# A Conceptual Study on the Impact of Work from Home on the Performance & Productivity of Employees

**Sandeep Bhardwaj** (Research Scholar, Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak, Haryana)

**Dr. Hema Singla** (Associate Professor, Faculty of Management and Commerce, Baba Mastnath University, Rohtak, Haryana)

*Abstract*

*The objective of the present study is to find out the impact of work from home on the performance and productivity of the employees conceptually in IT sector. After COVID-19 work from home became a common practice in IT industry. Along with the positive side of the work from home namely: less commutation charges, flexibility to do work, cost savings, accessibility to wider talent pool, reduction in stress level of the employees, enhanced job satisfaction, increased concentration and focus of employees and improved work life balance there are some negative impact also viz., enhanced isolation, increased home office costs, distractions while working at home, less communication among peer groups and improper balance in work life of the employees. Researchers in this study review the literature and found that work from home affects the performance and productivity of the employees.*

*Key Words: Performance, Productivity, COVID-19, Job satisfaction, Isolation and Communication*

## COVID-19 Pandemic and Work from Home

The COVID-19 pandemic first emerged in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease a pandemic and on March 12, 2020, it was named a pandemic (Hui et al., 2020)[1]. The first illness in Poland was confirmed on March 4, 2020. As in other countries, the Polish government also applied many restrictions, among them the obligation of distance learning in schools and universities and the transition to working from home (WFH). Implemented in companies where this was possible. On December 4, 2020, the WFH obligation was introduced for civil servants and public service employees.

The concept of workplace is evolving from ideas of a physical location to a state of mind. The physical location of a workplace has gradually lost its importance due to the development of information technology. Modern working life has adapted the work from home system. Working from home refers to the concept of working in a business where employees do not have to travel to a single, central workplace. It is also called teleworking and remote work. The development of information and communication technologies has made it very easy to perform tasks outside the workplace through good internet connectivity as well as reasonably priced computers, laptops and other similar, more user-friendly gadgets. This has made working from home easier and feasible to complete tasks and has likely reduced the employer costs of setting up such arrangements.[2]

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the concept of "work from home" (WFH) an officially mandated and strictly enforced rule. Today, the concept of WFH is emerging across all sectors, from IT to education sectors. The concept of WFH is new to the majority of employees, as COVID 19 forced almost all employees across all industries to work from home for the first time. As employees experience a new environment, this article attempts to uncover employees' experience of working from home versus working in the office conceptually. The study found that willingness to work from home depends entirely on the presence of their children at home, a comfortable space at home, a quiet environment at home and good internet connectivity. Most respondents also feel that although they are willing to work from home, they do not like working from home.[3]

The coronavirus disease has forced the concept of "work from home" (WFH) into authoritative and firmly enforced law. With organizations boosting social distancing and racing with time to combat the local spread of the virus, the notion of working from home is now emerging across industries, from IT to education sectors. The concept of working from home is new for the majority of employees. As employees thrive in an innovative atmosphere, this research paper aims to conceptually understand the employee experience during WFH. This research is undertaken to gain insight into how organizations and individuals experience and perceive the adaptability of these changes and challenges. Although the concept of working from home reduces the expenses of employees, they want to face the fear of the unknown, inadequate

communication at work, lack of precision and direction, interruptions while working from home and loss of resources like time and energy, etc. which leads to prolonged employee stress and workplace crisis. This research found that employees' willingness to work from home depends entirely on their comfort, workspace and good internet connectivity. This study focuses on workers' interest in and experience with working from home versus working in the office and employees' perceptions of it.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the view of IT employees working from their homes compared to the work in their office and also provides the details of change in working style during work from home in presence of family members and friends via literature review.

**Dilemma between COVID-19 and Work from Home**

It will be right to say that work from home benefitted the employees to a greater extent. In a number of cases work from home allows employees to me more productive and efficient[4]. Furthermore WFH allows employees to have fewer distractions from the coworkers that too in open plan offices. Instead of this, WFH allows employees to have work life balances and to follow a healthy life routine. Work from home reduces the commuted time of employees so that employees can utilize this time in productive activities and with their children also.

