



## WORK FROM HOME DURING COVID 19: EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCES

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### ABSTRACT

Covid-19 pandemic has enforced the concept 'Work from Home' (WFH) into an officially mandated, strictly enforced rule. Now, WFH concept is emerging from all sectors, from IT sectors to teaching sectors. WFH concept is new to majority of the employees, as the COVID 19 has forced almost all the employees of all the sectors to work from home for the first time. As the employees are experiencing new environment, this paper attempts to find out the experience of the employees in working from home when compared to Working in office. The study found that willingness to work from home is entirely dependent on presence of their children at home, comfortable space at home, quiet environment at home and good internet connectivity. Most of the respondents are also of opinion that even if they are ready to work from home they do not like to work from home.

**KEYWORDS :** Work From Home, Employees perception, willingness to work from home.

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of the workplace is shifting from ideas of a physical location to a state of mind. Physical location of a working place has been gradually losing its importance due to growth of information technology. Modern working life adapted the system of work from home. Work from home referred as the concept of working in a concern where the employees do not have to commute to a central and single place of work. It is also called telecommuting and remote work. The development in information and communication technologies has made it very easier to complete the tasks outside of the workplace because of good internet connectivity as well as reasonable price, more user-friendly computers, laptops and other similar gadgets. This made working from home easier as well as feasible to perform tasks and likely reduced the employer costs of providing such arrangements.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century the only flexible work arrangement in organization is working from home. The outcomes of these arrangements consist of both positive and negative. The working from home provides to employees more opportunity to focus on their work tasks. The regular face to face contacts with co-workers significantly reduce, when working away from the office. In the absence of physically monitoring, the employees have greater discretion in how, under what condition and when they complete allocated tasks. This also increases flexibility among the employees over performance of work. Work from home enables more autonomy in job, which is likely to be associated with more productivity. Decreased control by colleagues or the supervisors is an important drawback of work from home. This is true for both the organization and the employee. The work avoidance is the result when someone's work is poorly monitored. Work from home will be helpful when there are issues to attend office and work should continue. Most of the IT companies included work from home in their leave policy of employees in order to increase the productivity.

The Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic has led to biggest number of employees globally bound to work remotely. The citizens in many countries including India are urged to stay at home and to reduce social contacts to a minimum in the wake of the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19. This pandemic affected each and every sections of economy. The concept of work from home got more popularity at this point. This

pandemic also affected educational institution, which lead to online classes, webinars etc. in order to continue academic activities. This shows that one IT sector was following work from home. Now all the sectors started following the same especially educational institutions.

### Review of Literature

This study also includes the wide-ranging literature reviews on working from home.

Crosbie and Moore (2004) concluded that home working was not panacea for modern working life. Careful consideration should be given to aspirations and personality skills of those who are thinking of working from home. Those who have tendency to work long hours outside the home might find that home life is even further marginalized by work life.

Gajendra and Harrison, (2007) revealed in their study that it is difficult to monitor a worker's effort at home, especially when occasionally being interrupted by private responsibilities and family members. In a competitive labour market, such productivity effects would be reflected in a worker's wage level. Evidence on the productivity effects of Work from home is inconclusive, but seems to suggest positive effects more often than negative effects. Stevenson and Wolfers (2009) investigated that depending on the interactions between work and private life work from home could be more or less favorable to overall life satisfaction. As illustrated by the paradox of the decline in female happiness, these interactions are likely to differ by parental status and gender.

Amabile & Kramer, (2013) found that work from home is helping the employees to balance and differentiate their office work with their routine work. The study also added that work from home saves time, increases the productivity, finishes the targets on time and also helps the employees to give time for their personal life.

Go, (2016) stated the focus on major failures and dark side of work from home, the cultural differences faced during webinars by the employees. Work from home creates a big gap in communication between superior and the subordinates.

Beauregard.A et al(2013) in their study Home is where the

work is: A new study of homeworking in Ácas –and beyond, found that mobile workers and partial home workers performance is higher to a some extent and they are highly satisfied and engaged with their jobs than any of other workers. Their study also revealed that workers perform best when they achieve good work life balance and are less stressed. It was reported in the study that Mobile workers and home workers miss informal interaction and emotional support from their co-workers more frequently than partial home workers.

Richardson & Writer, (2017) opined that work from home is the result of modern technology, which resulted in the increased credibility i.e. increase usage of internet for web conferencing, voice mail, fax which makes work easier and simpler. The positive side of work from home is that the employees according to their convenience can start their work. Further they added that the negative impact such as delay in work and no submission of work on time will be there.

**Objectives of the study:**

1. To assess the willingness of respondents to work from home
2. To know the opinion of respondents towards work from home.

**Research Methodology:**

The study is purely based on the responses of 50 respondents working from home belonging to different sectors during COVID 19. Data is collected during April 2020, the time frame when all the employees are compelled to work from home. Majority of the respondents of this study are from teaching sector. All the respondents of this study are working from home since one month continuously.

Secondary Data has been also collected from various journals, websites and newspaper reports.

**Data Analysis and Findings:**

The study includes 48 percent of males and 52 percent of females. 28 percent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 20 to 25 years; 38 percent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 25 to 30 years; 14 percent belongs to the age group of 30 to 35 years; 10 percent belongs to 35 to 40 years; 6 percent belongs to 40 to 45 years and 4 percent belongs to 45 to 50 years.

34 respondents are belonging to teaching, 9 IT assistant, 2 are system Engineers and 5 belongs to other non teaching sectors such as administrator, Managers, coverage executive and senior executive.

Among the respondents belonging to teaching, 56 percent agrees that they are willing to work from home, 6 percent strongly agrees, 23 percent disagrees to work from home and 15 percent strongly disagrees to work from home.

