

THE IMPACT OF WORK FROM HOME ON THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF CORPORATE EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Working from home has become a norm for many employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided flexibility and convenience but can also blur the lines between work and personal life. It was important for both employees and employers to prioritize work-life balance and find a healthy balance during a pandemic. Working from home can have a negative impact on mental health and well-being, particularly if employees are unable to separate work from personal life and experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. The study was undertaken to know whether the employees have a flexible work schedule and to study the problems faced by employees during work from home. For this purpose, 300 corporate employees were interviewed with the help of a Google questionnaire. The study analysed that the majority of employees felt that their professional life and individual life slowly diminishes due to working from home. The study have analysed that employees gave the maximum vote to the lack of interaction and motivation while working from home.

INTRODUCTION

Work-Life Balance (WLB) is a state where a person accomplishes to balancing work, family life, and other tasks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, which began at the end of 2019, many companies have executed a Work from Home (WFH) strategy that allows a worker to spend all his time at home and with comparatively light assignments. The application of work from home does not essentially run smoothly. Many employees still have absences in mastering digital literacy and a lack of mastery of communication technology. Another hindrance that occurs when working from home is the availability of internet media that employees have not fully accessed. Another effect that is felt during this Covid pandemic is the incapability to use technology, so organizations must recognise the abilities and knowledge of employees about the use of communication technology. Another hindrance experienced when working from home is the work discipline of employees to work on time from home. The rise of remote work has changed the way we approach work-life balance in the corporate world, with the ability to work from home, employees have more flexibility in managing their professional and personal commitments. However, it also poses new challenges in maintaining a healthy balance between work and leisure. This has become increasingly important as the boundaries between work and home, lead to longer hours and increased stress levels. To foster a positive work environment and improve employee satisfaction, it is crucial for an organisation to support its employees in achieving a balanced work-from-home lifestyle.

Concept of work-life balance

Work-life Balance is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. Different experts have different opinions on this concept however, in general, it means balancing the time and energy to spend on work with the time and energy one spends on other aspects of life. Work-life balance refers to the level of prioritization between personal and professional activities in an individual's life and the level to which activities related to their job are present in the home. Work-life balance is a method that helps employees of an organization to balance their personal and professional lives. It encourages employees to manage their time on the basis of priorities. Work-life balance is an aspect of employee well-being related to the employee's ability to manage both personal and professional responsibilities with adequate time for rest and leisure. Each individual may define his or her ideal work-life balance differently. Some definitions suggest that work-life balance is the ability to accomplish the goals set in both work and personal life and achieve satisfaction in all life domains.

History of work-life balance

The idea that one should limit the amount of time spent at work dates back to manufacturing laws of the late 1800s when the work hours of women and children were restricted. By 1938, the Fair Labour Standards Act

established a 44-hour work week, although professionals such as doctors were assumed to be perennially “on call.” The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1980s brought work–life balance back to the forefront. To accommodate women in the workforce, flexible working schedules, and maternity leave were popularized. Initially, this concept was only for women, expected to both hold down careers and continue primary management of the family and home. The idea that people would want to have a balance between their professional and personal lives, more flexibility in managing their schedule, and increased satisfaction from work and life became a key concept in the late 20th century. The availability of balance facilities to employees witnessed phenomenal growth between the late eighties of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century. This growth has been rapidly interrupted by the current economic downturn. Increasing numbers of organizations, in the name of cost-cutting, have either curtailed work-life balance facilities or are contemplating to doing the same.

Corporate Job

Corporate jobs are positions within a corporate organisation. This means the position of an employee within a company, or organisation, which can be composed of several branches in different regions or global locations. Corporate jobs are often set up in a hierarchy or defined structure, which means usually there is an opportunity for career growth within the company.

Corporate Employee

Corporate employee means an employee of the company or an associate whose primary duties relate to corporate-level activities (rather than Business Segment-level, Education Group-level or Campus-level activities). Status as a corporate employee is determined by the Administrator.

