



Effects of COVID-19 Crisis on Employment and Working Arrangements

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in China in the last months of 2019 and spread all over the world, has caused a “health crisis” at the global level, and measures fort his health crisis have caused a “socioeconomic crisis”. In this crisis, a contraction in economies and employment occurred and unemployment increased. At the same time, the implementation of some flexible working methods has become widespread, especially “working from distance/home”. It is envisaged that the precautions will continue until the definitive solution to the COVID-19 pandemic is found, and that the outbreak and measures will continue, albeit with decreasing, to affect business and community life.

The view that “nothing will be the same anymore” is frequently and widely expressed due to COVID-19 crisis. However, despite these views, that gather a lot of supporters, it seems controversial that the effects or changes experienced in the short term, especially in working methods, will lead to a permanent and radical transformation. Because the effects and changes of the crisis on employment and working method only means an increase in some situations and practices that are already known and practiced. On the other hand, it can be said that the widespread use of some flexible working methods such as “working/doing business remotely” due to compulsory reasons will have an increase effect in the implementation of these methods.

If there is no serious error in the predictions about its duration and effects, it is expected that the negative effects of the crisis on economy and employment will continue, albeit with a decrease, even after the pandemic. Depending on the developments especially in information technology and other fields, the crisis is thought to increase the prevalence and application rate of remote work and some flexible working methods, which are already on the agenda and implemented in some works and businesses. However, it is considered that this will not lead to a revolutionary/permanent change that will replace the traditional system that can be called “transformation” in the short term.

Keywords

COVID-19, arrangements, teleworking, flexible work, employment

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in the city of Wuhan in China in late 2019 and spread to many countries including Turkey in a very short time has led to a major crisis that involved a “health crisis” and a “socio-economic crisis” on a global scale and that is named after the pandemic itself. Measures for managing the “health crisis” caused by the pandemic also resulted in a socioeconomic crisis with their rather sudden and dangerous effects that pose a threat to the economy and the social life. Economic activity have slowed down and shrunk significantly in many sectors and completely stopped in some of them causing serious recession and constriction in economies along with a serious increase in unemployment rates. The most significant impact or effects of the crisis on employment and business methods have been the shrinkage in employment and an increase in unemployment and also the implementation of some more flexible work methods, especially “remote work/teleworking”. The size and duration of these impacts depend on how long the crisis and the precautions taken will last. It is estimated that the measures for the COVID-19 pandemic will last until it is permanently resolved and that the pandemic and these measures will continue to affect business and social life, albeit less severely.

This study investigates the present and potential effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the measures taken to address the pandemic on employment rates and work conditions and whether these effects will lead to a permanent “transformation”. In this context, after the global pandemic of COVID-19 and the measures taken against the pandemic are explained, the present and potential effects and consequences of these will be discussed in terms of employment and working conditions in particular and on economies and societies in general.

COVID-19 Crisis = Health Crisis + Socioeconomic Crisis

Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) that originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019 and spread to various countries throughout the world was announced as a global outbreak (pandemic) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on March 11, 2020 and caused a major “crisis” on a global scale.

The term “crisis” (Özgüç, 2020) is defined as threatening, hazardous and dangerous events and circumstances which emerge suddenly and rapidly, causing terror and panic, requiring immediate response and which are difficult to deal with by means of existing mechanisms of defense and administration. Having first appeared in China and turned into a pandemic, COVID-19 led to a global depression named “COVID-19 Crisis” as it exhibited all signs of a crisis.

First of all, COVID-19 is a “health crisis”. One reason is that the virus spread very rapidly after its first incidence and caused global terror and panic with its threatening and harmful effects on human health challenging the healthcare systems of countries, eventually forced them to put their emergency healthcare and crisis management measures into effect.

In addition to their generally positive impact and effects on human health, the extraordinary health measures taken against the pandemic, which “restricted social mobility and contact” in particular, have affected all parts of the economy and social life seriously and negatively on a national and international level causing the economic and social activities to slow down/halt and decline. In other words, unlike its counterparts, this health crisis has also gave rise to an “economic and social crisis” on a global scale.

Based on this picture, it would be reasonable to define the COVID-19 as an extensive and complex, “two-fold” global crisis consisting of the elements or dimensions of (i) healthcare crisis and (ii) “socioeconomic crisis” triggered by this health crisis and formulate this as **COVID-19 Crisis = Health Crisis + Socioeconomic Crisis**.

The health dimension of the crisis refers to the threat and hazard that the virus directly poses to human health and to the crisis management for the prevention of these hazards and the recovery of the loss that they cause. The economic and social dimension to the problem is related to the negative effects of the health measures taken essentially to deal with the pandemic and the damage they cause to the economy and social life and their management.

Such “two-fold/two-dimensional” or two-factor description of the crisis is also appropriate for a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of such a global crisis that affects the individuals and various aspects of social life as well as employment and work life on a global scale and for the effective “management” of this global crisis.

Health Dimension: Health Crisis

The origin or source of the crisis is the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that was declared a pandemic by WHO on March 11, 2020 after it broke out in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019 and, from the first part of 2020 onwards, very rapidly spread to various countries.

