

Impact Of Pandemic Covid-19 On The Workforce In Electricity Distribution Services Sector In Oman

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Abstract

For many Omanis, COVID-19 has turned working life upside down. Sudden, decreased working hours and rapid adjustments to working from home have created changes no one could have predicted. Working from home is suitable the new normal in the pandemic, with 30% of people now clocking on from living rooms, bedrooms and kitchen tables around the country. This figure almost doubles to 70% for office workers, who are currently conducting meetings via video link and connecting in ways previously limited to those with flexible working arrangements in place. In this paper, Covid 19 on the workforce who work round the clock to maintain the undisrupted services in the electricity sector in Oman. Suggestions and other strategic plans to handle such unexpected events are listed in this paper.

Keywords: Work productivity, Economy effect, Level of services, SLA

Introduction

Electric organisations could get the impacts of a pandemic more like some other business. Predictably, a considerable level of organisations workers (up to 40 per cent) could be out sick, isolated, or may remain at home to think about sick relatives. In like manner, the sellers and providers that electric organisations rely on could encounter similar staff shortages. Electric organisations centre on keeping up the accessibility of crucial staff—such as power plant administrators, line labourers, and call focus delegates—during outrageous events, including a pandemic. Contingent upon the seriousness of a scourge, it might be necessary to use contractual workers and different organisations to help look after assistance. Because of the broad nature of a pandemic, organisations will be unable to rely upon the traditional shared help programs that assist organisations with reestablishing capacity after common disasters and climate occasions (You and Know, 2020)

In light of the situation dominant across the country, small and medium enterprises face unprecedented challenges Unmatched, the consequences of which will be tangible for years to come (San et al., 2020). Companies are now considered more companies affected by the applied social distancing measures, and many face complete closures because of the ongoing crisis. Although some steps have been taken to support small and medium enterprises to do so while there is an effort to combat the short-term consequences of this shutdown, a more response is still needed effective until the effects of this crisis on the economic lifeline can be mitigated.

The following report shows the impact of the crisis on SMEs and the electricity distribution company's readiness to address the current situation and its consequences. In addition, this study will shed light on the procedures The response that companies have adopted and identify the needs and expectations of small businesses supporting the electricity sector And the middle of the various decision-makers in the next period.

The effects of the emerging Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis have ravaged the development sectors in the Sultanate. During this pandemic, we have witnessed a decrease in consumer spending around the world, as travel and the tourism sector, in general, have stopped, and the industry has slowed due to restrictions imposed on movement and obstruction. Economic activity through services, electricity, transportation, shopping, and decreased consumption led to reduced demand.

As a result of the continuation of this crisis, many fundamental questions have surfaced, the most important of which is: What kind of economic repercussions can we expect as a result of this global epidemic? What are its effects on the societal milieu, the electricity, tourism and environmental sectors? What are the best practices followed by the Omani community institutions in dealing with the impact of the new Corona pandemic?

"Scientific Communication" will shed light on this issue on economic forecasts, plans and programs presented by prominent researchers, each in their respective fields, in an attempt to answer these questions.

The most prominent sectors affected by the pandemic are hotels and restaurants, followed by transportation and warehousing. The wholesale and retail trade sector (especially in durable goods and luxuries) and the most significant burden in these sectors fall on small companies and the self-employed. Moreover, these sectors require a direct link with the consumer and have been affected by the decrease in internal demand and market collapse by tourists and business travellers because of the border closures. As the evaluation of the electricity sector impacted due to all these sectors

Dr Al-Mukhtar Al-Abri - Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science – SQU Sultan Qaboos University, says about the impact of the Corona pandemic on the Omani economy, saying: "The Sultanate, like other oil-exporting countries, was affected by two simultaneous

shocks: the global epidemic outbreak and the drop in oil prices, and despite the decline in oil revenues and the situation, Difficult financial (as a result of the decline in oil prices since 2014), the government responded quickly to alleviate the economic consequences of the crisis through a package of measures to maintain financial stability, support the affected sectors and groups, and stimulate demand to prevent a prolonged economic recession

The volume of electricity consumption during the first quarter of the year 2020 was 5359 Gwh, compared to 5901 Gwh in the same period in 2019. The reduction in electricity consumption is due to the closure of commercial and industrial activities in the country as part of the preventive measures decided by the supreme committee in charge of mechanisms to deal with the magnitudes of the outbreak of the Coronavirus.

