

Review of literature for impact of work from home on the organizational productivity and employee satisfaction

Tanuka Bhattacharya

ICFAI University Jharkhand, Phd. 2019 Batch, University ID: 19FMRCJHN01002

tanuka.b19@iujharkhand.edu.in, tanukabhatt88@gmail.com

ABSTRACT - In India, the versatile work culture or work from home wasn't quite common till the pandemic had stricken in 2020. Some firms, majorly ITs and MNCs had the work from home possibility in their policies however for a specified tenure or at regular intervals. The recent pandemic has caused the management of various industries to think about remote operating culture seriously. The confinement to one's residence owing to lockdown and social distancing priorities meant workers were not able to work from their offices. Organizations had to work on setting up a digital infrastructure for their employees at home so that they could continue working conveniently. Alongside, there was the vital facet of making certain compliance and security. This is often being thought-about because the 'World's largest work from home transition'. With the main chunk of the service sector working from home, it is relevant to know the impact of this culture on organizational productivity.

Some organizations already had the WFH policy. The policy might indicate WFH on specific days or a set range of days in a month. The character of WFH are often occasional, temporary or permanent. The purpose for availing WFH are often parenting, emergencies, long hours of commute, health problems, etc. It is to be understood if the nature of the task permits WFH, if there's a cybersecurity or information privacy concern, if collaboration with the employee's team becomes tough, if workers have the required instrumentation or software system at their residence that allows them to work conveniently and also the conditions of employees' home in terms of setting, noise, internet connection, disturbance of any kind.

WFH is feasible in some industries just like the IT, Finance, but for essential services like dairy, or for healthcare, banks, it might not be as convenient due to the nature of the job. Again, it might be a convenient possibility for the middle and the senior management, but for the junior executives who are mostly on field, this might be a distant reality. Researches have highlighted that employment from home choices have enabled female workers to continue their careers post personal commitments of marriage and kids. This article will review research papers and articles related to working from home and understand the primary factors concerning work from home that impact the organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: *work from home, employee satisfaction, organizational productivity, work-life balance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Flexible working is fast growing. The 2019 IWG world geographic point Survey of fifteen,000 professionals in eighty nations found eighty % of companies in European country, seventy-six % in Brazil and fifty-eight % in Asian country had versatile operating policies. Implementation of policies were also in place. In another survey, 500 employees from a Chinese travel company were observed for two years.

Their productivity while working from home was found to have increased by 20 percent and more.

Employee productivity increased due to changes made in their style of working. They took lesser breaks and leaves such as sick days. But, not everyone is comfortable with working from home. This study also reported that after the experiment of working from home for a particular period of time, around half the participants decided to be working from office in the future.

Working from home reduces the strain of time-pressured work and lets employees better work around personal circumstances like attending to a sick child or to getting household work done. Workers availing the flexible work opportunity, displayed increased job satisfaction, more commitment towards their organization and a willingness to carry out tasks beyond their respective job roles. These employees were more engaged.

Researchers observed that it was difficult for flexible workers to discriminate between personal and professional time. In a 2018 study, it was observed that working from home increased productivity for employees having complex job roles, employees who were individual contributors and employees who did not require to interact much with the team. No job was reported where flexible working decreased employee productivity. Also, providing option for working from home helps in retaining and maintaining a loyal employee base. This is because it provides convenience to the employee and contributes to his/her work life balance to a large extent. Flexible working will help companies attract and retain more women because women are more likely than men to shoulder care responsibilities. A research by Felstead and Henseke shows that working from home helps employees adapt to personal circumstances.

This article will try to understand the impact of working from home on organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this article is to understand the impact of working from home on organizational productivity and employee satisfaction.

- To find the primary factors that impact organizational productivity and employee satisfaction as a means of working from home.
- To understand if some job roles are better suited for working from home.
- To understand the cost effectiveness of working from home.
- To study the effect of working from home on interpersonal relationships.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tracey Crosbie & Jeanne Moore, in their article 'Work-Life Balance and Working from Home, July 2004', Social Policy and Society, mentions that though working from home benefits a variety of workers there is not much progress in the policy development of the same. There is a lack of clarity in the terms and conditions for working from home. Even though more organizations are considering adopting working from home, guidelines on how to proceed remain ambiguous. For example, defined guidelines on what should be the defines hours of work, what should be the minimum

wages for employees working from home, will there be any option for overtime, are yet to be formed.

