

# Factors That Influence Performing Remote Work. Challenges And Solutions

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## Abstract

*Working from home has its shortcomings, and many employees choose for the hybrid way of working, if possible. The present research analyzes 405 anonymous answers from students, and focuses on the factors that influence performing the remote, online work. In particular, respondents were asked which factors they think are most influencing performing the work in the remote, online environment. Giving scores from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) to 10 factors identified in the literature review, students are of the opinion that technology, flexibility, technical skills and commitment have a major influence on performing remote work. Also, according to our results, there are several challenges related to this type of work environment, which can be managed.*

**Key words:** employees; remote work; factors; challenges; solutions.

**J.E.L. classification:** F66; J24; O15.

## 1. Introduction

There are situations when the remote work is more than necessary, almost impossible to refuse (the case of the COVID-19 pandemic), but the post-pandemic situation proves that future employees can still choose to work from the office or from home. Most of them choose a hybrid formula that represents a middle way between the requirements of employers, who want to minimize their costs in the galloping inflationary conditions, respectively the psychological comfort of the employees, who want to communicate with their colleagues, to socialize, and to learn things in other ways than in the remote environment.

This is the reason why we designed the main purpose of this paper, which is to analyze the factors that influence students to choose the remote, online work offers. Additionally, we comment what challenges occur in this kind of work environment, which is useful for applying a proper management strategy in the future.

## 2. Theoretical background

The majority of the rules for work are the same for the remote workers and the others, and there is no difference in what concern the requested performance standards (International Labour Organization, 2020). Work from home it is considered to increase in the future – as an alternative to temporary substitution, especially for the higher-educated employees (Bick *et al.*, 2021). Teleworking involves also measures for health and safety of the employees (International Labour Organization, 2020).

According to a qualitative study made on 53 employees from Swedish public organizations, the main advantages of the remote work were autonomy, work-life balance, individual performance and increased flexibility, while the challenges discovered were comradery lost and isolation (Babapour Chafi *et al.*, 2022). To counteract these disadvantages, trust and communication becomes fundamental, and can be gained right from the start of the employment contract negotiations (Clipa *et al.*, 2019). A study made on Microsoft employees in 2020 showed that firm-wide remote work

caused the employees network to convert into more static and siloed activities, with fewer bridges between disparate parts, with less synchronous communication and more asynchronous communication (Yang *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, it is more hard to employees to gain and spread new information among the network (Yang *et al.*, 2021).

A factor that counteracts long hours working from home is represented by the presence of children in the house (Bick *et al.*, 2021). In a study made in Bangladesh was found that human resources departaments, online tools and remote work are key factors that ensure the employee betterment and organizational productivity at the same time (Shahriar *et al.*, 2022). Another study, based on 129 qualitative interviews, revealed as advantages of the remote work cost-reduction and flexibility to promote work-life balance, and the following negative aspects of this way of working: communication and technical problems, management, with the comment that positive conditions are more visible than the negative ones (Ferreira *et al.*, 2021). Another study approves the following positive effects of the remote work: reduction in commuting time, greater working time autonomy, better overall work-life balance, and higher productivity, while contrasting with the following problems: issues of trust, control and power over employees by the employer (Shakti *et al.*, 2021). The same study approves that employees are productive in any environment if they have proper resources (Shakti *et al.*, 2021). A study made on 5452 Finnish employees demonstrates that trust in peers and supervisors does not support adjustment to remote work (van Zoonen *et al.*, 2021), while in another study has been demonnstrated that trust and management style can be key influences on e-worker effectiveness (Grant *et al.*, 2013).

### 3. Research methodology

Data was collected between 12.2021-05.2022 through an online questionnaire, designed in Google Forms. 405 students were involved in our study, 147 of them being undergraduate students, and 258 of them being master students. Their age is between 18-55 years.

The current research was designed to analyze in a holistic way what fresh workforce need in terms of rewards and work conditions to accept a remote, online work offer. In particular, in this paper, are presented factors that influence such type of work and challenges that occur in the online work environment, in order to timely manage them.

### 4. Findings

Respondents were asked to give a score from 1 to 5 (1-min, 5-max) for each category of factors found in the specialized literature, which have proven over time to influence the acceptance of a remote, online job offer. The results are presented in Table no. 1.

