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THE WORK FROM HOME EXPERIENCE OF IT AND EDUCATION SECTOR EMPLOYEES DURING COVID 19

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ABSTRACT

Covid 19 pushed every sector of the industries to Work from Home (WFH). Though for the IT sector the idea of WFH was not new, many sectors like education had to face this experience for the first time. A study was conducted with the aim of identifying the difference between the Work from Home experience of IT and education sector employees. The present study has also worked towards the development and standardization of Work from Home Scale. This research work was completed on sample employees of 530 from IT and educational Institutions. Simple frequency - percentage method, factor analysis and mean score analysis of factors were used for the study. The study found out that there is a difference between the Work from Home experience of IT and education sector employees for most of the factors like WFH& Communication, WFH& Personal Life, WFH & Organization Support. The study has been conducted only in education and IT industry of Karnataka region of India. In future the study can be extended to other sectors and regions as well.

KEYWORDS

COVID 19, work from home experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

The universe as a whole has witnessed the impact of COVID-19 on work life of employees across industries. Social distancing became the new norm during the novel Coronavirus period which pushed the employees to do work from home (WFH). WFH has been instrumental in maintaining the social distancing norms which would have been impossible otherwise. As such working from home is nothing new, many organizations have already been practicing WFH even before the strike of COVID-19. In certain industries like IT, everything can be done and managed from home, including meetings, routine tasks etc. But in education sector, the teachers found this arrangement all the more difficult. In this regard a study was conducted to understand the factors which create the Work from Home experience and to identify the difference between the work from home experience of IT and education sector employees during covid 19.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work from home is also popularly known as WFH has become new normal as a result of COVID 19 crisis. There is no accurate definition for the term 'work from home' as some of them view it as telecommuting or remote working. The concept is operationally defined as "carrying out the job tasks beyond the boundary of physical workplace and working from his or her own home with the help of information technology".

Working from home has a positive influence on employees' work effort (Rupietta, K., and Beckmann, 2016). Jaiswal and Arun (2020) conducted a study on Work from Home and Its Impact on Employees. during the lockdown using in-depth interviews with 24 middle and senior-level managers across manufacturing and technology-enabled service sectors in India and analyzed the data using MAXQDA software. The study revealed that employees reported an increase in working hours, major changes in their roles, reduced levels of productivity, and increased levels of stress. Himawan et al. (2020) conducted a study entitled 'The Sociocultural Barriers of Work From-Home Arrangement Due to COVID-19 Pandemic in Asia: Implications and Future Implementation'. The authors viewed that in many developed countries, WFH arrangement has been a common practice, but it is not the case in some Asian countries, such as Indonesia, China, India, and Thailand and not all workers have a positive attitude and a sense of readiness towards implementing WFH. WFH concept is emerging from all sectors, from IT sectors to teaching sectors Willingness to work from home is entirely dependent on presence of their children at home, comfortable space at home, quiet environment at home and good internet connectivity (Shareena and Shahid, 2020).

Though the concept of 'work from home' has been prevalent in IT firms for many years, the concept of work from home got more popularity at the time of novel corona virus pandemic outbreak imposing the employees of almost all sectors especially the education sectors to work from home. The consequences WFH could be either positive or negative. Teachers from educational sector initially found the arrangement as difficult one. Therefore, it was decided to find out if there is any difference between the work from home experience of IT and education sector employees and find out the factors contributing to Work from Home experience.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to find out work from home experience of IT and education sector employees during COVID 19.

METHOD**Sample / Participants**

The target population of the study was employees of IT and educational institutions of Karnataka, India. The study used judgmental distributed sampling, a non-probability sampling technique as a way to select the samples where each of organizations were approached through HR manager in the case of IT firm and administration heads in educational institutions.

A total of 580 questionnaires were distributed across the organizations and 530 questions were returned as per the requirement. Thus, the final sample size was 530. Among them 240 employees were from educational institutions and remaining 290 employees were from IT industry.

Instrument(s)

The questionnaire used Likert- scale measuring the dimensions of WFH. Each item had five response categories: 1) Strongly agree 2) Agree 3) Neither agree nor disagree 4) Disagree 5) Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire included the demographic variables and dimensions of WFH. The demographic variables in the study were gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, and total work experience

Data collection procedures

Primary data for the study was collected in August 2021. The questionnaire was distributed through google form.

The Subscale that determines Work from Home system were derived after extensive literature search followed by in-depth expert interviews. The experts included are 12 HR's from IT industry and 12 experts from educational institutions. The Instrument has been categorized into 2 parts in order to accomplish the objectives of the study.

The first section of the research instrument included the demographic factors. The second section of the research instrument comprised the subscales of Work from Home system

The raw data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0.0.0. Factor analysis was carried out in order to summarize the 25 variables into smaller sets of principal components. Twenty-five variables were reduced to five principal components through varimax rotation. The derived factors represent the different dimensions involved in the WFH system.

DATA ANALYSIS

With regard to the pre-analysis testing for the suitability of the entire sample for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was found to be 0.735 and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity 1621.312, significant at $p < 0.001$ (Table 1). Thus, it indicated that the sample was suitable for factor analysis.

