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Work From Home: Possibilities and Productivity

Ms. Sanjana S P^{1*}, Mrs. Shakunthala²

Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College (Autonomous) Ujire

sanjanasp2004@gmail.com, shakuk@sdmcujire.in

Abstract

The research paper explores the shift to Work-from-Home (WFH) systems, largely accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and examines its effects on productivity and employee well-being. The study's primary objective was to compare the productivity levels between remote and office-based work, while secondary goals focused on assessing the adaptation to communication technologies and collaboration tools. Through a combination of primary data (surveys from 20 corporate employees) and secondary data (articles analysing WFH productivity), the study provides a comprehensive view of both the positive and negative impacts of remote work.

The findings indicate a mixed outlook. On the one hand, WFH offers advantages such as flexible working hours, reduced commuting time, and improved work-life balance, which many employees appreciate. However, challenges like declining productivity, especially in roles requiring high collaboration, and the disruption of informal communication channels were observed. Technical issues and insufficient support also hindered productivity. The paper concludes that while WFH has the potential to enhance productivity and employee satisfaction, its success is largely dependent on individual discipline, organizational support, and the right balance between work and personal life. Moreover, the study suggests that hybrid work models are preferred by most employees, combining the benefits of both remote and office work.

In light of these findings, the paper recommends that companies invest in robust communication infrastructure, provide technical support, and encourage practices that help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, organizations should foster flexibility, ensuring employees can work in environments that suit their productivity needs. Overall, WFH, when well-executed, can be a sustainable and competitive work model.

Keywords Productivity, Commute, Communication, Work-Life Balance, Pandemic

1. Introduction

Working from home has been adapted enormously in the recent times due to many factors affecting the globe. The main reason for this system to be implemented is the Covid pandemic which affected the whole world to a great extent. In order to keep the functions to be continued even during these difficult times, the businesses introduced the system of Work-from-Home where the employees will work remotely from them

home and contribute to the continuity of the operations of the business.

This shift has reshaped the culture of the corporate world and even after the pandemic the employees would prefer to work from home instead of coming to a workplace of an office setting.

2. Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study:

- ❖ To find the difference in the level of productivity while working from home when compared to working from office.
- ❖ To measure the level of adaption to the technology used to communicate and collaborate within teams and success rate of the tools used.

3. Methodology

The research has been done using both primary and secondary data.

The primary data has been collected through questionnaire sent to 20 corporate employees who are working in a Work-from-Home structure or had an experience in the same in their previous role or organization.

The secondary data has been collected from 2 articles.

1. **“Work from Home and Productivity: Evidence from Personnel and Analytics Data on IT Professionals”** Survey by Michael Gibbs, Friederike Mengel, and Christoph Siemroth published in Chicago Journals
2. **The Truth About Work from Home Productivity** by Dr. Gleb Tsipursky

These articles were chosen to see both the sides of the effects of Work-from-Home structure i.e., Positive and Negative

3. Limitations For The Study

The limitation for this study is the small sample size for the primary data where the opinions can differ when collected at a larger volume.

4. Literature Review of the Articles Selected as Secondary Data

These two articles provide valuable insights for our research on "Work from Home: Possibilities and Productivity" by presenting contrasting perspectives and data-driven

findings. The first article, "Work from Home and Productivity: Evidence from Personnel and Analytics Data on IT Professionals," highlights some of the challenges associated with remote work, such as increased working hours without corresponding productivity gains. It underscores issues like home distractions, communication inefficiencies, and limited opportunities for collaboration, which led to a 20% decline in individual productivity despite longer working hours. These findings offer a cautionary perspective in our research, illustrating that work-from-home arrangements can negatively impact productivity, especially in roles requiring extensive collaboration and supervision.

On the other hand, "The Truth About Work from Home Productivity" presents a more optimistic view, suggesting that remote work can enhance productivity and employee well-being when managed effectively. It reports that remote workers were 5%-9% more productive than their office-bound counterparts, benefiting from fewer distractions, greater focus, and flexibility. Moreover, employees reported improved work-life balance and reduced stress, which are key factors contributing to overall productivity gains. This article is instrumental in presenting the potential positive outcomes of remote work, particularly in terms of employee preferences and well-being.

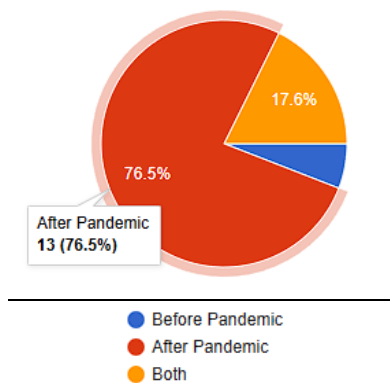
Together, these articles provide a well-rounded view of the impact of remote work on productivity, offering both the challenges and benefits. They support our exploration of the various possibilities and challenges of working from home, emphasizing the need to consider role-specific demands, communication dynamics, and employee preferences in shaping remote work policies.