However with these benefits of work from home there are a number of disadvantages also that comes along with the facilities. Firstly work from home prevents the employees to socialize that are an opportunity for the employees while they work from offices. Sometimes a blurred work life boundary becomes the reason for the stress and anxiety.In spite of this parents while working from home may choose to sacrifice their nights and early morning hour in order to get quiet hours so that employees can concentrate more on the office work[5].

**Potential Difficulties of WFH**

Considering the negative aspects, the authors of research on remote work mention the following: the blurring of the boundaries between work and private life, which results from constantly staying in the same space with other members of the household and combining work tasks and

family life. This can be felt strongly, especially by parents whose partners are also WFH, and their children are learning remotely while the parents work. This can be very difficult for those who work from a living room or bedroom (Bulut and Reziyamu 2021[6]; Chawla et al., 2020[7]; Davis et al., 2020[8]; Kniffin et al., 2021[9]; Vargas-Llave 2020[10]).

However, the feeling of isolation and loneliness are the most emphasized dangers of WFH in the COVID-19 pandemic (Algahtani et al., 2021[11]; Bentley et al., 2016[12]; Creary et al., 2018[13]; Kniffin et al., 2021[14]; Wang et al., 2020[15]), which can be especially acute for people living alone. The need for WFH introduced by the lockdown, while limiting meetings with family, friends or colleagues who an employee had spent an average of 8 hours a day with, make them feel lonely or even socially excluded. It is hard to replace rumors over coffee in the office, lunches in the company's cafeteria, going to company events or private meetings outside of work with virtual contacts.

The world was thrust into an unprecedented working culture in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizations transitioned their employees from the office to a Work from Home (WFH) model during the Covid-19 global pandemic. Many companies like Google, Microsoft, JPMorgan, Zillow, Slack, Amazon, PayPal, Sales force and other major companies have introduced Work-From-Home model. The WFH model has got world-wide acceptance due to its benefit in business as well as to the employees.[16]

In the Indian IT sector Work from Home is a new concept. **Raman & Revathy (2022)[17]** did a study on the overview of employee's perception towards WFH in Information Technology sector with reference to Chennai city. In their study, the data was collected through convenience sampling method from 153 respondents of IT employees via circulating Google Forms through online and analyzed their perception statistically using the SPSS software. Google was the first company in 2005 to begin work culture from home. In India after 2010 when the employee was sick, pregnant female employees and female employees after delivery to take care of the child prefer work from home. WFH has been successful in IT industry as it does not need employee's physical presence in office and work can be done remotely with less client dependency.An Exploratory factor Analysis, One way analysis of variance and one sample independent T-Test were applied for this study. Their study concludes most of the Indian IT employees like to work

from home after the pandemic as well; this is mainly because employees feel WFH is comfortable and they are able to manage work and life easily.

**Mathew (2022)**[18] did a study on the perception of IT company employees towards work from home culture. According to the researcherthe sudden outbreak of Covid-19 had affected the normal functioning of every industry. The restrictions imposed by the Government and other regulatory bodies to prevent its spreading for the purpose of protecting our society and individuals has an impact on the normal or regular operations of the IT companies. Here, in this study, an attempt is made to know the "Perception of IT Employees towards Work from Home (WFH) culture". A sample of 50 was taken for the purpose of conducting this study. The data collected from the primary and secondary resources has been in detail evaluated to have a better understanding of the employees working in IT companies and their attitude towards the WFH culture.

However, in order to minimize the employee monitoring problem **B & Raj (2023)**[19]did a study during Work from Home on Employee Management. According to the researchers employee management is a means of employee monitoring, and allows company administrators to monitor and supervise all their employees' computers from a central location. It is normally deployed over a business network and allows for easy centralized log viewing via one central networked PC. Sometimes, companies opt to monitor their employees using remote desktop software instead. The main objective of the employee management is to improve employee performance and productivity at Software companies. However, it becomes a question of concern about employee privacy when this software track the day in and day out activities of the time spent by the employees on their working platform. It is therefore of utmost importance to carry out this study to understand employees views towards the employee management while working from home and to provide suggestions to employers regarding the amount of data that can be tracked without intruding into employee privacy.