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture also known as company culture, refers to a set of beliefs and behaviours that guide how a company's management and employees interact and handle internal and external business dealing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Dodi Wirawan Irawanto, June 2021) This paper focused on the factor of work–life balance in the early pandemic wherein the unclear direction of working from home in Indonesia was not regulated, neither from the government nor within the organization. In this study, the workers became close with their family, the concept of work life balance received a positive sign, as it increase their job satisfaction, while on the other side, work stress affected them. However, in this study, where workers were forced to work from home, work stress had an adverse effect on job satisfaction. This study sheds light on the fact that even though it is unusual for Indonesian workers to work in the telecommuting setting, hopes for increasing productivity are still open when it is accompanied by the right policy. The study reveals that working from home as the new environment of working for Indonesian workers can maintain their job satisfaction, and it is expected that they commit to their work and fulfill their job achievement.

(Peter R.Y Pasla, December 2021) The research paper's objective was to define the impact of WFH and Workload on the WLB of Generation X and Generation Y. The study suggested that WFH does not significantly affect the WLB of Generation X and Generation Y. WLB is achieved not just because the employee has more time at home but by how the employee can manage the balance between the demand of work and the interest of personal life. It was found that workload has a significant effect on WLB based on the workload pointers used in the study. It has been concluded in the study that working conditions such as work standards, targets to be achieved, and working time affect WLB. WFH doesn't seem to make the workload lighter and accordingly, doesn't have a significant effect on WLB. The respondents of the research were taken from a sample of generation X and Y from Malang City, a small city in Indonesia. It is important for companies to organise for their employees to have WLB when they work for them.

Hope et al. (2020) The research paper studies the advantage of working from home is that it can create a harmless, more relaxed, and favourable atmosphere. Work can be done anywhere from home, from the living room, bedroom, dining room, terrace, and so on. In addition, by working from home, workers do not have to spend money to pay for conveyance or gas and can avoid traffic jams that can generate stress. The benefits of working remotely are not without challenges and problems. For workers, some of the problems include workers who are familiar with a conventional office atmosphere, find it challenging to coordinate with colleagues, do not see clear limits between office and home and tend to look unemployed, and have an influence on relationships with neighbours and family.

(Juan Sandoval-Reyes, 2021), According to research the data, have analysed that change from traditional work during the pandemic in some countries of Latin America, remote work demands increased perceived stress, reduced work-life balance and work satisfaction, and increased productivity and engagement. The explorative study also found that perceived stress has a competitive fractional intermediating effect that lessens the positive effect of working remotely on productivity and engagement. Perceived stress acts as a mediator between remote work strengthening the negative impact of remote work demands and the perception of work-life balance and job satisfaction. The significant gender difference obtained was between working remotely and productivity: perceived stress affects men's productivity more acutely than women's productivity

(Julyan Adhitama, 2020), The paper studies the level of interruption that employees are encountering at home, managers should be flexible around working hours and productivity. By working from home, employees have to share the living room, bedroom, or even bedroom with family members, and they have to deal with children and pets and have to organise live video calls. Mostly, the employees of PT Koexim Mandiri Finance have felt honoured and regarded, and they have realized Maintaining Employee Engagement and Employee Performance during Covid-19 Pandemic. Engaged employees are profitable and focused on the companies. Based on this research, the employees of the company have developed abilities, knowledge, skills to contribute to the activities that the company arranges for them. They need to discover solutions to utilize all the abilities, knowledge, and skills that they have so as to make positive involvement in the accomplishment of the company.

(Dr. Meenakshi Kaushik, 2020), The paper analysis Work from Home is a concept that is now going to be a permanent feature in the corporate world. The current pandemic situation has established that WFH is an effective business process to ensure continuity of business and also to provide work-life balance to employees. It has important economic and productivity benefits as well to organizations if achieved effectively.

(Gigauri, 2020), In this paper, the focus was on the effect of the Covid-19 crisis on HRM as well as digitalization and its accompanying work-life balance issues. The qualitative expert technique was applied for this research as a first direction to better shape the difficulties caused by the existing pandemic crisis. The aim of the research was to reveal the organizational results and to learn about the role of HRM during the crisis. The experts' decisions were founded on their knowledge and personal experience.

(Dr. KDV Prasad, 2020), The paper analysed that independent factors peer, role ambiguity, organisation climate, and job satisfaction are significantly influencing the psychological well-being of the employees in the IT industry. The study also implies that remote working options need to be worked out by the employer, to reduce stress and enhance the well-being of employees.

