involving with CSR activities.

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# Appendix 1

## Interview Questions

### Section 1: General part

1. What factors you would consider to calculate the personal budget against your salary, mention all that apply?
2. Have you taken such survey during pandemic period/time?
3. If you took the survey during pandemic how was the method adopted?
4. What is your last educational degree/diploma that you have done at latest?

### Section 2: Background

5. Where firm is located?
6. What industry do you belong to?
7. What is your department?
8. What post you hold in this department?
9. How long you have been working in this firm?

### Section 3: Impact

10. According to your knowledge to what extent do you think that the productions and operations of your firm has been affected by the pandemic?
11. What were the reasons for suspension of production and operations of your firm?
12. What are different operational pressures, which you being as a head of department are facing?
13. What do you think is the situation of the raw material and supply chain and other productions and operational material in your firm?
14. Based on future strategy specific to your department will you be increasing the work force?
15. How this pandemic has affected the recruitment?
16. Based on your understanding what is the clearest impact this pandemic has on your department/firm?
17. Does long time remote working effect on your mental or physical health?
18. How does it effect on mental or physical health?
19. Does working from the home effect on employee's loyalty?
20. What are the drawbacks of working from home?

### Section 4: Strategies to tackle the impact of this pandemic situation

21. Do you prefer to work from home?
22. If you prefer to work from home, how many hours do you prefer to work from home in a week?
23. Why have you preferred to work from home?
24. Do you have enough space and all technical support at home to work from home?
25. In which way do you communicate with your superiors and sub ordinates when you are working from home?
26. What is your thinking about the Security of Data in the case of more digitalization?

27. Has company taken any action to reduce cyber threats?
28. Does remote working effect on handling the Onboarding of new hires?
29. Does COVID-19 Pandemic effect on cash flow?
30. How the company has overcome the cash flow problem?
31. How pandemic will effect on Going Current status?
32. Are you willing to switch to online operations?
33. What are the steps so far taken by your firm to decrease the impact of pandemic?
34. What do you think is the plus side (if any) of this pandemic on yourself and on the firm?
35. What do you think about the overall governmental policies that have affected the operations of your department?
36. What was the estimated growth of your department during the first quarter of this year?
37. What is your thinking about the sustainability of working from home?



# Appendix 2

## Questionnaire:

### Section 1: General part

Name:-----

Company name:-----

Country:-----

Department/Division:-----

Gender:-----

What factors you would consider to calculate the personal budget against your salary, mention all that apply.

- a) Transportation/traveling to and back from work
- b) Cost of Living
- c) Health and medical expense
- d) Additional cost of living during pandemic
- e) Entertainment
- f) Others (Please specify) .....

Have you taken such survey during pandemic period/time.

Yes...

No

- a) Office was totally closed
- b) Just postpone it to later date
- c) Others (Please specify) .....

If you took the survey during pandemic how was the method adopted.

- a) It was cancelled
- b) Face to face with protection gear.
- c) Face to face was cancelled and switched to telephone
- d) Others (Please specify) .....

What is your last educational degree/diploma which you have done at the latest? Write the name and level of it.

.....

### Section 2: background

Where firm is located?

What industry you belong to you?

What is your department?

What post you hold in this department?

- a) Regional Head
- b) Department Head
- c) Assistant Manager
- d) Head of the Company

How long you have been working in this firm?

- a) More than 7 years
- b) More than 5 years but less than 7 years
- c) More than 2 years but less 5 years
- d) Less than 1 year

### **Section 3: Impact**

According to your knowledge to what extent do you think the productions and operations of your firm has been affected by the pandemic?

- a) Very high impact, leading to serious difficulties in firm's operations and bankruptcy
- b) Impact which is not that high but still: operations barely maintained
- c) Small impact, some difficulties in business operations, but overall stability
- d) No significant impact
- e) Positive impact, providing new opportunities for development

What were the reasons for suspension of production and operations of your firm?

- a) Shortage of Raw material
- b) Shortage of work force
- c) Transportation difficulties
- d) Following pandemic Restrictions
- e) Operations of firm are normal as before pandemic

What are different operational pressures, which you being as a head of department are facing?

