

Potential Impact of Covid-19 on Occupational Status (Work from Home): A Survey

Dr. C.P.Verma¹, Dr Paresh C. Mohanty²

¹Department of Management, Sanskriti University, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

²Department of Management, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Email - ¹cpverma.somc@sanskriti.edu.in, ²researchsub01@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Pandemics can change the way the world behaves, before the outbreak of COVID-19 world was interconnected, people enjoyed going out to the places, businesses were running smoothly at their physical location etc. In the month of March when WHO declared this outbreak as a global pandemic, countries sealed their borders, travel was banned to other countries, people were forced to stay under lockdown, business shifted their working remotely, and small businesses even ceased. Major sector organisations started working remotely and people with very less experience of working at home were also forced to work remotely. In the proposed research a survey has been conducted to evaluate the experience of individuals from different sectors, how they feel working at home and factors affecting the performance of work. The survey has been recorded differently for both male and female candidates as both the genders have different take on how working remotely affects their performance and productivity of their work.

Keywords

COVID-19, Contagious, Pandemic, Work from Home, Virus.

Article Received: 10 August 2020, Revised: 25 October 2020, Accepted: 18 November 2020

Introduction

Pandemic when arrived has changed the world's scenario in every aspect and the coronavirus outbreak had the same impact on the worldwide population. Whole world was under shutdown and people were forced to stay back at their homes, and going out only for essentials with the new normal of wearing a mask. This has a major impact on the economy as major sector organisations shifted to working remotely according to the government mandate, small business ceased and daily wages suffered badly.

The outbreak of the pandemic has turned out into a global crisis of health and has put a major impact on the way we discern our world and everyday lifestyle. Not only the rate of transmission and patterns of contagion menace our sense of living, but the precautionary measures applied to flatten the curve also require physical distancing by abstaining what is inherited in humans, which is to find peace and solace by interacting with other people [1]. In the month of March, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, specifying the consequential outspread of a contagious disease. In that month, there were approximately 118, 00 confirmed cases of the disease in total 110 countries.

China was the first country to record the case of coronavirus in the month of January followed by South Korea, Italy in the month of February. Soon the virus paved its way into other countries (117). The United States recorded the highest number of confirmed cases and deaths, the virus was immensely infectious and led to deaths more specifically to the people older than 60[2] and having some past comorbidities such as diabetes, heart problems etc. Figure 1 represents the comparison of data given by different organisation about the confirmed cases recorded of COVID-19 from the month of January 2020 to March 2020.

As the death toll rose worldwide due to the virus that did not have a vaccine or treatment for cure, countries globally closed their borders, banned travelling, and issued a mandate for the citizens to stay back at their homes. Universities, coaching's, schools and other educational groups shifted their base to online education, sports activities and major tournaments were postponed, Some businesses allowed working remotely and others decreased their strength to half. Businesses shifting remotely was a huge shift from physical location, as the IT sector was familiar working from home but it was not a trend in other sector and they faced difficulty performing.

Total confirmed COVID-19 cases, by source, World

Confirmed COVID-19 cases are compared for the three main data sources:
 -- Johns Hopkins University;
 -- World Health Organization (WHO) Situation Reports;
 -- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

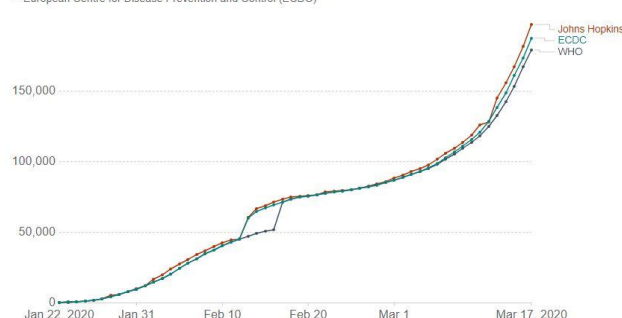


Figure 1: The Above Graph Represents The Comparison Of Confirmed Recorded Cases Of COVID-19 Through Different Organisations. (Source [3])

Particular and remarkable changes occurred as the result of the pandemic recorded is shift of employees to work from across occupations. Individuals from some sectors who never practised working remotely or had very little experience were forced to shift to such arrangements of working remotely (such as teachers in the education sector), whereas employees [4] who did not prefer working from

home were also forced to adapt to this change. Some individuals had a great experience working remotely and it was a benefit for them (e.g. employees of the IT sector).

The concessions of employee and occupational behaviour has great implications of research. When employee characteristics outshine occupational status, shifting to working remotely requires selection of workers who have the capability of performing at the same rate as in office and generating a good productivity, individual's willingness to work remotely and factors that will affect the performance of people. Various factors affects the performance when an individual works remotely such as working arrangements, internet connectivity, household chores etc. These factors may be different for various genders as males generally prefer going to offices and interacting with people, whereas female employees also look for the factors of household chores and many other aspects and also had some physiological impact[5] on the employees.

