



A STUDY ON WORK FROM HOME IN NEW NORMAL ERA – A BOON OR A CURSE FOR THE WORKING INDIVIDUALS (ACADEMICIANS AND CORPORATE)

□ Sailee Shringarpure*
Sneha Hathi**

ABSTRACT

The Pandemic of COVID-19 has become a history into our minds where in large proportion of the employees or workforce are not able to commute for work purposes, on the other had taking a precautionary measure to control the spread of the virus. Now, WFH concept is also emerging from all sectors rather all the facets of our economy, from IT sectors to teaching sectors. WFH concept is new majority of the workers, because the COVID-19 has forced most of the employees of all the sectors to work from home for the first time in history of mankind. As the employees are experiencing a totally new environment, in this paper the researcher attempts to find out the experience of the employees in working from home, challenges faced by them and on the other hand also the positive and negative impacts, when compared to working in office. The study shall also find about whether the willingness to work from home is entirely dependent on presence of their children at home, comfortable space, quiet environment and good internet connectivity at home. Most of the respondents are also of opinion that even if they are ready to work from home in future or they do not like to work from home. A critical insight and also a few related recommendations have been developed for future policy decisions to be made from the employer's prospect. It shall be majorly focusing on whether the work arrangement will remain as a temporal element responding to some rare circumstances, or whether it may result into long term arrangement.

Keywords- Work from Home, Covid -19, Positive impact, Negative impact.

Introduction

The pandemic has disarrayed several aspects of people's lives, one among the lasting effects of this pandemic and thus the ensuing lockdowns across the globe has been the huge shift in operating arrangements. Covid-19 has set back the workplace shutting down all institutional, corporate facilities, stopped fieldwork activities too sort of a hurricane, scattering staff in each direction, exposing several to new risks, and redefining what all should do on their jobs safely, with efficiency, and effectively. Throughout these times, consumer and various client's desires and expectations too have modified drastically.

There has been a total shift towards digitization, which is clearly the necessity of the hour and fast emerging as a replacement normal. Many sectors like academic (schools/college), corporates (especially in technology/software), have moved to a hybrid work model allowing employees to work from home absolutely during the lockdown period. In this section of COVID -19 it is really very stressful for all the staff, workers rather a standard common lay man to face this example of work from Home. This has verified to be an unforgettable history for all our workforce who has been forced to figure out from home and additionally manage the work life balance throughout this

*Prahldrai Dalmia Lions College or Commerce and Economics, Sunder Nagar, S.V. Road, Malad West

**Prahldrai Dalmia Lions College or Commerce and Economics, Sunder Nagar, S.V. Road, Malad West

pandemic, however it has created hurdles in balancing their lives and office task in one row irrespective of any type of profession and services initially, later and eventually everyone got use to it and had accepted the challenges coming on their ways too. Work cultures shall now demand themselves to focus rather give priority on more on results and fewer on attendance. Online meetings have become the norm. Individuals are now ready to integrate work life with home life. Therefore, understanding work life balancing while working from home of an employee as academician and other professions has become very important concept. The researcher further tries to do the interaction between the work and other various activities which consist of families, communities, personal development during this pandemic. During this lockdown corporations, institutions have additionally come back up with worker engagement through virtual games, meetings, events which is a very exciting trend wherever everyone seems to be engaging with each other digitally. Organizations are encouraging staff to up-skill themselves through totally different courses. It's time to simply accept the very fact that it's necessary to search out a work-life balance. rather than managing a work force with a one-size-fits-all approach, customizing the duty to suit the dynamic desires of the millennial employee is currently turning into progressively necessary. Hence here in this research paper the researcher is trying to find out the work from home experiences of the individual workforce and also to regulate the various system of work culture while working from home and balancing both work and life balance followed during COVID -19.

