

A Prospective Study

Online Work



Loss of Rights & Lack of Guarantees

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Introduction

In recent years, a number of new concepts and terminologies have appeared in various sectors. These terms have changed the previous perceptions that existed regarding many things in our daily lives, including work. Modern means of communication, for example, notably the internet have resulted in the emergence of new sectors of work including Online Work (E-Work). E-Work has revolutionised work as employees do not have to go to offices or companies in order to do their work; instead they can do it from anywhere they want as long as they connected to the internet. Such jobs first began emerging in the in the private sector, though it has gradually grown in alignment with the growth of modern telecommunications, particularly as more people became attracted to these types of jobs due to the freedom it provides in terms of not being bound to specific place or working hours.

Although there are particular advantages that online work does not provide in comparison to traditional work in terms of wages, as the first tends to offer lower wages; more people have shown interest in joining it. The reasons for this are various, including the freedom that this type of work offers in terms of working hours, as well as not having to spend time commuting between work and home and instead, working at any place the person feels comfortable.

Thus, companies which noticed this trend and offered their employers the chance to work remotely saw an increase in employee's productivity and satisfaction levels.

Companies that offer remote jobs do so in various sectors and types of positions, including: writing and editing, engineering, project management, data analysis, sales and marketing, social platforms management, photoshop and graphics, among others.

In Jordan, the popularity of online work witnessed an uptick as a consequence of the increase in unemployment levels which reached 18.3% ⁽¹⁾. The new sector offered individuals looking for work a chance to utilise their skills, and earn money, while in the same time avoid regulations related to traditional jobs like working hours.

In light of the above, this study was conducted to examine the status of workers in this emerging sector, in terms of their working conditions and the extent that they are offered their labour rights in terms of sick and annual leaves, social security, among other basic rights. The study also provides an overview of both the positives and negatives of this sector in relation to both companies and individuals as well.

Following a thorough examination of the sector, the study concluded that the majority of workers in this sector are subjected to many violations on their basic labour and human rights, especially with regard to their low-level wages; not having annual and sick leaves; and either being registered with Social Security or having health insurance.

The study was conducted by implementing a qualitative and descriptive approach. Also, several interviews were conducted with both employees and employers.

By publishing this study, Tamkeen Fields for Aid would like to shed a light on this category of workers, as an attempt to highlight their status and also put pressure on decision-makers to design legislation that would protect them and preserve their rights.

⁽¹⁾According to a report by the Statistics Department on Unemployment in Jordan

The Importance of the Study:

The study is quite important due to the subject it addresses and the approach it adopted to discuss it.

The study aims at looking at the working conditions of online workers, and analyse their status legally and economically within the ever-changing Jordanian Labour Market.

It also aims at providing an in-depth analysis of the working environment of these workers and the extent of which that employees in this sector are receiving their labour rights, in light of the scarcity of studies related to this aspect.

Objectives:

The study aims at providing an overview of the working conditions of online workers in terms of their wages and working hours, annual and sick leave, social protection including social security and health insurance in accordance with the Jordanian labour law.

Methodology of the study:

Both the qualitative and descriptive approaches were adopted in conducting the study.

The first stage focused on data collection, whether quantitatively or qualitatively through official resources, field visits and interviews. The interviews were done with a number of female and male workers. Additionally, another set of interviews were conducted with employers in order to create a full dimensional understanding of the sector.

The working methodology included:

Desk Research: In this stage, various reports, studies, previous publications, records and documents on the subject were reviewed. Additionally, websites related to this sector were also revised.

Field research: A number of workers were visited following the selection of a random sample of online workers, as well as employers in both Amman and Zarqa Governorates.