Among 9 IT assistants, 2 respondents disagrees to work from home and 6 respondents agrees and 1 respondent strongly agrees. Among 2 system Engineers, one respondent strongly agrees and one respondent strongly disagrees to work from home.

Among the total respondents, 44 percent (n=22) are married and 56 percent (n= 28) are single. With regard to willingness to work from home, from among 22 respondents, 8 respondents who are married disagree, 4 respondents strongly disagree, 8 respondents agree and 2 respondents strongly disagree.

With regard to willingness to work from home, from among 28 respondents, 2 respondents disagree and 2 respondents

strongly disagree, 20 respondents agree, and 4 respondents strongly agree. It is found that majority of respondents who are married are not willing to work from home compared to respondents who are single.

It is also found from the study that majority of the respondents who are having children are not willing to work when compared with the respondents not having children and single.

The study reveals that it is the first experience of 88percent of the respondents are working from home for the first time , and 12 percent have already worked from home (8 percent are from teaching and 4 percent are from non teaching sector). Majority of the respondents experienced the work from home due to the situation aroused from COVID 19.

**Table 1: Respondents willing to work from home and respondents liking to work from home:**

		Do you like to work from home?		Total No. of Respondents
		Yes	No	
I am willing to work from home	Strongly disagree	0	6	6
	Disagree	1	9	10
	Agree	11	17	28
	Strongly Agree	5	1	6
Total		17	33	50

It is found from the Table 1 that, 6 respondents strongly agree that they are willing to work from home and 28 respondents agree that they are willing to work from home.

But 17 respondents from among 28 respondents who are willing to work from home do not likes to work from home. Even if the respondents are willing to work, they expressed that they don't like to work due to the uncomfortable situation to work from home.

When the respondents were asked whether they find any difference in working from home and working in office, the respondents made the following statements.

72 percent of the respondents found difference in working in office and working from home.

The differences are in terms of negative and positive aspects towards work from home.

**Negative aspects:** (Respondents Statements extracted from questionnaire):

One respondent opined that "Assigned work is of that nature which cannot be completed at home".

Another respondent opined that "Eye contact with the students is missing, which is very essential to understand their concentration level".

Three respondents are of opinion that "100 percent concentration can be given to the work only if we work in office. Work cannot be done at home, not able to manage and balance personal and professional life and Work from home is very stressful".

Majority of the respondents stated that, "Work from home need high speed internet connectivity and classes will be effective only if there is uninterrupted internet connectivity". Few respondents were of opinion that, "teaching can be effective if and only if there is a direct interaction between the teachers and the students".

Majority of the respondents opined that in order to work from home, one should have quiet environment, comfortable space and all the other facilities which is very much required to work from home.

#### Positive aspects:

One respondent opined that "Can work according to my time and travel time can be saved and we can spend time with family".

One respondent is of opinion that it is very flexible to work from home.

#### Testing the Hypothesis of the study

##### H1: Willingness to work from home is dependent on gender and the presence of their children at home.

The researchers tried to find out whether the willingness to work from home is dependent on gender.

Chi square test has been used in order to test this hypothesis.

(a) It is found from the hypothesis testing that, p value obtained is 0.770, which is greater than 0.5 ( $p > 0.5$ ), hence the alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted.

Willingness to work from home is not dependent on gender of the respondents. Gender of the respondents has not influenced the willingness to work from home.

The researchers tried to find out whether the willingness to work from home is dependent on having the presence of their children at home.

Chi square test has been used to test this hypothesis

(b) It is found from the hypothesis testing that, p value obtained is 0.014, which is less than 0.5 ( $p < 0.5$ ), hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence can be concluded as, willingness of the respondents to work from home is dependent on having the presence of their children at home.

Majority of the respondents who are not willing to work from home are those having children at home.

##### H2: Comfortable space at home, Quiet environment at home and good internet connectivity at home influences respondents Willingness to work from home.

The researchers tried to find out whether the willingness to work from home is dependent on comfortable space at home.

Chi square test has been used to test this hypothesis

(a) It is found from the hypothesis testing that, p value obtained is 0.001, which is less than 0.5 ( $p < 0.5$ ), hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence can be concluded as, willingness of the respondents to work from home is dependent on having the comfortable space at home.

The researcher tries to find out whether the willingness to work from home is dependent on the quiet environment at home.

Chi square test has been used to test this hypothesis

(b) It is found from the hypothesis testing that, p value obtained is 0.009, which is less than 0.5 ( $p < 0.5$ ), hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is

rejected. Hence can be concluded as, willingness of the respondents to work from home is dependent on having the quiet environment at home.

The researchers tried to find out whether the willingness to work from home is dependent on the good internet connectivity at home.

Chi square test has been used to test this hypothesis

(c) It is found from the hypothesis testing that, p value obtained is 0.000, which is less than 0.5 ( $p < 0.5$ ), hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. Hence can be concluded as, willingness of the respondents to work from home is dependent on having the good internet connectivity at home.

#### Summary and Future Research:

The present study addressed a need in the current literature to understand the experience of employees working from home for the first time and to know their willingness to work from home and how the home environment affects their work. Given the results of the current study, respondents working from home will be willing to work if they are having good and supportive environment to work from home. Understanding the needs of employees provides employers with an opportunity to help their employees set up a supportive and controlled work environment, which may result in more number of workers showing increased willingness to work from home and thereby having higher job satisfaction and efficiency.

The results of the present study provide a number of potential avenues of future research. It includes the differences in opinion of employees towards work from home across the states. Due to COVID 19, employees of all the sectors are introduced to the concept of work from home for the first time hence comparative study of perception of employees towards work from home of different sectors can be studied.

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