In addition to the decrease in the number of workers in government and private institutions and the move towards remote work Muscat Electricity Distribution Company (MEDC) stated that for the sake of sustaining the safety of the consumers, employees and contractors of Muscat Electricity Distribution Company against the spread of the new Coronavirus (COVID-19), the company decided to provide the option of working from home to its employees from March 19th 2020 applicable for all employees by putting in place an alternative plan that includes a set of possible scenarios to sustain business continuity and supply of electricity to the customers in Muscat Governorate (MEDC) launched a new electronic channel, which is the communicating WhatsApp service named (Noor).

It serves as a virtual employee providing services to consumers via WhatsApp. (Noor) will be weighed by users of the service. Based on this evaluation, the service will be advanced. The channel is easy to use and more attractive to customers in how they interact under the current circumstances to limit the new Coronavirus (Covid-19) spread, which requires electronic communication with the customers.

Mr Ala Bin Hassan Moosa, Chief Executive Officer-Acting MEDC, stated, "We would like to assure you that we are working to offer sustainable electricity services for all of our customer's premises in Muscat Governorate." In these exceptional circumstances of the pandemic

GCC percussions on the Impact of the Corona Crisis on the GCC Electricity and Water Sectors

In the implementation of HE, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf directives, the GCC General Secretariat Gulf, organised a workshop via visual communication on "the Coronavirus Crisis (Coved 19) and Limiting its Effects on the GCC Electricity and Water Sectors". On Wednesday, April 15th 2020, with several representatives from the GCC authorities, ministries, organisations, and experts from all member states, ministries, organisations, and experts from all member states.

Came out with the following recommendations:

1. The importance of reviewing and updating the risk management plans, contingency plans, and crisis management plans periodically, and continuously training the staff and filling the gaps that may arise due to the various developments.
2. Investing in intelligent systems and networks for controlling assets.
3. Raising and strengthening the efficiency of cybersecurity.
4. Issuing a GCC guide for crisis management and business continuity procedures for all the GCC institutions to use, taking advantage of existing best practices.
5. The importance of implementing communication plans with all parties involved in crisis management (decision-makers, affiliated bodies and organisations, and business partners).

*GCC Electricity and Water Sectors workshop April 15th 2020

Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) (<https://www.gcc-sg.org>, 2021)

Facility management and reliability of power distribution network during the pandemic

With the depletion of traditional energy sources, including gas turbines, fuel cells and photovoltaic cells using renewable generation, significant progress has been made in distributed generation (DG) such as wind power generation (Alshamsi, et al., 2020). It can be directly connected to the distribution network or installed now approximately power customers, suitable for less demanding power supply, with the advantages of economy, environmental protection, flexibility, safety and other benefits, using more widely. (Yang et al., 2018)

DIgSILENT Power Factory software provides highly functional benefits in electrical power frameworks for vitality transmission, dispersion, age, fabrication plants, sustainable power source and brilliant network. The name DIgSILENT means "Advanced Simulation and Electrical Network computation program' (Ghany & Fayek, 2018) 'which can be effectively used in this crisis of COVID-19 avoiding human interaction as an alternative in facility management of the power distribution network

Electric grid operatives were arranging for the pandemic as the novel coronavirus began spreading in the United States, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).

