**Perception of Employees towards Work from Home during COVID-19**

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**Abstract**

Work from home entered the multidisciplinary areas of professions and opened up new career opportunities in Kerala. This gives flexible working hours to the employee as the work is done with comfort. This article explores the experiences of employees who have worked from home during the COVID-19 lockdown. The investigator analyzed the outcomes of working from home on work and life domains during COVID-19 based on the reflections of employees. A sample of 200 respondents from the Ernakulam district was chosen for the study. The tool used for primary data is the questionnaire given through mail and WhatsApp as Google forms. The percentage analysis method was used for analysis. The study reveals that the comfort of home makes individuals be calm and concentrate more on work and avoid tiredness due to commutation. The majority are satisfied with regard to the workplace at home in comparison with the office.

*Keywords*: perception, employees, teleworking

**Introduction**

Work from home is the concept that the employee is working from a remote location usually home which gives flexible working hours to the employee and employer to engage in work with ease. Working from home is supportive to work-life balance for the employee, and also helps the organization get the work done comfortably. With implications for organizational cost savings and improved employee flexibility and productivity, teleworking has become a crucial human resource management strategy in many leading organizations. Working remotely opens up a series of opportunities for the way businesses can work and structure themselves during the lockdown. Many new fields like public sector enterprises and the educational field stepped into the possibilities of working from home and the digital and online transactions accelerated more than before.

**Need and Significance of the Study**

Remote work poses a range of challenges as well as opportunities for employees and employers. Companies are inquiring about strategies to coach remotely and how to institute workstations to augment employee safety during COVID-19.WFH during the pandemic has also accentuated zones for the physical space in comfortable home office environments. The advantage of remote work is based on the eclectic blend of activities related to the profession and on their physical, spatial, and social context. The lockdown and public health constraints of the pandemic resulted in a massive shift to remote and virtual work for many workplaces. Working from home was a good opportunity for IT professionals, students, and employees of multinational companies. The home was metamorphosed into a workroom for the employees. Lots of opportunities have arisen for those who find it hard to commute for employment. There always remained a disinclination to use modernized technologies earlier. But it became the need of the hour and a large group of people was forced to acclimatize to the digital environment. Even after the removal of Covid restrictions, there is a probability of an upsurge in work from home. Working from home fosters flexibility, improved employee retention, attraction of resourceful and talented individuals, and increased productivity facilitating employees' working practices moving forward. This study is an inquiry into the employee perceptions and satisfaction towards working from home of people who were daily commuters before the lockdown period.

**Statement of the problem**

The study is entitled “Perception of employees towards work from home during covid 19”

**Objectives of the study**

* To examine the outcomes of working from home on work and life domains during COVID-19
* To analyze the reflections of employees on work from home during the COVID-19 lockdown

**Review of literature**

Oakman, J., Kinsman, N., Stuckey, R. et al. (2020) in the study “A rapid review of mental and physical health effects of working at home: how do we optimize health?” revealed that work at home will remain undoubtedly. Organizations need to frame authorized policies reflecting work-home boundary management provisions, role precision, work assignment, performance indicators, technical support, facilitation of co-worker networking, and training for managers for conducive work-at-home practice.

Rupiettaa & Beckmann (2016) in the study ‘Working from Home – What is the Effect on Employees’ Effort?’ found that working from home has a positive bearing on work effort and the frequency of working from home. The more often employees work from home, the greater the outcome of work they deliver. This constructive effect on productivity is attributed to a higher degree of autonomy and thus enhanced motivation.

**Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the specific procedures used to identify, process, and analyze informationscientifically. Descriptive research is used in this study. The population for this study is people in the Ernakulum district. A sample size of 200 is selected for data collection and analysis. Both primary and secondary data are used for investigation. Primary data refers to the data collected firsthand by the researcher for the study whereas secondary data includes published data from newspapers, books, journals, and articles. The tool used for primary data is the questionnaire and sent to respondents through mail and WhatsApp as Google forms. Percentage analysis method and tabular and graphical representations are made for interpreting the data in a useful manner.