This rapid spread and its unexpected occurrence primarily led to a health crisis with its observed and potential threatening effects that challenge the existing capacities. Following the identification of cases in all countries where the pandemic spread and also in Turkey, within the context of “emergency and crisis management” implemented by governments, institutions and other units, a great number of health measures were put into effect firstly as emergency precautions to put the pandemic under control and prevent it and, secondly as precautions for the treatment of infected patients.

The purpose of the “emergency health measures” that were implemented was to slow down the speed of the pandemic and keep it on a manageable level by putting it under control. The aim, therefore, was to prevent the increase in the number of patients from exceeding the diagnostic and treatment capacities of countries, to treat the patients with existing facilities and methods and to develop an effective vaccine and drug to finally solve the problem as well as to buy time for achieving “herd immunity” where the virus would become harmless through mutation (Tatlıyer, 2020).

Examples to these emergency health measures could be (Turkish Ministry of Health, 2020a) *the curfew in order to restrict or prevent human mobility or contact both on national and international levels, restrictions-bans on national and international travel, suspensions-shutdowns in workplaces and schools; hygiene and the use of masks, examination of symptoms in airports and customs, introduction of coronavirus screening tests, implementation of emergency and crisis management policies in health institutions as well as prioritizing pandemic cases in healthcare services and informing the public on issues such as virus protection and the healthcare professionals on the diagnosis and treatment of the virus.* In addition to these emergency measures, other measures were taken for the diagnosis, follow-up and treatment of the infected patients and to permanently solve the problem, which needs more time. The measures taken within this scope were;

- *Development of facilities and applications for testing (diagnosis),*
- *Diagnosis, follow-up and quarantine procedures for confirmed contact cases and suspicious contact cases,*
- *Allocation of diagnostic and treatment facilities primarily to pandemic management, excluding other medical cases requiring emergency response,*
- *Promotion and stimulating the production and supply of masks, disinfectants, protective clothing and other medical supplies and tools,*

- *Promoting exchange of information and experience between medical experts/supervisors, units and countries to deal with the pandemic on national and international levels,*
- *Trials of “varied/flexible treatment algorithms” in the treatment of medical cases resulting from COVID-19 using existing medication and facilities,*
- *Promoting and supporting studies on vaccination and medication.*

Although there were differences in the capabilities and crisis management policies of countries, it can be said that were generally similar in the measures they took and the results they achieved.

Impact and Consequences

In the COVID-19 pandemic as of 21.06.2020, the number of daily new cases reached 138.926 and that of the infected patients reached 8.708.008 with deaths reaching 461.715. (WHO, 2020). In Turkey, 2.945.240 people have been tested (as of 21 June 2020), 187.685 cases have been recorded and, of the confirmed cases, 160.240 people have recovered and around five thousand (4.950) people have died since 11 March 2020 when the first case was reported. In Turkey, the Positive Case-to-Test was realized as 6,4%, the Recovered Case-to-Test Ratio as 85% and Death-to-Case Ratio as 2,6%. Based on this data, Turkey performed considerably well in pandemic response and in terms of the results achieved when compared to other countries. It is a generally accepted and observed reality that, in accordance with these rates, the death-to-case ratio identified in this pandemic is not any higher than similar other pandemics and even lower than some of them, and also, the “infection speed” of COVID-19 is higher than its counterparts due to which it was capable of affecting almost all countries on a global scale.

Based on a few months of experience with this pandemic/crisis, it can be said that the aforementioned health measures -to the extent that they were implemented comprehensively and in a timely manner- have proved effective in controlling and managing the pandemic and produced expected results. It is evident that the emergency measures that involved restriction and limitation of social mobility and contact in order to prevent the pandemic from spreading made it possible to put the infection speed of the pandemic under control in a period of 1-2 months. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 patients were treated using existing medication and facilities as modified based on experience which produced a degree of success, albeit limited. Indeed, since March 11 when the first case was reported in Turkey, the number of daily cases constantly increased and reached its peak with 5138 cases a month later (April 12, 2020) and then decreased after that date -especially after April 21- and fell to 972 on May 21; then after staying below 1000 for about three weeks (after the lifting of many restrictive measures), it still remained below 1000 until June 12 and went beyond 1000 on June 13 and finally reached 1562 on June 14. This rate then took a downward turn with the number of new cases reaching 1.192 on June 21, 2020 (Turkish Ministry of Health, 2020b). With the normalization, a similar trend was observed in other countries (WHO, 2020).

In the global effort to deal with the pandemic, Turkey is among the leading countries in the world. It can be said that this success is the result of a number of facts that involve the organization of the necessary bodies and introduction of relevant measures without delay, Turkey's good standing in terms of the health infrastructure and manpower and effective implementation of scientific decisions taken in the course of the crisis management process². However, a vaccine or a drug that is considered to be the permanent solution of the problem has not yet been found and studies on a possible vaccine or drug are still in process in many countries, including Turkey.

