

# THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING FROM HOME FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

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## ***ABSTRACT***

Working from home is worldwide trend and effect companies in various ways. This study focussed on South African circumstances and examined the cost saving implications for a private company and their employees if they would be able and allowed to work from home. Further, relationships between structural and relational factors with experience with virtual work were studied. The Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped the perceptions of employees towards their physical work environment. It is also extremely difficult for an organization for retaining its employees without a physical workspace. Reducing face-to-face communication and contact is the most necessary in today's world. To attract and retain employees, an organization has to develop a high work-life Balance. The 'Work from Home' concept is a breakthrough in the traditional characteristics of work. This concept is being used in almost all sectors, from IT to even teaching.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Benefits for employees for working from home includes that employees are happier working from home than in the office; increased time to spend with the family, less stress of traveling in peak traffic, and the flexibility that comes with working in the home are all contributing factors to their increased happiness (Cassio, 2000:82). It started in the early 1980's that both companies and employees was intrigued by the idea of working from home. It was seen as an alternative to traffic in peak hours, captivity in small cubicles and flexible working hours. A few companies allowed selected employees to work from home as experiment while others were worried about the potential organisational and social hazards of working from home. As a global trend, estimates indicate that home-based/virtual working is becoming increasingly more popular. In the United Kingdom it has more than doubled in popularity in eight years



to 2.4 million employees working from home, and in the United States of America (USA) it is growing between 11% and 20% per year, currently representing over 20 million employees. According to Golden (2006:177), at least 37% of all companies offer working from home arrangements. Teleworking, increasing by 11% per year, is becoming a highly popular way for professionals to ease ever-increasing work demands, yet still fulfil personal and family needs. Distance in time and space was broken with working from home while opportunities for face-to-face communication was reduced.

## II. METHODOLOGY

In this cross-sectional study, people from India were requested to participate in the study. Respondents were contacted and requested to fill the questionnaire online through google forms in WhatsApp. The participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of data. Their prior consent and willingness to participate in survey was taken. Both female and male respondents were included in the study. The study aimed to examine educated and qualified young professionals. within the working age group working from home during the Covid 19 crisis.

A convenient sampling technique was implied for collecting the data. Respondents were included in this study only if they were willing to respond. In total, more than 200 questionnaires were distributed. 138 of the total respondents accepted to participate in the study. The response rate for the study was calculated to be 70% which is sufficient to conduct the further analysis. All the participants who filled the form were employees working from home due to lockdown restrictions imposed by the nation, in order to break the chain of transmission of novel corona virus (Covid -19). The field work of the study was conducted during June to December 2020. Each section had several questions related to a particular construct. The first section in the questionnaire consisted of the basic demographic information of the participants, which includes age, gender, marital status, children, educational level and whether they were willing and able to work from home

## **BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEES**

### **Savings in extra expense:**

One of the advantages of remote working is the saving of extra expenses. In India, apart from rent, traveling is the second major expense for most employees. Also, employees spend extra in the office cafeterias, on petrol price, toll fees, and other miscellaneous items. With work from home, all such extra expenses have been limited.

### **More independence:**

In a normal office environment, you find yourself switching between tasks a lot and get many opinions on a task's priority. But during remote working, with proper time management and discipline, you have more independence regarding your work. This can help you to add your flair to your work, prioritize your tasks, and take ownership of the tasks assigned to you.

### **Improved communication:**

Effective communication at the workplace requires clarity in context, active listening, etc. During the normal office days, you could communicate face-to-face which used to keep miscommunication at bay. However, when working from home, you need to go the extra mile while communicating to keep the team updated about progress, hiccups, etc. so that the team can be on the same page in terms of work progress.

Depending majorly on telecommunication tools might seem like a disadvantage of remote working, but the regular use of communication tools helps in improving communication instead of relying on simply face-to-face communication.

### **More flexibility:**

Another work from home advantage is work flexibility. Without having to travel for work, employees can save up a lot of time and work as per their most productive hours.

## **CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEES**

### **Distractions within the household:**

It is true that when working from home there are no office distractions, but home comes with its own distractions. The home comprises of family members and it is natural that there will be disturbances. You can inform your family members to hold off discussions for post-work hours, lock the door to your workspace or even use noise-cancelling earphones to keep noises at bay.

### **Lack of human contact:**

One of the biggest disadvantages of working from home is the lack of face-to-face communication with friends and colleagues. Communication with other people helps us feel involved, but without it, loneliness and a feeling of isolation take over. To avoid isolation, you can choose to have a video call or voice call with your colleagues and friends.

### **Disruption in work-life balance:**

Another one of the disadvantages of remote working is the lack of work-life balance. Working from home can dissolve the demarcation between work hours and personal life for various reasons. To maintain a healthy work-life balance, it is best to create a clear demarcation between work hours and personal time. Try to start your work the same time you would when in the office and complete your tasks within those hours. Avoid work calls post-work hours unless urgent.

**Risk of feeling burnt out:**

With the reasons for applying for leaves diminishing, the risk of burnout becomes one of the biggest disadvantages of working from home. It is best to take a day or two off when you find yourself anxious or if you feel extremely low and simply need to unwind. Take this time to do what you love to do, meditate, etc., but do keep your gadgets away as it will negate the resting process.

**III.**

**CONCLUSION**

To overcome all the challenges, the person must be able to work without any disturbance. They must be able to work in free space with less noise and easy access to network. They can maintain to do list and fix time for their personal work and office work separately. Hence we can conclude that at current scenario (due to COVID-19) most of the employees got an opportunity to work from home and many companies are encouraging it too. Work from process becomes success depending on the rules followed by the company such as an employee must log in at time and they must report the work they have done at periodic intervals on daily basis. They must communicate with their higher officials and team members to complete the work given to them at time.

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