

WORKFROM HOME IMPACT ON EMOTIONS AMONG SOFTWARE EMPLOYEES

***Dr Ch. Munendar Reddy**

Abstract:

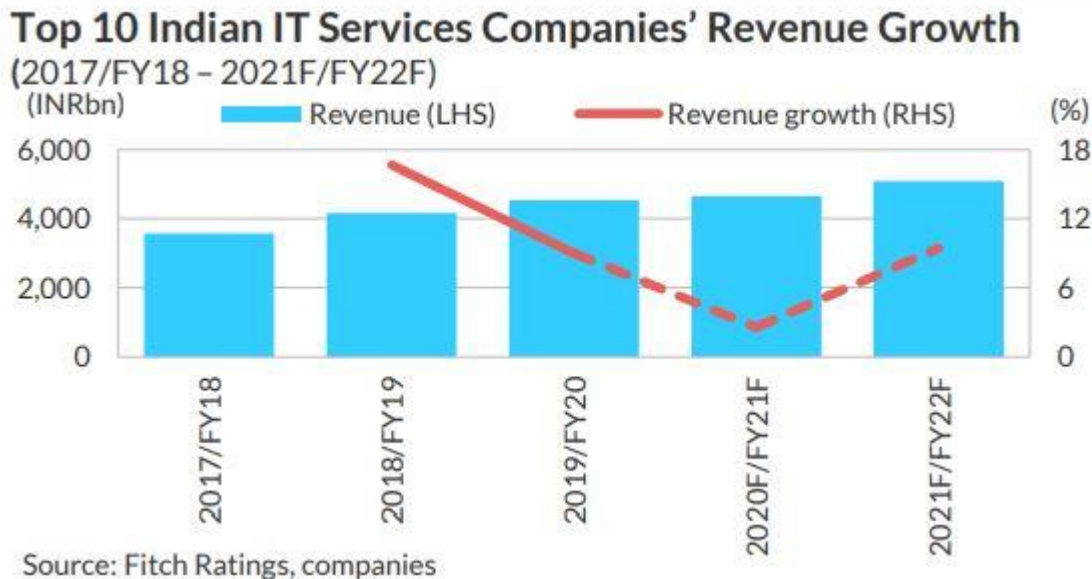
The present world demands higher level of inter-relationships, mutual understanding and greater productivity at work place. A good knowledge about others emotions of others, empathy and an ability to manage them can help a person to gain success and satisfaction in his work. The earlier and partially present the IT professionals who are performing duties form home are facing a lot of mental imbalance due to various reasons like weak relations with team members , sometimes the team leader is unable to compromise with your performance , uneven duty timing and calls which may disturb family life leads to mental stress and imbalance among them. This situation may leads to serious psychological disorder among employees and same will reface in their work commitment. Moreover, among IT industry, software industry's contribution is high and hence the tasks of software professionals have become more demanding globally. Simultaneously, Software professionals when allocated with projects, they work long hard hours to complete projects in front of the systems with high contribution of mental applications and are constantly under pressure.

Introduction:

The IT and ITeS sector comprise of services that are related to information technology, research and development services as well as engineering designs, hardware and BPO. IT: The application of computers and telecommunication equipment to store, transmit, retrieve, and manipulate data, in context of business or an enterprise.

Information technology enabled services (ITES), is a form of outsourced service which has emerged due to involvement of IT in various fields such as banking, finance, telecom, insurance among others. Some of the examples of ITES are medical transcription, back-office accounting, insurance claim, credit card processing and many more.

*Associate Professor-MBA, MRM Institute of Management, Ibrahimpatan(M), Rangareddy, Telangana -501510



Technology can be a difficult term to define. It has both broad connotations and specific associations. At a top level, technology commonly refers to society's application of scientific knowledge to solve practical problems in industry or commerce. Technological innovation or the application of technology takes many forms and often involves the interplay of expertise across multiple disciplines and industry verticals.

Each segment of the technology framework has been vitally important to economic growth and the well-being of society. Over the past decade and half though, the one segment that has arguably had the greatest impact on businesses and consumers around the world is Information Technology (IT).

