

WORK FROM HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN IMPACT ASSESMENT OF CYTIVA PVT. LTD.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our work and personal lives. Companies, organizations, and institutions boosted their efforts in response to national and local containment policies (International Labour Office, 2020). To stay safe, employees should work from home. WFH was founded in the early 2000s, at a time when telecommuting technologies were becoming more prevalent began to develop, and workers were able to work from home to avoid commuting, schedules can be more flexible, resulting in a better work-life balance (Lina, 2021).

Finding the right work-life balance is a challenge for all employees. Employees' ability to successfully combine work, family responsibilities, and personal life is critical for both employers and employees' family members (Baruch, Y. 2000).

Companies are now evaluating whether operating costs could be drastically reduced by reducing the amount of office space required. In addition to the benefits to businesses, WFH has been shown to have direct benefits to employees. Most importantly, WFH reduces daily commuting time and allows employees to better care for their families (Bailey, 2002).

During this pandemic, the work from home setup has brought success to the organization in terms of business growth, with a growth rate of > 200%. At the same time, there are a number of drawbacks to working full-time at home. Employees who work from home miss out on opportunities to socialize with co-workers and may have fewer physical activities, such as walking between meeting locations. Furthermore, long periods of screen time from full-time computer work can cause fatigue, tiredness, headaches, and other eye-related symptoms (Lina, 2021). Full-time WFH without face-to-face interactions and social support on a daily basis may contribute to mental issues such as social isolation and depression in people who live alone.

Overall, the pandemic has created a new environment for discussing WFH in terms of both work and home life. The results of a survey aimed at understanding the relationships between many of these social, behavioral, and physical factors on the physical and mental well-being of workers who switched to WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic are presented in this paper.

KEYWORDS: *WFH, COVID-19, Physical and Mental Well Beings, Flexi Working*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

At this moment the world has come at a standstill as the most sophisticated and well-branded race got gripped by a deadly COVID-19 pandemic which is questioning the entire existence of the human race (Lina, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic is a human crisis that brings the need for human resources to be at the forefront of ensuring success in sailing through the crisis. Thus, HRs need to redefine their business and people strategies in such challenging times (Cooper, 2002; Perez, 2003). As the COVID-19 crisis continues to have a huge impact on businesses, leaders across the world are focusing on the agility to evolve to the new ways of working and ensuring the workforce stays engaged and productive (Fonner 2010). Which gets us to conclude that work from home is here to stay and is going to be the new normal in the business world.

During this pandemic the Information technology has now become an integral part of the office environment, and the physical location of a working place has been gradually losing its importance. According to Gallup's annual Work and Education poll, only 9% of US employees are doing work at home using a computer in 1995, but by 2015 this number had increased to 37% (Gallup, 2015).

Telework is a broad and complex phenomenon that lacks a commonly accepted definition. The work done from places other than a traditional office space has been defined as telework, telecommuting, virtual work, home-based teleworking, mobile telework, remote work, etc. (Bailey and Kurland, 2002; Nilles, 1997). During this pandemic, the work from home setup has brought success to the organization in terms of business growth, with a growth rate of > 200%.

A detailed understanding of the factors in this new environment that relate to physical and mental well-being is instrumental to ensuring impacts of office workers who might switch to WFH in near future (De Croon, 2005).

The objective of this research article, will be aimed to understand the relationships of many of these:

- Overall impact on business growth during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Social behavioural, and physical factors on the physical and mental well-being of workers who switching to WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The goal of this study is to; understand the overall change of physical and mental well-being during WFH, identify how the changes in lifestyle and home environment during WFH influence physical and mental well-being and
- How the occupational and home office environments have affected physical and mental well-being during full time WFH.

This research article will establish an empirical relation of how the WFH situation during pandemic has an impact on employee's physical, well-beingness & mental well-beingness i.e., productivity, job satisfaction, flexibility, and work engagement, work life balance, mental health, anxiety, stress, etc.

METHODS

Participants and Procedure

Overall business growth analysis and data were collected from company annual report. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from Cytiva employee to understand the effect of pandemic on employee’s WLB in WFH set up. Emails were used to recruit participants. An initial screening question asked if the participant spent the majority of his/her work time at an office desk and had transitioned to WFH due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 200 respondents were included in this survey. There were categorical, and open-response questions in total on the questionnaire. Participants answered questions about lifestyle and home environment factors, occupational and home office environment factors, as well as primary dependent variables related to work performance, physical and mental well-being. The information presented here is centered on factors that are linked to changes in physical and mental health.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Assessment of Work from Home during COVID-19 Pandemic on Organizational Growth

Cytiva is a global service provider company which supports Drug manufacturing company with technologies and services that advance and accelerate the development and manufacture of therapeutics. Cytiva is a trusted partner to customers that undertake life-saving activities ranging from biological research to developing innovative vaccines, biologic drugs, and novel cell and gene therapies. Cytiva operate in 40 countries and territories covering Europe, Asia, North and Latin America, and the Middle East. ~8000 associates are dedicated to mission to advance and accelerate therapeutics.

