

A Study on the Impact of Working from Home on the Work Attitude of Employees in the IT Sector

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ABSTRACT – This study analyzes the impact of working from home on the work attitude of the employees in the Information Technology sector in India, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic of 2020 has taken the entire world for a toss as we know it. Working from home has become an inevitable norm. By measuring employee work attitudes, companies can get a broad idea of an employee's typical current mindset and can harness their utmost potentials. The study measures and analyzes productivity, motivation, job satisfaction and stress level of employees using statistical tools such as analysis of variance and correlation. The information from this study can be effectively utilized by companies to revise their employee policies as well as by other researchers for future studies.

Key words – Work Attitude, Work from Home, IT Sector, Employee Productivity, Employee Motivation, Work Stress, COVID-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) sector is a huge and rapidly growing field that plays a major role in shaping the Indian business standards. Software development, consultancies, software management, online services and business process outsourcing (BPO) are included in this sector. One of the biggest benefits that the computer and IT industry provide in India is the employment it can generate. When the COVID-19 struck down the entire world, the IT sector had relatively less impact since employees could still continue working from the comfort of their homes.

Work from home describes work being done remotely, instead of at an office. The acronym 'WFH' is used as a nickname for the concept. With the progression of digital transformation, as software capabilities are becoming more complex, it is seen that employees are no longer bound by a physical workplace in order to work efficiently. Instead, telecommuting, or working from home, can be just as efficient.

Work from home has always played a major role in the IT sector, even before the COVID-19

period. Since most of the work done is digital and using a computer system or a laptop, the work can still be carried out even remotely. The IT professionals have faced the most challenges and have had the most expertise on working from home, especially during this pandemic period. Hence, it is most relevant to attribute WFH to the IT employees and to study how it has impacted their work attitude.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The primary objective is to study the impact of WFH on the Work Attitude of IT employees
- To identify if working from home has an overall positive or negative impact on the general mindset of an IT employee towards the work being done
- To determine the kind of relationship that working from home has on the productivity of an IT employee
- To investigate if the IT employees would prefer to work from home even after the pandemic situation ceases to exist and all restrictions are relaxed

III. REVIEWS OF PAST STUDIES

“The Impact of Closing Schools on Working from Home during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence using Panel Data from Japan,” a paper by Eiji Yamamura and Yoshiro Tsustsui (2021) explores how school closure influences parents’ work style based on short panel data for the period of school closure from mid-March to mid-April, 2020. It concludes that in cases where parents are full-time employees and the children are in primary school, mothers are more likely to work remotely, while fathers are less likely to do so. However, if the children are in junior high school, the parents’ work styles are hardly affected [1].

The paper titled, “Home as Work Place: A Qualitative Case Study of Online Faculty using Photovoice,” by Lee Stadtlander et al (2017) addresses how online faculty members structure their workspace in their homes and how their work situation affects their home environment. Eighteen faculty members from a large online university were recruited and they were interviewed. Photovoice techniques were used wherein the participants take photographs and are interviewed about them. It was found that most members preferred a good work surrounding and organized their workspace with books and beautiful views from windows [2].

The paper titled, “Teachers’ Experiences Working from Home during the COVID-19 Pandemic,” by Matthew A. Kraft and Nicole S. Simon (2020) examines the experiences of teachers teaching online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. A *Teaching from Home Survey* was created and almost 7,200

teachers took up the survey. The findings suggest that a sudden change to online teaching has created substantial challenges for teacher's work and has limited the degree to which students can engage in learning. Schools with more supportive working conditions have been far more successful at helping their teachers maintain a sense of success during the pandemic [3].

The paper titled, "The Impact of Working from Home on Productivity. A Study on the Pandemic Period," by Mirela Bucurean (2020) explains the various advantages and disadvantages of working from home, especially on the productivity of an employee. After a survey from local employees, the paper concludes that working from home has had an overall negative impact on employee productivity [4].

The paper "Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment," by Nicholas A. Bloom et al (2014) has experimented work from home on random employees in a Chinese travel agency of nearly 16,000 employees. The study has identified that there was a 13% increase in employee productivity when working from home. Home workers also reported improved work satisfaction, and their attrition rate halved [5].

"Let me go to the Office! An Investigation into the Side Effects of Working from Home on Work-Life Balance," a paper by Rocco Palumbo (2020) concludes that home-based telecommuting negatively affected the work-life balance of public servants. Employees who remotely worked from home suffered from increased work-to-life and life-to-work conflicts. It has also been found that telecommuting from home triggered greater work-related fatigue, which worsened the perceived work-life balance [6].

The paper titled, "A Work-Life Conflict Perspective on Telework," by Shihang Zhang et al (2020) tries to associate telework frequency with life stages. The generic patterns that have been observed are, single individuals are more likely to telework than married individuals. Also, couples with children are less likely to telework than couples without children. The paper concludes that policies that support formal childcare resources could encourage more people to work from home [7].