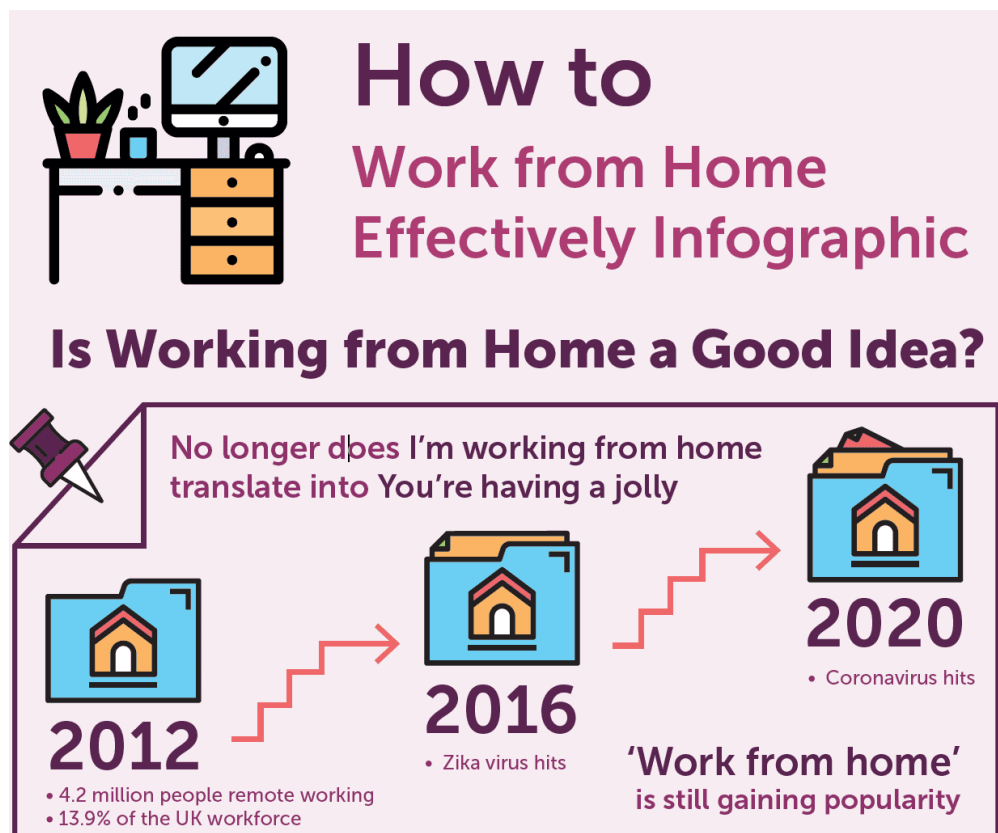
Information Technology (IT) can be defined as the utilization of hardware, services and infrastructure to create, store, exchange and leverage information in its various forms to accomplish any number of business objectives. Additionally, the term encompasses the workers that develop, implement, maintain and utilize information technology directly and indirectly.

Examples of the Key Elements of the IT Definition IT Hardware: computers, tablets, mobile phones, printers, servers, etc. Software: productivity applications, network applications, security applications, etc. IT Services: integration, maintenance, repair, application development, managed services, etc. IT Infrastructure: the Internet backbone, fiber optic networks, data centers, etc. Information: data, documents, voice video and images, etc. Business Objectives: communication, collaboration, efficiency, insight, production, commerce.

According to a 2021 poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, a health policy research organization, 53% of American adults have had their mental health negatively impacted because of stress linked to the pandemic. In the UK, the Centre for Mental Health expects half a million more people to experience poor mental health compared to a normal year, due to corona virus. On and off restrictions on travel and social life have left us feeling isolated and despondent; those working from home have had new pressures to deal with; and for key workers, the fear of catching the virus exacerbates anxiety.

Since many employers expect a long-term shift to remote working practices, tackling these mental health issues will be a key challenge for companies to overcome in the next few years.

The sudden shift to a remote work setup was surprisingly stressful for many employees, explains Dr Dominique Steiler, professor of people, organizations, and society at Grenoble School of Business. Dominique is also chair of Mindfulness, Well-Being at Work, and Economic Peace. His work involves supporting business leaders as they bring mental health and mindfulness initiatives into the workplace.



