

# Study on the Current Situation of Work Performance in Telecommuting Mode Based on SWOT Analysis under the Epidemic

— Taking HT Group Ltd. as an Example

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## **Abstract**

In order to study the problems related to employees' work performance in telecommuting mode, the study used questionnaires to collect survey data on 62 employees of HT Group Ltd. and analyzed the survey data using SWOT analysis. The study found that the existing performance appraisal system is not applicable to telecommuting mode, and there is a problem that the leave system is difficult to implement, which is not conducive to better development of the company. However, in the telecommuting mode, employees' work efficiency is improved because there is no commuting pressure as well as less outside interference. This study provides theoretical support and policy suggestions for enterprises to improve employees' work performance in telecommuting mode.

**Keywords:** *Epidemic; Telecommuting; Performance; SWOT Model; Human Resource Management*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

After the outbreak of New Crown Pneumonia in early 2020, the organization of businesses across the country was hampered. In order to effectively control the outbreak and avoid the movement towards people and cross-infection, more companies began to arrange for employees to work remotely from home to ensure the normal operation of their businesses. During this period, employees' works patterns change and their performance may fluctuate.

As an alternative to the traditional office model, telecommuting originated from the oil crisis that broke out in the 1970's. In order to reduce or even avoid the consumption of gasoline during long commutes, telecommuting began to enter the public eye.

Since 2011, telecommuting software has been introduced one after another, which has driven the development process of telecommuting to a certain extent. According to "Telecommuting Industry Insights in the 2020 Epidemic" released by Mob Research Institute on February 26, 2020, telecommuting is not very popular in China, but it is growing rapidly. In the long run, telecommuting will become a trend in the future.

In the management of telecommuting, some scholars have studied it from the perspective of individual employees. Chevron et al. (1999) in their empirical study of remote employees' attitudes and behaviors found that remote employees are more efficient but miss out on in-office socialization as a result.<sup>1</sup> Xu Xiaoying (2012) also raised similar issues.<sup>2</sup> Cui Jian et al. (2021) argued that the management and evaluation mechanism of employees in telecommuting mode needs further improvement.<sup>3</sup>

Some other scholars have studied from an organizational perspective. Rui Xue (2020) proposed that the performance appraisal system in telecommuting mode should strengthen the result orientation and weaken the process orientation.<sup>4</sup> Sun et al. (2022) point out that enterprises should focus on the management of "people" to explore an

effective way of telecommuting performance management.<sup>5</sup> Xu Xiaoying (2012) argues that telecommuting is not only a change in the location and mode of work of employees, but also a change in the management style.<sup>2</sup>

The author tries to explore whether the existing performance appraisal system (e.g. attendance system) of HT Group Ltd. be applicable to the telecommuting mode from the perspective of telecommuting employee performance. What are the problems? Can the company effectively monitor the employees' on-the-job status under the telecommuting mode? What is the impact on the telecommuting models on the economic efficiency of the enterprise? To address the above questions, the study designed a questionnaire and used SWOT analysis to analyze and summarize the survey data of 62 employees of the company.

## **2 RESEARCH METHODS**

### ***2.1 Method Introduction***

SWOT analysis is a comprehensive, systematic and accurate study of the scenario in which the object of study is located, in order to formulate corresponding development strategies, plans and countermeasures based on the results of the study. It is a qualitative tool used in the development of corporate development strategies and was proposed by Professor Wyrick of the University of San Francisco.<sup>6</sup>

In this study, using the SWOT analysis method, the four SWOT factors in the process of using telecommuting mode in HT Group Ltd. during the epidemic existed interdependent and feedback relationship among each other, and the main steps of this model research method were constructed as follows.

Firstly, it is determined that the aspects of work performance under telecommuting mode are employee attendance, work progress, and quality of results, and the three aspects are deconstructed into questions, and relevant questions are set and finally presented in the form of a questionnaire to investigate all the issues that need to be studied.

Secondly, questionnaires were distributed among the employees of HT Group Ltd. for data collection. 24 mandatory questions were set in the research questionnaire for this study, and 62 employees voluntarily participated in the survey, and a total of 62 valid questionnaires were collected.

Thirdly, combined with the questionnaire results to analyze the impact on work performance relationships in the telecommuting mode of HT Group Ltd. in the context of the epidemic, to establish a SWOT model, and to propose four alternative scenarios.