In the proposed research work survey of various employees has been done from different sectors such as Information Technology, Planning department, Banking sector etc. and based on the gender their responses have been recorded about how they feel about working remotely and what factors affect their performance, productivity of the work and organisations feel about shifting their bases remotely. Some sectors which are new to this trend are also analysing the situations and evaluating the pros and cons of working remotely. If productivity is efficient and profit is generated at the same rate then companies can see it as a futuristic option.

Literature Review

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the scenario worldwide whether it is travelling, wandering around places, going for shopping and many other activities. Whole world was under shutdown and people were forced to stay back at their homes. Organisations were ceased and workforce were given work from home. Many researches and surveys have been conducted regarding the employee satisfaction rate working remotely depending upon various factors like gender, working conditions etc. In research done by Alexander Bick, Adam Blandin and Karel Mertens they have analysed a novel survey data in the United States (US) and found that 35.2 percent of the workforce worked remotely in the month of May. Highly literate, white workers and high-income groups were more likely to work remotely and maintain the performance of organisation following the pandemic [6]. In the overall analysis they found that 71.7% of workers in total worked from home and one surprising finding was that before the outbreak of COVID-19 showed very less relationship with post crisis employment outcomes.

In another research proposed by Dr.Shareena P and Mahammad Shahid they have found that willingness to work remotely or from home entirely depends on some factors such as presence of children, snugly space at homes, peaceful and quiet environment suitable for working and most important adequate internet connectivity and also it was found that people enjoyed going to offices and are forced to work from home due to pandemic. Different individuals have contrasting nature towards working

remotely like, some people in the survey mentioned that nature of their work did not allowed them to work smoothly from home while some individuals mentioned that during work from home travelling times was saved and they spent lot of time with their families[7], thus different individuals have unique opinions on what they want depending on factors affecting their performance.

In an article published in Hindustan times by Dr Sridhar Mitta, according to the survey 90 % of the total employees of Indian IT industries worked remotely with 65 % of the individuals living in metro cities and other 35 % living in small towns. Some business organizations are even considering work from home as a permanent option and have started reading and evaluation about its advantages and disadvantages. In fact, one MNC has recently announced that rather than the 100/100 model they have shifted to 25/25 model i.e. employees can attend office anytime and only 25% of their office attendance will be counted. Work from home has benefited organisations as less infrastructure is used with the same productivity [8], hence it is considered a beneficial approach for future.

In another article published in The Hindu it is found that COVID-19 outbreak has offered business organisations to analyse the merits and demerits of the concept of work from home from a relatively longer term. The ongoing pandemic has forced a lockdown worldwide to flatten the curve and this changed even the nature of working in organised sectors. IT companies were familiar with this culture of working remotely but it is a new concept for other sectors [9], thus many sectors are now evaluating thoroughly about the conditions and possibility of working from home in future too after the situation gets normalised.

Methodology

Design

The research is proposed in such a way that the upshot recorded is accurate as possible. In order to obtain justified results, surveys of ten individuals from different sectors were recorded or determined such as IT, management, planning department, research and development etc. This helped the research to provide more generalised and efficient results. The responses were recorded in the tabular form in order to analyse them correctly.

Sample

The study comprises individuals from different sectors like Information and technology (IT), management, planning department, business development, research and development, electronic manufacturing companies etc. The survey is performed in the city of Noida, Uttar Pradesh for generalizing the results all the above sectors are considered as a strength of the Indian economic diversification. The investigator in Noida has selected all the multinational companies (MNC'S) using the convenient sampling technique. Fifty sets of questionnaires were given to every individual but only 20 sets of copies could be used for study.

Instrument

There are two sets of questionnaires used for the analysis of the individual's responses towards work from home or working remotely. The set of questions are different for both men and women as both these genders have different take on the working conditions due to various factors and responsibilities. Six different departments of private sector were taken and data for both female and male candidates were recorded differently as follows:

3.1 Information and technology

3.2 Management department

3.3 Planning department

3.4 Electronic and manufacturing sector

3.5 Research and development department

3.6 Banking Sector

The designing of the questionnaire was based on information regarding the experience of WFH through various different categories and the possibility of open answers so that they can form own understanding of the situation, Information or suggestion about how managers can increase productivity when working remotely [10], factors such as household chores other activities while being in a lockdown affecting the efficiency of work while at home etc.

The individuals were asked to describe the situation at the scale of 5, point scale 1: very much satisfied, point scale 2: satisfied, point scale 3: somewhat in disaccord, point scale 4: somewhat dissent, point scale: very much disagreed. In addition to this personal credentials such as age, working hours, location, demographic data, monthly salary etc.

