

The Perception of Impacts of Work from Home on Employee Well-being

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This empirical study reports the results of the effect of the perception of remote working on employees' well-being in the Information Technology industry. This paper measures employees' perception of well-being by considering pre-validated items and measured each construct like psychological well-being, subjective well-being, physical well-being. The effects of different aspects of work from home have been studied on employee well-being in the Information Technology industry. Simple linear regression has been used to understand the effect of the perception of work from home on the perception of employee's subjective, psychological and physical well-being. Based on a sample of 76 IT employees this research has validated the measurement of each construct through multiple measurement items and established an indicative relationship between the perception of WFH and on employee well-being.

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Introduction

Work from home is a practice that emerged towards the end of the 20th century. This improved work-life balance since employees could save commuting time and cost, and avail flexibility in work schedules. However, this was mostly introduced in the IT sector, on an occasional basis under certain circumstances. When the pandemic hit the entire world, employees were asked to work from home completely to maintain social distancing. Post-pandemic, home-based telework has been introduced in almost all sectors and in most companies. It is now an important HR policy that also has its effects on employee well-being.

Employees are becoming more comfortable with work arrangements that can mix more flexibly with family care (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). However, this may have positive as well as negative effects. On the one hand, it pro-

vides more time for family care (Bailyn, 1989; Crossan & Burton, 1993; Olson, 1987), task autonomy, or traveling time and cost reduction. On the other hand, it can lead to work-family conflict (Gurstein, 1991; Leidner, 1988; Olson & Primps, 1984).

Studies have shown that longer working hours (Brannen, 2000; Duxbury & Higgins, 2001), and an increasing number of working parents (Office for National Statistics, 2007) have been creating examples of role conflict. Such work and home interference can lead to occupational as well as personal stress. This has negative effects like increased absenteeism and decreased job performance (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Frone, Yardley & Markel, 1997) at work, reduced life satisfaction, and increased physical and psychological strain at a personal level (Ford, Heinen & Langkamer, 2007; T. H. Hammer et al., 2004).

It is therefore important to study organizational culture that supports employees in order to maintain work-life balance. Given the current scenario, it is important for organizations to incorporate work arrangements that mix more flexibly with family care (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Employees who perceive receiving organizational support have shown greater job satisfaction (Allen, 2001), increased organizational commitment (Lyness et al., 1999) and decreased turnover intentions (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999).

One of the policies introduced by most companies during the pandemic is

the work from home arrangement, and this has stayed as an effort to support employees in balancing work and personal spheres (Bartik et al., 2020). Although there are many success stories that we hear about this new setup, it is inevitable that these changes will eventually affect the relationship between work and domestic lives, which in turn will affect productivity.

Employees reported less work family conflict and stress and experienced higher work engagement and performance on working from home days.

Although companies have adopted this approach of teleworking, there are still not many studies done to understand the effectiveness of working from home in the long run. Therefore, there is a risk to organizations if telework is used and managed without properly understanding the effects and outcomes. Studying the intraindividual aspects and day to day fluctuations in working from home is necessary to have more insights into this arrangement. Work from home aspects were studied (Delanoëje & Verbruggen 2020) and four outcomes have been found, namely work family conflict, work engagement, stress, and performance (Allen et al., 2015). From these studies, it has been seen that employees reported less work family conflict and stress and experienced higher work engagement and performance on working from home days. Other studies to investigate the effects of working from home show that

employees experienced less negative affective well being and more positive affective well being on days when they worked from home (Vega, Anderson & Kaplan, 2015).

Theoretical Background

The 2-year long pandemic has caused an immense increase in telework or remote work arrangements across the globe. During the lockdown, it was compulsory for all organizations to introduce teleworking. However, the practice continues even post pandemic, since it has been found to be reaping more benefits than challenges.

Although working from home is not a new concept, the compulsory shift to remote working overnight had led to many challenges for employees. Telecommuting and remote working, both involve working outside the office. Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015) conducted a comprehensive review of a wide range of telecommuting studies. As per the findings, telecommuting has two parts: working from a location other than the actual work location or office and using technology to perform work-related tasks.

Work from home fosters improved family and work integration. It also has positive effects like less fatigue and stress and better productivity. However, the lines between work and home have blurred and it can have a few negative impacts like limited support from organizations, extended working hours causing more stress, etc.