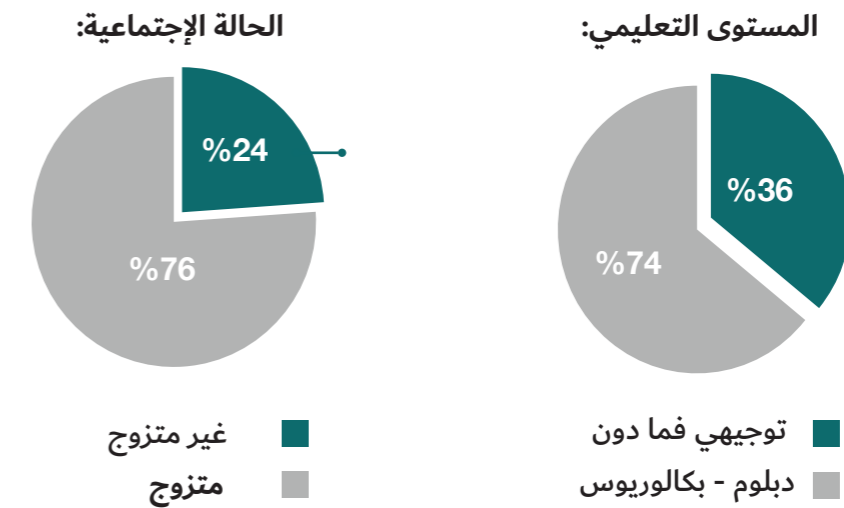
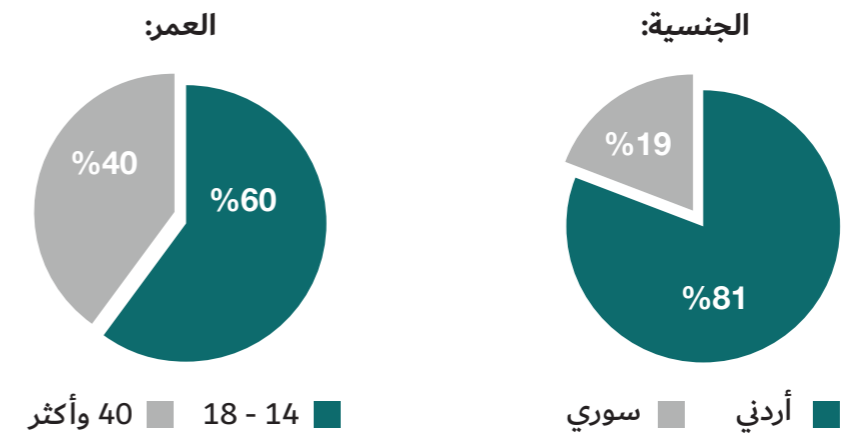
Characteristics of the Random Sample:

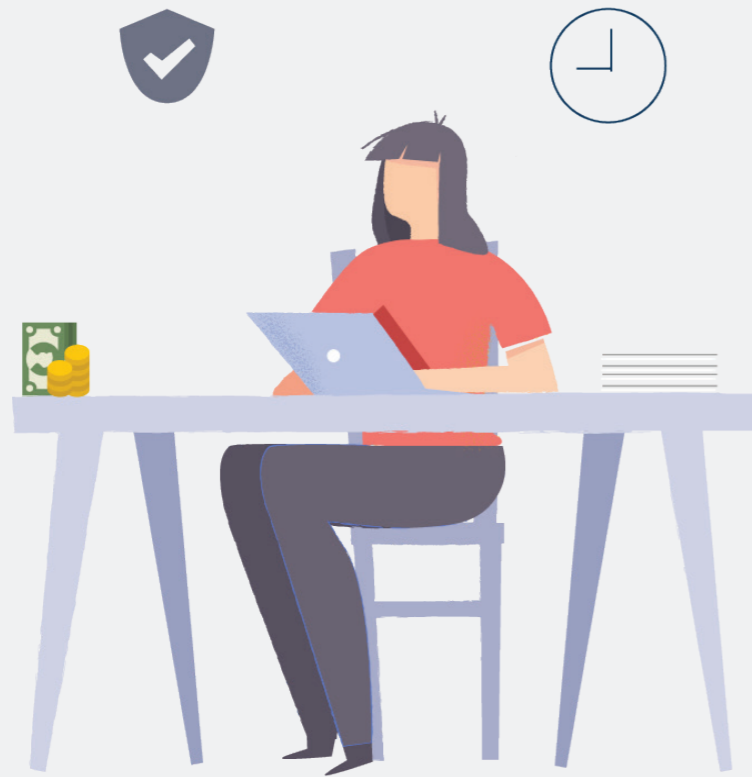
The random sample that was selected comprised of 80 workers, 15 of which are Syrians. These workers were chosen following a month-long search of online workers who were subjected to violations, or were deceived by the nature of the online work. Other workers were selected who were satisfied with their working conditions and wanted to further discuss it.

- The characteristics of the sample were:
- In terms of nationality, 65 of the interviewees were Jordanians, while 15 were Syrians
- 45 women and 35 males were interviewed.
- Regarding age groups, 48 workers were between the ages of 18-40, while 32 of them were older than 41 years of age.
- In terms of education, 23 workers either finished high school and had a Tawjehi certificate or did not; while 57 of them were holders of a diploma or a university degree.
- Regarding Social Status, 19 workers were single, while 61 were married.

The graphs below provide the ratios of the Sample Group:

توزيع العينة حسب:





Online Work: Loss of Rights and Lack of Guarantees

The definition:

Worldwide, companies began to follow new policies that would lead to boosting business and growth in profit. One of these policies have focused on giving employees more flexibility and modernising work environments instead of the traditional one that confined employees inside of office spaces.

The outcome of these police has been the creation of a new economic culture called “Online Work”, also known as: telecommuting, E-Work, Tele work - Freelancing – and Working from Home.

