Work from Home as Boon or Curse: HR Perspective

* Dr. Shameen Warsi
**Dr. N. K. Totala

*Dr. Shameen Warsi, Assistant Professor, Govindram Sakseria Institute of Management and Research, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore. (shameen.warsi@gmail.com).

**Dr. N. K. Totala, Reader, Institute of Management Studies, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore. (navindratotla@gmail.com).

Abstract

Work from home/remote working is no more a buzz word; employees are working from home and employers are accepting it as far as the work goes on without compromising productivity. There are few questions which draw attention when remote employees are looked from HR's perspective. Information technology-based organizations are bit acquainted with the process and facilities of work from home employees but the for the HR professionals of other industries it seems to be quite challenging. Looking at the scenario of lock down and COVID-19 environment and post covid environment, the frequent shift or immediate action of providing work from home or from office is the prime concern for most of the HR departments. Its successful execution in different ways i.e., work from home or work from office or a combination of both became a performance criterion for the HR professionals.

This research paper explores the overall work from home experience of employees along with identifying the pitfalls and positive impacts of working from home across various industries and sectors. It will also shed some light on how the HR professionals can cope up with this challenge or grab the opportunity without making any compromise with productivity of the organization. The cost benefit analysis of work from home appears as determinant of work from home and statistical tools also supports the same.

Keywords: Work from home, remote working, HR Challenges, COVID-19 environment

Introduction

Work from Home/Remote Work
Work from home or remote working is a concept where the employee can do his or her job from home. Work from home gives flexible working hoursand environment to the employees and the job for the employer is done with certain ease (MBASkool, 2020).

Corona Virus Disease-2019
Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) is the name given by the World Health Organization (WHO) on February 11, 2020 for the disease caused by the Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. It started in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread worldwide. The coronavirus disease of 2019 was given the abbreviated name of COVID-19 by the WHO in a press release dated February 11, 2020.Coronaviruses are common human and animal viruses. They were first discovered in domestic poultry in the 1930s. In animals, coronaviruses cause a range of respiratory, gastrointestinal, liver, and neurologic diseases. Three human coronaviruses cause serious lung infections, also called pneumonia: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or 'SARS' also called as SARS-CoV in 2002, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or 'MERS' also known as MERS-CoV in

2012, and Corona Virus Disease, 2019 also known as SARS-CoV2, the current pandemic (Vergnaud, 2020).

Work from Home Led by COVID-19

On March 24, 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a complete lockdown of the entire nation for 21 days in an effort to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. In a televised address to the nation, the PM said that even those nations with the best medical facilities could not contain the virus and that social distancing is the only option to mitigate it (The Economic Times, 2021a)

During the lockdown, Indian IT industry made employees "Work from Home" (WFH) as per government's mandate. As a result, about 90% of employees worked from home with 65% of them from homes in metros and rest 35% from homes in small towns (The Economic Times, 2020).

COVID -19 is a communicable disease and the only way to fight with this is to stay isolated. Social distancing got limelight in this era and the places which are more prone for the spread of this disease like, schools, colleges, offices and other places of mass gatherings are required to be closed.The commercial establishments like, company offices, banks, factories, etc. opted work from home facility for the employees so as to avoid the loss.

Government guidelines for work from office mainly includes – no one is allowed to enter office premises without mask, thermal scanning at the time of entry is mandatory, provide sanitizers at all touch points, distance of at-least 2 meters among the workstations is required, discourage employees from touching common surfaces, prohibit employees to share tools and appliances, prohibit touching, handshaking and hugging, face to face common meetings should be avoided, ;limit the use of AC, focus on proper ventilation in work premises, encourage home food and common eating places should be closed (ESIC, 2021).

Role of HR Professionals

Leaving apart IT industry, most of the organizations are not familiar with the concept of managing remote employees or providing the facility of work from home. COVID-19 outbreak has left no option other than work from home in-order to make things moving.

The main responsibility of this transition actually is on the shoulders of working HR professionals. The centre point of all the coordination efforts is the HR department as this is very crucial task; it requires lot many things like approvals, shifting/availability of gadgets, task allocations, attendance, leave management, grievances, productivity, cost considerations, smooth carrying out of operations, compliances of contemporary and the then prevailing guidelines issued by WHO, the Central as well as the State government/s, and so on and so forth.

Review of Literature
Work from Home

Largest software exporter TCS's Chief Executive and Managing Director Rajesh Gopinathan explained that over the decades, IT companies' model was based on employees trooping-in to cubicles often in specially erected or hired campuses for work, but the lockdown resulted in a quick shift to the Work from Home (WFH) model. Keshav Murugesh, Chief Executive of business process management player World Network Services (WNS) and former Chairman of IT industry lobby grouping Nasscom, said the association responded to the challenge by helping its members in transporting over 25 lakh desktops from offices to associates' residences within a fortnight, ensuring work continuance (Economic Times, 2020).