Fourth, the SWOT model was used to identify and analyze the four major influencing factors of the current situation of telework mode and work performance of HT Group Ltd. and establish the SWOT four influencing factors structure chart.

Fifth, the SWOT model is used to conduct a combined strategic analysis of the strengths (S)-opportunities (O), strengths (S)-threats (T), weaknesses (W)-opportunities (O), and weaknesses (W)-threats (T), which are four influences on the internal and external environment of HT Group Ltd. telecommuting model and work performance status, to determine the dependencies between the influencing factors, and to identify the network of relationships.

Sixth, collate the relevant analysis results and data, discuss and analyze them to draw experimental conclusions and give relevant suggestions.

### ***2.2 SWOT Analysis***

#### ***2.2.1 Strengths (S) Analysis***

1) S<sub>1</sub> Consistency of attendance. In a survey of 62 employees of HT Group Ltd. on attendance system in telecommuting mode, this study found that 48% of the surveyed employees clearly expressed strong consistency in online and offline appraisal, 27% of the surveyed employees thought the consistency of online and offline appraisal system was general, while the employees who clearly indicated disagreed Only 25% of the surveyed employees clearly indicated that they “disagree”. Thus, it can be seen that the attendance system, no matter online or offline, has

less fluctuation in our employees, and the attendance system is basically consistent with most of the post employees (75%).

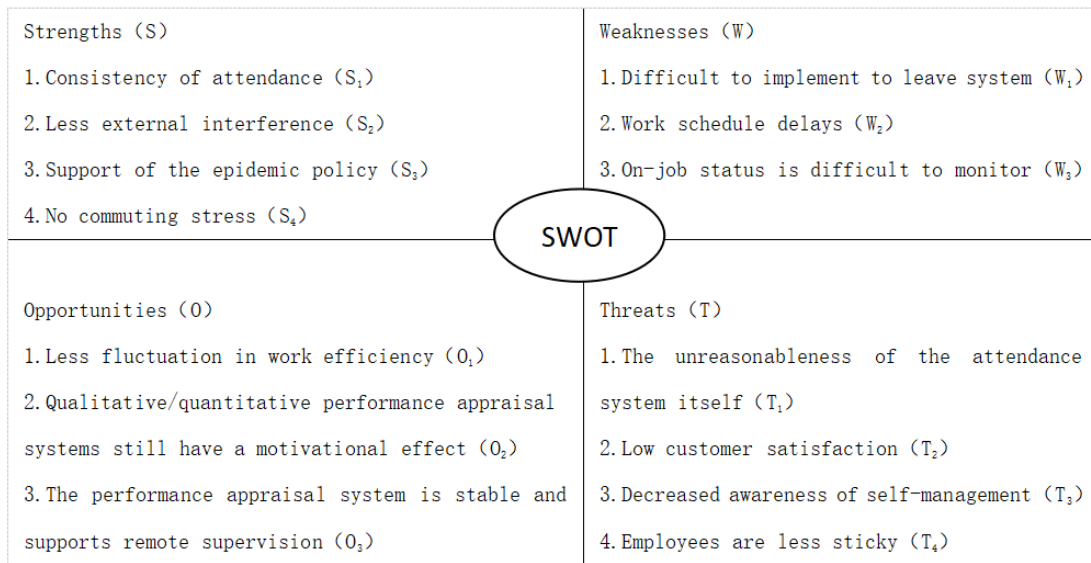


FIGURE 2.2.1 STRUCTURE OF SWOT IV INFLUENCING FACTORS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF TELECOMMUTING MODE AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF HT GROUP LTD.

2) S<sub>2</sub> Less external interference. Responses to a survey of telecommuting mode for productivity improvement factors showed that “no outside distractions” were the most important factor, with a score<sup>1</sup> of 3.2, and that employees generally felt they could work in a quieter home environment than in a dedicated office. In addition, the reduction/removal of commuting time (3.15 points) allows employees to get to work faster and they have more time to devote to their work.

3) S<sub>3</sub> Support of the epidemic policy. On July 14, 2020 13 departments jointly issued “from supporting the healthy development of new industries and new models to activate the consumer market to expand employment,” the “views” pointed out that to accelerate the transformation and upgrading, expand the depth of integration. Encourage the development of convenient online office, to create “anytime, anywhere” online office environment, support the promotion of telecommuting applications and safe and reliable online office tool development, to meet the daily multi-party collaboration work, off-site collaborative office needs, effective support for efficiency improvement, business collaboration model innovation and business organization changes.