Psychological well-being generally deals with people's feelings about their everyday life activities (e.g. Bradburn, 1969; Warr & Wall, 1975; Campbell, 1976). This can also be defined as positive mental health (eg. Jahoda, 1958; Herzberg, 1966; Berg, 1975). The concepts of positive self-evaluation, learning from previous experience, freedom from constraints and some degree of personal success are included in this well-being. It takes into consideration an individual's daily affective aspects.

RQ1: Is there any relationship between work from home and physical well-being?

H01: There is no influence of work from home on employees' physical well-being.

Ha1: There is an influence of work from home on employees' physical well-being.

Working from home can be described as an 'escape' from the office working environment (Collins et al., 2016: 171) and in most cases, it has been a more pleasant working environment as per studies (Tremblay, 2002: 167). Research has shown that employees had more job satisfaction while working from home (Binder, 2016; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Fonner & Roloff, 2015; Redman et al., 2009; Wheatley, 2017).

However, homeworking has also led to more stress in cases of overtime work. Employees often prefer working from home so that they can carry out other

responsibilities simultaneously. This has resulted in longer hours of work causing increased stress. The extra earning due to overtime (Bell & Freeman, 2001; Schroeder & Warren, 2004; Pannenberg 2005), is not sufficient to reduce the work-family conflict and negative reactions from family members (Ojala, Nätti & Anttila 2014).

Subjective well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. These evaluations are based on how an individual makes a judgment of his/her life satisfaction as a whole or one's experience of pleasant and unpleasant emotions in life. High subjective well-being is a result of high life satisfaction and positive emotions like joy and happiness (Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991).

RQ2: Is there any relationship between work from home and subjective well-being?

H02: There is no influence of work from home on employees' subjective well-being.

Ha2: There is an influence of work from home on employees' subjective well-being.

There are significant direct benefits to employees during work from home, in addition to the other benefits spoken about. It saves daily traveling time and cost and allows employees to balance between work and family life. It offers more autonomy in terms of work, and flexibility of time. Employees get an opportunity to focus more on work-life bal-

ance which promotes a healthier lifestyle, which affects employee well-being positively.

Physical well-being is widely considered as the absence of any bodily illness. It encompasses "bodily health and functioning" (Grant et al., 2007: 53). Physical well-being is receiving increasing attention in management research and is an important well-being outcome in the experience of work-related stress (e.g., Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

With the increase in occupational stress, the study of employee well-being is becoming vital to every industry.

RQ3: Is there any relationship between work from home and physical well-being?

H03: There is no influence of work from home on employees' physical well-being.

Ha3: There is an influence of work from home on employees' physical well-being.

As per the literature study, it has been found that many papers on employee well-being have drawn their models from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) to understand which factors determine employee well-being. It specifies how working in a specific working condition can either have positive or negative outcomes. This model suggests that every working environment can be categorized into job demands and job resources. The demands include the

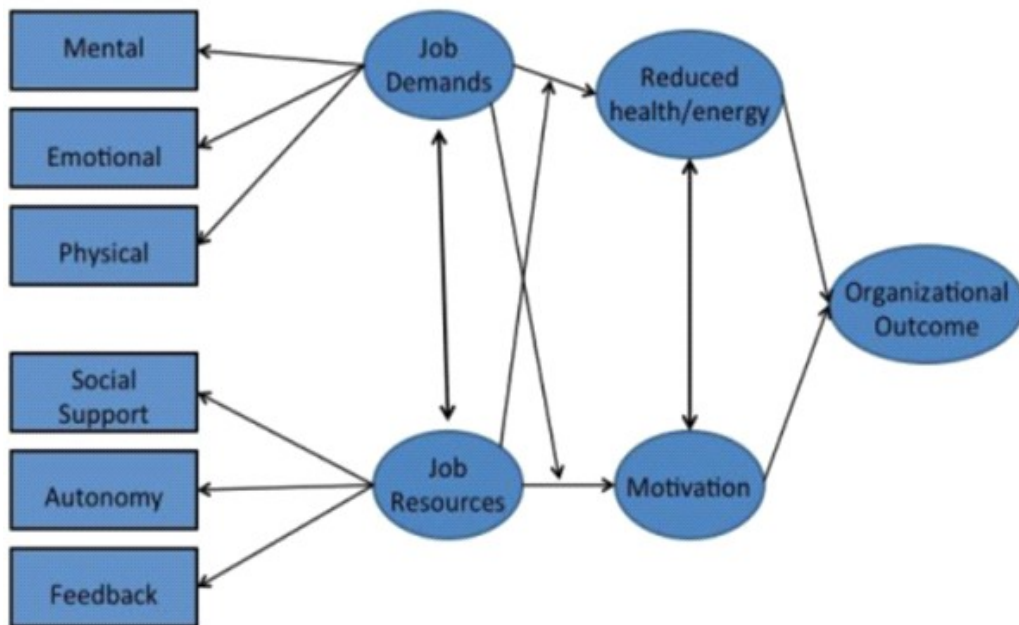
physical or psychological efforts or costs in carrying out a job (Demerouti et al., 2001). The resources include the aspects of the job that help in achieving the goals, by reducing the physical or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). Occupational health psychologists suggest that when job demands are high, organizations should be more proactive in incorporating factors that keep employees healthy (Richter & Hacker, 1998).

