

Employee's Perception on Work from Home Policy in the IT/ITES Sector

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ABSTRACT

The work from home has become a new trend of working, in particular with the Information Technology (IT) and the IT enabled Sector. Remote work is a “work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections”. The aim of this research is to analyze the employee's perception on Work from Home Policy in the IT/ITeS Sector employees during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic. A survey was carried out during the period, April 2020 - June 2020 using research survey instrument, an undisguised questionnaire through online mode. The sample size for the research comprised of 242 IT/ ITES Professionals working in various IT/ ITES Companies. This study analyzed various aspects of the work from home policy. The survey instrument's validity and reliability was assessed using Cronbach alpha (overall C-alpha measured at 0.85) for all the items. Primary data was analyzed using Percentage analysis, Correlation analysis, Chi- Square Test for association. The findings revealed that aspects like “Employee well-being”, “Work life Balance”, “Job Performance”, “Job Satisfaction”, “Trust among the team members”, “Job Autonomy”, “Professional Isolation”, “Convenience” of employees has improved and “Team Co-Ordination”, “Communication”, “Job stress” has declined while working remotely .The Respondents have also given suggestions for making work from home more effective and efficient.

Keywords: Work from Home, Cronbach alpha, Employee well-being, Job Satisfaction, Professional Isolation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, progress in information and communication technologies has made it easier to perform tasks outside of the workplace because of better connectivity through broadband internet, as well as cheaper, more user-friendly computers. Working from home (WFH; also called telecommuting or telework or Remote working) is becoming an increasingly common practice which is feasible for present scenario. Remote work is a “work arrangement in which employees perform their regular work at a site other than the ordinary workplace, supported by technological connections”. The work from home has become a new norm of working, in particular with the Information Technology (IT) and the IT enabled Sector, mainly to ensure engaging the workforce, to reach out to the internal and the external stakeholders, to retain the talent and maintain attrition rate to its low on one hand. Remote work is a working practice that encourages professionals to work beyond the conventional office setting. As far as information technology sector is concerned, they are finding the ways and means to figure out the activities that can be accomplished remotely

using latest communication technologies like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, bluejeans, WebEx, Hangouts etc.

The recent Covid-19 outbreak changed working landscape to a great extent. The institutions and organizations of both public and private sector should reflect on their learnings from employees working remotely and its arrangements. The institutions and the organizations to give more liberty to the employees to adjust their working schedules to suit to their wellbeing. It is not only for the employee, individually, but to every organization and the society, and the world as a whole to get tuned to this new situation. Every human resource within a working landscape attempts to balance his/her own needs with the needs of the environment. Following the current scenario, work from home has become the new norm of working. So there is a need to know the employee's perception of work from home policy. Not many studies have been done & it is the requirement of the existing pandemic situation, many companies have gone for this trend. And also, there is a need to analyse various aspects of this work from home policy. Hence, this research is currently the need of the hour and will be helpful for the companies to realign their working policies in the future considering the changes that would be brought by the pandemic situation. The Objectives of the study is to analyse the employee's perception & various aspects of work from home policy.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adam Hickman (2019) describes a common understanding that of how workplace isolation may influence a remote employee's performance. The most common understandings that emerged into themes were the need of social interaction, manager communication, and peer-to-peer interactions that had an influence on job performance. Ajay K Garg, Jan van der Rijst (2015) considered WFH as these saving implications for a private company and their employees if they would be able and allowed to WFH. Benefits for employees for working from home includes that employees are happier working from home than in the office; increased time to spend with the family, less stress of traveling in peak traffic, and the flexibility that comes with working in the home are all contributing factors to their increased happiness. Distance in time and space was broken with working from home while opportunities for face to face communication was reduced. Dr. Revenio C. Jalagat, Jr. Almalinda M. Jalagat (2019) stated that Remote working enhanced productivity, flexibility, access to global talents, cost-saving, better working environment, and environmental impact. On the other hand, remote working posits issues and challenges that includes social isolation, laziness, and difficulties in prioritizing tasks. Amanda J. Andersona, Seth A. Kaplana & Ronald P. Vega (2014) stated that employees experience more job-related positive affective well-being (PAWB) and less job-related negative affective well-being (NAWB) on days when they were teleworking compared to days they were working in the office. Nurul Nadia Nordin, Maizatul Fateha Mohd Baidzowi & Ruzanna Ab Razak (2016) stated that the proportion of employees working at home or utilizing flexible working arrangements has been increasing along with the

advancements in information and communications technology and discusses the potential challenges from this flexible working concept.

Kenneth Matos and Ellen Galinsky (2015) aimed to bring to the surface some of the intricacies associated with telecommuting research so that we may shed insights into the debate regarding telecommuting's benefits and drawbacks. They reviewed telecommuting's implications for employees' work-family issues, attitudes, and work outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and identification, stress, performance, wages, withdrawal behaviours, and firm-level metrics. Marie Antoinette Schall (2019) examined the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction levels of employees in the workplace. Additionally, the variables perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, and telecommuting intensity were investigated as mediators. Results showed that remote work had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Perceived autonomy, work-family conflict, and telecommuting intensity each mediated the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction. The major findings is that increasing remote work may be an efficient way to increase employees' job satisfaction.