4) S<sub>4</sub> No commuting stress. The results of the survey show that the majority of HT Group employees choose to work from home of telecommuting mode, which largely reduces commuting time and stress, and to some extent reduces/eliminates the probability of employees being late due to traffic conditions.

### 2.2.2 Weaknesses (W) Analysis

1) W<sub>1</sub> Difficult to implement to leave system. In a survey on compliance with the leave system during telecommuting, this study found that only 37% of employees was able to apply for and approve leave in accordance with the leave system and process. This shows that the telecommuting mode is affected by the lack of a compulsory workplace, which makes it less necessary and less flexible to take leave, so the number of employees who can adhere to the leave request system and apply for leave approval is decreasing.

2) W<sub>2</sub> Work schedule delays. In this study, it was found that during telecommuting period due to human factors such as disrupted business communication with colleagues/superiors and untimely supervision and work feedback from superiors. The delay in work progress of the surveyed employees in HT Group Ltd. showed an increasing trend

<sup>1</sup> The scoring formula is: the average composite score of the options = (Σ frequency × weight) / the number of people filling in this question

during telecommuting compared to offline office.

3) W<sub>3</sub> On-job status is difficult to monitor. Although employees can use the online clocking system for attendance supervision under the telecommuting mode, The real work status after clocking at is difficult to be effectively monitored by the traditional offline work monitoring methods.

### 2.2.3 Opportunities (O) Analysis

1) O<sub>1</sub> Less fluctuation in work efficiency. This study found that the personal work efficiency of HT Group Ltd. employees is less affected by human (colleagues/superiors/customers, etc.) and environmental (home/office space, etc.) factors. No matter online or offline office, the personal work efficiency of employees in this company has not shown a significant upward or downward trend and has been at a flat level.

2) Q<sub>2</sub> Qualitative/quantitative performance appraisal systems still have a motivational effect. Under the telecommuting model, HT Group Ltd. conducts employee performance evaluations through online qualitative/quantitative appraisals. The findings show that the qualitative and quantitative performance appraisal methods are effective in motivating employees to work remotely. It is worth mentioning that this study also found that qualitative performance appraisal (44%) is slightly more motivating than quantitative performance appraisal (42%) in online job performance appraisal assessment.

3) O<sub>3</sub> The performance appraisal system is stable and supports remote supervision. Under the remote office mode of HT Group Limited, its performance appraisal system has not experienced system problems such as inability to log in, system failure, unexplained lagging and slow operation, and employees' work performance can be steadily monitored and appraised remotely.

### 2.2.4 Threats (T) Analysis

1) T<sub>1</sub> The unreasonableness of the attendance system itself. Firstly, the approval authority on employees' leaves, the type of leave and the time of leave are uncertain; secondly, the submission of leave slips is not timely, and some employees appear to cancel their leave without formalities, which makes the HR department unable to effectively grasp the situation of employees' leave request and cancellation; finally, the related departments of attendance records have the problem of inadequate supervision.

2) T<sub>2</sub> Low customer satisfaction. In this survey, it was found that the quality of employees' remote work was slightly lower compared to offline, while the development and advancement of solutions to customer problems were both negatively affected by the inability to communicate with customers face-to-face, relying solely on online communication. Based on the above two reasons, HT Group Ltd. shows a decreasing trend of customer satisfaction compared to the previous one.

3) T<sub>3</sub> Decreased awareness of self-management. Since employees tend to choose to work from home of telecommuting mode, entertainment facilities and equipment that meet their interests are more readily available, resulting in a decreasing sense of self-restraint.

4) T<sub>4</sub> Employees are less sticky. On the one hand, because the network used for telecommuting is not the company's intranet, it is not possible to set/block permissions for web pages or software, and employees who browse web pages related to job hunting, online resume delivery and online interviews cannot be effectively controlled by the company, which is more likely to cause employees to leave suddenly. On the other hand, affected by the epidemic, the company can not organize offline reunion, family day, annual meeting and other activities, the cohesion of employees in a short period of time can not be effectively enhanced, resulting in the team or departmental work progress and the quality of work results are on a downward trend. Thus, the two aspects mentioned above have a negative impact on the stickiness of the employees of HT Group Ltd.