- a) Employees' salaries, and benefits
- b) Building and Equipment Rent (Depreciation)
- c) Loan payments
- d) Cancelations of Orders
- e) High operational cost as have to incur new expenditure for pandemic accessories
- f) Normal as before the pandemic

What do you think is situation of the raw material and supply chain and other production and operational material in your firm?

- a) Total disruption
- b) Very low
- c) Almost satisfactory
- d) Normal as before

Based on future strategy specific to your department will you be increasing the work force?

- a) No plan in this situation
- b) Will see after couple of months
- c) Will keep same number of work force as before
- d) Yes, to meet the production demand

How this pandemic has affected the recruitment?

- a) Has closed it for further notice
- b) Will conduct if needed
- c) As need more employees to meet the requirement of productions so recruitment process in on going.

Based on your understanding what is the clearest impact this pandemic has on your department/firm?

- a) Production
- b) R&D of the department
- c) Supply chain
- d) Operations

Does long time remote working effect on your mental or physical health?

- a) Yes
- b) No
  - How does it effect on mental or physical health?
    - a) Over weight gain
    - b) Anxiety
    - c) Depression
    - d) Poor sleep
    - e) Back and neck pain increase
    - f) Increased the risk of diabetes
    - g) Other etc.

Does working from the home effect on employee's loyalty?

- a) Yes
- b) No

What are the drawbacks of working from home?

- a) Employees can be sleeping in working time
- b) Employee can cheat with the company
- c) Give less concentration in work more concentration in family

- d) Misuse of time
- e) Without any significant reason delay the due date
- f) Less productivity
- g) In working time doing other work
- h) For financial benefits employee can leak data easily
- i) Others.....

#### **Section 4: Strategies to tackle the impact of pandemic situation**

Do you prefer to work from home?

- a) Yes
- b) No
  - If you prefer to work from home, how many hours do you prefer to work from home in a week?
    - a) 8 to 20
    - b) 20 to 30
    - c) 30 to 40
    - d) More then 40
    - e) Other.....
  - Why are you preferred to work from home?
    - a) Easy and flexible
    - b) Decreased my expenses
    - c) Spend more time with family
    - d) Others.....

Do you have enough space and all technical support at home for working from home?

- a) Yes
- b) No

In which way do you communicate with your superiors and subordinates when you are working from home?

- a) Call
- b) Email
- c) Message
- d) Zoom meeting
- e) Other .....

What is your thinking about the Security of Data in the case of more digitalization?

.....

Does company take any action for reducing cyber threats?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Does remote working effect on handling the Onboarding of new hires?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Does COVID-19 Pandemic effect on cash flow?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- How the company has overcome the cash flow problem?  
.....

How Pandemic will effect on Going Current status?

.....

Are you willing to switch to online operations?

- a) High cost to install IT operations
- b) Work force does not have the required skills to perform firm operation online.
- c) Right now, accessing the cost of IT installation
- d) Firm operations cannot be operated online
- e) Yes, firms' operation can be performed online and they are already being done online.

What are the steps so far taken by your firm to decrease the impact of pandemic?

- a) Looking for other opportunities
- b) Decreased production cost
- c) Employees fired from the job
- d) Cut employee's salaries
- e) Cannot perform any other work
- f) Operations are normal as before

What do you think is the plus side (if any) of this pandemic on yourself and on the firm?

- a) Nothing
- b) More work to perform
- c) High profit
- d) Operations are normal as before
- e) Firm is suffering and having losses

What do you think about the overall governmental policies that have affected the operations of your department?

- a) No help
- b) Just making promises
- c) Slow process of implementation of policies
- d) Financial help from government
- e) Loan refinancing
- f) Relief in operational cost

What was the estimate growth of your department during first quarter of this year?

- a) Reduced slightly
- b) Unchanged
- c) Increased slightly
- d) Increased significantly

What is your thinking about the sustainability of working from home?

- a) It can be continued in future (full time work from home)
- b) It should be stopped now
- c) It can be done alternatively (some days working from home and some days working from office)
- d) Other .....