Suraya Casey in his article, 'The surprising facts about working from home, 2020' mentions that the organizations' understanding that some job roles can be better performed while working from home will help in better management of teams and thus delivering the targeted results. Also, the quality of deliverables in a job role while working from home will highly depend on the attributes of the person performing the task.

Drew Desilver, in his article 'Working from home was a luxury for the relatively affluent before coronavirus - not anymore, 2020' talks about fields of work where working remotely is not feasible due to the nature of the job. Jobs carried out by restaurant servers, hair stylists, plumbers, police officers or construction workers cannot be done from home. The NCS found out that only 1% of service workers enjoy the option of working from home.

Rachel Muller-Heyndyk in her article 'Women more likely to take career break for caring responsibilities, 2019' mentions the importance of flexible work policies for women. Working from home relieves women employees of the stress of balancing work and life to some extent. Her study consisted of 3,001 working adults where it was identified that 74% of women are the main carer for children and they take short or long periods off work to look after family, this number was as low as 26% for men. She suggests that companies can have policies to ensure men are eligible for equal number of parental leave and pay as women. Such measures will ensure equality amongst the workers.

D. Sucharitha in her paper 'The impact of flexible work on organizational performance and employee experiences in selected IT and ITES sector, 2015' identifies that working from home either has a positive effect on employee performance or has no effect at all. No negative impact has been observed. It provides better work-life balance and reduces stress level. It leads to higher job satisfaction. It has been observed that there more distractions at workplace in the form of meetings and colleagues as against distractions at home. Working from home is cost effective. By raising managers to employee's ratio and providing greater responsibility and rewards to employee's overhead costs can be reduced.

Shilpy Kashyap in her paper 'Retention of Women Employees in Selected Information Technology Companies in India - A Study, 2015' suggests that retention of women employees can be increased through flexible work options including working from home. Working from home provides positive correlation between retention management, work-life balance and supportive work environment.

Rajendra Kaushik in his paper 'Determinants of employee attraction motivation and job satisfaction in information technology industry,2007' identifies that one of the primary

factors of motivation and job satisfaction for employees can be the flexible work policy. More families are becoming dual income based, hence flexibility around work has become more important. Organizations can provide individuals with remote access for telecommuting, childcare centres, referral programmes and employee assistance programmes. Such employee benefit programs shows the organizations' intentions towards the employees and ensure loyal employee base.

Saundarya Rajesh in her paper 'Role of Flexible Working Methods as a Career Enabler for Increasing Workforce Participation of Women in India, 2015' concludes that flexible working arrangements ensures that the woman has a positive outlook towards her organization, engages in her work with more discretionary effort and also demonstrates longevity of career.

Nicholas Bloom James, Liang John Roberts and Zhichun Jenny Ying in their paper 'Evaluating the Impact of Working from Home on Productivity and Work-Life Balance in China, 2011' observed that performance of employees working from home was better than their colleagues working from office. But reduced face to face interaction with reporting managers and peers affected interpersonal relationships and reduces chances of promotion. It was also observed that home workers were less exhausted and had a positive attitude as compared to employees working from office. Working from home option acted as a motivating factor and reduced attrition.

Elizabeth Hamilton in her paper 'Bringing work home - advantages and challenges of telecommuting' provides insight on the factors important for considering working from home, like - declining technology and telecommunications costs, increased investments in digital technology and infrastructure, demand for information-technology sector jobs, increased use of computers in the workplace, organizational goals of increasing productivity, the need to reduce office commute time, work life balance.

Farell K in his research paper 'Working from home: A double edged sword, 2017' identifies that in terms of working from home, it is important to consider the nature of the work involved. Activities that call for more collaboration can be performed better in the office environment. Tasks that primarily require individual contribution can be performed better from home. Managing one's home life effectively is linked to effectiveness and job satisfaction in one's work role.