TABLE 1: KMO AND BARTLETT’S TABLE

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.735
Bartlett’s test of Sphericity	Approx Chi-Square	1621.312
	Degree of Freedom	231.000
	Significance	0.000

The Five factors

The study has identified 5 factors. The first factor represents WFH & Communication. Work from Home in organizations uses virtual communication technology to exchange messages between the employees (Mergener & Trübner, 2022). The second factor represents WFH & Productivity. Factors, such as autonomy empowerment, independence a supportive environment were necessary for the productivity of employees in WFH (Patanjali, S., & Bhatta, N. M. K., 2022). The third factor includes WFH and Personal Life. Some studies have found that WFH had negative effects on the personal life. Others found that WFH is positively associated with family and life satisfaction (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021) The fourth factor includes WFH & Organization Support. The effort of Work from Home would be successful only when employees perceive that they get enough organizational support to carry out their task (Ranieses & Tanpoco, 2021) and the fifth factor includes WFH adaptability (Report, 2020).

TABLE 2: FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor 1 – WFH& Communication	Factor loading
It is easy to communicate with my colleagues in the WFH set up	0.872
WFH policies are very clear to me	0.817
There is adequate communication from the teammates and team leaders	0.902
I am satisfied with quality of communication from leadership	0.801
I am satisfied with the frequency of communication from leadership	0.780
Factor 2 – WFH & Productivity	
My performance has increased because of WFH set up	0.789
I am able to complete my work	0.746
I have been able to stick to a work routine.	0.782
I feel as productive at home as I am at the office.	0.690
We as a team are able to reach our work objective through WFH set up.	0.675
Factor 3 – WFH& Personal Life	
In WFH system I face many distractions at home	0.942
I have enough internet connectivity to do the work from home	0.937
I get quality time to spend with my family because of WFH system	0.905
I have a suitable workspace at home	0.809
I have a healthy work and life balance when working from home	0.772
Factor 4- WFH & Organization Support	
I get enough support from the organization in WFH set up	0.867
I am in regular contact with my team and manager	0.640
My organization has provided me all the equipment and remote tools needed to complete my work	0.683
I feel supported and trusted by the Organization.	0.674
I feel supported and trusted by the leader.	0.597
Factor 5 WFH adaptability	
I am comfortable in the WFH set up	0.918
My work objectives are clear each day	0.972
I enjoy working from home.	0.868
I face anxiety because of the WFH set up	0.795
I very much look forward to return to office	0.721

RESULTS

The factor analysis considered to exhibit sufficient reliability and validity. Therefore, it was used for further analysis in order to identify the difference between the Work from Home experience of IT and education sector employees. The factor scores were obtained and used as independent variable, the respondents’ response on whether they belong to IT or education sector employees were taken as dependent variable.

Table 3 illustrates the Mean score analysis of factors for IT and education sector employees.

TABLE 3: MEAN SCORE ANALYSIS OF FACTORS

Factors		WFH& Communication	WFH & Productivity	WFH& Personal Life	WFH & Organization Support	WFH & adaptability
IT Sector	Mean	4.6900	4.1667	3.2714	3.5100	3.923
	Std. Deviation	.52498	.32763	.61259	.50845	.41151
EDUCATIONAL SECTOR	Mean	3.9667	4.3048	4.1524	3.8657	3.9433
	Std. Deviation	.28426	.45132	.25444	.45459	.31275
Total	Mean	4.1833	4.2357	3.6119	3.6733	3.9522
	Std. Deviation	.59643	.39710	.71247	.51128	.36225

DISCUSSION

It can be seen from the table 3 that there is significant difference among the employees of both the sectors for all the factors except WFH & productivity and WFH & adaptability.

In terms of WFH & Communication factor the mean score of WFH & Communication is 4.6 whereas the mean score of Educational sector is 3.9. Thus there is a significance difference between communication aspects that took place in both the sectors during the WFH system. In WFH & Productivity factor, the mean score

of IT sector employees is 4.16 and the mean score of education sector employees is 4.30. Thus, there is no significance difference between the WFH& Productivity of employees in the IT education sector employees.

In terms of WFH & Productivity factor the mean score of IT employees is 3.27 whereas the mean score of academic sector is 4.15. Thus, there is a significance difference in terms of WFH & personal life between the IT staff and the academic staff.

In terms of WFH & Organization Support factor the mean score of IT staff is 3.51 whereas the mean score of academic staff is 3.86. Thus, there is a significance difference in terms of WFH & Organization Support factor between the IT staff and the academic staff.

In WFH & adaptability factor, the mean score of IT sector is 3.92 and the mean score of academic staff is 3.94. Thus, there is no significance difference between the WFH & adaptability factor required by the IT staff and the educational sector staff.

CONCLUSIONS

The study was conducted to identify the difference between the Work from Home experience of IT and education sector employees of India. The present study has also worked towards the development and standardization of Work from Home Scale. This research work was completed on sample employees of 530 from IT and educational Institutions. This tool is prepared as part of study which is completed during lockdown period due to recent Covid-19 crisis.

The study is a genuine effort to achieve the objectives mentioned in the initial stage of the report, subject to the limitations of Study. Simple frequency - percentage method, factor analysis and mean score analysis of factors were used for the study. The study found out that there is a difference between the Work from Home experience of IT and education sector employees for most of the factors like WFH& Communication, WFH& Personal Life, and WFH & Organization Support.

Much research is needed to identify the new dimensions of WFH. The study has been conducted only in education and IT industry of Karnataka region of India. In future the study can be extended to other sectors and regions as well.

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