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SCIKEY's survey on *'Creating Work from Home Champions – Enhancing Productivity in Crisis'*. from 10,559 respondentsrevealed that 99.8% of the workforce are incapable of working from home and only 0.02% are workingashome champions and showcase highly productive attributes. The study further revealed, 16.97% of the employees are challenge driven. Such employees should be given challenging tasks and can work seamlessly with minimum intervention. The study identified 17% of employees as instruction driven and need clear cut direction to deliver task. While engaging with these employees, especially under the remote working scenario, one should pay close attention to the details of the tasks assigned to them. As a result, work from home is a challenge for them(IndianWeb2Wire, 2020).

The Work-Home Resource Model

The Work-Home Resource (W-HR) model provided a new theoretical perspective for the work-family research field by viewing the work-home interface as a set of processes. Each process runs from demands and resources in the work (or home) domain, via changes in personal resources, to outcomes in the home (or work) domain. It is believed that the W-HR model offers a useful framework for future work-home research, allowing an investigation of what actually occurred when work and home interfere with each other (Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) Figure 1.
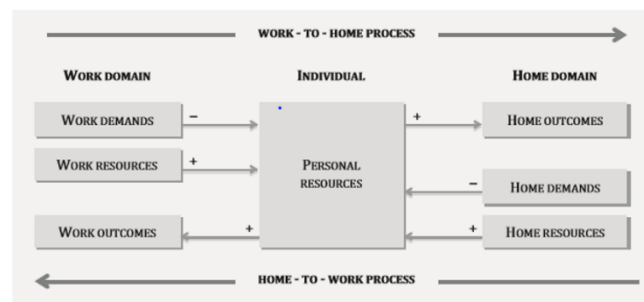

Figure 1:Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012

The Components of the Work-Home Resources Model

Construct	Subtype	Example
Contextual Demands	Overload	Working overtime, many household chores, urgent care tasks
	Physical	Lifting weights, care for the elderly, care for young children
	Emotional	Dealing with an angry customer, conflict at home, disappointments
	Cognitive	Writing a report, coordination of household and care tasks, multitasking
Contextual Resources	Social Support	Advice from co-workers, understanding, love, respect from a friend
	Autonomy	Control over work design, planning leisure time, allocating home tasks
	Opportunities for Development	New tasks at work, attending courses, participating in sports, hobbies
	Feedback	Supervisor evaluation, open communication at home, reflection with friends
	Physical	Health, Physical energy, vigour, sleep
	Psychological	Optimism, self-efficacy, focus, mental

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Personal Resources		resilience
	Affective	Mood, fulfilment, empathy, gratefulness
	Intellectual	Skill, perspective, knowledge, experience
	Capital	Time, money
Outcomes	Production	Meeting deadlines, service quality, completing tasks, quality of care tasks
	Behavioural	Absenteeism, turnover, availability at home, providing a secure home
	Attitudinal	Satisfaction, commitment, wellbeing, relationship quality

(Figure 2: Source:Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012)

COVID-19'sImpact on Working Mothers
The economic downturn caused by the current COVID-19 outbreak had substantial implications for gender equality, both during the downturn and the subsequent recovery. Compared to regular recessions, which affected men's employment more severely than women's employment, the employment drop related to social distancing measures had a large impact on sectors with high female employment shares. In addition, closures of schools and day-care centres have massively increased child care needs, which has a particularly large impact on working mothers(Alon, et.al., 2020).

Challenges of HR Professionals
The findings of researchers suggested that IT is related to two distinct aspects of HR professional roles: enabling aspects as well as time shifting aspects. Firstly, their results indicated that HR professionals are enabled to provide increased information responsiveness, have more information autonomy, and have more external professional links. At the same time, however, the study indicated that more extensiveuse of IT required them to provide IT related support activities. HR professionals needed to supplement their skills and increasethe know-how in order to improve their contributions to the organizationthrough their support of IT. They may need to develop their skills to provide theseexpected services, or as more is expected of HR staff, higher quality personnel mayneed to be hired to replace those lacking the needed skills and knowledge in regardsto IT (Gardner, et. al., 2003).

Cost Benefit Analysis
Cost to Company
Among the biggest potential problems for employers are the requirements (or in some cases desirability) of reimbursing employees for their costs for working from home and the need to track hours accurately.In a recent Aon survey of around 1,400 U.S.-based companies, more than 1 in 5 say they are helping to pay for their employees' home-office equipment. Meanwhile, nearly a third of companies say they are reimbursing their newly remote employees for their laptops, and more than 14% are paying for their ergonomic office furniture, according to a recent survey by Mercer. More than 10% are covering their workers' internet bills (Nova, 2020).