When the pandemic began, he observed a proliferation in workplace anxiety and depression. There are three ways working from home is damaging our mental health. First, people seem to feel more alone without the necessary support they need, according to Dominique. The sudden lack of physical connection can leave workers feeling they have nowhere to turn when they feel stressed or anxious. It becomes more challenging to form the strong support network which is crucial for good mental health, Dominique emphasizes. Then there's adapting to working from home, which can also contribute to an increased workload. There's the temptation to work longer hours, and for those who don't have a home office setup there's no disconnect between home and office life. Where do you draw the line between working from home and homeing from work? Thirdly, the trend of back to back virtual meetings would not be possible in a physical office.

Literature:

The stress of getting resources, familiarizing with the technology rarely or never used, a sense of market uncertainties, getting used to with the paperless administration and guidelines, fear of getting an infection, managing office space at home, and getting the work-life balance is something naturally added responsibilities to employees. On the other hand, working remotely is more likely to become a common pattern for some organizations even after the pandemic because of investment in infrastructure, reduced paid travel cost, worker's flexibility habits, and for minimizing the office space or daily utilities cost. Further, these costs can be effectively transferred to employees, but that would impose an unfair burden on home workers (Pennington & Jim Stanford, 2020). Therefore, the study of job satisfaction during the pandemic times has become a more relevant and newer avenue for the researcher and HR practitioner to explore. The other side of the story is, there were already some sectors practicing virtual work strategy even before the pandemic, so the job satisfaction between them and the new home-workers could be another deep-diving subject for now or even later for any stakeholders involved in the business.

The study in the educational setting was conducted by Han and Johnson (2012) to investigate the relationship among the emotional intelligence of students in an online master's program, the social link, and their interactions in the online learning environment. Statistically significant relationships were found among the three variables. "The results indicated that the ability of students to perceive emotions through facial expressions was negatively related to the number of text and audio messages sent during synchronous

interaction" (p.78). Another result indicated that the ability of students to perceive emotions to peer bonding was positively related.

According to Chin, Anantharaman, and Tong (2015), a study was carried out to determine the influence of emotional intelligence over the performance of an organization. The respondents that participated in this study are from the Malaysian manufacturing industry. The "Genos Emotional Intelligence" construct was used to measure the level of emotional intelligence. Five dimensions comprise the Genos Emotional Intelligence model: emotional recognition and expression, understanding others' emotions, emotions direct cognition, emotional management, and emotional control (Chin et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Sony and Mekoth (2016) examined the relationships among emotional intelligence, the adaptability of front-line employees, and the results of work, measured by satisfaction and performance. In this cross-sectional study with 517 employees, a positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and the adaptability of first-line employees.

Singh (2007) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness among 340 software professionals of a large company in India. EI was found to be positively and significantly related to organizational leadership for both genders. The study demonstrated no significant differences between male and female software professionals in terms of emotional intelligence and overall leadership effectiveness. Among all dimensions of emotional intelligence, the relationship management aspect was found to be the most important predictor of leadership.

The employees of software industry might be able to balance their function with organization demands in order to minimize work conflicts if they have a high emotional intelligence (Radha & Shree, 2017).

Methodology

Objectives:

- 1) To know the correlation between work from home and mental health among IT professionals in Hyderabad
- 2) To study various stress causing factors to employees due to remote working condition
- 3) To assess mental health condition of employees in work from home work environment.

Hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no significance relation between honouring of individual member emotions and work allotments in team.

H₀₂: There is no association between group decision making and concern for individual opinion while making decision.

H₀₃: There is no significance relation between workfrom home conflicts and its impact on mental health.

Sample:

The sample consist of Software professionals who hold more than 5 years of experience in software field and designations such as Software Programmers, Software testing analyst, System administrator and Team leaders are considered as valid samples.

Sample Unit:

All software professional who are with more than 5 years of experience (company listed in NSE) in Cyberabad/ GHMC region which is also treated as one of the biggest IT hub in India.

Sample Size

A sample of 50 software professionals with above profile will be considered for data collection to get valid input for the proposed study.

DATA ANALYSIS:

H_{01} : There is no significance relation between honouring of individual member emotions and work allotments in team.

Designation						Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Team Leader	Count	1	3	3	1	8
		12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
System Analyst	Count	5	6	5	1	17
		29.4%	35.3%	29.4%	5.9%	100.0%
DBA	Count	4	7	5	1	17
		23.5%	41.2%	29.4%	5.9%	100.0%
V.P-Operations	Count	0	4	3	1	8
	% within Age	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	10	20	16	4	50
	% within Age	20.0%	40.0%	32.0%	8.0%	100.0%

The above cross tab table reflecting that most of the employees are strongly disagreed with the above comment and said that there is a relation while allotting various duties to employees based on their emotions.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.814 ^a	9	.023
Likelihood Ratio	5.290	9	.808
Linear-by-Linear Association	.116	1	.734
N of Valid Cases	50		
a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .64.			