Francis Kinsman defined the term as: “Substitution of telecommunications for transportation in a decentralized and flexible work arrangement which allows part- or full-time employees to work at home via a computer attached to the employer’s data network. Telecommuting is suitable for well-defined and well-structured routine jobs with clear and fixed goals, and not for complex jobs with fuzzy or fluid objectives requiring personal contact.

Therefore, online worker could be defined as “an employee with an institution who uses Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to perform his work regardless of the place where that work is being implemented on a full or partial or days basis.

Meanwhile, Freelance Workers could be defined as “a person who usually performs tasks for multiple employers throughout the year by working remotely and communicating using modern technology.

Online Work could be either a full-time job, where it is the main source of income; or a partial time job where people rely on it as a secondary source for extra money but have other more traditional jobs as well.

One of the main characteristics of online work is that it provides a great extent of freedom of choice for both employers and employees, whether in relation to the type of work they do or the choice of who to work with.

On the other hand, online work is also characterised as being unstable either in terms of the wages earned through that work; or finding the

(2) تعريف فرانسيس كينسمان الذي استخدم في العديد من الدراسات والتقارير

(3) دراسة التوظيف عن بعد، لماذا تلجأ الشركات الناشئة إلى التوظيف عن بعد واعتماد المستقلين.

(4) المصدر نفسه

suitable candidate for some jobs. Workers in that sector also lose the benefits of permanent employment like insurance, pensions and paid leaves.

Another characteristic that need to be highlighted in relation to online work is related to its legal status. Online Work is a departure from the previous traditional sectors of work which are more regulated in relation to their conditions or wages. Due to the modernity of the sector and its mechanism of work, it still lacks sufficient regulations and legal legislations determining the wages of its workers and their relationship with their employers.

As a result of this legal loophole, some workers in the sector face violations that include long working hours with no overtime wages. They are also socially isolated, especially those working in routine or modest jobs. These workers usually lack the incentive to communicate with others; do not regularly receive feedback or assessments; and might eventually lose their motivation towards their work.

In this context, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted a research study that was published in mid-February of 2017 under the title: "Working anytime, anywhere: The effects on the world of work". It provided an analysis of the impact of telework/online work on the labour market. The study looked at status of online workers in 10 European Countries: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK; as well as the Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan and the US.

It then looked closely at the habit of workers in these countries, dividing employees in relation to their place of work into three categories based on their working place; whether at their homes, in the office or in another location; and the intensity and frequency of them using ICT outside the employer's premises.

The analysis identified three distinct groups as follows: regular home-based teleworkers; occasional T/ICTM workers, with mid-to-low mobility

and frequency of work outside the employer's premises; and high mobile T/ICTM, with high frequency of working in various places, including working from home.

Following data collection and its analysis, the results of the study indicated that workers in the third group are the most vulnerable to be negatively affected by online work in terms of their working conditions and health compared to those working in offices.

The results also confirmed that 42% of people who perform their work regularly from home suffer from insomnia, compared with only 29% of those working in offices. Results also showed that 41% of employees who perform their tasks in various places suffer from exhaustion in comparison with 25% of those working in offices.

Ultimately, the effects of online work on societies cannot be denied, as it helps in creating jobs in different geographical areas; thus, breaking the barriers of centralization. These jobs affect economic growth in countries and help in advancing the principles of justice and equal opportunities between different social groups; as well as aiding in providing services to clients in off-duty hours.

Consequently, online work is strengthening the new trans-boundary and time-bound economic space, which aspires to function efficiently without any external or internal obstacles

Several countries have resorted to online work in hopes of achieving these results. Currently, the United States ranks first in the creation of online opportunities, followed by Canada, Germany and Britain. Meanwhile, the Arab World has recently began to register such opportunities, with some countries issuing laws focused on online work regulations and recruitment.

It is due to these facts that Tamkeen Fields for Aid conducted this study to shed the light on the status of online workers, in terms of their wages, working hours, social protection, among other aspects related to conditions of decent work.

International Legislative Framework governing Online Work

The main international convention that addresses the status of Online Workers is the ILO's Convention Number 77 on Home Work f 1996. The convention defined the term home-work as work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homemaker:

1. in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer;
2. for remuneration;
3. which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used,

The Convention provides that states shall adopt, implement and periodically review a national policy on home-work aimed at improving the situation of homeworkers, in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers and, where they exist, with organizations concerned with homeworkers and those of employers of homeworkers.

It also calls for the necessity to develop policies that promote, as far as possible, equality of treatment between home workers and other types of workers, taking into account the special characteristics of home work and, where appropriate, conditions applicable to the same or a similar type of work carried out in an enterprise.