Data Collection

On surveying the different sectors and genders the data gained is as followed in the Table 1, 2:

Table 1: Table represents the data collected from male candidates whether they are satisfied or not by working from home by asking some different questions regarding the situation

SECTOR	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSE RECORDED	RESULTANT RESPONSES	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Information Technology(IT)	20	18	4
Planning Department	20	5	15
Management Department	15	6	9
Research and Development Department	20	6	14
Banking Sector	15	8	7

Table 2: Table represents the data collected from female candidates whether they are satisfied or not by working from home by asking some different questions regarding the situation

SECTOR	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSE RECORDED	RESULTANT RESPONSES	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Information Technology(IT)	20	19	1
Planning Department	20	15	5
Management Department	15	12	3
Research and Development Department	20	14	6
Banking Sector	15	10	5

The data represents the responses of the candidates according to the questions asked and found that female candidates in every department are more comfortable working remotely due to some factors such as household chores and other housing activities.

Data Analysis

Table 1 summarises the data of male candidates who are satisfied and not satisfied with the current working situation of work from home during the pandemic. It was found from the data collected that the sectors which require less human interaction and infrastructure people were content and happy to work from home. Male candidates although prefer going to offices to follow the normal routine and increase the efficiency of work, individuals from the IT sector preferred working remotely because all the work of these fields can be done on personal devices such as laptops or personal computers with less risk factor.

Table 2 summarises the data of female candidates and shows that they are more comfortable working remotely than men. Several factors affect the working scenario of different individuals, women generally need to look around all the household conditions and other activities and work from home provides them an opportunity to not only look after their household but also perform efficiently at their workplaces.

By analysing the data it is also found that department such as planning, research and development and banking sector requires more human interaction and also have some privacy issues, therefore companies and even individuals almost 15 % to 18 % also prefer to work from office because integrity can be maintained at its best following all the company norms and also the efficiency and productivity is also improved.

Results And Discussions

The worldwide COVID-19 epidemic has led to widespread social distancing to cease the spread of this contagious virus. Many firms and organisations shut the physical operations of their offices or workplace because of the government mandate guidelines issued in concern of pandemic situation. The sectors which were not familiar with the concept of working remotely have also evaluated the pros and cons and the productivity of employees because working remotely has some major advantages such as less infrastructure, less management etc. Hence, it can be seen as a future approach for business organisations.

In the proposed research survey many individuals have been performed from different sectors such as Information and technology, planning department, management department, banking sector because every sector has different requirements and conditions for working, therefore we have chosen different sectors and departments also based on genders. Female and male individuals have different perspectives over working from home and it is found that both the individuals from the IT sector are very much content with working remotely as they have past experience and also their working conditions supports them in their working efficiency and productivity. While individuals in different sectors with less experience wish to work from offices and their performance is affected by several factors whereas the majority of women are happy working remotely.

Conclusion

The novel coronavirus has resulted in a boom for the novel coronavirus trend, forcing millions of people to work remotely almost overnight as companies had to seek operation in the global pandemic. It is found that some people were willing to work from home while others did not find it comfortable. The productivity and efficiency of work suffered for some individuals in sectors where working remotely was not practised before. Male and Female candidates also had different opinions because factors for the individuals differ and females generally preferred working from, whereas individuals from the Information and technology sector were satisfied working from home because IT industry is practising this trend from past few years. Business organisations has also started evaluating the situation because this has profited some companies in some areas as less infrastructure was used, less management was required, thus it can be seen as a future approach even after the ending of this pandemic.

References

- [1] F. Organisation, "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): The Impact and Role of Mass Media During the Pandemic." [Online]. Available: <https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/13638/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-the-impact-and-role-of-mass-media-during-the-pandemic>.
- [2] J Vocat Behav, "Impact of COVID-19 on Work and Workers," *Elseiver Public Health Emergency Collection*, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7205668/>.
- [3] Oxford Martin School, "Our World Data." [Online]. Available: <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/covid-cases-by-source>.
- [4] and K. Z. K. Amit Kramera, "The potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on occupational status, work from home, and occupational mobility," *Elasavier Public health emergency collection*, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7205621/>.
- [5] P. H. V. Marimuthu, "THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WORKING FROM HOME DURING CORONAVIRUS (COVID 19) PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY," *CnR's Int. J. Soc. Sci. Res. India*, 2020.
- [6] A. B. and K. M. Alexander Bick, "Work from Home After the COVID-19 Outbreak," *Fed. Reserv. Bank Dallas*, 2020.
- [7] S. P and M. Shahid, "Work from home during COVID-19: Employees perception and experiences Dr . Shareena P Mahammad Shahid *," *Gjra - Glob. J. Res. Anal.*, 2020.
- [8] Dr Sridhar Mitta, "Work from home has been 'successful' during Covid-19 lockdown. What next," *The Economics Times*. [Online]. Available: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/mag>

azines/panache/work-from-home-has-been-successful-during-covid-19-lockdown-what-next/articleshow/75470580.cms?f.

- [9] Dhiraj Shetty, "Work-from-home is nice, but the office wants you back," *The Hindu*.
.
- [10] Global Workplace Analytics, "Work-At-Home After Covid-19—Our Forecast." [Online]. Available:
<https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/work-at-home-after-covid-19-our-forecast>.