Benefit to Company
Booming sectors like technology and e-commerce are already more likely to embrace virtual working – Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has said that employees can work from home permanently if they want to. "Companies could see this as an opportunity to downsize, to reduce operating costs and invest more in technology," says Paul Stapley, vice president in the project management team

at WSP in Canada. "Occupiers have already been moving to shorter lease terms. If they have only got, say, six months left, they may decide to walk away" (WPS-Insights, 2022).

The upscale clothing retailer Ralph Lauren announced in February it will be cutting as much as 30% of its corporate real estate in North America, to "embrace new ways of working." Similarly, CVS Health said it will slash its office space by 30%, as part of a cost-saving initiative.Nordstrom said it chose not to extend a lease at one of its office towers in downtown Seattle, taking into account the personal preferences of its workforce and the state of its business (Thomas, 2021).

Global Workplace Analytics's Mobile/Remote/Hybrid Workplace Savings Calculator™suggests that companies can save around $11,000 per employee per year if they allow their employees to work remotely 50 percent of the time – taking into account productivity levels, lower real estate costs, reduced absenteeism and turnover (Global Workplace Analytics, 2022).

A New York-based real estate developer of office, retail and residential spaces, is eyeing unique perks to entice tenants. It's launching an outdoor workspace program for its four office towers at Hudson Yards, where tenants can book spaces outdoors with Wi-Fi for meetings and calls (Thomas, 2021).

Few examples about how much real companies are currently saving because of remote workFlexjobs saved $5 million from remote work, IBM reduced real estate costs by $50 million.McKesson indicates savings of $2 million a year. Sun Microsystems' real estate costs have sunk by $68 million a year. Data is retrieved from Global Workplace Analytics' overview of costs and benefits of remote work(Global Workplace Analytics, 2022).

Cost to Employees
Utilities cost surge when people work from home, in cities with extreme temperatures, air conditioning/heating costs can be immense. Other expenses may include a personal computer/laptop, printer, office supplies. Coffee, food, snacks, beverages replace free coffee machines and subsidised canteens. Mostly homes are not equipped with professional table and chair resulting in chronic back pain from poor ergonomics. While working from home people take fewer breaks, reducing overall movement and exacerbating medical issues (The Economic Times, 2021).

In a knowledge economy, an organization's success will still depend on face-to-face interaction, collaboration and serendipity. With universal flexible working, the office could become a vital anchor. "When you're trying to attract, retain and nurture top talent, the workplace plays a really significant part in how people perceive a business," says Michael Holloway, general manager of property investment at Kiwi Property, one of New Zealand's largest real estate firms. "Rather than doing a job interview on a videoconference, you want to go into their space and see how they value other members of staff."The office has an arguably even more important role in providing learning opportunities for younger employees, says Jim Coleman, head of economics at WSP in London. "A lot of developing people is not formal training, it's all the other interactions. There's still a lot to be gained from being together as a team" (WPS-Insights, 2022).

Isolation and distancing are intangible but they still cost a lot in terms of social skills, depression, stress, anxiety and other health issues. Along with that fewer professional relationships and slashed networking opportunities lead to a drop in opportunities and income (The Economic Times, 2021b).

Benefit to Employees

Better work life balance Many remote jobs also come with flexible schedules, which means that workers can start and end their day as they choose, as long as their work is complete and leads to strong outcomes. *Less Commute Stress* The average one-way commuting time in the U.S. is 27.1 minutes—that's nearly an hour each day spent getting to and from work, and it really adds up. According to the Auto Insurance Centre, commuters spend about 100 hours commuting and 41 hours stuck in traffic each year. The time savings can allow employees to focus on priorities outside of work, like getting extra sleep in the morning, spending more time with family, getting in a workout, or eating a healthy breakfast. *A Customizable Office* Being able to create a comfortable home office is an excellent benefit of remote work. Employees can choose customizable ergonomic chair or health issues that require specialized office equipment, employees can set up home office accordingly. FlexJobs' 2020 survey found that workers who thought they might be more productive working from home actually were more productive when working remotely. Just over half of respondents (51%) said that they are more productive working from home during the pandemic. When asked why, many cited fewer interruptions and quiet work environments (68% for both) as part of the reason for their increased productivity (Courtney, 2022).

The effects of the crisis on working mothers are likely to be persistent, due to high returns to experience in the labour market. Beyond the immediate crisis, there are opposing forces which may ultimately promote gender equality in the labour market. First, businesses are rapidly adopting flexible work arrangements, which are likely to persist. Second, there are also many fathers who now have to take primary responsibility for child care, which may erode social norms that currently lead to a lopsided distribution of the division of labour in house work and child care (Alon, et. al., 2020).

Rationale

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact fundamentally changed the way many organizations used to operate. Working from home is currently seems to be necessary or appeared to be the only way to keep the things moving. Information technology-based organizations are bit acquainted with the process of work from home but for other industries it is quite challenging. The purpose of this research is to explore the overall work from home experience along with identifying the pitfalls and positive impacts of working from home across various industries and sectors.

