

*A Path Analytic Investigation of Teleworking Challenges
During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Qatar*

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This academic essay is about ideas dropped from the findings of a previously published article entitled “A Structural Equation Modeling Approach to Understanding the Causes of Psychological Distress during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Qatar.” The goal of the present study is to discuss something new about Qatar that was not discussed in our last publication. The new findings discussed here have not been known to us as the best conclusion until we published the full draft, revisited, and squeezed the original data few more times. The last attempt helped the team of researchers at the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) in Qatar to identify new strong ideas for understanding the root causes of teleworking challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The Research Problem in the current paper is to determine the relative importance of variables affecting variation in teleworking challenges in Qatar. What’s more, it would be well worth mentioning that to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, this is the first investigation analyzing the antecedents to teleworking challenges as well as the fears about COVID-19 in Qatar. The researchers believe that this novel context should provide a useful base for subsequent human resources management studies as well as for policymaking in Qatar.

For the last two years, the Coronavirus pandemic has made it necessary for working parents to telework full-time from home and accept full-time teaching of their kids. As to be expected, several people became more productive working from home while others became less so. Furthermore, monthly income and family relationships were influenced. Glenn, Chau-

mont, and Villalobos believe that “Countries show different responses to the way they assessed and reacted to the COVID-19 as a crisis” (Glenn *et al.*, 2020; p.81). Governments implemented social distancing, new school-work policies, and other measures including people’s awareness in facing the coronavirus crisis (Kashayp and Raghuvanshi, 2020; p.357; Thelwall and Thelwall, 2020; p.945). What’s more, Feng and Savani think that society should provide more support to married women during the Covid-19 pandemic because “when couples are working from home the whole day and when schools are closed, women are expected to devote more time to housework and childcare” (Feng and Savani, 2020, p. 719). Several studies have shown that remote - learning is good for conceptual learning as compared to face-to-face learning that is good for exercises (Smith, 2013; p. 83). Hass and Joseph, believe that hybrid courses can be built with many different options” (Hass and Joseph, 2018; p. 230). Moreover, Thelwal and Thelwall argue that “Public attitudes towards COVID-19 and social distancing are critical in reducing its spread” (Thelwal and Thelwall, 2020; p. 945). As it is to be expected, families and government follow different approaches to deal with Corona crisis, “the crisis is bringing about a significant yet unintended cultural change” (Kraus, et al., 2020; p. 1769). Besides, working from home could be influenced by age. Ameriks, Briggs, Caplin, Lee, Shapiro, and Tonetti believe that Corona lockdowns arrangements have allowed some older workers to work longer “even those who are long retired, have strong willingness to work, especially in jobs with flexible schedules” (Ameriks *et al.*, 2020; p.174). Bal and Hansen state that “As demographic changes impact the workplace, governments, organizations, and workers are looking for ways to sustain optimal working lives at higher ages. Workplace flexibility has been introduced as potential way workers can have more satisfying working lives until their retirement ages” (Bal and Hansen, 2016; p. 43).

The data analyzed in this study originated from a national online survey of 4579 residents in Qatar during the Corona crisis in 2020 and the multivariate analysis was based on 3330 valid responses. Eighty items were measured using four and five-point Likert type scales and 28 items with no missing data were factor analyzed. To determine the suitability of the multivariate factor analysis, two statistical tests were utilized: the KMO (Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin) and the Bartlett test of sphericity. First, the computed KMO (Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy score of 0.787 score was well above the recommended level of 0.50. Second, the computed Bartlett statistical test of sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 14731.947; P = 0.00), indicating that there are satisfactory inter-correlations between the measured statements. The oblique rotation extracted nine factors using Eigenvalue greater than 1 “the one criterion” and explained 59.091% of the total variation. The nine dimensions were reliable with Cronbach (alpha) values greater than 0.5. Moreover, the extracted nine dimensions were easy to label.

Findings of the study showed that “teleworking challenges” is determined by five significant explanatory variables:

1. “Age of respondent”,
2. “Individual diagnosis with Covid-19”,
3. “Fears about COVID-19,
4. “Perceived face-to-face vs. blended learning”,
5. “Strategic responses in crisis situations.”

What’s more, path analysis showed that the relationship between “Strategic responses in crisis situations” and “teleworking challenges” can be moderated by “Fears about COVID-19” in crisis situations. This study provides strategic insights and practical thinking for understanding teleworking challenges in fears about COVID-19 crisis situations in Qatar.

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