(Mithilesh Kumar Singh, 2020), The paper studies the condition created by Covid-19 which has shaken up the socio-cultural framework of society and work culture. The health and safety actions have outshined the norms of any local culture. A new global culture has appeared with a primary focus on safeguarding from highly infectious Coronavirus. Facemasks, hand gloves, sanitizers, and physical isolation became an integral part of life. The current situation has given thrust to the virtual world and there are numerous steps taken by the governments to grow contactless experience.

(Sabanpreet Mann, 2021), This study reveals the complications faced by employees after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in preserving the balance between work and personal life during remote working. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire population of the country along with the whole world. The global pandemic has affected the economy of the world and closed down all operations throughout the world

(Adedapo Oluwaseyi Ojo, 2021), The present study contributes to current knowledge of COR theory's relevance in explaining how employees' engagement could be improved during a state of psychological stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings demonstrate the impacts of family and friends' support, self-efficacy, and facilitating conditions on employees' resilience and how resilience disturbs work engagement throughout stressful situations.

(Williams, April 16, 2020), The study reveals UK public perceptions and experience of social distancing and isolation related to covid-19 pandemic. Respondent reported a lack of trust in the government and a lack of clarity in the guidelines for social distancing and isolation. Some participants felt that they would have persistent concerns over social contact while others were eager to return to high levels of social activity. The study also reveals that covid-19 had negative impacts on mental health and well-being in the early stages of the lockdown.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- [1] This study signifies that corporate employees will get knowledge about the strategies used to balance personal life and professional life.
- [2] To know the satisfaction level of corporate employees.
- [3] To understand the techniques used by employees to maintain Work-life balance.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To find out if employees have flexible work hours during work from home.
2. To study the perception between personal life and professional life.
3. To find out the problems faced by employees during work from home.
4. To study the stress level of employees.
5. To know the association between the attribute “Gender” and “Option between work from home and work from office”.
6. To know the association between attributes “Gender” and “Productivity”.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: Descriptive research and Hypothesis testing

Data Sources: Secondary data was taken from research papers and websites. Primary data was directly collected through an online structured questionnaire survey from various respondents from different corporate offices and different age groups.

Research Instrument: Structured questionnaire.

Sampling design:

Sampling Frame: Corporate employees from different organisations from Ahmedabad.

Sample Size: 400 corporate employees

Sampling Method: Systematic Sampling Method and Convenient sampling.

Statistical Tool used: Chi-square Test

Future scope of the study

The survey can be done in other cities of Gujarat.

Surveys can be done on a large scale to get the perfect opinion of corporate employees and public sector units.

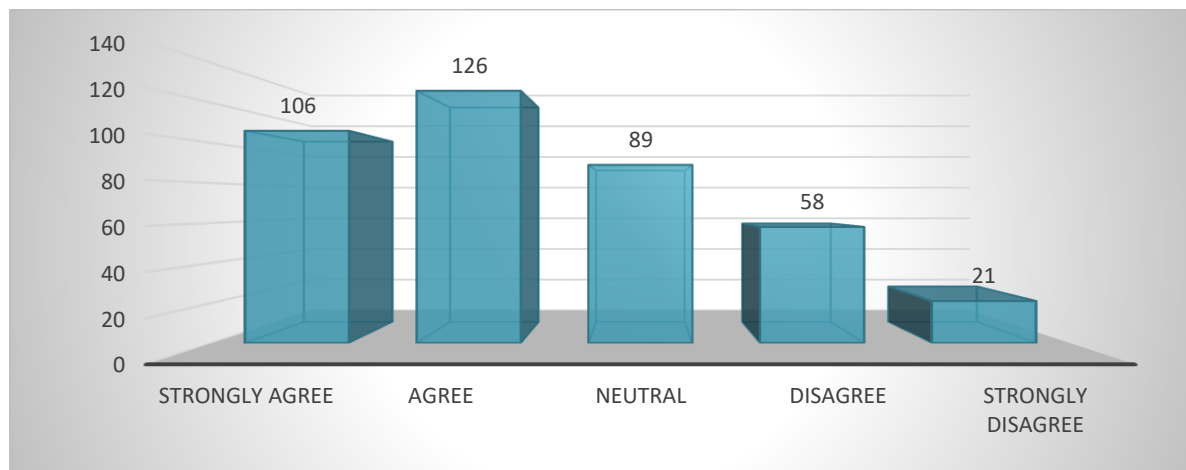
Limitations

As the sample size is limited, it may lead to a partial conclusion.