Objectives

- To explore the perspective of employees across various industries towards work from home.
- To explore the perspective of HR professionals across various industries towards work from home.
- To explore association between the challenges of working from home across various age groups, experience level, qualification, etc. of employees.
- To suggest measures which can ease out the entire work from home experience for employees, HR professionals and the organisation.

Research Methodology

The Study

The present study is suggestive in nature and it is an exploratory study which explores the concept of work from home and the perception of employees and HR professionals through a questionnaire-based survey. The target population was the employees and HR professionals who are working from home.

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Tools for Data Collection

The survey tool consisted of 11 items under the head of demographic profile and 22 items for the main survey. There were 104 respondents of employee category and 29 respondents of HR category; the respondents belonged to various industries across multiple locations. Personal interviews, talks, opinions, suggestions were observed and noted for different stakeholders.

Tools for Analysis

The tools applied are Descriptive Analysis, Text Analytics, Independent 't' Test and Chi Square Test. Text Analytics of subjective questions was done through word cloud.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis refers to transformation of raw data into a form that will facilitate easy understanding and interpretation. Descriptive analysis deals with summary measures relating to the sample data. The first thing to do when data analysis was taken up was to describe the sample. Characteristics of sample data gathered during primary survey were described as below:

Descriptive Analysis – Employees

S. No.	Variable	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age (Years)	18-24	10	9.61
		25-34	45	43.26
		35-44	47	45.19
		45-54	2	1.92
		Total	104	100
2.	Band	Executive	54	51.92
		Manager	26	25
		Sr. Manager	16	15.38
		Director and above	8	7.69
		Total	104	100
3.	Organization Strength	0-50 Employees	15	14.42
		50-500 Employees	23	22.11
		500-1000 Employees	4	3.84
		1000 Plus Employees	62	59.61
		Total	104	100
4.	Location of Organization - Offices/Branches	Only One	15	15.6
		Across the State	1	0.961
		Across the Country	17	16.34
		International	71	68.26
		Total	104	100
5.	Qualification	Doctorate	1	0.961
		Post Graduate	53	50.96
		Graduate	49	47.11
		Under Graduate	1	0.961
		Total	104	100
6.	Work Experience	0-5 Years	28	26.92
		5-10 Years	20	19.23
		More than 10 Years	56	53.84

7.	Location	Bangalore	18	17.30
		Chennai	2	1.92
		Delhi NCR	8	7.69
		Dewas	1	0.961
		Hyderabad	3	2.88
		Indore	34	32.69
		Mumbai	10	9.61
		Pune	18	17.30
		Aboard/Out of India	10	9.61
		Total	104	100

		Total	104	100

Results

Maximum respondents are of age group 35-44 years and minimum respondents are of 45-54 age group**.** Maximum respondents are executive band and minimum respondents are director band. Maximum respondents are from 1000 plus employee strength organizations and minimum respondents are of 500 -1000 employee's strength organizations. Maximum respondents are of organizations having international offices/branches and minimum respondents are of organizations having interstate offices/branches. Maximum respondents are post graduates and minimum respondents are undergraduate. Maximum respondents are of 10 plus years of work experience and minimum respondents are of 5-10 years work experience. Maximum respondents are from Indore location and minimum respondents are from Dewas location.

Descriptive Analysis – HR Professionals

S. No.	Variable	Range	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age (Years)	18-24	2	6.89
		25-34	17	58.62
		35-44	10	34.48
		45-54	0	0
		Total	29	100
2.	Band	Executive	11	37.93
		Manager	13	44.82
		Sr. Manager	3	10.34
		Director and above	2	6.89
		Total	29	100
3.	Organization Strength	0-50 Employees	4	13.79
		50-500 Employees	7	24.13
		500-1000 Employees	1	3.44
		1000 Plus Employees	17	58.62
		Total	29	100
4	Location of Organization - Offices/Branches	Only One	4	13.79
		Across the State	3	10.34
		Across the Country	9	31.03
		International	13	44.82
		Total	29	100

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5.	Qualification	Doctorate	0	0
		Post Graduate	23	79.31
		Graduate	6	20.68
		Under Graduate	0	0
		Total	29	100
6.	Work Experience	0-5 Years	10	34.48
		5-10 Years	9	31.03
		More than 10 Years	10	34.48
		Total	29	100
7.	Location	Bangalore	1	3.44
		Chennai	2	6.89
		Delhi NCR	2	6.89
		Hyderabad	2	6.89
		Indore	8	27.58
		Mumbai	10	34.48
		Pune	4	13.79
		Total	29	100

Results
Maximum respondents are of age group 25-34 years and minimum respondents are of 45-54 age group**.** Maximum respondents are of Manager band and minimum respondents are director band. Maximum respondents are from 1000 plus employee strength organizations and minimum respondents are of 500 -1000 employee's strength organizations. Maximum respondents are of organizations having international offices/branches and minimum respondents are of organizations having interstate offices/branches. Maximum respondents are post graduates and minimum respondents are undergraduate. Maximum respondents are of 10 plus years and 0-5 years of work experience and minimum respondents are of 5-10 years' work experience. Maximum respondents are from Mumbai location and minimum respondents are from Bangalore location.