The equality of treatment of the workers shall address equality in terms of:

- a) the homeworkers' right to establish or join organizations of their own choosing and to participate in the activities of such organizations;
- b) protection against discrimination in employment and occupation;
- c) protection in the field of occupational safety and health;
- d) remuneration;
- e) statutory social security protection;
- f) access to training;
- g) minimum age for admission to employment or work; and
- h) maternity protection.

However, it should be noted here that Jordan has not ratified the Convention as of yet.

Legislative and Legal Framework of Online Work in Jordan

The current laws in Jordan do not directly address the status of Online, nor the nature of the contractual relationship between employers and employees in this sector. The only law that addresses any similar issue is the Flexible Work System, Number 22 of 2017. However, the type of work that is regulated in this law differs from online work. In its articles, the law specifies the work regulated under it as those that are part-time or distance work done in the public sector. It also states that the provisions of the system shall not any of the rights granted by the labour law to the worker.

It has been noted the main beneficiaries of the system are women, and that it is a great step forward for improving work conditions. The law covers specific categories of employees including:

1. An employee who has spent at least 3 consecutive years working for the employer;
2. An employee who bears “family responsibilities”, which are defined as encompassing a pregnant employee; an employee who assumes parental ‘responsibility’ of a child; or an employee who assumes responsibility for disabled or ill members of their family (including the elderly or infirm).
3. University students [who are employed with the employer]; and
4. Disabled employees.

The Regulation provides the Employees with different forms of flexible working arrangements, patterns or schedules of work, including the following:

1. Part-time Work where the Employee is entitled to work for reduced working hours.
2. Flexible daily working pattern; though they are still obliged to ensure that these shifts cover the standard length of the traditional working hours.
3. Varied working weekly schedule or pattern.
4. Varied yearly schedule; though this option is restricted by Article 60 of the Jordanian Labour Law (Law No. 8 of 1996) which stipulated that the employee is prohibited from working for more than 4 weeks in a row without taking any day off.
5. The option for remote working.

The above options are, of course, subject at all times to the prior approval of the employer; as it does not provide employees with the unconditional automatic right to benefit from the law without the consent to such arrangements from the employer. Thus, employees should also take into consideration the business needs and requirements of the employer.

The system also gave the option to employees who are subject to the criteria of the flexible labour system to request the conversion of their contract of employment into a flexible contract, in accordance with the nature of the work. It also stressed that employers may not impose on the employee to do so, adding that any such behaviour is considered void.

Finally, the system asserted that “workers under a Flexible Work contract of employment shall enjoy all the rights that regular receive in accordance

with the provisions of the Labour Code.

Thus, employees should be:

1. Paid a wage that is not less than the minimum wage applied in Jordan (which amounts to 220 for Jordanian employees and 150 for non-Jordanian employees).
2. Able to get their annual, sick and official vacations as stated by the law.
3. Entitled to request to revert to their original employment contract at any time during the flexible arrangement upon the approval of the employer.

Therefore, current laws have not yet adequately addressed Online work, nor gave it a legal definition it's the Labour Law or develop a specific law for it either. Instead, it defined work as: Every mental or physical effort exerted by the Employee against wages whether on permanent, casual, temporary or seasonal basis."

In terms of actual online work in Jordan, it is currently most commonly found in sectors related directly to the internet like: Software Developers, Content Developer, Web Designer, Editing and Marketing.

Interviews conducted throughout working on this study confirmed that the application of the labour law in the field of online work is difficult due to many reasons. These difficulties stem from the incompatibility of these laws with the nature of online work; especially articles related to working hours, wages, vacations and work injuries.

Therefore, there is an urgent to clarify key aspects related to online work by the state to facilitate any agreements between employers and employees in terms of wages, holidays and other things related to employees' working conditions.

The Social Security Act must also be amended to include provisions that would protect the online workers in terms of work injuries and occupational diseases.

The lack of such amendments has put online workers in vulnerable situations, and have led to them being subjected to multiple violations of their rights. Legislative limitations have also resulted in weakness in protective laws that preserve workers' rights or resort to in cases of any possible issues or violations.

Online Work in Jordan

In recent years, the search for online workers begun to spread significantly in our societies. Today, this sector represents an important means for employers to manage and follow up on their work first-hand, in accordance with their own circumstances that may prevent them from being at the work place, due to personal circumstances related to their family and children or other reasons.

On the other hand, online work is not easy, as it requires good communication and cooperation skills, due to the loss of physical interaction between employers and other members of the team, or the team itself.

Thus, extra work needs to be put in order to ensure that the results will be positive; and that there are no misunderstandings, or else the work and the morale of the team will be affected.

Online work is considered a promising market, although it is still not widely common in Jordan. However, it has been growing in momentum, particularly as a result of high unemployment rates, which have hit 18.7% according to the Department of Statistics.