Nireekshan Singh Gowgi, S. K. in his paper 'Stress and work life balance among employees of manufacturing and IT sector, 2015' compares manufacturing sector and IT sector in terms of work life balance. The paper observes that for the IT sector, the nature of the work itself is flexible and work from home facility are inevitable to meet the clients'

demands unlike the manufacturing sector where the nature of the job is not suited for working from home.

Gunjan Mohan Sharma in his research paper 'Employee turnover and retention strategies an empirical study of teaching staff in selected business schools in India, 2011' provides an insight on flexible work facilities in the education sector. Work schedule flexibility had a direct, significant and positive impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to stay. It did not have a negative impact on actual turnover.

Anu Meher in her research paper 'Work life balance of women in public and private banks in Punjab, 2015' has studied the working conditions of the female employees in private sector banks. Meher states that the State bank of India has a policy of allowing women work from home in case of maternity and child care instances. A two-year sabbatical leave has been allowed by the bank for this purpose. ICICI bank's iWork@home, allows women employees of ICICI Bank to work from home. This facility provides the employees access to their work applications in a safe and secure manner. Women can work from home for a year or more as per the policy.

Audrone Nakrošiene, Ilona Buciniene and Bernadeta Goštautaitė in their research paper 'Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework, 2019' states that reduced communication with co-workers, supervisor's trust and support, convenience of the working place at home were found to be the most important factors impacting various outcomes. Employee productivity increase as a result of reduced time in communicating with co-workers, a suitable working place at home, and the possibility to take care of family members when working from home. The possibility to access to work documents from home acts as a hygiene factor. Working from home is negatively impacted by the increase in number of children. Working from home also reduces absenteeism and attrition.

IV. ADVANTAGES

Employer	Employee
Saves time	Less time to commute
Increased productivity	Work life balance
Reduces cost for office management	Reduces transportation expenses
Reduces attrition	Increased job satisfaction
Recruitment possible globally/nationally since relocation is not required	Can apply for jobs in any location without relocating
Employees working remotely from different locations can provide insights on local market	Increased opportunities
Reduces absenteeism	Increases motivation

V. CHALLENGES

Disadvantages	
1	It eliminates face to face contact. Might hamper interpersonal relationship.
2	Telecommunication increases the digital set up and maintenance cost of a company
3	It leads to isolation of employees and employers hampering brainstorming sessions. It limits the extent to which employees interact.
4	It increases vulnerability to information hacking and cybercrime.
5	Intent of the employee is another concern in case of working from home.

VI. FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

The article is a review of literature related to working from home and its impact on organizational productivity and employee satisfaction. Through this study it has been observed that the primary factors that impact organizational productivity and employee satisfaction as a means of working from home are absenteeism, increased motivation, increased job satisfaction and reduced attrition, loyal employees, work-life balance, job satisfaction, better employee productivity. These findings are stated by the following papers:

Sl. No.	Literature Reviewed	Literature Type	Author/s	Publishing Year
1	Women more likely to take career break for caring responsibilities	Article	Rachel Muller-Heyndyk	2019
2	The impact of flexible work on organizational performance and employee experiences in selected IT and ITES sector	Research Paper	D. Sucharitha	2015
3	Retention of Women Employees In Selected Information Technology Companies In India A Study	Research Paper	Shilpy Kashyap	2017
4	Evaluating the Impact of Working from Home on Productivity and Work-Life Balance in China	Research Paper	Nicholas Bloom James Liang John Roberts Zhichun Jenny Ying	2011
5	Bringing work home - advantages and challenges of telecommuting	Research Paper	Elizabeth Hamilton	
6	Working from home: A double edged sword	Research Paper	Farrell, K.	2017
7	Impact Of Employee Benefits On Motivation In Information Technology Companies A Study	Research Paper	Akila	2020

8	Women Work and Work Life Balance in Select Pharma Companies A Study	Research Paper	Sandhya. Ch	2019
9	Women in information technology a study of job satisfaction job hopping recruitment and retention strategies	Research Paper	Parul Sharma	2015
10	A Study on Job Stress And Family Conflicts With Special Reference to Women Police in Karnataka	Research Paper	Bhagyalaxmi M.	2018
11	A Study on Technology and Work Life Balance	Research Paper	Purohit Rudri Chintankumar	2019
12	Employee turnover and retention strategies an empirical study of teaching staff in selected business schools in India	Research Paper	Gunjan Mohan Sharma	2011
13	Work life balance of women in public and private banks in Punjab	Research Paper	Anu Maher	2015
14	Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework	Research Paper	Audrone Nakrošiene, Ilona Buciuniene and Bernadeta Goštautaitė	2019