Text Analysis through Word Cloud/Text Cloud/Tag Cloud
The survey questionnaire also carries few subjective items and the responses are in textual form. Word cloud is the best way to highlight the raw data. A word cloud is a collection, or cluster, of words depicted in different sizes. The bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it is mentioned within a given text and the more important it is.

The data collected from subjective questions is analysed through word cloud and on the basis of appearance frequency of words in the given text, they are presented in bigger and bolder font. Word clouds are prepared through free online tool called as word cloud(www.WordClouds.com).

1. Affiliation/Organization of Respondents
Respondents were asked about the name of the organization they are associated with. Word cloud as mentioned in Figure 3 carries the organization name of the survey respondents.

Figure 3: Source: Self-Created, with the help of www.WordClouds.com

2. Skill Sets of Respondents

Respondents were asked about their skillsets and the word cloud mentioned in Figure 4 carried the skill set key words of the respondents.

Figure4: Source: Self-Created, with the help of www.WordClouds.com

3. Mode of Explaining Basic Hygiene to the Employees

Survey instrument asked respondents to mention the mode through which their organization explained basic hygiene during covid environment. Figure5 carries key words from the responses.

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Figure5: Source: Self-Created, with the help of www.WordClouds.com

4. Measures taken for Reduction of Employee Stress Level

Working online during covid environment is stress inducing and the survey instrument enquired about the measures taken by the organization in reducing employee stress level. Figure 6 carry information about those key words.

Figure 6: Source: Self-Created, with the help of www.WordClouds.com

Statistical Analysis

1. Independent 't' Test on Employee Responses

		Hypotheses	Respective p Values	Result
H$_{01}$		**There is no significant differencebetween Male Employees and Female Employees regarding:**		
	Gender	i. Favourite mode of work	0.857	Accepted
		ii.Utilization of extra time	0.977	Accepted
		iii. Major missing about in office work	0.652	Accepted
		iv. Major challenge in working from home"	0.818	Accepted
H$_{02}$		**There is no significant difference between organizations of 0 – 50**		

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	Employees and organizations of 1000 plus Employees regarding:		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.721	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.266	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.093	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from	0.739	Accepted
Organizational Strength	**There is no significant difference between organizations of 50 – 500 Employees and organizations of 1000 plus Employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.935	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.843	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.879	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.871	Accepted
H_{o3}	**There is no significant difference between 5 – 10 years experienced Employees and 10 year plus experienced Employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.965	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.592	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.904	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	**0.014**	**Rejected**
WorkExperience	**There is no significant difference between 0 – 5 years experienced Employees and 10 year plus experienced Employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.798	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.390	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.113	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	**0.026**	**Rejected**
H_{04}	**There is no significant difference between 18 – 24 years old Employees and 45 – 55 years old Employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.274	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.185	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.421	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.003	Accepted
Age Band	**There is no significant difference between 18 – 24 years old Employees and 35 – 44 years old Employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.361	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.333	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.436	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from	0.374	Accepted

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	home		
	There is no significant difference between 25 – 34 years old Employees and 35 – 44 years old Employees regarding:		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.805	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.560	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.366	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.086	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between Executive level employees and Director and above level employees regarding:		
H$_{05}$	i. Favourite mode of work	0.189	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.168	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.488	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.454	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between Manager level employees and Director and above level employees regarding:		
Designation	i. Favourite mode of work	0.464	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.972	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.224	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.568	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between Sr. Manager level employees and Director and above level employees regarding:		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.423	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.103	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.352	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.248	Accepted
H$_{06}$	**There is no significant differencebetweenonly one branch and across the country office branches regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	**0.035**	**Rejected**
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.992	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.760	Accepted
Office Branches	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.615	Accepted
	There is no significant differencebetween across the country office branches and international level office branches regarding:		

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	i. Favourite mode of work	**0.006**	**Rejected**
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.644	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.432	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	0.859	Accepted
H$_{06}$ **Employee Qualification**	**There is no significant difference between graduate employees and post graduate employees regarding:**		
	i. Favourite mode of work	0.269	Accepted
	ii. Utilization of extra time	0.143	Accepted
	iii. Major missing about in office work	0.330	Accepted
	iv. Major challenge in working from home	**0.028**	**Rejected**

't' Test Results on Employee Data Implies thatthere is significant difference in "Major challenge in working from home" between 5 – 10 years experienced Employees and 10 year plus experienced Employees.There is significant difference in "Major challenge in working from home" between 0 – 5 years experienced Employees and 10 year plus experienced Employees.There is significant difference in "Favourite Mode of Work" between only one branch and across the country office branches.There is significant difference in "Favourite Mode of Work" between across the country office branches and international level office branches.There is significant difference in "Major challenge in working from home" between across the graduate employees and post graduate employees.