Literature Review:

1. Prior to the situation of pandemic, discussions or one to one talks on the future of work-life were unclear and often questionable. COVID-19 has obliged a lot of decision upon people, and with the world of having to or getting adapted quickly, in which many businesses opted to try WFH. These practices have been employed widely, as can be seen in the U.S., where studies show in May 2020, 35.2% of the workforce worked from home, with further to an increase from 8.2% in February.

Furthermore, 71.7% of workers that WFH found that they might work more effectively (Bick, Blandin, and Mertens 2020). In few places, WFH guidelines were introduced by governments, where government employees WFH while advisory notices were sent to employers of private organizations, as a precaution to prevent further increase in the same by reducing social contacts (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government [HKSAR Government] 2020a).

2. A 2008 University of California report found that it took an average of 23 minutes 15 seconds to get back on task following an interruption, which can be tough enough to stay focused on a constant thing, when working from home, accordingly so use techniques to minimize the levels of distraction. If you get stuck up into routine domestic chores, or suffer few repeated interruptions from family or friends, reset your boundaries, and ask for help in maintaining them. Control your social media use. Think carefully about which notifications to keep on and which need to be ignored or rather to mute until later. Allocate variant time slots for seeing or checking your phone, and put it to one side outside those times or when you are in your personal space or time. If your workplace has made you busy by internal communications channels, discipline on time yourself to check them at times. If you don't try this, later it is observed that you'll find yourself being pulled away from your important or priority tasks to waste seamless flow of your energy on seemingly urgent but less critical or less significant activities.
3. WFH has been defined in various or different terms over the last four decades, namely remote work issues, flexibility in workplace, telework, telecommuting, e-working. The concept relates to different factors like managing with technology and time management. (Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Grant et al. 2019).

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand the work from home experiences of the workforce.
2. To analyze the impact of WFM on workforce
3. To conclude measures in order to regulate the system of work culture followed during COVID -19.

Scope of study:

The Researcher majorly focuses on different aspects in employee's working in the academic and corporate sectors their work life balance, while working from home. It further discusses on the factors which led to increase in the productiveness, accountability, commitment, better team work. The activities done to make sure your health is not being affected due to work from home and regulated the system of work culture followed during COVID - 19. Activities both having a positive and a negative influence of impact in the WFH balance in case of individuals (both academicians or corporates) in different sectors and also their various experiences during this New Normal Era.

Methodology:

Sources of data collection

Secondary data: It majorly consist the information collected from various sources like books, websites, journals etc.

The researcher has first studied about the concept of work life and their personal life in reference to WFH, and also working from home during Covid – 19 and the impacts through literature review.

Primary Data: The primary research covered employees like academicians and other corporates, in the age group of 25 -35 years, 36 – 45 years, 46 – 55 years and 56 years and above. The Research was conducted through a structured questionnaire, survey form being collected online information. For this study, the sample size was 96 respondents from various employees (academicians and other corporates).

Impact of work from home on individual workforce

Based on the initial proof of WFH adopted by the personnel coming back from completely different sectors, city will have the potential to create WFH

much more commonplace, taking the supply of technology under consideration. At this current scenario the maximum countries have to be considered as one of the most technologically advanced places with approximately 92% of its population being internet users. As work from home is not a new concept but this pandemic had made maximum organizations as mandatory to go for work from home concept in virtual manner. The work from home culture got both positive and negative impact on individual workforce, sometime by giving satisfaction to work at their own comfort zone with time flexibility or along with work spending maximum time with their family members, whereas faced also some issues like of lack of focus due to too much of distraction at home, maintaining a proper schedule which triggers out the mental pressure as compared to physical pressure due to stress. The stress levels faced can be worked as a self-motivator to cope up with new challenges of new work culture while working from home and also it can be vice versa which can be negatively affect our mental health, if not managed on time.