Table 1

It has been observed that some job roles are better suited for work from home while others are not. Effective work from depends on the nature of the person, some jobs need supervision, some jobs can be done independently. Jobs that need collaboration is better suited for office environment while jobs that need individual contribution can be better performed through home. Working from home is better feasible by the IT sector as compare to the manufacturing sector owing to the difference in the nature of the job of these two sectors.

Sl. No.	Literature Reviewed	Literature Type	Author/s	Publishing Year
1	The surprising facts about working from home	Article	Suraya Casey	2020
2	Working from home was a luxury for the relatively affluent before coronavirus - not any more	Article	Drew Desilver Senior Writer, Pew Research Center	2020
3	Work from home policy	Article	Resources workable website	2018
4	99.8% workforce in IT sector incapable of remote working: Study	Article	The Economic Times	2020
5	To Raise Productivity, Let More Employees Work from Home	Article	Nicholas Bloom	2014
6	Working from home actually makes you better at some tasks and worse at others	Article	Cory Steig	2020

7	Stress and work life balance among employees of manufacturing and IT sector	Research Paper	Nireekshan Singh Gowgi, S. K.	2015
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Table 2

It has been observed that working from home is more feasible for the senior management, or the more trusted and accountable employees of the organization, as compared to the junior management who are mostly involved in routine jobs.

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1	The surprising facts about working from home	Article	Suraya Casey	2020
2	Working from home was a luxury for the relatively affluent before coronavirus - not any more	Article	Drew Desilver Senior Writer, Pew Research Center	2020
3	Work from home policy	Article	Resources workable website	2018
4	The Impact of Working at Home on Career Outcomes of Professional Employees	Research Paper	Pamela S. Tolbert and Tal Simons	1994
5	To Raise Productivity, Let More Employees Work from Home	Article	Nicholas Bloom	2014
6	Working from home actually makes you better at some tasks and worse at others	Article	Cory Steig	2020

Table 3

Though working from has proved to be cost effective in the long run, the initial cost of setting up digital infrastructure to allow employees to carry out their tasks with equal ease and efficiency from home does incur huge costs for the company. It has been observed that if manager to employee ratio is increased and the employees are rewarded effectively for performance then work from home reduces costs in the long run. Cost effectiveness is also related to decreased fixed costs for the organization in form of fixed assets, reduce communication to office premises for the employee.

Sl. No.	Literature Reviewed	Literature Type	Author/s	Publishing Year
1	IT campuses will never be the same: How India's 4 million IT workers shifted to working from home overnight	Article	Priyanka Sangani & Anandi Chandrashekhar	2020
2	Work from home policy	Article	Resources workable website	2018
3	Bringing work home - advantages and challenges of telecommuting	Research Paper	Elizabeth Hamilton	

Table 4

Working from home effects interpersonal relationships between colleagues due to reduced physical interaction.

Employees can get frustrated due to the lack of social life. Reduced face to face interaction with reporting managers and the top management hampers chances of promotion in case of work from home even though it has been observed that in some cases employees working from home perform better and have a better attitude as compared to their counter parts working from office premises.

Sl. No.	Literature Reviewed	Literature Type	Author/s	Publishing Year
1	Retention of Women Employees In Selected Information Technology Companies In India A Study	Research Paper	Shilpy Kashyap	2017
2	Role of Flexible Working Methods as a Career Enabler for Increasing Workforce Participation of Women in India	Research Paper	Saundarya Rajesh	2015
3	Evaluating the Impact of Working from Home on Productivity and Work-Life Balance in China	Research Paper	Nicholas Bloom James Liang John Roberts Zhichun Jenny Ying	2011
4	Bringing work home - advantages and challenges of telecommuting	Research Paper	Elizabeth Hamilton	
5	The Impact of Working at Home on Career Outcomes of Professional Employees	Research Paper	Pamela S. Tolbert and Tal Simons	1994
6	Women in information technology a study of job satisfaction job hopping recruitment and retention strategies	Research Paper	Parul Sharma	2015
7	Working from home: characteristics and outcomes of telework	Research Paper	Audrone Nakrošienė, Ilona Buciniene and Bernadeta Goštautaitė	2019