2. Independent 't' Test on HR Responses

	Hypothesis	**p Value**	**Result**
H$_{01}$ **Work Experience**	There is no significant differencebetween 5 – 10 years experienced HRs and 10 year plus experienced HRs regarding:		
	i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.360	Accepted
	ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.942	Accepted
	iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	**0.002**	**Rejected**
	There is no significant difference between 0 - 5 years experienced HRs and 10 year plus experienced HRs regarding:		
	i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.810	Accepted
	ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.331	Accepted
	iii.Organization's preferred mode of work	0.051	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between 0 - 5 years experienced HRs and 5 - 10 years experienced HRs regarding:		
	i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.261	Accepted
	ii. Organization's ability to provide technical	0.305	Accepted

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		assistance effectively		
		iii.Organization's preferred mode of work	0.192	Accepted
Qualification	H₀₂	There is no significant difference between GraduateHRs and Post graduateHRs regarding:		
		i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.986	Accepted
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.503	Accepted
		iii.Organization's preferred mode of work	0.462	Accepted
Organizational Strength		**There is no significant differencebetween HRs of 50 – 500 employee organization and HRs of 1000 plus employee organization regarding:**		
	H₀₃	**i. Major challenge in providing work from home**	**0.030**	**Rejected**
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.121	Accepted
		iii.Organization's preferred mode of work	0.224	Accepted
		There is no significant differencebetween HRs of 0 – 50 employees organization and HRs of 1000 plus employees organization regarding:		
		i. Major challenge in providing work from home	**0.002**	**Rejected**
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	**0.035**	**Rejected**
		iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	**0.011**	**Rejected**
Designation	**H₀₄**	**There is no significant difference between Executive HRs and Director HRs regarding:**		
		i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.096	Accepted
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	**0.042**	**Rejected**
		iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	0.630	Accepted
		There is no significant differencebetween Executive HRs and Manager HRs regarding:		
		i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.337	Accepted
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.410	Accepted
		iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	0.229	Accepted
		There is no significant difference between Executive HRs and Sr. Manager HRs regarding:		
		i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.051	Accepted
		ii. Organization's ability to provide technical	0.606	Accepted

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	assistance effectively		
	iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	0.519	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between Sr. Manager HRs and Sr. Manager HRs regarding:		
	Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.525	Accepted
	Organization's preferred mode of work	0.911	Accepted
	There is no significant difference between 25-34 years old HRs and 35-44 years old HRs regarding:		
	i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.257	Accepted
	ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.728	Accepted
	iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	0.195	Accepted
H₀₅ **Age Band**	**There is no significant difference between 18-24 years old HRs and 35-44 years old HRs regarding:**		
	i. Major challenge in providing work from home	0.525	Accepted
	ii. Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively	0.343	Accepted
	iii. Organization's preferred mode of work	0.192	Accepted
H₀₆ **Gender**	**There is no significant difference between male HRs and female HRs regarding:**		
	Taking care of employees which are thrown out of their accommodation by land lords because of COVID-19	0.934	Accepted
	Major challenge in providing work from home	0.122	Accepted
	Organization's preferred mode of work	0.699	Accepted

"t" Test Results on HR Data Implies thatthere is significant difference in "Organization's preferred mode of work" between 5 – 10 years experienced HRs and 10 year plus experienced HRs.There is significant difference in "Major challenge in providing work from home" between HRs of 50 – 500 employees organization and HRs of 1000 plus employees' organization.There is significant difference in "Major challenge in providing work from home" between HRs of 0 – 50 employees organization and HRs of 1000 plus employees' organization.There is significant difference in "Organization's ability to provide technical assistance effectively" between HRs of 0 – 50 employees organization and HRs of 1000 plus employees organization.There is significant difference in "Organization's preferred mode of work" between HRs of 0 – 50 employees' organization and HRs of 1000 plus employees organization.There is significant difference in "Organization's preferred mode of work" between Executive HRs and Director HRs.