John F. Veiga and Zeki Simsek Timothy D. Golden (2006) asserted that telecommuting enhances work-life balance and reduces conflict. The authors examined how extensively working in this mode impacts work-tofamily conflict as well as the contextual impact of job autonomy, scheduling flexibility, and household size. The findings suggest that telecommuting has a differential impact on work-family conflict, such that the more extensively individuals work in this mode, the lower their work-to-family conflict. Additionally, job autonomy and scheduling flexibility were found to positively moderate telecommuting's impact on work-to-family conflict. Kathryn L. Fonner & Michael E. Roloff (2010) reveal that high-intensity teleworkers are more satisfied than office-based employees and achieve significant benefits from their work arrangement, with work life conflict most influential toward job satisfaction. Alan Felstead and Golo Henseke (2017) critically assessed the assumption that more and more work is being detached from place and that this is a 'win - win' for both employers and employees. They stated that remote working is associated with higher organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job-related well-being, these benefits come at the cost of work intensification and a greater inability to switch off. Tracey Crosbie and Jeanne Moore (2004) stated that telecommuting is one initiative that has been promoted as a way of improving the work-life balance. Work-life balance should be welcomed, as for those companies which take it seriously, it offers the potential for greater flexibility and choice for a broad range of workers. Some advantages of homeworking recently cited include familiarity and comfort, flexibility, self-management, quiet and working undisturbed, no travel, being with the children. We can map people's work-life needs within three different but connected areas of their lives. First, there is personal time and space: what do we need for the care of self and maintenance of body, mind and soul. Second, care time and space: what do we need to care properly for others. And thirdly there is work time and space: what do we need to enable us to gain economic self-sufficiency. A balance between work and daily life could be said to be achieved when each of

these areas are balanced together. This paper explores the question of whether working from home improves people’s capacity to balance their work and life commitments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature as the study seeks to identify in detail “WHAT” are the various aspects of WFH Policy. The sampling method used for research is Non-probability sampling. In this research IT/ ITES employees are chosen as the samples but equal chances are not given to all individuals in the population. This technique is more reliant on the researcher’s ability to select elements for a sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. The sample size for the research is 242, IT/ ITES professionals working in various IT/ ITES Companies. In our research, majorly primary data is used & it is collected through a survey. The data collection tool deployed in this research is “Questionnaire” & data is collected through online mode. Statistical techniques used for research were Percentage analysis, Correlation analysis and Chi- Square Test for association.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Reliability Method

The internal consistency, reliability of the questionnaire was measured estimating Cronbach alpha value. The values in the Table 4.2 indicate the survey instrument is reliable and consistent (overall C-alpha measured at 0.85) for all the items.

TABLE 4.1 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha based on standardized items	N of items
.853	.853	29

Source: Primary data

TABLE 4.2 Demographic profile of the Respondents

S. No	Demographic variables	Percentage Of Respondents	
		1.	Gender
		57%	43%
2.	Marital Status	Unmarried	Married

		82%	18%		
3.	Educational Qualification	Graduate	Post Graduate		
		76%	24%		
4.	Age Group	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
		84%	13%	2%	1%

Source: Primary data

4.3 Percentage Analysis

A standardized, undisguised research instrument based on five point Likert Type scale, with rating scale of Strongly agree =5; Agree = 4; Neutral =3; Disagree =2; Strongly disagree =1 were used to analyse various aspects of work from home policy using Percentage Analysis.

TABLE 4.3 Results of Percentage Analysis of Various Aspects

S.No	Various Aspects	5	4	3	2	1
1	Feel More Convenient working environment while working remotely.	22%	36%	27%	10%	5%
2	Have Required technological support at home to perform their job.	26%	40%	26%	5%	3%
3	Feel Less Job Stress while working Remotely	19%	24%	22%	22%	13%
4	Feel happy while working from home	25%	33%	26%	9%	7%
5	Working from home improves their health & minimizes the number of sick leaves.	28%	36%	20%	10%	6%
6	Feel greater job autonomy while working from home	21%	39%	27%	9%	4%
7	Better work life balance while working remotely.	26%	30%	28%	10%	6%
8	Have sufficient time to meet family demands & responsibilities while working remotely.	32%	35%	18%	9%	6%
9.	Feel professionally isolated while working Remotely.	22%	47%	27%	3%	1%

10	Have Flexible work schedule while working remotely.	27%	38%	18%	12%	5%
11	Miss face to face contact with Co-workers while working remotely.	45%	38%	14%	2%	1%
12	Performing Team work is quite difficult while working from home.	15%	33%	24%	21%	7%
13	Highly satisfied while working from home than at office.	21%	42%	27%	8%	2%
14	Job performance have improved while working remotely.	17%	46%	31%	5%	1%

Source: Primary data

Results of Percentage analysis (Table 4.3) revealed that “Employee well-being”, “Work life Balance”, “Job Performance”, “Job Satisfaction”, “Job Autonomy”, “Professional Isolation”, “Convenience” of employees has improved and “Team Co-Ordination”, “Communication”, “Job stress” has declined while working remotely.