The general opinion on the permanent solution of the COVID-19 global pandemic is that 1) "herd immunity" must be achieved with at least 50-60 percent of the population infected with the virus, 2) an effective vaccine must be developed, 3) the virus must become harmless through mutation. It is estimated that herd immunity will cause the death of a lot of people in a short time and the mutation will take a long time. The development of an effective vaccine which is thought to be the best solution, on the other hand, is accepted to be a too challenging a task. The shortest time it has taken for a vaccine to be developed, globally, so far is five years for the Ebola vaccine. While ceaseless efforts are being made in many countries in the world, including Turkey, in order to develop a vaccine, it is estimated that an effective vaccine could be developed in 12 to 18 months at the earliest and it is quite likely that a vaccine will not be developed in 18 months time. Another prediction is that the crisis caused by the pandemic will last one or two years -worsening and improving at times-, two or three waves of pandemic will occur and the countries will have to implement semi-quarantines for about two months on each wave (Tatliyer, 2020).

Economic and Social Dimension of the Crisis: Socioeconomic Crisis

Although the measures taken within the context of the management of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic proved successful in slowing down its spread and putting it under control, it also created new concerns as the economic and social problems grew even deeper and more widespread. In all countries that have been affected by the pandemic, including Turkey, health measures against the pandemic have not only caused a serious slowdown, constriction and decline in the economic and social life and activities, it also led certain business activities to a complete shutdown. These impacts, circumstances and consequences that arose in connection with the pandemic have given rise to a global socioeconomic crisis with due to their sudden emergence and the fact that they require emergency response, challenging existing capabilities and mechanisms with their threatening, harmful and widespread impacts.

² The fact that a "Coronavirus Science Committee" had been formed under the Ministry of Health much earlier than the first case was reported in Turkey and the Committee's advice in decisions on the pandemic response was taken with utmost compliance contributed greatly to the efficiency of these measures and the public's adoption of them.

As it is closely dependent on a health crisis where it is not certain which direction the pandemic will take or when a permanent solution will be found, this socioeconomic crisis has emerged as one that is different from its historical counterparts and is very difficult to manage.

Economic and Social Impacts of the Crisis

While the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 are visible and concrete, data on these impacts and consequences is not sufficient. One reason for this is that this pandemic crisis is only a recent concern that has been going on for the last few months. Therefore, it would be wise to be “cautious” when making predictions and evaluations regarding these impacts and consequences based on our limited experience and data from this short period.

In spite of these limitations, the socioeconomic crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic can be said to have;

1. *Caused financial recession and constriction,*
2. *Negatively affected employment and increased unemployment*
3. *Caused changes to employment conditions and working methods which also gave rise to new problems and situations with respect to economy, sectors, corporations/businesses, households and employees.*

Economic Recession and Constriction

The most visible impact of the health crisis is the slowdown, recession and constriction in the economies of almost all countries. Significant restriction of human mobility in order to take the pandemic under control led to the constriction and slowdown of business activities in most sectors with almost complete shutdowns in some lines of business including tourism, civil aviation, transportation and other activity by artisans and artists.

Based on the estimations of the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is predicted that the global trade volume for 2020 will be at least 13% lower than the previous year and, in the worst case scenario, fall by 32% and this percentage will reach double-digit numbers throughout the world causing an economic constriction that is far greater than the 2009 crisis. It is expected that the export from North America and Asia as well as manufacturing sectors with complex value-chains such as electronics and automotive and the trade in services directly affected by the restrictions on travel and transport will receive the biggest blow in the crisis. While a degree of recovery is expected in global trade in 2021, it is still predicted to be dependent on the duration of the pandemic and on the effectiveness of the policies that are implemented (WTO, 2020; Balci, 2020). Similarly, according to IMF's estimations in April, 2020 based on the data for the first part of 2020, the global economy, which grew by

2,9% in 2019 will shrink by 3% in 2020, and this global shrinkage is estimated to realize at a much higher rate of 6,1% in advanced economies (ILO, 2020a; Balcı, 2020). And Turkey's GDP, which had increased by 6% in the last quarter of 2019 slightly declined in the first quarter of 2020 and rose by 4,5%. Based on the latest estimations of IMF, the growth in the Emerging Markets and Developing Countries group, which Turkey is a part of, will only be 1% which is the lowest (the best) shrinkage rate among all categories. On the other hand, India (1,9%) and China (1,2%) which is the source of the pandemic, are among the few countries who are predicted to show a positive growth even in 2020 (IMF, 2020; Balcı, 2020).

It is further estimated that, among the country groups, the highest shrinkage will be in the Eurozone with 7,5%, Russia will have a constriction of 5,5% and the fact that the pandemic spread to Russia with delay might even deepen the problem. As Turkey's exports are mainly to these countries, Turkey is estimated to be negatively affected by this situation. Based on the latest estimations of IMF, there will be 5% shrinkage in Turkish economy in 2020 which will be followed by a growth of 5% in 2021. The sharp drop in tourism receipts emerges as a significantly negative impact both on GNP and on the current deficit (Balcı, 2020).