Since the pandemic hit the world, most of the Information Technology firms and few other firms where most of the work happens through computers, work from home option has been provided for employees to run the business. In work from home conditions, it becomes difficult or impossible for employers to track employees in person as to how effectively they

spend their working hours. However, it becomes a question of concern about employee privacy when this software track the day in and day out activities of the time spent by the employees on their working platform (computers).[20]

Additionally, the literature contends that WFH may enhance worker productivity. **Golden et al. (2006)** discovered that WFH can boost employee output by cutting down on commute time and office distractions. According to a more recent research by **Rodriguez-Sanchez et al. (2020)**, remote employees in the software business were more productive than their on-site colleagues, partly because there were less interruptions and diversions. Additionally, the COVID-19 epidemic has emphasized the significance of giving remote workers the right assistance. According to a recent study by **Fodor et al. (2021)**, WFH can reduce employee fatigue and desire to quit their jobs.

**Oleniuch (2021)**[21] did a study on the employees' perception of the difficulties of work at home from the perspective of their experience on remote working. The research objective was to check whether there is a correlation between feelings about difficulties in Work from Home (WFH) and having previous experience in remote working. During this research the literature review and a questionnaire study were conducted. The CAWI method was applied in April 2021, i.e., a year after the first case of COVID-19 in Poland, and five months after the introduction of the obligatory WFH in public institutions. The study covered 1284 employees of various positions and branches. The Pearson chi square test of independence and the U-Mann-Whitney test were applied. The findings showed that there is a correlation between feelings about the difficulties and WFH benefits and the experience of remote working before the pandemic. The hypothesis that in the group with no experience in remote working more people feel difficulties related to WFH than among those with experience was only confirmed as to the problem of lowering the living comfort. Other difficulties, for which a statistically significant correlation with experience was found, were mentioned less often by people without experience than by those who worked remotely before the pandemic. As for the benefits, it was found that their strength was higher for those with no experience than those who had previously worked remotely. The exception was the benefit of low level of supervisor control, which was felt more strongly by employees with experience. Assuming that with the time of remote working the

benefits decrease, and the number of difficulties increases, managers should develop an appropriate motivation system and support for WFH employees. This will be beneficial not only during a pandemic, but also in the future, as remote working is likely to remain in a hybrid form in some organizations, or it will be implemented along with the development of Economy 4.0. The research focused not only on the difficulties (and benefits) experienced by employees providing WFH, but also on the relation between their feelings and experience in remote working before the pandemic outbreak. The correlations should become an inspiration for further research, mainly of a dynamic nature.

**Outcomes of Work from Home**

A number of studies have been done on the impact of work from home on the productivity and performance of the employees. The findings from the review that shows that there is impact of work from home on the functioning of the employees either positive or negative is tried to explain in this study.

**Crosbie and Moore (2004)[22]** concluded that home working was not panacea for modern working life. Careful consideration should be given to aspirations and personality skills of those who are thinking of working from home. Those who have tendency to work long hours outside the home might and that home life is even further marginalized by work life.

**Gajendra and Harrison (2007)[23]** revealed in their study that it is difficult to monitor a worker's effort at home, especially when occasionally being interrupted by private responsibilities and family members. In a competitive labour market, such productivity effects would be rejected in a worker's wage level. Evidence on the productivity effects of Work from home is inconclusive, but seems to suggest positive effects more often than negative effects.

**Jang (2009)[24]** conducted a study to examine the relationship between work-schedule flexibility and employees' perception of workplace support, supervisory support, work-life balance and well-being. The results were employees who had flexible work schedule reported higher levels of work-life balance, which in turn positively affects their wellbeing. In addition, perceived flexible works schedule was found a mediator of perceived supervisory and workplace

support, thus fitting a theory that a good organizational culture helps creates a more positive perception of workplace flexibility.

**Stevenson and Wolfers (2009)**[25]investigated that depending on the interactions between workand private life work from home could be more or lessfavorable to overall life satisfaction. As illustrated by theparadox of the decline in female happiness, these interactionsare likely to differ by parental status and gender.