*Table no. 1 Which factors influences the most performing remote work online? (N=405) (sort in descending order)*

No.crt.	Factors	Mean
1.	Technology	4,32
2.	The desire for flexibility	4,26
3.	Technical skills and commitment	4,08
4.	Cost benefits	4,00
5.	Time management of interrelated business	3,92
6.	Organizational strategy	3,90
7.	Increased added value (turnover, profit, etc.)	3,66
8.	Improving collaboration among employees	3,58
9.	Cultural and social influences	3,46
10.	The support of the authorities	3,23

*Source:* Data processings. Scores were given from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum).

With an average close to the maximum score limit, technology proved to be the most important factor for choosing a remote, online job offer (Mean = 4,32 out of 5). This factor refers to the abilities of the employees to use technology and to work with it. On the second place flexibility of the work schedule/ location proved to be very important in choosing remote job offers (Mean = 4.26 out of 5), and on the third place occurred technical skills and commitment (Mean = 4.08 out of 5). In other words, young people are ready to accept a remote, online offer if they have a suitable technical skills package, commitment, and pleasure to work with technology, and if they want/ need to work with flexible program and/ or location. Cost benefits appear on the fourth place (Mean = 4.00 out of 5) as factor that influence such job offers, and the role of the state authorities in this equation is minimized on the last place (Mean = 3.23 out of 5).

Respondents were asked to tick a list of challenges (with no limit in terms of number), that are considered to be important for organizing the remote, online work. The frequency of these challenges are presented in Table no. 2.

*Table no. 2 What do you think are the challenges of doing work remotely (online)? (N=405) (sort in descending order)*

No.crt.	Categories of challenges	Frequency
1.	Challenges related to communication	292
2.	Challenges related to technology	247
3.	Challenges in maintaining the cohesion of work teams	241
4.	Challenges related to management	214
5.	Achieving a balance between formal communication and documentation	185
6.	Absenteeism	177
7.	Involvement of employees to put effort into the work	165
8.	Persuading employees to use IT assets effectively	160
9.	Challenges related to transparency	157
10.	Information fragmentation	153
11.	Challenges related to performance	152
12.	Challenges related to training and professional training	146
13.	Security and safety challenges	119

*Source:* Data processings.

Although homework involves by default the use of many communication channels, most students are of the opinion that the many challenges of the remote work are related to communication. 292 respondents out of 405, representing 72,10% of the sample, chose this challenge that organizations have to manage. Technology, which turned out to be the first factor that influence a remote work offer, represents also a challenge for many of the students (247, representing a percentage of 60,99% of the sample). The cohesion of work teams represents a challenge worthy of consideration for the management boards of organizations, while security and safety challenges do not represent a challenge for too many respondents in the study (only a percentage of 29.38% of the sample checked it as a challenge). Management itself could represent a challenge if it is not properly done for the remote, online work.

## 5. Conclusion

There are many factors that influence the decision of getting a remote job. In our study, an analysis of 10 factors that influence the choice of a remote, online job offer was carried out and a frequency-based statistic of 13 challenges that can appear in such a work environment was made.

In the top 5 challenges for the online, remote jobs, 4 of them are correlated with communication problems: challenges related to communication (Frequency=292 out of 405), challenges in maintaining the cohesion of work teams (Frequency=241 out of 405), challenges related to

management (Frequency=214 out of 405), and achieving a balance between formal communication and documentation (Frequency=185 out of 405).

The most important factor that influences the acceptance of a remote job refers to the abilities of the employees to use technology and to work with it. Young people are ready to accept a remote, online offer if they have a suitable technical skills package, commitment, and pleasure to work with technology, and if they want/ need to work with flexible program and/ or location. Despite the fact that the remote work involves by default the use of many communication channels, most of the participants in our study are of the opinion that most common challenge of the remote work it is related to communication. This may mean that human resources may not yet be ready to work 100% online, remotely. Thus, we consider that a hybrid approach it would be preferable to the fresh employees.

The first limit of our research is represented by the number of factors/ challenges taken into account in the questionnaire. The second limit may consist of the data collection period, 12.2021-05.2022, immediately after the pandemic generated by the Sars-CoV-2 virus, which may influence the answers given due to the urgency of working from home during the pandemic. This research can continue with further studies analyzing human resources preferences for the remote, online work.

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