It is asserted that the overall impact of the crisis on sectors and economies will be in a downward trend while affecting some sectors even positively. In this sense, the **negatively affected sectors** will include the "entertainment" sector followed by tourism and leisure, aviation and maritime industries, automotive, construction and realty, manufacture (non-essential), financial services, education and oil-gas industries. It is projected that the **"most positively" affected sectors** will include "alternative energy sources" followed by medical supplies and services, food processing and retail, personal care and hygiene, informatics and communication technologies, e-commerce and agriculture (Şeker et al., 2020, ss. 128-129). Additionally, it is estimated that the economic constriction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will last at least 2-3 years and the national economy as well as global economies will only reach the 2019 levels in 2023.

Employment and Unemployment

It is an observed fact and generally acknowledged view that the economic recession and constriction caused by the global crisis will lead/have led to (1) decline in employment, (2) increase in unemployment and (3) a change to the negative in terms of employment.

It is reported that, approximately 2,26 billion employees (about 70% of the world's total labor force) throughout the world are negatively affected by the measures taken to fight the global pandemic of COVID-19. According to the recent data from ILO (International Labor Organization), in the first quarter of

2020, the total employment in the world based on working hours has declined by 4,5% compared to the figures before the crisis (the last quarter of 2019). And if we consider the weekly working hours as 48 hours, this figure corresponds to 130 million (full-time) employment. According to ILO, the constriction in employment will persist and the total working hours in the second quarter of 2020 will drop by 10,5% compared to the last quarter of 2019, which means a loss of more than 300 million hours of full-time employment (ILO, 2020a; Balcı, 2020). However, these figures should not be interpreted as reflecting the unemployment of 300 million people. The reason is that a constriction in employment may not always occur in the same way in terms of working hours and the number of employees. Especially in the short-term, the constriction based on the number of employees may be lower due to the measures taken by employers to reduce working hours without discharging, government bans and restrictions on layoffs and reduction of working hours. However, as the crisis persists, it is expected that the constriction of employment rises in terms of the number of employees leading to the increase in unemployment rates as well as a drop in labor force participation rates.

It is projected that unemployment due to the economic crisis arising from the pandemic in Turkey and in the world will affect the business activities in areas of manufacture, wholesale and retail trade, hospitality and food industries, real property, culture, arts, entertainment and sports which constitute a large part of the economy and employment. The industries moderately or severely affected by the crisis are reported to be construction, transportation and warehousing, vocational, scientific and technical activities, administrative and aid services and other service activities (ILO, 2020a; Balcı, 2020). In the first two months of 2020, the unemployment rate in Turkey realized as 12,7%, a figure slightly lower than the last quarter of 2019. However, the same decline was seen in the labor force and employment participation rates in the same months. In addition to the decline in the labor force, which could be interpreted as a sign of constriction, we must also take into account the fact that the pandemic had not spread to Turkey in those months. The last data provided by TÜİK (June 2020) shows that the unemployment rate is 13,4% and the labor force participation rate is 49%.

Table 1. Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Rates and Figures of Turkey

		2019											
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Workforce (000)		32 265	32 567	32 704	32 619	32 462	32 553	32 617	32 640	32 551	32 560	32 552	32 340
Employment (000)		27 926	28 105	28 169	28 085	27 926	28 031	28 011	28 066	28 066	28 177	28 276	28 123
Unemployment rate (%)		13,4	13,7	13,9	13,9	14,0	13,9	14,1	14,0	13,8	13,5	13,1	13,0
Labor force participation rate (%)		52,9	53,3	53,5	53,2	52,9	53,0	53,0	53,0	52,8	52,7	52,6	52,2
		2020											
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Workforce (000)		32 067	31 505	30 104	29 388	29 684	30 632						
Employment (000)		28 004	27 509	26 133	25 614	25 858	26 531						
Unemployment rate (%)		12,7	12,7	13,2	12,8	12,9	13,4						
Labor force participation rate (%)		51,7	50,7	48,4	47,2	47,6	49,0						

Source: TÜİK

Young people, especially young women, are expected to be affected by the COVID-19 crisis more severely than adults (25+ years of age). In addition, the countries in the high income group are expected to receive more negative effects. Indeed, since the start of the global pandemic, 17% of the young population have fallen out of work; the unemployment rate in young males in February-March 2020, when the COVID-19 crisis first broke out, rose from 12,7% to 27,1% in Canada, from 8,5% to 24% in the USA and the unemployment rate in young females rose from 8% to 28,4% in Canada and from 7,5% to 29,8% in the USA. The labor force participation of young population in the same period dropped by 7,1% in Australia, 11,7% in Canada, 1,9% in South Korea and 7,5% in the USA. The working hours of young people in employment dropped by 23% with their incomes also dropping by up to 40%. The unemployment rate of young people below the age of 20 in Australia rose by 18,5% (ILO, 2020a).