5. Analysis

Work-From-Home and Pandemic

The pandemic was the main reason for the rapid and most vast implementation of the WFH structure. As per our survey, 76.5% of the sample has started working in WFH system after pandemic which clearly tells us that the relationship of Work-from-Home structure and the pandemic is true to the fact that it is the main reason for this rapid implementation of the same in all around the globe.

Question : When did you work under Work-from-Home structure?



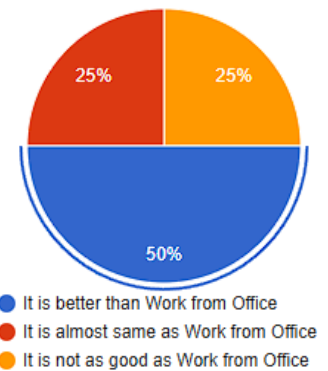
Employees Opinion On Work-From-Home System

The sample was asked a question stating which is an better option when compared to Work-from-Home, and the options given were :

1. It is better than Work from Office
2. It is almost same as Work from Office
3. It is not as good as Work from Office

And the response is not surprising and is as expected that most of them would prefer working from home and the below chart is the proof for this statement.

Question : What is your opinion on Work-from-Home structure ?

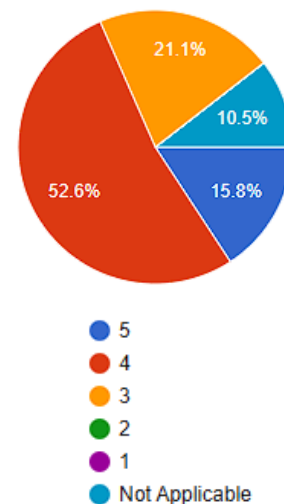


50% of the sample prefer to work from home and feels that it is better when compared to working from office. The main points which leads to this response is to save the time of commuting to office, flexible working hours, can start early and finish late, more time with the family and this in turn increases the employee's satisfaction.

Level of Productivity

Every organization requires the employees to contribute to the success of the organization by working to his/her full potential which is defined as productivity of an employee. So the sample was asked to rate themselves on the level of productivity while they are working from home when compared to working from office.

Question : How would you rate your productivity while working from home compared to the office?

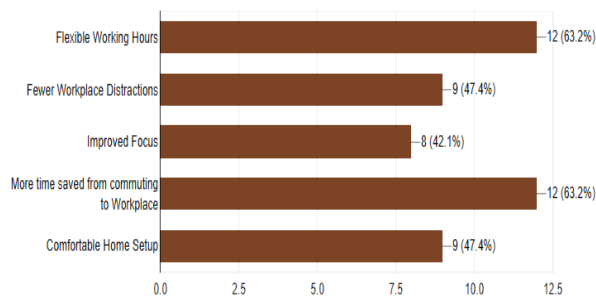


By referring to the above chart, we can see that there is different opinion from different people. Most of them have rated themselves 3 and 4 while only 15.8% of them rated themselves 5. Therefore, we can conclude that the productivity of the individuals working from home will be relatively less than that of the productivity while working from office. Here we can also note the level of confidence the individual has as most of them has rated themselves as 4. They are not confident enough to rate them to 5 which may be due to different factors affecting this rating.

Factors Impacting the Productivity in Work-From-Home System

There are many factors which we had already mentioned while analysing the secondary data from the two articles. For clearer and more precise conclusion, the same has been collected from the primary data also. Let's analyse both positive and negative factors from the primary data.

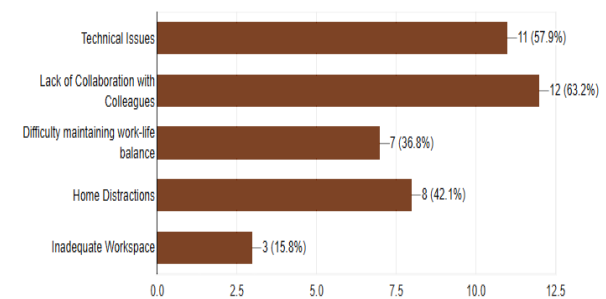
a. Positive Factors



There are many positive factors which has resulted in increase of productivity of the employees while working from home. Out of the 5 main factors, the factors which has impacted extensively to maintain a very good level of productivity are **Flexible working hours** and **Time saved from commuting to workplace**. This has positively impacted the employees to work very productively.

b. Negative Factors

Along with positive factors, there are few negative impacts due to working from home.



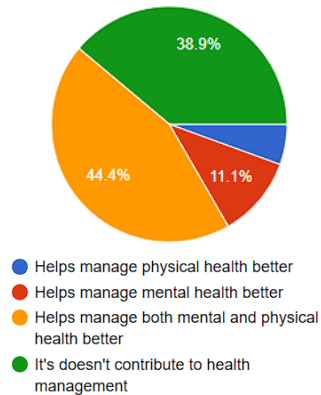
As observed in secondary data also, the most negative impact of working from home is the lack of collaboration with colleagues. This is the most important aspect in any organization. Communication is the key to every role performed. The roles which need extensive communication are adversely affected due to lack of collaboration. So, to conclude, communication is the most important aspect for any organization. While planning for hybrid work culture or remote work culture, the organization must plan extensively for communication keeping it as first priority.