3. Chi Square Test on Employee Responses

	Hypotheses	p Value	Result
H₀	There is no significant association between		

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Employee Age	Age of employees and:		
	Favourite mode of work	0.183	Accepted
	Utilization of extra time	0.801	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work	0.322	Accepted
	Major challenge in working from home	0.163	Accepted
H_0 **Position Band**	There is no significant association between position band and:		
	Major challenge in working from home.	0.324	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work.	**0.024**	**Rejected**
	Utilization of extra time.	0.045	Rejected
	Favourite mode of work.	0.456	Accepted
H_0 **Organizational Strength**	There is no significant association between		
	Favourite mode of work.	0.577	Accepted
	Utilization of extra time.	0.434	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work.	0.146	Accepted
	Major challenge in working from home.	0.123	Accepted
H_0 **Office Branches**	There is no significant association between office branches and:		
	Favourite mode of work.	0.123	Accepted
	Utilization of extra time.	0.925	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work.	0.566	Accepted
	Major challenge in working from home.	0.883	Accepted
H_0 **Qualification**	There is no significant association between Qualification and:		
	Favourite mode of work	0.569	Accepted
	Utilization of extra time	0.237	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work	0.849	Accepted
	Major challenge in working from home	**0.043**	**Rejected**
H_0 **Work Experience**	There is no significant association between work experience and:		
	Favourite mode of work	0.214	Accepted
	Utilization of extra time	0.82	Accepted
	Major missing about in office work	0.24	Accepted
	Major challenge in working from home	**0.041**	**Rejected**

Chi Square Test Results on Employee Data Implies thatthere is significant association between position band and major missing about in office work.There is significant association between qualification and major challenge in working from home.There is significant association between work experience and major challenge in working from home.

4. Chi Square Test on HR Responses

	Hypothesis	p Value	Result
H_{01}	There is no significant association betweenAge Band of HRs and:		
	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.159	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	**0.022**	**Rejected**
Age Band	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working	0.477	Accepted

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	employees.		
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.469	Accepted
H₀₂	There is no significant association between position band of HRs and:		
	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.463	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.100	Accepted
Position Band	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	0.514	Accepted
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.926	Accepted
	There is no significant association between organizational strength and:		
H₀₃	**Organization's preferred mode of work.**	**0.024**	**Rejected**
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	**0.011**	**Rejected**
Organizational Strength	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	0.714	Accepted
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.679	Accepted
H₀₄	**There is no significant association between office branches and:**		
	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.106	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.062	Accepted
Office Branches	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	0.444	Accepted
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.450	Accepted
H₀₅	**There is no significant association between qualification of HRs and:**		
	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.516	Accepted
Qualification	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.368	Accepted
H₀₆	**There is no significant association between work experience of HRs and:**		
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.617	Accepted
Work Experience	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	0.248	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.662	Accepted
	Organization's preferred mode of work.	**0.027**	**Rejected**
H₀₇	There is no significant association between job location of HRs and:		

Job Location	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.458	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.932	Accepted
	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	0.093	Accepted
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.303	Accepted
H_{08}	There is no significant association between industry and:		
Industry	Organization's preferred mode of work.	0.159	Accepted
	Organization's major challenge in providing work from home.	0.083	Accepted
	Measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employees.	**0.017**	**Rejected**
	Explaining basic hygiene to employees who are working from home.	0.248	Accepted

Chi Square Test Results on HR data Implies thatthere is significant association between Age Band of HRs and organization's major challenge in providing work from home.There is significant association between organizational strength and organization's preferred mode of work.There is significant association between organizational strength and organization's major challenge in providing work from home.There is significant association between work experience of HRs and organization's preferred mode of work.There is significant association between industry and measures taken by organization to reduce the stress level of remote working employee.

Survey Result
Employee Survey
Respondents miss during working from home – on the spot work related help from colleagues (49%), lunch/tea break with colleagues (29%), non-work-related conversations (16%), office food/tea/coffee/snacks (6%), this signifies the importance of team work and mutual bonding between office colleagues. Respondents utilized the commute time which is saved in work from home – quality time with family (38%), upskilling (24%), devoting extra time for office work (21%), personal/family chores (17%); These findings stress on the fact that employees do need extra stress-free time and the same will reciprocate with high work efficiency. Most of employees irrespective of industry, skillset, job location, designation, etc. are in favour of work from home for few days in a week (53%), work from home only in case of emergency (25%), in-office (13%), work from home (9%). Most of the organizations (86%) have explained basic hygiene to their employees. Majority (92%) of respondent's organizations were able to provide technical assistance effectively. 57% of respondents said that their organization has taken measures to reduce the stress level of remote working employees, 30% of respondents were working from home before covid 19, 47% started working from home before lockdown, 19% started working immediately after lockdown, 4% started working from home one week after lockdown. The major challenge (31%) while working from home is technology/connectivity and background distractions (31%), online availability of team members (19%), task assignment (10%), getting the work done on time (9%).

Tools used for online meetings, Webex (42%), Zoom (19%), Microsoft teams (17%), Google meet (10%), Skype (8%).