The unemployment could be expected to rise depending on how long the crisis lasts; and a long-lasting crisis may lead to a recession and decline in labor force participation of the general population. The reasons for a potential recession and decline in the world economies in the period ahead could include people giving up looking for jobs due to extended period of unemployment (discouraged worker hypothesis), decline in the number of female and non-working-age (retired) workers and the potential impact of government policies within this context. Another significant effect of the crisis, in addition to numerical decline in employment and the increase in unemployment, is the negative impact on employment conditions, especially with respect to individual workers and households. Some of the expected outcomes within this context include a drop in wages, reduction in working hours, weakening of job and income security as well as rights to association and collective bargaining and widespread practice of unregistered, temporary/flexible employment.

Looking at the observable effects of the crisis so far, we can assert that, despite the constriction in employment and the rise in overall unemployment in many sectors, some may show a contrary trend. Examples of such professions and sectors include healthcare, communication-information, supply chain and distribution.

Economic and Social Measures

In countries negatively affected by the crisis, including Turkey, a number of healthcare, financial, monetary and social policies and measures have been put into practice in order to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic on economy, working life, businesses, households, employees and the society as well as to protect businesses, employment, employees and their incomes and finally to establish communication and coordination between social stakeholders (ILO, 2020b). In the present context of Turkey, in line with the Economic Stability Shield Package announced after the COVID-19 Response Coordination Meeting held on 18 March 2020 and the policy decisions that

followed (IMF, 2020), a number of very significant measures -some of which are listed below- amounting in total to 252 billion Turkish Liras (5% of GDP) were put into effect by the Presidential Cabinet, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services and the Ministry of Commerce as well as institutions such as the Central Bank of Turkey, Turkey Wealth Fund, Public Banks etc. (Işık Erol, 2020: 222-224):

- *A total additional fund of 2 billion Turkish Liras (300 billion American dollars) was allocated for the provision of financial aids to families in need and a financial aid of 1000 Turkish liras was given to 2 million households of Turkish citizens,*
- *The minimum retirement pension was raised to 1500 Turkish liras and the bonuses for the religious holiday, Eid, were paid early in the beginning of April*
- *Withholding and VAT deductions of business in certain sectors as well as their social security employer premium payments for April, May and June were deferred,*
- *Minimum of a 3-month deferral for the capital and interest amounts of the banks loans of businesses whose cash flows were broken due to the pandemic and the measures along with additional funding support.*
- *The funding support offered to the Credit Guarantee Fund was increased from 25 billion to 50 billion Turkish Liras in order to support the corporations and SMEs (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) that had liquidity needs and margin deficits due to the negative impacts of the crisis,*
- *Hospitals were paid a daily amount of 660 Turkish Liras for each patient diagnosed with COVID-19 as per Communiqué on Healthcare Practices (“SUT”) and the new COVID-19 measures,*
- *Layoffs were banned for a certain period of time (three months),*
- *The minimum wage support first introduced in 2016 was extended for 2020,*
- *Utilization of the short-time working allowance was facilitated and sped up to provide income support for workers in times of slowdown or suspension of work due to the emergence of a general, sectoral or regional crises or other force majeure and the duration of this allowance was extended,*
- *The practice of “compensatory work” that aims to compensate the reduction or suspension of work due to force majeure (maximum three hours a day) was extended from 2 months to 4 months.*
- *Measures of occupational health and safety were improved,*
- *“Open and distance teaching” was adopted in all levels of education, and flexitime and teleworking models were promoted in working life.*

Impact of Crisis on Employment Conditions and Working Methods Arrangements

Employment Conditions

In addition to its effects that cause “constriction of employment (reducing the number of active workers/participants in the economic activity) and increase unemployment”, as discussed before, it also affects the employment (work) conditions as well as working systems and methods.

It is normally expected that the sectors and businesses of goods and services with “high elasticity of demand” and those with relatively “weak labor force” will be most negatively affected (incur loss of work and income) by the recession and constriction. The crisis in question can be said to affect the distribution of those participating in the labor force and employment by sectors (agriculture, industry, service) and statuses (paid, freelancer, employer, family business worker) and their employment conditions at varying degrees. Indeed, it can be said that, in the course of a few months with the crisis, the effect of recession and constriction on sectors, lines of business and statuses appear to have varied. While work almost completely halted in some lines of business and enterprises, albeit for a certain period of time, efforts were made to maintain economic activities in some lines of business and workplaces by taking necessary measures via traditional working systems or implementing certain *flexible or atypical work arrangements*, notably *remote work/teleworking*. Based on the experience and estimations on this issue (Şeker et al., 2020), it can be said that the “service” industry, followed by the industry sector and, by job status, paid employees/workers and self-employed freelancers will be most negatively affected by the crisis.

It is also estimated that the paid (dependent) worker group, which make up the biggest portion of the labor force and employment, will be more negatively affected with regard to working conditions including wages, job and income security, rights to association and collective bargaining and other social benefits.