This model suggests that job demands that require sustained efforts and skills and job resources that may be functional in meeting those demands are related to different dimensions of employee well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The job demands and resources, in this case,

are affected by various external factors (Bakker et al., 2003) and, changes in such factors influencing the demands and resources, are bound to alter the levels of well-being (Brauchli et al., 2013).

Empirical studies have proven the positive relationship between work overload and work–family conflict (Butler et al., 2005; Heponiemi et al., 2008). Therefore, it is fair to assume that job demands like work overload or any other distractions during work from home can lead to a decrease in employee well-being. On the other hand, job autonomy and participation in decision making, and opportunities for development are job resources that can significantly improve well-being (Jenkins, 1991; Karasek, 1998).

Fig. 1. Job Demand-Resource Model



Research Gap

A lot of studies have been done till now on work from home and employee well-being separately. Research work done in countries like the UK, USA, Australia have been discussed at length to understand the effects of work from home on different aspects of employees' well-being at work and how well they manage their family lives. Also, few papers have studied the effects on HR policies and employee well-being and the recent emergence of the mental well-being of employees. While WFH has become a popular subject of study since the pandemic, when it is coupled with employee health and mental well-being, it becomes a whole new area of research. The concept of work from home and employee well-being have not much been explored and hence it is difficult to do an extensive literature review in this combined area. The same topic needs much attention for the IT industry in India, as the Indian IT sector mostly serves

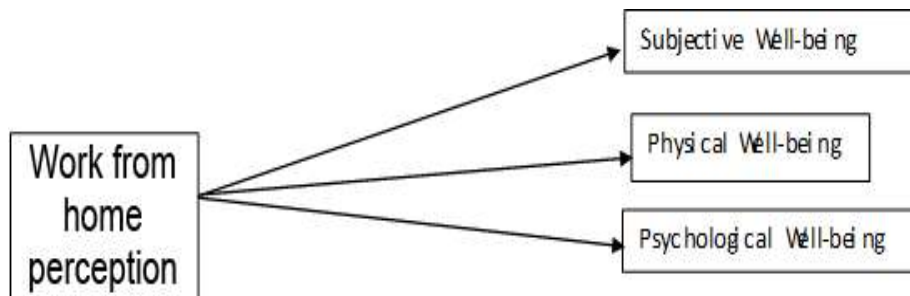
foreign clients at different time zones, and therefore, IT employees mostly face a higher amount of stress. In this paper, we will try to establish a three-dimensional approach towards work from home, the IT sector, and employee well-being (subjective, mental, and physical well-being) in the Indian context.

Objectives

This study will be a meta-analysis based on existing literature and aims at:

- Providing an overview as to which types of resources in the organization add value to employee wellbeing.
- Bringing together all separate strands like Work from Home, workplace resources, employee well-being and inherent resources of the individuals in a common platform.
- Examining the relationship between work from home and employee well-being.

Fig. 2 Relationship between Work from Home & Employee Well-being



Research Methodology

A systematic literature search has been conducted in areas like work from home, employee well-being, factors af-

fecting and consequences of employee well-being (eg. job stress, absenteeism, work-life balance, performance, etc.). A total of approximately 70 papers have been studied. Research work starting

from 2000 till the present has mostly been reviewed. For work from home scenario and the perception of its effect on employee well-being, papers predominantly starting from 2020 have been studied to bring into the picture the Covid-19 scenario. This paper is based on a pilot study on a sample size of 76. They are IT employees at different managerial levels. The study has been done during October-December 2022 period. The primary data has been collected through the survey method using Google forms. The questionnaire has been filled by respondents within 25-55 years of age. The method used is convenient sampling. Data has been analyzed through SPSS

software. A pre-validated questionnaire has been used for the study (Basi,1999; Oyinlade, 2006; Nima, Cloninger, Persson., Sikström, S. & Garcia, 2020; Pradhan & Hati, 2019). Simple linear regression has been used to understand the effect of work from home on employees' subjective, psychological, and physical well-being.