The response from corporate employees might be biased.

The data has been gathered using online questionnaires and hence it has limitations.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



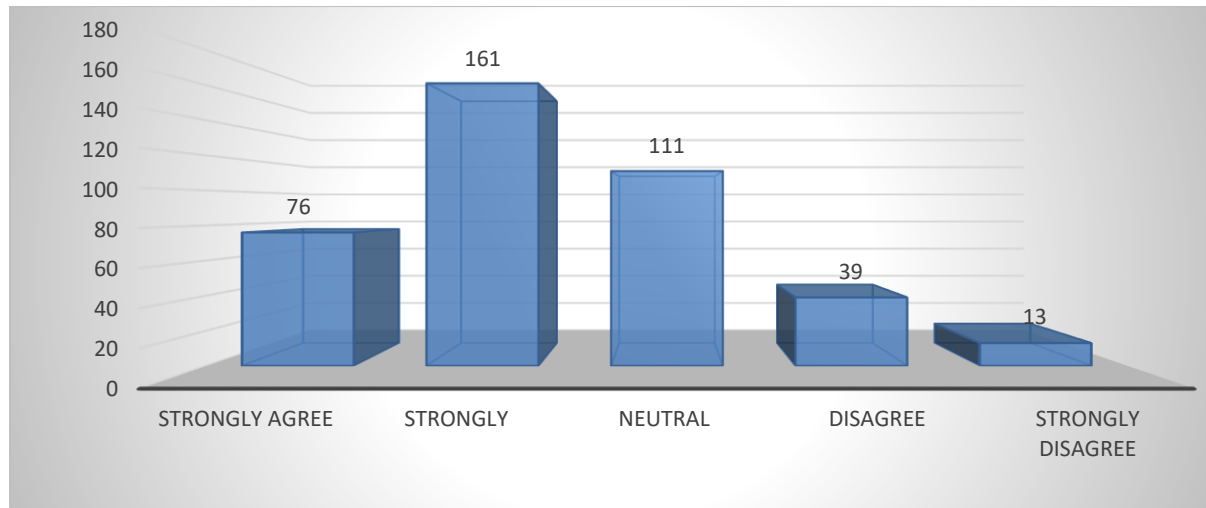
I sacrifice sleep for work		
	No. of Respondent	Percent
Strongly Agree	106	26.5
Agree	126	31.5
Neutral	89	22.3
Disagree	58	14.5
Strongly disagree	21	5.3
Total	400	100.0

Interpretation:

From the above chart maximum 126 (31.5%) employees agreed that they sacrificed sleep for work, and minimum 21(5.3%) employees strongly disagreed.

Work pressure affects my personal life

	No. of Respondent	Percent
Strongly Agree	76	19.0
Strongly	161	40.3
Neutral	111	27.8
Disagree	39	9.8
Strongly disagree	13	3.3
Total	400	100.0



Interpretation:

From the above chart, we can see that maximum of 161(40.3%) employees agreed that work pressure affects their personal life, and 13(3.3%) employees strongly disagreed with statement.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Rank
Do you feel stressed when you shifted from office to work from home.	12	35	83	122	146	1549	1
Work pressure affects my personal life.	13	39	111	161	75	1443	2
I sacrifice sleep for work.	21	58	89	125	105	1429	3

Interpretation:

From the above table, we analysed that a maximum number of employees felt stressed when they shifted from the office to working from home.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Rank
My job positively contributes to my overall happiness.	11	15	69	127	178	1646	1
I feel fulfilled by my job.	12	24	81	204	79	1514	4
I'm motivated with my work.	16	24	107	137	116	1513	5
I feel encouraged to do my best at work.	13	38	79	153	117	1523	3

My job gives me the opportunity to develop my skills. 21 31 76 145 127 1526 2

Interpretation:

From the above table, we analysed that out of 400 responses maximum response is from employees whose jobs positively contributed to their overall happiness.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Rank
My family responsibilities make my job difficult sometimes.	17	28	62	125	168	1599	1
I give importance to my family over my work life.	8	23	96	197	76	1510	3
I can schedule my personal time offs.	17	25	96	132	130	1533	2