Another prediction is that the crisis process will have more negative effects on young and female labor force for the following reasons:

- The young population’s standing in labor markets is weak and problematic even in good periods. Their unemployment rates are higher; while the increase in adult unemployment is 1%, the unemployment of the young population increased by 2,1%. Three quarters of young people work in unregistered (informal) jobs vulnerable to unemployment and income loss and lacking social security and benefits. While the rate of young people working in temporary jobs in the European Union is 50%, it is 12,5% in adults. The rate of young population who are not in employment or in education is 20%, which corresponds to 267 million people.

- Young people make up the larger part of the population seeking employment for the first time. Young people have little or no work experience and discharging them is easier and less costly.
- In comparison to the countries with more effective laws protecting workers, the employment in young people increases more easily in countries with weaker regulations.
- Not many vacancies have been filled since the start of the pandemic. The number of vacancies in England has dropped by 24,8% in 2020.
- The crisis accompanied by unemployment is also negatively affecting the mental health of the young population. In one study, 53% of young males and 60% of young females state that they experience emotions of uncertainty and fear for their careers with 50% stating that they have anxiety and depression.
- Interruption of educational and professional learning activities is also considered to be a problem that will negatively affect young people's employment opportunities and reduce their income (ILO, 2020a).
- *The negative impact of crisis on the young population is expected to multiply due to loss of jobs and income as a result of (1) interruptions in education, teaching and vocational learning activities; (2) increased challenge for young population new in the markets to find work and (3) decline in the quality of employed population. In this context, comprehensive and purposeful policies and solution ought to be developed in order to revive the economy and employment, support businesses, employment and revenues, protect young population and improve social dialogue (ILO, 2020b, Balci,2020).*

Working Systems/Methods Arrangements

Working systems or methods refer to the arrangement of economic activity in terms of the time, duration and location of work or the functions and duties of workers^{2,3}. Working methods/systems can be grouped in two as (1) Non-flexible (traditional), (2) Flexible systems.

It is generally observed that the global pandemic of COVID-19 has affected the way working methods are implemented and, especially led to a significant increase in the popularity of the teleworking system. The observed and potential effects of the crisis on work arrangements are discussed below.

Traditional Working System

Traditional (typical) working systems involve all or most of the workers -with exceptions- working on a full-time basis at designated working days and for designated periods of time, out of home/at designated workplaces doing permanent tasks. With these particular features, the traditional system is the dominant working system that is “non-flexible” in terms of duration-time and

³ Indeed, in the literature written in English, the term “work arrangements” is used to describe this concept.

location of work as well as the functions (duties) of workers and that has been implemented for a long time.

In the COVID-19 pandemic process, especially with the health measures that have been put into practice, there has been a serious decline in the adoption of traditional working system. However, it is observed that the traditional working system is re-introduced in many sectors and enterprises due to the loosening of health restrictions.

Flexible Working Systems Arrangements

“Flexible working systems”, also referred to as “alternative” or “atypical” involve the arrangement and implementing of employment or work in a “varied” manner in terms of the time, duration of work as well as the functions/duties of the workers. These concepts are discussed in detail in many sources on human resources management (Acar, 1992; Dessler & Varrkey, 2005; De-Cenzo et al., 2016; Kaya & Burtan Doğan, 2016).

These working systems defined as flexible or atypical are gradually becoming more widespread depending on the economic, social and technological changes. The factors that led to the emergence and adoption of the flexible working systems include;

- Development of information and communications systems,
- Increased competition causing the labor costs to fall,
- Increased importance of ensuring family-work balance for female workers in particular,
- Traffic density in big cities that lead to loss of time and power consumption, increased demands for reducing environmental pollution as well as the effect of legal regulations on the employment of disadvantaged workers.

Despite the gradual increase in the adoption of flexible working systems for the above reasons, traditional system(s) are still dominant. In addition, with the implementation of health measures taken in the course of the COVID-19 crisis, many sectors where work had been carried out under traditional working systems have largely adopted the teleworking system. Also, there has been an increase in the adoption and popularity of some other flexible working systems. These developments led to the question of whether the teleworking and other flexible working methods will still be popular after the pandemic.

Teleworking

The biggest impact of crisis on working conditions is that the practice of teleworking has significantly increased in Turkey in terms of scope and scale.

Teleworking is a flexible working method, model or arrangement that involves workers performing their work outside the office and commonly at home, generally though communication established on a computer, telephone and internet within a flexibility of time and space for the whole or a part of their working hours (Dessler & Varrkey, 2003). This system, also referred to as home working, is a working method which is gradually becoming more widespread in sales and service industries in particular, while at the same time creating unique situations and even problems for workers and managers alike.

Despite its popularity, teleworking lacks an official definition commonly agreed by all parties and could therefore be defined and implemented in different ways. While work is defined by where and with which tools it is performed, this system can be implemented by arrangements according to location (traditional office, home etc.), the use of information and communication technologies and the tool as well as the intensity of information and intra-organizational and extra-organizational contact.

Teleworkers are defined as laborers that perform their work -either entirely or a small or large part of it- out of the workplace, at home or on the move with little or extensive use of information and communication technologies. These are *peripheral workers/employees* whose work status are commonly referred to as temporary or contract worker. Working conditions of the laborers employed in this category (job security, unionization, rights to collective bargaining and some other social benefits) are worse than those of the core employees employed in the traditional system and they tend to be getting even worse.