Jordanian women in particular are keen to join this sector. The reasons for this high desire vary between those who would like to help their families in light of the difficult living conditions and high living costs. Other who prefer this type of work due to the customs and traditions, which might otherwise prevent them from joining the labour market. While others like its flexibility and the fact that they do not have to deal with difficulties related to commuting or because they would like to stay at home and take care of their children.

Consequently, a number of women found that online work is the best way for them to find a job that would provide them with a suitable income for them and their families; while also avoiding any psychological, or physical issues related to traditional lines of work.

The above-mentioned reasons, among others, have contribute to the increase in this type of work, which in turn had positive impact on the

economy of the country and helped reduce unemployment rates. This rising sector could also contribute in the creation of income for families and injection money in the local market.

A number of Economic Experts have also confirmed such positive contributions, adding that this sector provides opportunities for people, regardless of their skills levels or experience. They also said that such work might have side positive effects on other sectors like cafes or restaurants as some workers might prefer to do their work there instead of their homes.

Another advantage of this work is that it saves workers time, effort, money and reduces the stress associated with traditional work in office premises.

On the other hand, jobs in this sector could sometimes not be included in Unemployment Statistics as they are still classified as sectors in the Unofficial Economy (Shadow Economy), as explained by the Experts. They also added that these jobs might be secondary jobs to some people who also have other traditional jobs.

The Experts also require some preparations on the part of the employee, including: designating a specific place to work in, as well as preserve any classified documents related to the work. They also need to ensure that they have stable internet connections and any other equipment needed to finish the needed work.

There are also issues connected with online work, particularly in terms of its working conditions. Workers in that sector find difficulties setting boundaries separating their work life and their personal life as both are set in the home.

Furthermore, there are legal issues connected with this sector, as they are not offered enough protections, which jeopardises their situation and leaves them vulnerable for possible violations.

These violations vary from receiving wages that are below the minimum wage; work for long hours; not having access or provided with social protection; or being unable to negotiate for better conditions either due to their precarious status at the company or other reasons.

Advantages of Online Work

Many workers have chosen online work due to the advantages it offers. These advantages stem from the nature of the work itself, which allows the workers the ability to complete their tasks from the comfort of their own homes without the need to commute or use means of transportations which might not even be available in their areas of residence. Other advantages also include lack of possible discriminatory criteria during the recruitment process, whether in terms of gender, age, health or social status.

Furthermore, online work is characterized by its flexibility in terms of the working conditions, as workers have the ability to create a balance between work duties and personal commitments.

As for companies, it provides them with the opportunity to reduce operational costs and increase productivity levels by its employees as well. Thus, the advantages of online work could be highlighted as the following:

Convenience and increased productivity

All of the interviewees confirmed that they feel really comfortable about their ability to work at home. They added that their working conditions have resulted in an increase in their productivity and quality of their work; as they do not have to spend hours commuting or being concerned about weather or road conditions.

Lack of Excuses or Absences by Employees

Both companies and institutions tend to be negatively affected by the various reasons that might lead for employees not to come to work or miss a deadline. These reasons vary and include getting ill or not feeling well.

Thus, online work provides a solution to such problems for companies as the absence of employees from their working place due to illness or other reasons does not affect the pace of the work, as they already do not have to be there to do the tasks required from them.

Better utilization of Time

Employees tend to utilise their time better when they have the flexibility of working from home. A number of employees noted that this is due to the hassle that they used to go through during their commute to work from traffic, finding an available parking place or waiting for a taxi. Instead, having the ability to wake up relaxed and not having to deal with these types of stress, have resulted in better planning and utilisation of time and thus better results.

Reduce Stress and Pressure

Traditional working environments are known for being places full of stress, pressures and high levels of competition. On the other hand, online work is free from all of these elements. As a result, 65% of interviewees confirmed that working outside from office environments have resulted in better relationships with their families and communities.

Increased Productivity

In an independent report published in 2017 by Mind Meter Research about productivity levels of online employees found that 56% of those included by the study have higher productivity and concentration levels. Meanwhile, 53% of them said that their productivity levels have notably improved than before.

Saving Money

Online work has also contributed in employees being able to save money as they do not have to spend money on either commuting, buying food or business appropriate clothes. In fact, all interviewees confirmed that they have been able to save money since they started working from their homes.