## 2.3 SWOT Models Building

In this section, the following table (Table 2.3.1) shows the main content to illustrate the strategic analysis given in this study after the four SWOT combination elements, Strengths (S)-Opportunities (O), Strengths (S)-Threats (T),

Weaknesses (W)-Opportunities (O), and Weaknesses (W)-Threats (T), are analyzed through the survey. The main element shown in the figure (Figure 2.3.1) are the network hierarchy of the relationship between telecommuting model and work performance of HT Group Ltd.

TABLE 2.3.1 SWOT ANALYSIS MATRIX OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TELECOMMUTING MODE AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF HT GROUP LTD.

Serial Number	Related Elements and Programs	Specific Content
1	Strengths (S)	Consistency of attendance (S1)
		Less external interference (S2)
		Support of the epidemic policy (S3)
		No commuting stress (S4)
2	Weaknesses (W)	Difficult to implement to leave system (W1)
		Work schedule delays (W2)
		On-job status is difficult to monitor (W3)
3	Opportunities (O)	Less fluctuation in work efficiency (O1)
		Qualitative/quantitative performance appraisal systems still have a motivational effect (O2)
		The performance appraisal system is stable and supports remote supervision (O3)
4	Threats (T)	The unreasonableness of the attendance system itself (T1)
		Low customer satisfaction (T2)
		Decreased awareness of self-management (T3)
		Employees are less sticky (T4)
5	SO Strategy	Use the epidemic support remote online office policy to accelerate the applicability of the performance monitoring and assessment system to optimize the upgrade.
		Based on the advantages of less commuting pressure and less interference from the outside world and higher work efficiency, we actively promote the qualitative/quantitative performance appraisal system as an incentive for telecommuting.
6	ST Strategy	With the help of the supportive policies of online office during the epidemic period, we optimized the performance appraisal system, and committed to improving employees' loyalty and satisfaction to the company, as well as employees' recognition of the attendance system.
		The management of the company changes its role, actively promotes the reform of the performance appraisal system, is good at understanding and considering the uniqueness of the attendance of employees in different positions, and sets up an effective and reasonable attendance system according to the actual work content of the positions.
		The company management takes the initiative to understand the work/life needs of employees and enhance employee care.
7	WT Strategy	Improve the efficiency of communication with customers, timely handling of customer opinions and early formulation of solutions, and also adhere to the grasp of performance assessment, so that the work concept of improving customer satisfaction is sustainable.
		Using a professional telecommuting platform/APP to monitor and record employees' presence and work completion progress in real time, to enhance employees' self-monitoring awareness in the absence of leadership supervision at any time during telecommuting.
		The upper and lower levels strengthen work communication, solve problems of a timely manner, and improve employee efficiency and corporate pride.
8	WO Strategy	The qualitative/quantitative performance appraisal system should be tilted to the direction of daily work progress appraisal, and the daily work progress of employees should be reasonably included in the monthly/quarterly/annual total appraisal results (or become an important reference factor for performance appraisal rating) to motivate employees to complete their work actively and efficiently.
		Using the remote assessment and supervision system, we promote the online learning + assessment method, so that employees and managers related to leave approval can have a comprehensive understanding of the company's leave types, leave system and approval procedures and other remote online leave regulations, systems and processes, and actively listen to the problems/deficiencies of the leave system reflected by employees, and further improve the leave management system.