Data Analysis

Data has been collected based on a questionnaire framed by pre-validated items on the perception of psychological, subjective, physical well-being and work from home.

Table 1 Items Used to Measure Employee Well-Being & Reliability Test of Each Construct

Sl No.	Statements	Average	Standard Deviation
Psychological Well-being This quotient is high since employees in the current sample have not faced much challenges psychologically in shifting to work from home.			Cronbach Alpha 0.868
PC1	I easily adapt to daily challenges even in work from home situation.	5.94	1.30
PC2	I manage my responsibilities well even in a remote working arrangement.	6.45	1.06
PC3	In a work from home situation, I have become very flexible when it comes to my job.	6.18	1.31
PC4	I know what is expected from me in my current role and in a remote working arrangement.	6.55	0.79
PC5	I can make decisions wisely now since there is a work life balance due to work from home.	5.91	1.59
PC6	I feel perturbed by the traffic and travelling time and cost, when I regularly go to office.	4.00	1.98
Subjective Well-being The influence of Work from home on subjective well-being is moderately high			Cronbach Alpha 0.747
S1	Mostly I feel happy when I get a chance to work from home.	5.76	1.48
S2-N	The demands of my work interfere with my private and family life while working from home.	6.09	1.33
S3-N	My life has become sorrowful post the pandemic due to family issues in a work from home situation.	5.42	1.94
S4	In future I would prefer to look for jobs which allow remote working.	4.55	1.94

S5	In most ways I feel there can be a perfect work-life balance post work from home.	5.45	1.54
S6	I feel good about myself when I can manage both family and work in a remote working arrangement.		
Physical Well-being There is not much effect on physical well-being as a result of work from home. However, the overall physical well-being quotient is positively affected by WFH			Cronbach Alpha 0.844
PH1	I sleep well during the night since I can complete my job on time as I work from home.	5.09	1.93
PH2	I feel energetic and fresh during work from, since I do not have to travel through traffic	4.67	1.99
PH5	I don't get sick very often after work from home arrangement.	5.12	1.88
PH6	I smoke less when I am working from home and it has improved my health.	4.64	2.38
PH7	I can spend more time in workouts and sports, due to work from home, which makes me satisfied.	4.64	2.10
Perception of Work From Home Perception of work from home among employees is positive, with most employees looking for a hybrid arrangement going forward.			Cronbach Alpha 0.656
WFHN1	Due to this work home situation, there is very little face-to-face interaction with colleagues.	4.55	2.20
WFHP2	I do not find it much difficult to communicate my issues even during work from home since my team is quite approachable.	3.00	1.85
WFHN3	I am often overloaded with work and need to extend beyond my working hours since this remote working arrangement.	4.97	1.91
WFHP1	I like working from home since the traveling time and cost are saved.	5.94	1.58
WFHN5	I am a social person, hence I do not enjoy working from home.	3.27	1.97
WFHN4	I mostly miss the office cafeteria in work from home setup.	4.24	2.09
WFHP3	I want a hybrid arrangement with a mix of work from home and work from the office, I don't want to return to office permanently.	5.85	1.84

The Cronbach Alpha values show that the content validity and reliability of the questionnaire are good.

H01: There is no influence of work from home on employees' subjective well-being.

Ha1: There is an influence of work from home on employees' subjective well-being.

This hypothesis is tested if there is

any effect of work from home on subjective well-being.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics to Understand Employees' Perception on Work from Home and Subjective Well-being

Descriptive Statistics			
Column1	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Subjective Well-being	5.133	1.472	75
IT Employees' Perception of Work from Home	4.236	0.942	75

Table 3 Impact of Employees' Perception of Work from Home on Subjective Well-being

Hypothesis	Beta Co-efficient	Adjusted R ²	p-value	Hypothesis Supported
H1	0.868	0.443	0.000	Yes

Adjusted R²= 0.443 depicts that the model explains 44.3% of the variance in subjective well-being. Or, in other words, 44.3% of the change in employee subjective well-being can be accounted for by work from home. P<0.05, which means that the results are statistically

44.3% of the change in employee subjective well-being can be accounted to work from home.

significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

H02: There is no influence of work from home on employees' psychological well-being.