Along with communication, technical issues are also a great concern while working from home. More than technical issues, the resolution for that is time consuming which results in the inconvenience for the employees and also causes wastage of time and in turn reduces productivity.

Work-From-Home: Boon Or A Bane in Managing Health Issues (Both Mental and Physical)

While it comes to managing health, it is very important for every individual because it is very crucial for maintaining productivity. And does working from home help in managing health? This was asked to the sample and the following is the analysis.

Question : How do you think Work-from-Home could be a boon or a bane in managing Health Issues (Both mental and physical) ?

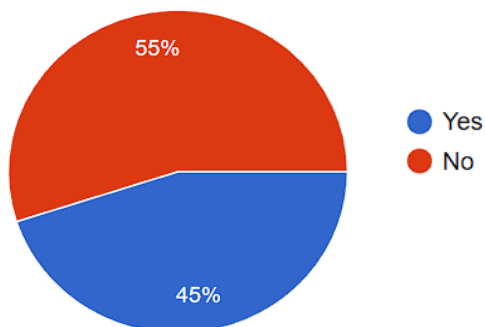


As per the sample, majority of them believe that, Work-from-Home helps them to manage them mental and physical health better and also most of them also believe that it doesn't contribute to health management. There is a differed opinion on this topic. Hence it is up to an individual to maintain their health keeping in mind their productivity and output.

Work From Home And Work-Life Balance

In this modern corporate world, maintaining work-life balance has become a biggest problem for many employees. People are not being able to separate personal life from work life. The working habits has changed in people as they are starting early and ending late. The sample has been asked the question confirm this, whether Work-from-Home has affected the work-life balance of employees and following is their response.

Question : Do you think working from home affects your work-life balance?

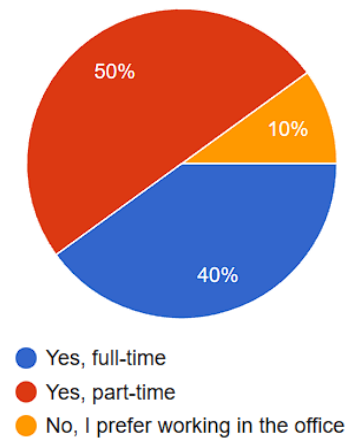


Again there is almost equal response for yes and no. 45% of the sample believe that Work-from-Home is affecting their work-life balance and the rest 55% believe that is has not affected the same. So here we may draw a conclusion that work-life balance completely depends on the individual and not in the system.

Preferences of the Employees

We asked the sample, whether they would prefer to work from home if given chance and the following options were given.

Question : Would you prefer to continue working from home if given the choice?



As we can see in the above chart, 50% of the sample would prefer to work in Work-from-Home for part time which is also called as Hybrid Work Culture which is now very much famous all around the globe. They feel it is very convenient to work from home as there are many positive impacts by following this system. And also we should notice that, 10% of the people still prefer to go to office and work where they believe that they will be more productive at office than in home.

Suggestions To Make Work-From-Home Better

There are few suggestions by the sample to make Work-from-Home better.

- ❖ The organisation should provide the technology kit and the assistance

required to set-up the workstation at home.

- ❖ Availability of good internet in each & every place can make it a good opportunity for everyone so they can work remotely.
- ❖ Identify the time in the day that is best suitable to you where your productivity is better. Find balance between work And personal time
- ❖ Not to extend the working hours that is schedule specific work hours.
- ❖ Maybe having a personal room with an office setup is good to maintain focus while working from home
- ❖ Giving Preference Towards Health Care

6. Findings and Suggestions

Following are my findings and suggestions after analysing the primary data collected and represented above:

1. The productivity of an individual is mostly dependent on himself/herself. The system may not decide whether the employee is productive or not.
2. The WFH system has been widely liked by the employees and they would choose to work from home if given a chance.
3. According to the responses received, separating work life and personal life is also in the hands of an individual. The system is not the reason for a bad work-life balance.
4. Communication, Technical issues and Tech-support are the major issues in work from home setup. The organizations must plan accordingly to find solutions for making Work-from-Home a better place to be.
5. Another important point that has been noted from the study is that Work-from-Home has been proven to be a competitive advantage for the companies to attract good talents and also reduce employee turnover. However the

companies should design a really strong communication channel to get the most out of the talents they have gained through this competitive advantage

7. Conclusion

The shift to Work-from-Home (WFH), driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, has reshaped the corporate world. While 50% of employees prefer working from home due to benefits like time saved on commuting, flexible hours, and improved work-life balance, challenges such as declining productivity, especially in collaborative roles, and communication and technical issues remain significant.

Despite these challenges, most employees favour hybrid work models that combine remote and office work. The success of WFH largely depends on individual discipline and work-life boundaries, but organizations can improve the experience by enhancing communication tools, offering technical support, and ensuring a suitable home office setup.

In conclusion, the future of work is likely to be hybrid, with businesses needing to adapt to the evolving needs of employees by fostering clear communication and supporting both productivity and well-being in a remote work environment.