4.4 Chi square test for association

The chi-square test of association, is used to discover if there is a significant relationship between two categorical variables. The null hypothesis is that the two variables are not associated, i.e., independent. The alternate hypothesis is that the two variables are associated. The Chi-square test for Association is conducted using SPSS.

4.4.1 Association between gender and better work life balance

Null Hypothesis: H_{01} -There is no association between the gender and better work life balance

Alternative hypothesis: H_{11} - There is association between the gender and better work life balance

TABLE 4.4.1 Results of Chi square association between gender and better work life balance

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Valid Cases
Pearson Chi square	3.519	4	.475	242
Likelihood Ratio	3.547	4	.471	

From the results of Chi square test of Association (Table 4.4.1) it is evident that there is no association between better work life balance.

4.5 Spearman rank order correlation

Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient is a nonparametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured at least an ordinal scale. It is denoted by the symbol r_s . (ρ). ρ (pronounced rho) Will always be a value between -1 and 1.

4.2.1 Relationship between work from home & employee well being

Null Hypothesis: H_0 There is no significant association between work from home & employee well being

Alternative hypothesis: H_{11} There is significant association between work from home & employee well being

TABLE 4.5 Results of Correlation between work from home & employee well being

		Work from home	Employee Well Being
Work from home	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.157*
	Sig(2 – tailed)		0.014
	N	242	242
Employee Well Being	Correlation Coefficient	.157*	1.000

	Sig(2 – tailed)	0.014	
	N	242	242

***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

From the results of Spearman Rank Order Correlation (Table 4.5) it is evident that is significant association Work from home & employee well-being.

4.6 ANALYSIS USING WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

TABLE 4.6 Various aspects of work from home policy

S. No	Key Aspects	Weighted Average Value	Rank
1	Job satisfaction	60.2	2
2	Employee wellbeing	56.6	5
3	work life balance	57.9	4
4	Job Performance	59.8	3
5	professional isolation	62.1	1

From the Results of weighted average method (Table 4.6), it is observed that the employees perceive more Professional Isolation while working remotely followed by job satisfaction.

The Respondents have identified the following challenges generally experienced by an employee while working remotely which needs to be mitigated by suitably modifying organizational policies so that the employee can work with minimum disturbance during pandemic period.

- Working for Long Hours
- Professional Isolation
- Promotional Opportunities

- Career Advancement
- Team Co-Ordination
- Lack of Face-to- Face Contact
- Missing Mentor Relationship
- Communication
- Supervision

On the positive part of the side there are several benefits for the employee from work from home elaborated as following:

- Improved Job Autonomy
- Better Work Life Balance
- Saving communication time
- Flexible working hours
- Less Job Stress
- Greater Convenience
- Working for Long Hours
- Professional Isolation

The following Opinions were provided by Respondents to make the work from home policy effective:

6. CONCLUSION

- Security policies & Secured devices - Companies have to outline the security policies & provide secured devices in order to emphasize data & device security.
- Appropriate technological support - Companies have to provide appropriate technological support for the employees in order to work efficiently at home
- Specify remote work hours - Defining remote work hours for employees can prevent employees from working for long hours

Work from home is becoming an essential work-practice. The research aims at “Analyzing the employee’s perception on Work from Home Policy at IT/ITeS Sector”. The sample size for the

- 2-Days a week- WFH Option - Organizations can explore options to introduce 2-days a week WFH option to employees in order to reduce Professional isolation.
- Offer Technology Training - Offer Technology Training for each employee to use certain platforms, software, and tools which helps to be productive working remotely
- Team Collaboration Portal - Use a Team Collaboration Portal which helps employees to communicate effectively among various team members to converse about internal tasks, group activities, project challenges, ideas, and more.

research comprised of 242 respondents working in various IT / ITES Companies. The primary data was collected through an Online Questionnaire. It was analyzed using Percentage analysis, Correlation analysis, Chi- Square Test and content analysis. Findings from the analysis revealed that the aspects like “Employee well-being”, “Work life Balance”, “Job Performance”, “Job Satisfaction”, “Trust among the team members”, “Job Autonomy”, “Professional Isolation”, “Convenience” of employees has improved and aspects namely “Team Co-Ordination”, “Communication”, “Job stress” has declined while working remotely. Most of the Respondents feel that Organizations can explore options to introduce 2-days a week WFH option to employees in order to reduce Professional isolation.

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