Data Analysis:

The research data was collected through a primary data i.e. a questionnaire was prepared wherein all the questions were asked in reference to work from home experience, whether the respondents had established good work routine, mental satisfaction, stress related factors, work life balancing factors etc. The questionnaire focused on all the variant aspects of problems faced, influential aspects while WFH. The sample consist of 96 respondents where in all academicians and corporates were send the questionnaire which covered both the male and female population. The data collected can be interpreted as follows: Maximum population (teaching academicians) covered was from the age group of 25 years (minimum) to 55(maximum) years of age group was covered in the sample respondents. The Respondents rated the WFM concept to be fair enough and quite stable one to be worked upon. Maximum Respondents were of the opinion that they were able to establish a good work routine as well as few influential factors were prior like safety, security, quality time with family, and few stress factors like time management, internet connectivity etc. Also maximum respondents nearly more than 50% were happy with the WFH

concept to bear with and also an extension would be appreciated for the same.

Findings of the Study:

This research works on Work life balance while working from home has actually helped us to know, how people combine their paid work with life's other roles and responsibilities they need to perform while staying at home and managing every single work irrespective of activities of professional work like teaching online as academicians or any other job as an employee of corporate. The work from home has brought into an issue that is important and also affecting both the organizations as well as to employees at their own satisfactory level. This issue has come to the core, due to a multitude of listed issues rather problems or reasons like changes in the work place in employee demographics and in the family sphere. On one side adapting new work culture by totally transforming to digitalization, that becomes one of major challenging tasks to those who were not techno savvy. Individuals were also compelled rather pressurized with no proper schedules of working from home and had to put an extra hours of work beyond the working hours as it was WFH to prove their worth and meet the expectations of the organizations, undoubtedly and individuals also had spent a good time with their family members as well 24/7. Advancement in technology has played a major role in this new work culture which has brought into a thin line between office and home, and with a laptop, employee is on calls for a continuous span of time. Further, specifically if mentioning about women have joined the workforce in large numbers and are now performing a dual role i.e. of a breadwinner as well as a homemaker. This puts an extra pressure on them. In the family types like some of the nuclear families, single parenting, both earning parents, parents placed at different locations and increasing demands of household work further add to the problems. Well established time management techniques would have helped us to maintain work life balance also proper time management techniques need to be implemented.

Conclusion and Suggestions

It is said that this working from home is not by choice but due to the Coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant to

lockdown, it's a forced situation. However personal and professional life should be different. Currently professional life is interfering in personal life. Though it is being experienced by maximum employees that time, energy and money saving are there while working from home but with proper regulations about time management which would be more beneficial to maintain family and work balance. All this positivity sometimes can become obstacles since it may be troublesome to draw crystal clear lines between work and home. To create the simplest out of this example is to line some guidelines and prioritize tasks so that an individual can have best use of time in their professional and personal life. However, work from home gave us all kinds of tempting freedoms to work at our own comfort zone sometimes but that had also turned out to be the hardest one to conquer which resulted to mental and physical issues. To have quality work life balance while WFH is important to keep some benchmark to get the out successful. It is very important to have one designated place for engaging work from home. A place that you are associating with work, can facilitate in putting you in work mood especially when you really need to be focused, and concentrated, and all those comfort places are not working for an individual. When performing from a typical workplace, things are being recognized when to end the workday, other colleagues already leave the premises. However once performing from home it is toughest job to realize where to end the workday sometimes it had not time limit so for that everyone need to keep some time constraints, take breaks in between, end at a particular time, make sure that one at home spending the rest of the day with your family. Sometimes once engaging from home, one has to be available after hours during some busy periods. Therefore to be more effective one needs to prioritize their some tasks and wisely schedule the calls with their clients and teammates. Also having a secured internet connection is at own responsibility, so if any problems are being faced by an individual, make sure that the workforce have Plan B. Keeping in mind the current scenario Work from home is based on temporary and forceful situation, having self-motivation time

management would be better option rather a advisable suggestion to work upon. Better time management techniques to be applied by the individuals to enhance more productivity would work upon. As we all are aware few situations are uncontrollable in such times how the workforce needs to keep a balanced approach for work and family in a tactical manner. Also the employer prospect towards making the individuals work and slog at any time, uncalled meetings, and work pressure shall be reduced at the organizational level too.

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