HR Survey

59% HR respondents were not sure about allowing work from home after covid as well, 24% will allow work from home and 17% will not allow to work from home after covid. 93% of HR respondents have explained basic hygiene to employees working from home. 66% of HR respondents didn't bother about the employees who were thrown out of their accommodation by landlords because of covid, 36% have taken care of employees who were thrown out of their accommodation by the landlords. 93% HR respondents were able to provide technical assistance effectively. 66% of respondents have taken measures about reducing the stress level of employees working from home. 34% of respondents were working from home before lockdown, 45% allowed working immediately after lockdown, 21% were working from home before covid 19. The major challenge for HR respondents while working from home is technology/connectivity (59%), employee performance tracking (21%), getting the work done on time (14%), task assignment (3%), online availability of employees/communication (3%). Tools used for online meetings, Webex (31%), Zoom (28%), Skype (21%), Microsoft teams and life size (7%), GTM and Slack (3%). Organization's preferred mode of work – In-office (41%), work from home only in case of emergency (31%), work from home for few days in a week (28%).

Qualitative Analysis

On the basis of literature review and as per talk and discussion with employer and employees it results out that benefit to company is more important than the costs to the company which normally appears to one time cost where as majority of benefits are accruing on recurring basis hence benefits over rights on costs as far as company's perspective is concerned. In addition to it, qualitative benefits to employees are more in comparison with cost to employees. Hence it is a win-win situation for both employer and employees. It was also revealed that companies are reclassifying their jobs as per their requirements with regard to only jobs doable at office premises, jobs doable at home or remote places, jobs doable by rotation of both the things together at an optimal mix with reference to nature of the job and office space available on rotation basis or day basis and as per customised needs of the time.

Discussion

There is no one -size-fit-all solution, it differs from organization to organization even within organization it differs from function to function and department to department. The important thing is to get the answers about what is important for any particular job role, function, department or organization; level of collaboration required, feasibility and optimization of work etc. Covid scenario and post covid scenario has its own costs and benefits for employees as well as employers. New strategies need to be developed taking caring care of all the related factors in post covid situation.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the employees prefer to work from office along with the flexibility to work from home for few days. The crucial thing is to have a balance between personal and professional life, working from home saves the commute time but the quick support from colleagues is not possible through virtual meetings.

Organizations mostly want employees to work from office though there are various advantages to the organizations as well in providing work from home. The efforts done by the organizations in explaining basic hygiene and stress management of employees are commendable. Tech savvy HR faced the transition in better manner

Statistical analysis concludes that the challenges in working from home and favourite mode of work varies between the employees of various experience levels as well as educational qualification. The major missing about in-office work also varies between various job positions.

Suggestions
Employees should try to complete the assigned tasks on time and gain the confidence of HR, this will help in justifying the mode of work be it work from office or work from home. Communication should be very clear and transparent in case of any issues, work from home employees need to stay connected with HR.

The employers should think of providing few days of work from home post COVID also, hybrid work model which allows work from office and home both interchangeably. The basic training of conducting and attending online meetings should be provided to the employees. The organizations other than that of IT sector should also provide basic computer skills training to the employees. Senior employees who do not have any exposure of working from home should be given assistance about proper execution of tasks in remote working also.

The HR professionals should conduct regular online meetings with the remote employees for grievance redressal and stress management. The process of task allocation and performance assessment should be very clear to the employees. The HR should keep dialog with the team leads for understanding the progress of work and the related issues. Monthly online birthday and festival celebration, online team games and other such activities may also help in reducing stress and increasing bonding. The flexibility in working hours may also help the employees in performing their job in better manner.

Employees should be encouraged to help each other in smooth conduction of duties. Thank-you notes can be counted on monthly basis and the employees who receives maximum thank notes will be recognized with some rewards. This will inculcate the feeling of being helpful to others while working from home as well.

Office/workplaces needs to be redesigned according to organizational priorities. Open spaces, lawns, gardens, balcony, may be developed as open-air meeting places for a safe and healthy work environment. Categorization of employees for work from home or work from office based on job role, work priorities as well employee preference may help in accomplishing the organizational goals.

Communication should be more frequent; HR professionals need to know the thought process of employees regularly. HR can come up with concept of "Zero Hour" on weekly basis, i.e., one hour devoted by HR only to listen grievances in which employees can freely discuss issues and HR can work on solution. It may help in coping up with employee burnouts, stress, frustration and other such issues.

Implications

It is implicated that company and employees both are in win-win situation in context with work from home and remote working. The concept of virtual organization is gradually increasing. Fixed overheads may be not be hindrance to extra ordinary growth objective. Importance of geographical presence and geopolitical presence is decreasing in physical management of organization. Workforce diversity may be used in favour of organization. Help of experts may be ensured which was otherwise not available due to their personal and geographical constraints. Work from home increases individual's virtual mobility. Work from home is a boon in disguise.

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