Organisation of Schedules

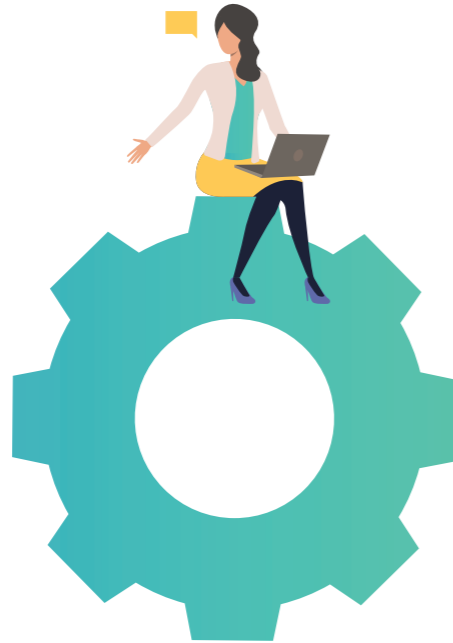
Online work provides employees with the ability to choose the most appropriate working hours based on their own schedules. Most mothers, for example, prefer to work either early in the morning after their children go to school or late at night after children have went to sleep and they have finished all of their chores.

Freedom at work

Employees have the ability to choose their own break times; when to start and when to finish their working days; without the need to pre-coordinate this with supervisors or colleagues.

Continuity and Loyalty to the Company

Feelings of comfort and satisfaction regarding the work and its flexibility results in employees continuing to work with the same institution. Interviews conducted with the sample show that 30% of interviewees asserted their loyalty to the company where they currently work due to the flexibility of the working conditions and the understanding of the management of the nature of online work.



During one of the interviews, a working mother said that online work represents both a need and an opportunity for her. She said online work gives her the chance to both raise her children and take care of her obligations, both at home and at work. She added that online work is a great opportunity for women as it gives them the opportunity to work, achieve and be both creative and a competitor in the job market, as it does not have the restrictions that traditional working environments would have and would prevent women from self-fulfilment. Thus, online work leads women to be efficient and effective in their performances due to its characteristics which support women to have the ability to complete all her tasks within her work and family sphere as well.

She added that the advantages of online work cannot be ignored either for women or even the society as a whole; as women are presented with the chance to show their skills and commitment to the work they are doing, while also having the ability to be in control regarding all the other aspects of their lives.

Negatives of Online Work

In spite of the above-mentioned advantages of online work, there are a number of negatives attached to this type of work as well. It was noted that online employees face many issues in their line of work.

Some of these issues stem from the same characteristics that give online work its advantages; as this type of work cannot be implemented in all sectors for example. In addition, this type of work requires that companies have modern technological systems that enables both employers and employees to stay connected.

There are legal issues as well, due to the lack of a legislative and legal regulations that clearly defines the relationship between the employees and the employer.

Finally, the nature of online work requires that employees be trained and have enough knowledge to deal with mediums of modern communication, in case of any technical issue that might occur during the work.

Negatives of Online Work could be highlighted as follows:

Overworking

Online workers, especially those working at home, might find difficulties setting limits to themselves in terms of time to start or stop working. Such flexibility in schedules and working hours might lead to physical or mental exhaustion instead of bringing comfort to the worker.

In order to avoid such issues, workers need to designate a specific room or area inside the house that is especially marked as an alternative office space. Individuals also need to specify their own working hours in compatibility with the number of hours employees in offices work.

43% of the sample group said that they work for long and unspecified number of hours. They added that there are no regulations in terms of their work, as they always need to be available at any time and connected to the internet.

No Labour Rights

Online work deprives many workers from access to or the chance to enjoy their rights, such as fixed working hours, social security, and annual, or sick leaves.

Many of the workers are even unable to get their salaries, and cannot resort to legal means to claim them as they lack legislative protection.

Lack of commitment

Even though online work could lead to an increase in employees' productivity, this type of work is not suited to all people. Some employees, for example, cannot abide or discipline themselves when they are working at home due to surrounding noise.

Therefore, employee must ensure that their home atmosphere is suitable for work; and allocate a place to work away from any possible sources of noise or distraction. In case the fulfilment of these conditions is difficult for some, then people have the option to only choose quiet days in which there are no distractions present in the home.

Loss of Connection

Despite the significant development in Internet connections and the proliferation of dependence on smart phones and other modern means of communication, the interruption of Internet services on homes or weakness of networks could still occur and be classified as a problem. Interruptions or loss of connection may lead to embarrassing situations with customers or delays in submitting the work past the deadlines.

Labour Rights of Online Employees

When talking about any work in the world, aspects related to labour right need to be discussed.

One of the first aspects related to this important topic is work contracts as they are the main tool to preserve workers ' rights, especially as all employees in Jordan are governed by the labour law and its regulations.

The contract should contain within its articles, the salary that the employee shall be receiving which should not be below the minimum wage and shall be payed to the employee is a specific date or a time period of no more than 7 days after that date.

The Labour Law also sets he number of working hours that employees shall work daily, which should not exceed 8 hours or a total of 48 hours a week; except in special cases stated in the law.