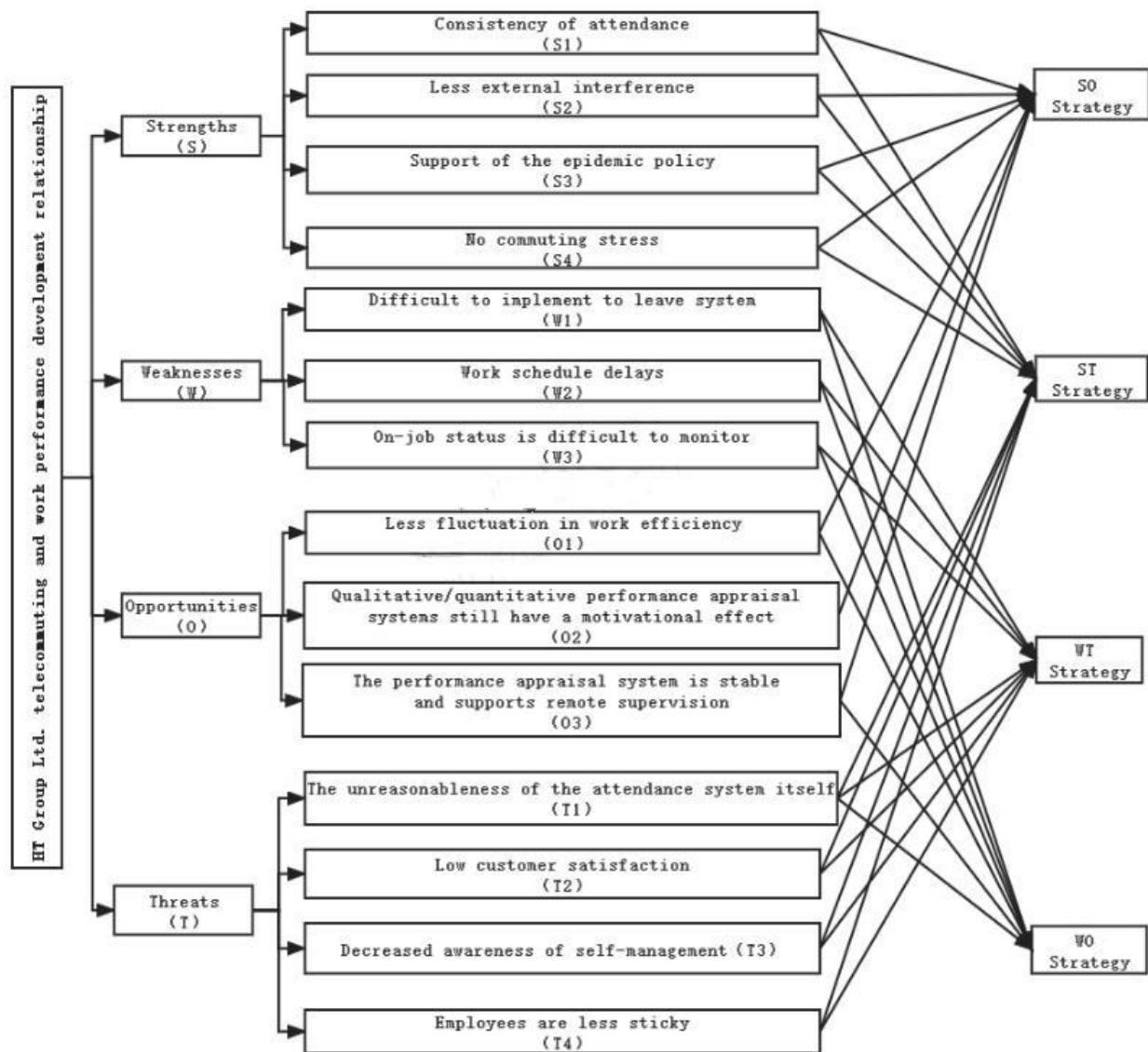


FIGURE 2.3.1 NETWORK HIERARCHY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TELECOMMUTING MODE AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN HT GROUP LTD. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EPIDEMI

### 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper takes 62 employees of HT Group Co., Ltd. as the research object and discusses issues related to work performance in telecommuting mode, which to a certain extent makes up for the shortcomings of existing studies and also provides necessary reference basis and suggestions for how to improve employees' work performance when telecommuting is implemented in enterprises.

From the above experimental analysis and discussion, the following conclusions were drawn from this study:

- 1) The existing performance appraisal system is not applicable to the telecommuting mode, and there is the problem that it is difficult to implement the leave system.
- 2) In telecommuting mode, it is difficult to supervise employees' on-the-job status in real time, which may cause delays in work progress and low customer satisfaction.
- 3) In telecommuting mode, employees have no commuting pressure, are subject to less outside interference and work more efficiently.
- 4) When companies implement telecommuting, they save office space and reduce operating costs, thus improving

their economic efficiency.

As a result of the above experimental analysis and discussion, this study gives the following recommendations of companies to consider:

- 1) Companies in telecommuting mode, develop a performance appraisal system in line with the telecommuting mode, so as to better manage employees.
- 2) In telecommuting mode, enterprise management should make use of new supervisory means, such as requiring employees to turn on the camera throughout the workday, so as to monitor employees' on-duty status in real time and reduce the delay in work progress caused by inadequate supervision.
- 3) Under the telecommuting mode, employees who work more efficiently and those who over-achieve their tasks can be properly incentivized to better play their leading role in demonstration and improve their motivation.

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