Ha2: There is an influence of work from home on employees' psychological well-being.

This hypothesis is tested if there is any effect of work from home on psychological well-being.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics to Understand Employees' Perception of Work from Home and Psychological Well-being

Column1	Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AVERAGE (Psychological Well-being)	5.813	1.218	75
AVERAGE (Work from Home)	4.236	0.942	75

Table 5 Impact of Employees' Perception of Work from Home on Psychological Well-being

Hypothesis	Beta Co-efficient	Adjusted R ²	p-value	Hypothesis Supported
H2	0.496	0.132	0.000	Yes

Adjusted R²= 0.132 depicts that the model explains 13.2% of the variance in employee psychological well-being. Or, in other words, 13.2% of the change in psychological well-being can be accounted for by work from home.

13.2% of the change in psychological well-being can be accounted for by work from home.

P<0.05, which means that the results are statistically significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

H03: There is no influence of work from home on employees' physical well-being.

This hypothesis is tested if there is any effect of work from home on physical well-being.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics to Understand Employees’ Perception of Work from Home and Physical Well-being

Descriptive Statistics			
Column1	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
AVERAGE (Physical Well-being)	5.355	1.472	75
AVERAGE (Work from Home)	4.236	0.942	75

Table 7 Impact of Employees’ Perception of Work from Home on Physical Well-being

Hypothesis	Beta Co-efficient	Adjusted R ²	p-value	Hypothesis Supported
H3	0.785	0.242	0.000	Yes

Adjusted R²= 0.242 depicts that the model explains 24.2% of the variance in physical well-being. Or, in other words, 24.2% of the change in physical well-being can be accounted for by work from home.

24.2% of the change in physical well-being can be accounted for by work from home.

P<0.05, which means that the results are statistically significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

From the regression analysis, we see that there is quite an effect on employee’s perception of overall subjective well-being caused by the perception of work from home. However, there is not much effect on employee’s perception of psychological or physical well-being as a result of the remote working arrangement.

Discussion

This paper aims to discuss the effect of work from home on employee well-being (subjective, psychological and physi-

cal well-being). Work from home becoming a mandate since the pandemic, has hit employees’ subjective, physical and psychological well-being differently. Although in most cases it has been seen that subjective well-being has been affected positively due to work from home, the physical and psychological well-being have decreased over time for many employees. This happened mostly due to the lifestyle factors of the employees combined with the homeworking arrangement. These factors include the physical activity, eating habits, social aspects, communication with colleagues and distractions at home.

Subjective well-being has been affected positively due to work from home, the physical and psychological well-being have decreased over time for many employees.

However, in the last 2 years different studies in different locations across the world have shown a preference for working from home as and when required, or a few days every week. Work from home was incorporated as an HR policy in IT sector even before the pandemic. Employees at

certain managerial levels had the provision to opt for it if necessary. After the pandemic, employees were asked to shift to work from home overnight. They faced challenges in coping with the new arrangement, getting themselves upskilled, working at places different from their workstations, and managing the family along with the work. On the other hand, they also had more autonomy at work, more time with family, and less commutation time and cost.

From the present study, we see that although subjective well-being is positively affected to a large extent, psychological and physical well-being are less affected as a result of work from home. However, the sample size used here is 76 which is relatively less. The same study has to be done on a larger sample size for getting more reliable results.

Conclusion & Managerial Implications

In the last 3 years, the world has seen organizations bringing a lot of changes in terms of their policies. All these policies have been mostly directed towards the well-being of employees, especially in or after the pandemic. The organizations had to move to a complete work from home arrangement to curb the spread of the Covid virus, and since then most of the companies, particularly in the IT sector have made this work from home a part of their HR policy. This has led to positive and negative outcomes as we have seen in the literature review.

These findings can lead managers to introduce an arrangement where employ-

ees can work in a hybrid arrangement. This means they can go to work 3-4 days a week, or they have the flexibility to work from home whenever required. The importance of employee well-being has increased over the years, and organizations have introduced policies to cater to it. This necessitates that they take the hybrid arrangement of working as a new policy, so that work life balance is increased and employee well-being is enhanced.

Scope for Future Study

This paper is indicative of the relationship between the perception of work from home and the perception of employee well-being. This is not a conclusive study. The same questionnaire has to be tested using a larger sample and rectifications have to be done based on the findings. The items with lower loading will be dropped and a generalized result can be established.

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