Despite its advantages, teleworking has some disadvantages not only for employers and workers but for the society as well. Teleworking offers benefits, for the employers that include, reducing labor costs, convenience to flexible production of goods and services, reduction of the loss of work time (shift), reduction of costs and expenses of the workplace, positive effect on the job satisfaction and performance of workers, convenience to project-performance and result-oriented work and pricing and reduction of transportation costs and absence. It is also found to be advantageous *for the employees* as it allows for more autonomous and flexible work, it is convenient for balancing and harmonizing family with work duties, allows work even in cases of disability and illness, saves time, power and expenses for transportation and positively affects job satisfaction and physical health. It is also reported that teleworking provides social advantages such as increasing stability and encouraging entrepreneurship, reducing traffic density, power consumption and air pollution.

However, teleworking may raise certain problems for businesses including increased cost of recruitment and training as well as issues of management and auditing, health and safety and a weakening in commitment and the sense of belonging to the work and the company. The negative effects on the part of

workers may include the lack of access to professional learning and promotion opportunities, conflict between the roles at work and at home, weakened commitment to work and the company, social isolation, relatively lower job security and worsened/unsuitable work conditions. Other issues raised by teleworking include an increase in informality, tax loss and social expenditure, difficulties in regulation and inspection and other inconveniences regarding concerns of social order and healthcare.

Partially implemented prior to COVID-19 crisis mostly in certain managerial and professional work, “teleworking” has now been adopted by a larger community for a wider array of different tasks on different levels. The most striking example of this is that, in all levels of formal education including universities, the education and teaching is now provided in the form of “open and distance teaching”. In addition to schools and universities, many public and private organizations also largely adopted “teleworking” method for “service work” in particular. However, in parallel with the loosening of measures, there has been a return to the traditional system.

Job Sharing

Job sharing is a system where the workload of a single worker is equally distributed to two or more workers and completed by taking turns. In a typical single-shift system that requires full-time work, dividing work to be done by one person for the first half of the day and by another person for the second half is an example to the implementation of this system. Job sharing can also be implemented by distributing daily, weekly or monthly full time work to a group of employees (divided day, divided week, weekly rotation). This is a method that can be used to prevent and reduce the layoffs and the increase in unemployment especially in times of high unemployment. *In the event that the crisis persists, it could be expected that job sharing will become more widespread as a practice promoted by the government in order to reduce open unemployment.*

Part-Time Work

Part-time work is an arrangement involving work for shorter periods of time than the normal working hours (weekly or daily) as agreed between the worker and the employer. Part-time work is an arrangement of work for shortened durations. This duration varies by country. Part-time work is permanent and this is how it differs from short-time work (Kaya & Burtan Doğan, 2016: 1079). While temporary reduction of work hours was implemented in many enterprises due to the crisis, we lack sufficient data or information on whether there has been a change in the number of part-time workers.

Flexitime

Flexitime is a work arrangement in which allows workers to determine what time they start and finish work and have lunch breaks in addition to one or two fixed time periods when they are expected to be working. It can be said that this system is more frequently implemented in office and sales-related work as

well as managerial work in comparison to blue collar work. Flexitime system is more applicable to work that is performed in the office within professional and managerial contexts and not to production (factory) work with high levels of interdependence. Increased flexibility can be said to produce equal degrees of advantages and inconveniences. The way the system is implemented and managed is of high significance: It is advised that a manager be appointed and the system be implemented within a pilot department (Dessler & Varkkey, 2005). *If the crisis persists, an increase can be expected in the practice of this system in order to reduce the increased social density and contact at rush hours as well as the duration of density and contact in the workplace.*

Flexible-shift Work

Commonly preferred as a result of the failure to fit the daily tasks in a day's shift for technical, economic and legal reasons, "shift work" involves the performance of the daily work by dividing the shift into two or three a day.

Traditionally, decisions regarding the shift work are left, wholly or mostly, to the employer. "Flexible shift", as a term more frequently used recently, is a working system that involves providing the employers with more autonomy and preferential right as regards the shift arrangements. Based on this system, workers are allowed to make changes to the shifts according to their needs and demands.

Compressed/Short Work Week

Compressed work week is a work arrangement where the required weekly working hours are compressed into fewer number of days (i.e. 40 hours of work required for a week is compressed into four days with 10 working hours a day). This system has long been implemented in airline transport industry for pilots and airline worker as well as for physicians and other healthcare workers in the healthcare industry. It is widely accepted that this system will positively affect the worker satisfaction and, to a degree, the loss of work time although, due to extended working hours, it will lead to fatigue-related problems. In the event that the crisis persists and curfew and other restrictions are implemented on certain days of the week, this system can be expected to become more widespread.