These cases are mentioned in Article (57) of the Labour Law and include tasks related to the annual inventory, preparation of budgets or accounts, or other tasks, as long as working hours for that day do not exceed 10 hours.

Employees are also entitled to be added under the umbrella of Social Security and benefit from its services. They also need to be provided with decent working conditions, that ensues they are protected and safe to their health. Thus, the work environment needs to be properly ventilated; safety gear provided if the type of work requires it, among other things.

The above-mentioned rights are the basic labour rights as stipulated in the Labour Law. Questions though occur whether these rights are actually implemented on the ground, especially to those working online?

Thus, the following section of the study will focus on this aspect and present an overview of the most common violations that online workers face.

Status of Online Workers

Despite what has been mentioned in the previous sections of this study about the benefits of online work for both employees and employers, there are in fact various violations that workers in this sector are subjected to, which are worth highlighting.

These violations occur due to difficulties in properly implementing the Labour Law to the working conditions of this category of people; whether in terms of working hour, wages or leaves.

In preparation for this study, Tamkeen Fields for Aid conducted interviews with 60 online workers. These interviews highlighted the following violations:

Wages and working hours

Some types of online work do not follow the traditional scheme of providing a monthly salary for employees. Instead, agreements are made with these workers that would result in them being paid either on an hourly, weekly, or conclusion of a project basis.

These agreements are usually made between the two teams, and might lead to some employees being paid in advance either a segment or the full sum. Others prefer to being paid in instalments or when the project has been finished.

While some resort to signing contracts to guarantee their rights, there are a large number who do not; as they prefer to work without contracts. This category of employees usually accepts to receive a partial amount of the salary prior to starting their work, while second instalment is paid after the work's conclusion.

In terms of working hours, 78% of the sample group said that their working day usually starts at 7 am and ends 7 pm, and might be even extend till 10 pm depending on the nature of the task and the amount of work required.

Among the most common challenges related to online work is the low level of wages for the majority of workers. Even though these wages vary, they are generally low and do not exceed 200 JOD a month. There are however types of jobs, like telemarketing, where the wage could reach 500 a month but it is dependent on the amount of merchandise sold; meaning that the wage is in fact not stable.

During the interviews, 48% of workers said that their wages vary between 150 and 250 JOD a month. Meanwhile, only 11% said that their wages vary between 250 and 500 JOD. It is thus noteworthy that around 51% of the sample group receive monthly wages which are below the minimum wage.

As stated above, there are many schemes for paying wages in the sector. However, it should be pointed out that the scheme where employees are paid after the conclusion of the project is in violation of the Jordanian Labour. Article 46 of the law states that:

“The wage should be paid within a maximum period of seven days from the date of its entitlement. The Employer may not deduct any part, thereof except in the cases permitted by the law”¹

Interviews also showed that a number of workers were unable to collect their labour rights after concluding their work and could not communicate with their employer either. Other cases that were noted were for employers refraining from giving workers their wages under the pretext that the work was not good or below the required level.

Other workers said that they faced either procrastination or delays by some companies in terms of receiving their payments. These cases are especially noted when the payment is scheduled after the work has been submitted. Workers, who have performed their tasks to the fullest and submitted on time, have to then wait for the mercy of the companies or even individuals until they finally pay them the due amount.

¹ Jordanian Labour Law, Article 46 (A)

In the same context, some employers stated that they think that the wages they pay the workers are incompatible with amount of work they do. Employers justified this by adding that online workers do not have Social Security payments, do not pay for commuting and that the main cost they have to cover is the internet connection. They concluded by saying that they believe that 150 JOD is a suitable salary for both male and female workers.

Despite the low wages, the number of employees who are also parents who prefer this type of work is increasing; as it provides them with the opportunity to both raise their children and work from home at the same time.

Vacations and Official Days off

In addition to long working hours, online workers are deprived from vacations and official days off. These conditions are a clear violation of Article 57 of the Jordanian Labour Law, which stipulates that:

“The Employer may put the Employee to work more than the ordinary working hours in any of the following cases provided that the Employee receives, in any of these cases, the overtime pay provided for in this law:

- Carrying out the Establishments annual inventory, preparing the balance sheet, and closing accounts, getting ready to sell at discounted prices provided that the numbers of days on which the provisions of these paragraphs are applied do not exceed thirty days per year and that the actual working hours do not exceed ten hours every day thereof.”

Article 59 of the same law states that:

- “It is permissible to put the Employee to work with his consent for more than the ordinary working hours provided that the Employee receives a wage against every hour overtime a minimum of 125% of his ordinary wage.
- If the Employee works in his weekly rest day, religious feast holidays or official holidays, he should receive a minimum wage for his work in that day of not less than 150% of his ordinary wage.”