**Troup & Rose (2012)**[26] investigated the impact of formal and informal telework arrangements on work-family outcomes such as job satisfaction, time spent on childcare and satisfaction with the distribution of childcare tasks in Queensland, Australia. They found that formal telework arrangement had greater positive effect on women's job satisfaction. The flexibility of working time (informal telework arrangement) for women provides optimum satisfaction towards child care distribution with their spouse. It also allows them to act on family needs and responsibilities.

**Amabile & Kramer(2013)**[27] found that work from home ishelping the employees to balance and differentiate their office work with their routine work. The study also added that workfrom home saves time, increases the productivity, finishes thetargets on time and also helps the employees to give time fortheir personal life.

**Beauregard. Aet al (2013)**[28] in their study Home is where the work is: A new study of homeworking, found that mobile workers and partial home workers performance is higher to some extent and they are highly satisfied and engaged with their jobs than any of other workers. Their study also revealed that workers perform best when they achieve good work life balance and are lessstressed. It was reported in their study that Mobile workers and home workers miss informal interaction and emotional support from their co-workers more frequently than partial home workers.

**Bloom et al. (2015)**[29] investigated whether the work from home model works using an experimental study on the employees of a travel agency in China. They found several striking results. First, a 13% increase in the productivity among the workers. Second, attrition fell sharply among the home workers, dropping by 50%. Thirdly, it pointed out a downside of WFH that it reduced the rate of promotion by nearly 50%.

**Srivastava et al. (2015)[30]**studied the perspectives of IT employees on the Work from Home concept. The majority of the employees claimed that there were flexible working hours and they were able to maintain work life balance. The major disadvantage pointed out was lack of communication with their colleagues.

**Tavares (2017)[31]** report three principal issues on well-being in a WFH setting: musculoskeletal pain, isolation and stress. Isolation is usually linked with a lack of worker comfort, engagement, satisfaction and commitment (Gainey et al. 1999)[32]; occupational stress (Dussault et al. 1999)[33]; morbidity and mortality (Johnson et al. 1989)[34]; psychological strain (Bentley et al. 2016)[35]; and overall well-being (Yang 2017)[36]. Undesirable manifestations of stress include fear, worry, an inability to relax, an increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, disturbances in sleeping patterns, changes in eating patterns, difficulty in concentrating, worsening of pre-existing health conditions (physical and mental) and increased use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (WHO, 2022).

**Andres-Sanchez et al. (2023)[37]** investigated Perception of the Effects of Working from Home on Isolation and Stress by Spanish Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic. This paper tests the explanatory capability of the individual, organizational, environmental and job factors regarding Spanish workers' perception of isolation and stress owing to working from home (WFH). They used a survey of the Spanish agency Centro de InvestigacionesSociológicas on the Spanish population's perceptions of several aspects of information technologies that was carried out in March 2021. Information overload, work overload and isolation were perceived to be the principal factors involved in WFH. Because WFH could be inhibiting professional development, drawbacks in the infrastructure include overload and impediments to career development as the most relevant variables to explain the perception of isolation. Age and balance between family and work also have explanatory power, but less so for isolation and stress. While people with intermediate ages are less sensitive to isolation and stress, having a correct balance between work and personal life is a protective factor against these effects. From the results in this paper, they outlined several questions that must be addressed by labour authorities via legal regulations

and by firms and workers to adapt organizational and working culture to ensure the efficient implementation of WFH settings compatible with employees' well-being.

**Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to find out the impact of work from home on the performance and productivity of the employees conceptually. A number of studies have been reviewed by the researcher in this study. However it is difficult track the employees who work from home and also difficult to coordinate for the team leader with the team members but work from home provides cost advantage to the organizations in terms of low maintenance of infrastructure. Work from home is beneficial for the employee as well as it provides an opportunity to the employees to manage their own time flexibly. It was found that work from home is less favorable to the women who have children as for them they have to do the office work as well as child care. Women felt more exhausted while working from in comparison to men. Work from home also affected the health also. Loneliness, stress and frustration was found among the employees who work from home during COVI-19 period. Along with the advantages work from home brought disadvantages also.

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