Interpretation:

From the above chart, we analysed that the maximum responses are of employees whose family responsibilities make their job difficult sometimes

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H_0 : There is no association between Gender’s thinking about work from home and work from office
 H_1 : There is an association between Gender’s thinking about work from home and work from office

Gender	Option between work from home and office	Total	Count	
			No	Yes
Female	Count	143	30	113
	Expected Count	143.0	37.9	105.1
Male	Count	257	76	181
	Expected Count	257.0	68.1	188.9
Total	Count	400	106	294
	Expected Count	400.0	106.0	294.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	d_f	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.483 ^a	1	.062
Continuity Correction	3.056	1	.080
Likelihood Ratio	3.568	1	.059
Fisher's Exact Test			
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 37.90.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Interpretation:

As $P(0.062) > 0.05$, we Accept H_0 and conclude that there is no association between Gender’s thinking about working from home and working from office.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H_0 : There is no association between Gender’s thinking about the concept of the work-life balance to increase the productivity of the organization.

H_1 : There is an association between Gender’s thinking about the concept of work-life balance to increase your productivity of organization.

Gender	Concept of work life balance helps to increase your productivity of organization	Total	Count	
			May be	No
Female	Count	143	40	33
	Expected Count	143.0	42.9	34.3
Male	Count	257	80	63
	Expected Count	257.0	77.1	61.7

Total	Count	120	96	184	400
	Expected Count	120.0	96.0	184.0	400.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	d_f	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.805 ^a	2	.668
Likelihood Ratio	.805	2	.669
N of Valid Cases	400		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 34.32.

Interpretation:

As $P(0.668) > 0.05$, we Accept H_0 and conclude that there is no association between Gender's thinking about the concept of work -life balance to increase the productivity of organization.

FINDINGS

1. We found that the majority of employees work at home for 2-3 hours.
2. We found that the majority of employees felt that their professional life and personal life slowly diminishes due to working from home.
3. We found that employees gave the maximum vote to the lack of interaction and motivation while working from home.
4. We found that maximum employees felt stressed when they shifted from the office to working from home.
5. We found that a maximum number of respondents gave 1st rank to the employees whose jobs positively contributed to overall happiness.
6. We found that $P(0.062) > 0.05$ we accept H_0 and conclude that there is no association between Gender's thinking about WFH and work from the office.
7. We found that $P(0.668) > 0.05$ we accept H_0 and conclude that there is no association between Genders thinking and productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical exercise: Regular physical exercise is an effective measure to combat stress. Walking, jogging, swimming, playing indoor and outdoor games, etc., can help people better to cope with stress.

Time management: Time management is a stress-preventive strategy. Most of our problems are related to a lack of proper time management. Employees can learn time management from various sources.

Relaxation: Relaxation provides enough physical and mental power to deal with stressful situations. Some of the techniques are stretching, snap-sleep, deep breathing, resting, etc. many of-the-job techniques include book reading, listening to music, and visiting holy and natural places.

Networking: Networking implies building and maintaining close interactions with co-workers and colleagues who listen to others. One should share one's problem with the right people. Good friends, relatives, and well-wishers play an important role during stressful situations. Their creativity, inspiration, and support help to cope with stress.

Awareness has to be created among corporate employees as to how work-life balance can be achieved by women employees and men employees.

Take care of mental and physical health: Working from home can be stressful, so it is important to prioritize self-care. Take breaks when you need them, and make sure to stay active and eat a healthy diet.

Stay up to date on the company's policies: Make sure to stay informed about any changes to company policies or procedures related to remote work during the pandemic. This will help to stay on the same page as your team and avoid any misunderstanding.

CONCLUSION

As per the investigation and the research from the employees and the employers during the lock and their experience of dealing with new work environment; the analysis shows that corporate employees like to work from home as they can enjoy flexible hours, spend time with family and can appreciate a stress-free environment at home.

The research also has come to the conclusion that productivity of work has increased due to the flexibility of time and working from home. The personal life and professional life can be handled in a well-mannered way that can satisfy the energy and time for work and the energy and time for personal life. The employees believe that the success of working from home is on managing time and having a clear work plan. Also, most of the employees experienced being stressed while shifting from the office to working from home and the research also added that workers face to lack of interaction and motivation while working from home.

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