Inference: The above chi square table value indicating that, the sig. value is 0.023 (Less than 0.05) **Reject the null hypothesis.** i.e the. team leaders are caring and concern about various emotional imbalance among employees and accordingly allotting work duties to take care of their well being in IT sector.

H₀₂: There is no association between decision making process and concern for individual opinion while making decision.

Gender						Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Male	Count	5	8	10	7	30
	% within Gender	16.7%	26.7%	33.3%	23.3%	100.0%
Female	Count	3	8	4	5	20
	% within Gender	15.0%	40.0%	20.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	16	14	12	50
	% within Gender	16.0%	32.0%	28.0%	24.0%	100.0%

The above cross tab values indicating that, most of the employees are opined that, there is a Gender discrimination in decision making process and only one particular gender opinions are considering.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.463 ^a	3	.691
Likelihood Ratio	1.483	3	.686
Linear-by-Linear Association	.079	1	.779
N of Valid Cases	50		
a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.20.			

Inference: The above chi square table value indicating that, the sig. value is 0.691 (Greater than 0.05)

Accept the null hypothesis. i.e the gender based opinion considered practice is happening in IT sector where only one particular gender dominating decision making procedure and it leads to mental disturbance in workfrom home environment.

H₀₃: There is no significance relation between workfrom home conflicts and its impact on mental health.

Age in Years						
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Below 25	Count	1	3	3	1	8
	% within Age	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
25-35	Count	5	6	5	1	17
		29.4%	35.3%	29.4%	5.9%	100.0%
35-45	Count	4	7	5	1	17
		23.5%	41.2%	29.4%	5.9%	100.0%
Above 45	Count	0	4	3	1	8
		0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	10	20	16	4	50
		20.0%	40.0%	32.0%	8.0%	100.0%

The Age wise cross tab values indicating that, work from home conflicts with co workers are creating a lot of mental imbalance among employees and it leads to resignation to the organization.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.814 ^a	9	.011
Likelihood Ratio	5.290	9	.808
Linear-by-Linear Association	.116	1	.734
N of Valid Cases	50		
a. 12 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .64.			

Inference: The above chi square table value indicating that, the sig. value is 0.011 (Less than 0.05) **Reject the null hypothesis.** i.e the internal conflicts among workers in work from home condition and the employees are mentally very disturbance and not able concentrate on work carefully.

Discussion of Results:

For many people working from home has caused their mental health to take a dive throughout the past year. Moreover, according to Qualtrics, one-fourth of remote workers have faced increasing feelings of guilt since the start of the pandemic. To combat this alarming trend, we need to give ourselves grace. When employee internal voice holds you to an impossible standard, it causes far more stress than you realize. So stop beating yourself up about the length of your to-do list, perceived pressures to always be on, and other workplace stressors. When WFH becomes a constant game of “*Why can’t I be better or do more?*” it’s time for a mindset shift. The answer to the remote work burnout issue lies within breaks. While it may seem counterintuitive to slow down to speed up, taking breaks will significantly boost mental wellness, decrease the chance of burnout, and increase productivity.

To be your most productive self, take consistent breaks throughout the workday. Regularly detaching from your workload—and the stress that goes along with it—helps you stay motivated and improves productivity. To understand that any type of change takes time. Just as the causes of mental health decline can be insidious and happen slowly, improving your wellness doesn’t happen overnight. There isn’t a single solution, but rather, many small actions you can take to build better habits for improved remote working and mental health experience. Adjust your daily workflow and practices to match your lifestyle and stay the course. Remember to prioritize your mental health and to keep chipping away at negative thought processes. When you’re aware of the causes, it’s much easier to address and fix the issues impacting your happiness in your remote role.

Higher productivity and less stress reactions while performing remote work may be possible by improving job environments, such as quantitative/qualitative job load, physical demands, job control, skill utilization, interpersonal conflict, physical environment, job suitability, and meaningfulness of work. Furthermore, maintaining and promoting social support between workers and their supervisors, colleagues, family, and friends.

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