The paper titled, "Does Telework Stress Employees Out? A Study on Working from Home & Subjective Well-Being for Wage/Salary Workers," by Younghwan Song and Jia Gao (2020) examines how subjective well-being (SWB) varies between working at home and working in the workplace among wage/salary workers. The positive effect of WFH, according to the research, is that telework reduces tiredness on weekdays. It also suggests that both males and females feel more stressed when teleworking, indicating the existence of individual heterogeneity [8].

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design simply yet accurately gives a description of all the respondents who take part in the study. It mainly revolves around answer the ‘What’ question rather than the questions, ‘How,’ ‘When,’ and ‘Why.’

The population of this study involves all persons employed in the IT industry in India. The sampling frame of this study includes all those IT employees in India whose jobs make it relevant for them to work from home. Each employee in the above mentioned sampling frame becomes a sampling unit.

This study uses the Convenience Sampling Technique. It is a type of non-probability sampling method that is generally used for the ease of the researcher. The sampling frame in this study may involve millions of respondents and it is impossible to include all of them. Hence, a sample of 150 is taken according to convenience considering the time constraint and the ongoing pandemic situation.

The primary data for this study has been collected through first person survey research method. A Questionnaire was circulated and the data has been obtained first hand, directly from the respondents related to the survey. The secondary data has been collected from journal papers, articles and websites.

The questionnaire was structured with open and closed – ended questions. It was designed with demographic factor questions, multiple choice questions and Likert scale questions. The questionnaire is designed to be simple and easy, with the proper length. The terms used are explained clearly and arranged in proper logical manner.

This study on the impact of WFH on the work attitude of IT employees was undertaken for a period of about four months. It was carried out from the month of January, 2021, to the month of April, 2021.

V. DISCUSSIONS

For more in depth analysis, analytical tools such as ANOVA and correlation have been used with the help of the SPSS software by IBM. The purpose of this is to find whether there are any statistical relationships between certain factors and to draw more apt conclusions from the study.

HYPOTHESIS – I

H_0 : There is no significant difference among the ages of respondents in regards to their productivity while working from home

H_1 : There is a significant difference among the ages of respondents in regards to their productivity while working from home

TABLE 1: ANOVA FOR DIFFERENCE AMONG AGES OF RESPONDENTS IN REGARDS TO PRODUCTIVITY WHILE WFH

ANOVA					
Productivity Analysis					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.440	4	2.110	1.538	.194
Within Groups	198.920	145	1.372		
Total	207.360	149			

From the above table it is seen that the significance value is 0.194, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the ages of respondents in regards to their productivity while working from home.

HYPOTHESIS – II

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her overall mindset towards the job after WFH

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her overall mindset towards the job after WFH.

TABLE 2: CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS LEVEL AND OVERALL MINDSET TOWARDS JOB AFTER WFH

CORRELATIONS			
		Stress Level	Overall Mindset
Stress Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.507
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Overall Mindset	Pearson Correlation	.507	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

From the above table it is seen that the significance value is 0.000, which is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Thus, it can

be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her overall mindset towards the job after WFH.

HYPOTHESIS – III

H₀ : There is no significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her preference to go back to work after the pandemic situation

H₁ : There is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her preference to go back to work after the pandemic situation.

TABLE 3: CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS LEVEL AND PREFERENCE TO GO BACK TO WORK AFTER THE PANDEMIC

CORRELATIONS			
		Stress Level	Preferred Work Mode
Stress Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.497
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Preferred Work Mode	Pearson Correlation	.497	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

From the above table it is seen that the significance value is 0.000, which is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H₁) is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her preference to go back to work after the pandemic situation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of the study throw light on many valid inferences that help in fulfilling the objectives framed. From what a majority of the respondents have expressed, it is seen that WFH has had a relatively positive impact on the mindset of the IT employees towards their work. Most respondents feel that they are considerably unstressed while working from home.

As far as productivity is concerned, most respondents feel that they are neither productive nor unproductive while working from home. The results show that the respondents have an even spread of

opinions and there is no striking evidence as such to establish a sure relationship between WFH and productivity levels. It varies enormously from one individual to another and there may be numerous physical, cognitive and psychological factors behind each person's opinion.

It is important to note that a considerable majority of respondents prefer going back to work after the pandemic situation ceases rather than continuation of WFH. Now again, this opinion may be due to various underlying factors that are probably specific to each respondent. However, a majority of them express that WFH exploits their entire day without proper start and end times for work as well as adequate breaks.

From the three statistical tests carried out for the framed hypotheses using the analytical tools, ANOVA and Correlation, the following inferences were made. There is no significant difference among the ages of respondents in regards to their productivity while working from home. There is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her overall mindset towards the job after WFH. There is a significant relationship between the stress level of a respondent and his / her preference to go back to work after the pandemic situation. The data and suggestions put forth by this study can be successfully used by companies to revise their employee policies. It can also be used as an efficient reference for further studies and researches by aspiring researchers in the future.

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