Table 5

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions have been made:

1. Eliminate ambiguity and build a proper framework and lay down guidelines for the work from home policy. This will provide clarity on the work from home facility for both the employers and employees.
2. Organizations are required to analyze job roles to understand which jobs are suitable for working from home and which jobs are better performed through office premises. Some jobs can be partially performed remotely. This segregation of job roles according to their suitability to be performed remotely will increase employee productivity.
3. Female employees, though benefit from the work from home facility, often experience increased work pressure while availing such facility. While working from home, it has been observed that the

women employees have to balance both professional tasks, household chores and caring for dependents and children. This can lead physical and mental health issues for the female employees. It is suggested that the organizations extend additional support to their female employees to cope up with the additional pressure. Their male counterparts can offer professional support to ease the situation. The female employees; families too are required to understand her situation and extend support.

4. Organizations can provide employees with increased accountability to generate the feeling of trust and inclusion amongst the employees. This will boost employee engagement, will be a source of motivation and increase organizational productivity as a whole.
5. Proper implementation of the work from home facility and timely updation of the same can lead to retention of valued employees.
6. It has been observed that interpersonal relationships tend to get hampered for employees opting to work from home owing to decreased face to face interaction. Organizations need to take measures to curb this mentality from the teams, create an environment of trust and team cohesiveness.
7. Regular interactions and online team meetings can be conducted to keep the team spirit high. Online team get-togethers apart from work can be initiated for informal team bonding. Measures need to be adapted by the organizations to ensure working from home or being away from office does not affect the interpersonal relationships between peers and seniors.
8. Employees working from home should be evaluated solely on their performance during the appraisal process. Any bias towards remote employees owing to their absence from office premises should be eliminated to create equal opportunity for all employees irrespective of them working remotely or from office.

VII. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggests that working from home has served to be a boon for some. While it reduces absenteeism and increases motivation, working from home also act as a primary factor of job satisfaction amongst employees leading to reduced attrition. Working from home definitely help balance work life balance, especially in cases of female employees who often choose to leave their careers owing to family responsibilities.

The primary factors that impact organizational productivity and employee satisfaction as a means of working from home have been found to be saved time due to elimination of travel time to workplace, reduced or nil travel expenses, reduced absenteeism and better engaged employees. Work-life

balance has emerged as one of the major factors positively affecting employee satisfaction. Employees who are engaged and satisfied display increased loyalty towards the organization and are easier to retain. This reduces attrition. Working from home impacts employee motivation. Employees feel more accountable and responsible with the trust shown by the organization, this further motivates them to be more productive.

It is also observed that some job roles suit better for working from home due to the nature of the job. Jobs requiring supervision will be best performed in office environment while individual contributors will be performing better and with lesser distractions at home or remotely. The senior management, can opt for working from home more easily as compared to the junior management who are mostly involved in routine jobs. Creative tasks, tasks that require individual contribution than team collaboration have emerged as jobs well suited for working from home. Jobs that require employees to be physically present in the office cannot be performed remotely. Organizations are required to analyse the job roles that can be performed better from home and office and delegate duties accordingly for optimum utilization of their resources and better organizational productivity.

Working from home affects interpersonal relationships. Reduced face to face interactions will create bias amongst peers and reporting managers when it comes to performance appraisals. It has been found that employees working from home have lesser chances of promotion even if their productivity has been at par with their counterparts working from office. This can be due to a certain mind-set that is created when one meets the person regularly. It has been observed that if manager to employee ratio is increased and the employees are rewarded effectively for performance then work from home reduces costs in the long run. Cost effectiveness is also related to decreased fixed costs for the organization in form of fixed assets, reduce communication to office premises for the employee. It can be concluded that though companies are willing to adapt to working from home, there is a lack of laid down guidelines for the same. Basic agendas like minimum wages for home workers, total hours of work, benchmark of productivity still needs to be transparent.

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