On-call Work

On-call work is a work arrangement that involves workers working for pre-designated/required periods of time upon a call made beforehand. This arrangement can be implemented in different ways. The worker can work for minimum periods of time as designated by laws or agreed upon by the parties. Another option is that the work time is stated on each call. In some cases, the work time can be determined by the employer according to the needs. In general, the relevant regulation and agreements set out the rules on when the calls can be made as well as the minimum and maximum work time and the minimum payment to be made even if the work is not performed. It can be

said that there is a growing trend towards implementing this method, albeit not systematically, in many enterprises and this could continue if the crisis persists.

Fixed Term/Temporary Work

As is known, the working relationship between the worker and the employee is essentially classified into two categories: fixed-term and permanent. In fixed-term work or employment, the starting and end dates (duration) of the relationship is established beforehand while permanent work refers to a determined start date but no end date. Commonly referred to as “regular” workers, workers employed on full-time basis under permanent contracts are generally considered to be *core (primary) employees* of the enterprise. Wages, job and income securities of these employees as well as their rights to association and collective bargaining along with other working conditions are more acceptable than those employees working under temporary or flexible arrangements. With the widespread adoption of flexible work, there has been an increase in the number and ratio of fixed-term/temporary workers. These workers are in a much weaker position in terms of wages, job and income security, rights to association and other working conditions; therefore, they are referred to as “peripheral employees”. With the ever more frequent economic fluctuations and increased competition in recent years, the number and ratio of fixed-term employees are on an upward trend -especially in the young population- in connection with the increased importance of reducing costs. The COVID-19 global crisis can be expected to create an impact that will speed up the popularization of this “temporary work” methods.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Having emerged in the late 2019 in China and turned “global” by spreading to other countries, including Turkey, since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global crisis named after itself. Referred to as the “COVID-19 crisis”, this crisis differs from other crises in history in many ways as it is a combination of a global health crisis and a socioeconomic crisis, affecting the lives of societies in multiple aspects. The socioeconomic crisis arising from this global pandemic has been the result of health measures taken within the context of managing the health crisis.

Triggered by the health crisis, this socioeconomic crisis caused significant loss of jobs and income as well as recession and constriction in economies and acceleration of the downward trend in employment and the upward trend in unemployment. The biggest impact observed in terms of working systems or methods has been the decline in the implementation of traditional working systems due to the health measures in particular and the widespread implementation of some flexible working systems, notably teleworking.

At this point in time, which some people refer to as the “new era” and the general impression is that “nothing will ever be the same again”, the popular

discussion is the impact of the crisis on (i) *employment and unemployment rates and (ii) working methods and whether this impact will be permanent*; in other words, whether the crisis will result in a transformation in these areas (as well).

It must be stated that the impact of this crisis, namely the constriction in employment, inconveniencing the working conditions, increasing unemployment and altering working methods will persist, albeit at varying degrees depending on the level and extent of the health crisis and the implementation of measures -until the pandemic is permanently resolved or herd immunity is finally achieved. However, it can further be asserted that the health measures will be loosened depending on whether the health measures prove effective, which will eventually mitigate the negative socioeconomic effects of the crisis with the help economic and social policy measures. In addition, considering the impact of the economic crisis of 2008-2009, it is estimated that the negative impact on the employment rate and work conditions as well as unemployment will persist after the crisis, also that the issues of unemployment and work conditions that concern the young population which, having existed for a long time, has now become even deeper will require more effort and time to solve.

Similarly, the crisis can be expected to have the following effects on teleworking and other working systems/methods;

- *It may continue in parallel with the duration and level of the health crisis and measures, albeit following a downward trend, until the pandemic ends,*
- *However, as distinct from employment and unemployment rates, these effects in particular, may vary depending on the conditions and measures that require teleworking/flexible working,*
- *For as long as the crisis lasts, there may be an increase in the practice of flexible work arrangements including teleworking, job sharing, short-time work/reduced time work, compressed work week, temporary work,*
- *As a result of the sensitivity toward and dependence on the measures, after the pandemic ends, there may be a return to the working systems that had been implemented before the pandemic,*
- *In addition, with the impact of the experience of teleworking and other flexible working methods as required by the crisis on the way the attitudes and policies of social stakeholders (employees-employers-state) change or the continued impact of the economic return -which is expected to continue even longer- (and of the relevant government policies) on employment and unemployment, there may be a growing trend in the implementation of flexible working systems (especially in the form of traditional/flexible/mixed arrangements) speeding up their widespread adoption,*
- *However, it could be said the possibility of these impacts on working systems (such as teleworking becoming almost as popular as the traditional working system) leading to a fundamental and permanent change or transformation is low.*

In addition to these, it is also claimed that this crisis will also worsen the working conditions of a significant part of the labor force -of the young population in particular- (wages, job and income security and other rights and benefits) and the solution of this problem will take much longer. The “psychosocial” effects of the crisis on the society, labor force, family and individuals, which are not topical at present, and the negative effects on other areas (weakening of social relations and bonds, increase in psychosocial-psychosomatic disorders, public order and safety, data security, quality of education-teaching etc.) ought to be examined in detail. The common view is that it is important to implement the policies to be developed in participation and collaboration of social parties and relevant stakeholders for the solution short-, medium- and long-term problems concerning the society, economy and the work life.

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