NERC oversees electric reliability in the contiguous United States and adjacent regions of Canada and Mexico. NERC noted increased reliability risks in Spring 2020:(Lawson, 2020), potential personnel disruptions due to illness and quarantine, potential supply chain disruptions, and increased cybersecurity risks due to more teleworking member of staffs. According to NERC, these elevated risks are likely to continue throughout the summer, and new risks may emerge. Potential new Summer 2020 hazards include electricity supply disruptions caused by deferred maintenance and operational challenges as solar energy share increases. Moreover, pandemic protections might cause utilities to take longer to restore power following emergencies such as hurricanes (the Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1st) or wildfires(Lawson, 2020)

Reduced Bill Payments

Customers who have lost their salary due to the pandemic may not pay their monthly electricity bills. Under normal circumstances, utilities and their state or municipal authorities put mechanisms in place to shut off electric service to non-paying consumers (shutoffs). Several utilities have voluntarily discontinued shutoffs, and shuffleboard has been prohibited in several states and localities. As part of their COVID-19 response, they have forbidden shutoffs.

Many of these shutoff moratoria are only temporary, which raises concerns that shutoffs will resume just as the summer season increases the demand for air conditioning. Many utilities expect to lose revenue in the near term due to reduced sales and shutoff moratoria. It is unclear how any costs incurred resulting from lost utility revenue will be addressed once normal conditions resume. Revenue shortfalls are frequently recovered by raising electricity rates in subsequent years, though regulators may be hesitant to raise rates if economic activity remains low. It's also unclear what utilities and state or local regulators might do if customers owe large sums of money. During a power outage moratorium, Most power outages do not include bill forgiveness; customers must eventually pay for the electricity they use.

COVID-19's Impact on Utilities

Electricity is more critical than ever as more people telecommute from home, conduct meetings online and otherwise rely on data and electricity to get the job done. As hospitals fill, public places empty, markets contract and in-person events are cancelled or rescheduled due to COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, electric utilities still must keep the lights on. Electricity is more critical than ever before as more people telecommute from home, conduct meetings online and otherwise rely on data and electricity to get the job done. (Jeff Postelwait, 2021)

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented worldwide economic and social crisis in recent months. The pandemic has had a reflective impact on all aspects of life, including the energy sector. . (pv-magazine.com, 2020)

This COVID-19 has affected the sources of supply and affects the global economy (Hossain et al., 2020). There are restrictions on travelling from one country to another country. During travelling, numbers of cases are identified positively when tested, especially when taking international visits.

All governments, health organisations and other authorities are continuously focussing on identifying the patients affected by the COVID-19. Healthcare professional face a lot of difficulties in maintaining the quality of healthcare these days. (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, 2020)

Decreasing workers' coverage to COVID-19 in the workstation

A key measure to contain the spread of COVID-19, followed by many governments, was to encourage those who can telework from their homes to do so. To facilitate a quick transfer to telework for all operations that allow it, countries took a series of measures to streamline its

use, including through financial and non-financial support to companies. Italy, for example, facilitated the procedure by allowing companies and employees to arrange teleworking without a prior agreement with trade unions, without written agreement and at the employees' place of choice.

At the same time, Russia introduced amendments to its Labour Code on teleworking. Spain expedited ongoing public programmes to support the digitalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises. Other countries, such as Japan and Korea, offered a subsidy towards the cost of introducing flexible work arrangements. Some large tech companies also stepped in, providing companies and workers with assistance and temporarily free-of-charge access to some of their statement and sharing tools. Evidence-based on surveys conducted in mid-April shows a massive surge in the share of workers working from home compared to the pre-crisis numbers, ranging from around 30% in Canada to almost 70% in South Africa(ILO-OECD, 2020)

Recommendation

According to the risk assessment of the different jobs and work tasks, the return to work premises should be carefully planned, with preventive measures. All possible risks for safety and health should be assessed, such as risks resulting from reduced maintenance of machines and facilities during the closure period. If a return to work is rushed and not done in a phased and cautious manner, it puts lives at risk and threatens to undermine efforts to restore social and economic activity.

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