With regard to sick leaves, workers in this sector are denied the right to sick leave of up to 14 days per year and under special conditions of up to 28 days, which is another clear violation of Labour Law.

Article 65 Indicates that:

“Every Employee shall be entitled to a-fourteen-day-sick leave with full pay per year based on a report from the physician approved by the establishment. It may be renewed for a further fourteen days with full pay if he is hospitalized in one of the hospitals and with one half pay if it is based on a report of a medical committee approved by the establishment and was not hospitalized in any hospital.”

However, all interviews stated that even when they are sick, they do not get days off and have to abide by the deadlines set to submit their work.

Social protection

All interviewees asserted that they are not included under the umbrella of Social Security, which is a violation of article 20, paragraph (c) of the Social Security Law.

Their non- inclusion means that they are the ones who have to cover the costs of treatment, if the injury they were suffering from was work-related; as employers do not recognise any injuries to be classified into that category as employees are working at home.

Workers are also denied health insurance. Some employers have justified this with high financial costs, adding that since employees are working from home, then they do not require health insurance and that companies already have other more pressing high financial costs to look after.

As a result, workers confirmed that sometimes they cannot afford treatment when they get sick, due to its high costs

Furthermore, they added that even if the injury was work-related, they still have to treat it on their account. On the other hand, other workers, and later confirmed by some employers as well, that dealing with work injuries varies according to the employer, where some employers bear the expenses of treating their workers, while others do not.

Job Stability

The flexibility of online work might be its main advantage, but it also leads to major issues as well. One such issue is the lack of Job Stability.

Many of the workers interviewed confirmed this, adding that their continuation with their current jobs is reliant on their personal loyalty to the employer and vice versa. They also added that in some cases it depends on the moods of the employers, concluding that it is very easy for employers to let go of their services, without even needing to explain the reasons behind the decision.

Due to the sporadic nature of online work, plenty of people find it necessary to find other jobs as a result of their difficult economic conditions. This need is further amplified in cases where they were fired by their employers or if they have not received their wages.

Occupational Health and Safety

Providing employees with a safe and decent work environment is one of the most basic rights guaranteed to them. Thus, application of occupational health and safety standards is one of the conditions for decent work as set in international standards. The concept of decent work refers to “promoting opportunities for all to obtain productive employment in conditions of freedom, equality, security and dignity as well as non-discrimination between males and females.

A closer look at the conditions of online workers show that they lack these means of protection. In fact, the non- application of occupational safety and health in this field causes many problems, especially since the majority of these workers perform their work at their homes under conditions that are unsuitable. Others also have to use some substances in their work that may cause them some diseases, and thus, require more protection provided to them.

Additionally, online work may lead to psychological and social stress, as their work might extend to all hours of the day; blurring any possible barriers between working hours and times for rest, in addition to some conditions of isolation that online workers experience.

Unknown or Unspecified Employer

The identification of the principal employer is one of the main problems facing online workers.

Some sectors are known to have intermediaries between the worker and the employer. The existence of such barriers between the two parties could contribute to the loss of workers’ rights, as they cannot go directly to the employer and ask for them.

Also, some employers might reside out of Jordan and thus are difficult to reach; while others whose identity might not even be known from the start.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study presented an overview of the situation of Online Workers in Jordan. The study started by defining what online work is; fleshing out both its advantages and disadvantages; exploring the working conditions of this category and finally going through a list of violations that they are facing.

The interviews conducted show that many workers in this sector face difficult working conditions, including long working hours, low wages, absence of occupational safety and health protections, and deprivation of annual leaves.

In conclusion, the study recommends the following:

1. The establishment of legal systems that protect online workers including guarantees that they are covered under the umbrella of social security and provided with health insurance.
2. Conduct more studies that shed light on online workers, their working conditions and environment.
3. Develop an inspection mechanism especially for this sector.
4. Raise the awareness of of the community regarding Online Work through Media Campaigns tailored for this subject.
5. Provide trainings for individuals focused on the necessary skills to join the Freelancing Sector by establishing specialized training centres.



The study was conducted through financial aid provided by the European Union. Tamkeen Fields for Aid takes full responsibility for the study's content and in no circumstance could the content be considered as a reflection for the positions of the European Union.

A Prospective Study

Online Work

Online work is considered a promising market, although it is still not widely common in Jordan. However, it has been growing in momentum, particularly as a result of high unemployment rates, which have hit 18.7% according to the Department of Statistics.

Jordanian women in particular are keen to join this sector. The reasons for this high desire vary between those who would like to help their families in light of the difficult living conditions and high living costs. Other who prefer this type of work due to the customs and traditions, which might otherwise prevent them from joining the labour market. While others like its flexibility and the fact that they do not have to deal with difficulties related to commuting or because they would like to stay at home and take care of their children.



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