**Data Analysis And Interpretations**

The investigator analyzed the outcomes of working from home on work and life domains during COVID-19 based on the reflection of employees towards work from home which is presented below

**Table 1**

*Level of Satisfaction in the Workplace at Home in Comparison with Office Cabin*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level of satisfaction | No of respondents | Percentage |
| Extremely dissatisfied | 20 | 10% |
| Dissatisfied | 50 | 25% |
| Neutral | 30 | 15% |
| Satisfied | 70 | 35% |
| Extremely satisfied | 30 | 15% |
| Total | 200 | 100% |

**Figure 1**

*Level of Satisfaction in the Workplace at Home in Comparison with Office Cabin*

The table is with regard to satisfaction in the workplace at home in comparison with office cabins, 35 percent are satisfied and 15 percent are extremely satisfied. Another 15 percent stays neutral. There is 25 percent showed dissatisfaction and 10 percent are extremely dissatisfied. This analysis shows that most of the respondents fall in the satisfied category. The dissatisfied persons were found to be working in professions that require face-to-face interaction with people.

**Table 2**

*Issues Faced Due to the System of Work at Home*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Particulars | No of respondents | Percentage |
| Health issues | 0 | 0% |
| Network issues | 110 | 55% |
| External disturbances | 60 | 30% |
| Mental and emotional issues | 15 | 7.5% |
| Others | 15 | 7.5% |
| Total | 200 | 100% |

**Figure 2**

*Issues Faced Due to the System of Work at Home*

The table reveals that work at home creates various issues also. None of them face health issues. More than half of the respondents 55 percent are facing network issues. 30 percent of people are having external disturbances. 7.5 percent are having mental and emotional issues and the same percentage of people have issues other than those mentioned above. Other issues for the teaching professionals are regarding practical labs which are to be supplemented in curriculum transaction, government services, Akshaya centers, and construction field workers where there is limited scope for online substitution.

**Table 3**

*Self-rating of Respondents on the Performance by Working from Home.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level of satisfaction | No of respondents | Percentage |
| Extremely dissatisfied | 15 | 7.5% |
| Dissatisfied | 15 | 7.5% |
| Neutral | 85 | 42.5% |
| Satisfied | 55 | 27.5% |
| Extremely satisfied | 30 | 15% |
| Total | 200 | 100% |

**Figure 3**

*Self-Rating of Respondents on the Performance by Working from Home.*

The self-assessment made by the respondents about their performance at work from home in comparison with work at the office reveals 42.5 percent have a neutral opinion, 27.5 percentage of people show satisfaction and 15 percent of respondents are extremely satisfied, 7.5 percent of the people feel dissatisfaction and the same percentage of people are extremely dissatisfied. The opinions of respondents show that their performance is unaffected even if they work from home. The comfort of home makes individuals be calm and concentrate more on work and avoid tiredness due to commutation to and from the office. It also saves time and money to a greater extent for some people.

**Findings**

* Around 50 percent of the people have adapted to the workspace at home. 15 percent neither shows any satisfaction nor any dissatisfaction. But 35 percent of people prefer to work in their office cabin than at home.
* When it comes to issues faced due to work at home, the majority face network issues. Nobody complains about health issues. 30 percent of people are having external disturbances. 7.5 percent of people suffer from mental and emotional issues. The other reasons put forward by the respondents are difficult coping with home and work routines. Teachers find it difficult to teach effectively all the topics compared to physical classroom scenarios. The suggestions from the respondents to overcome the issues related to working from home are better internet, best support/motivation from superiors, and relaxation in periodical goal targets, as compared to normal workdays. The reduction in remuneration without compromise in workload and work pressure is not pleasing the employees.

# Conclusion

* The workload should be reasonable. The compensation should also match the work undertaken by the employees. Employees should get enough breaks in between working time to get refreshed.
* There should be continuous monitoring with respect to issues involved by the employers and solutions should be implemented. Training should be given to work with various devices and technological platforms that enable efficient working.
* The concept of “hybrid working”, which combines time working from home and time in physical proximity to colleagues at the office will be advantageous to attract them back to the office

It has been evident that work from home is possible for many unexplored areas. Private companies can shift to work from home wherever possible to minimize the cost and enhance productivity. The telecommunication system and channels should be upgraded so that the work from home can be implemented in every nook and corner effectively. The employees under work from home should be allowed to join in the meetings and celebrations of the office. For those who work under foreign time schedules, working from home will be more relaxing.  This work culture can reduce the cost of transportation spent for picking and dropping off the employees.

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