When whole the world has halted during the COVID-19 pandemic, international border was closed, even getting the raw materials for manufacturing of media/feed and instruments parts were tremendously challenged for service industries. During this period, the firm has forced its workers to work remotely or on a WFH basis (Lapierre, 2015). Even though this WFH facility was not a popular form of working facility, the firm installed it and have achieved a phenomenal growth of >200 percent in the year of 2020-2021 (www.cytiva.com/growth).

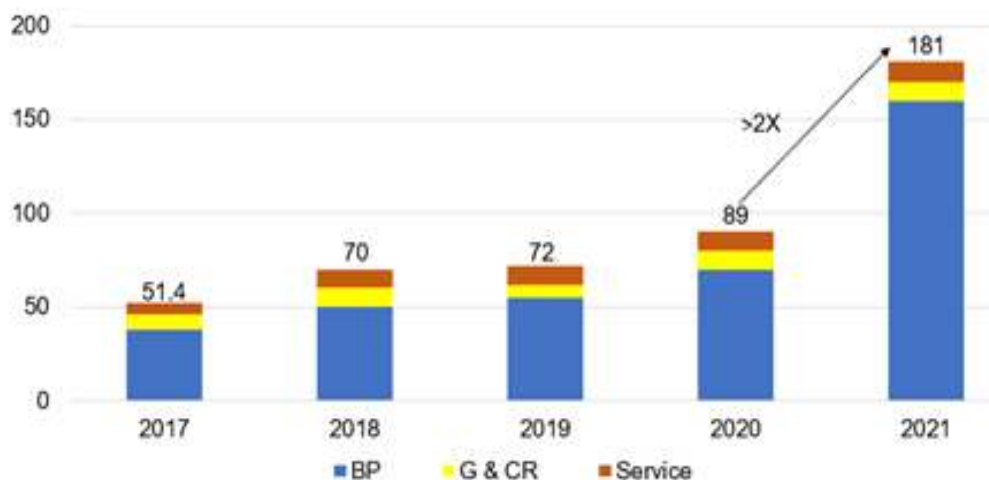


Figure 1: Over Sales for India in 5 Years; there be >200% of over Sales and Growth Observed during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Lupu, highlights the reduced organizational expenditures such as "rent, maintenance, computers, telephones, offices, utilities, equipment, and so on" (Lupu, 2017). Ford and Butts have provided more reasons concerning office space

expenses and suggest that organizations might avoid leasing extra offices by implementing a WFH/Flexi programme (Ford and Butts, 2019).

Both Lupu and Ford & Butts mention productivity factor and suggest that the reason for it is long periods of uninterrupted time for concentration on their tasks and "lack of interruptions, increased concentration, increased motivation, employee satisfaction, a better employee dedication, increased work energy by reducing time and disruptive elements". The work from home set up reducing absenteeism (Johns. G, 2010).

Employees prefer working from home to working in an office for a variety of reasons, which are detailed below: The ability to work from home on a flexible schedule is one of the most compelling arguments for doing so. According to Lupu, flexible scheduling allows employees to have some control over their daily life, encompassing both employee and family activities, such as sending their children to school or taking care of them. Another advantage of working from home for employees is that they save time travelling to work and avoid rush-hour traffic Ford and Butts (1991). Employees will have more free time to spend with their family if they do not commute (Wienclaw, 2019).

Assessment of Work from Home during COVID-19 Pandemic on Employee and their WLB

The covid-19 epidemic has disrupted practically every element of human life. The lockdown made some individuals happy, while it made others unhappy. The survey was conducted among Cytiva employees, with nearly 200 respondents were participates from different modality such as marketing, sales, application specialist, service etc. A different set of questionnaires has been formulated based on Lifestyle and Home Environment, Occupational Environment, Home Office Environment, and Physical and Mental Well-being to conduct this survey.

Relations with Family, Colleague, Manager and Self-Health have been Improved during Pandemic

Responses to the question: *'How have each of the following changed for you?'*

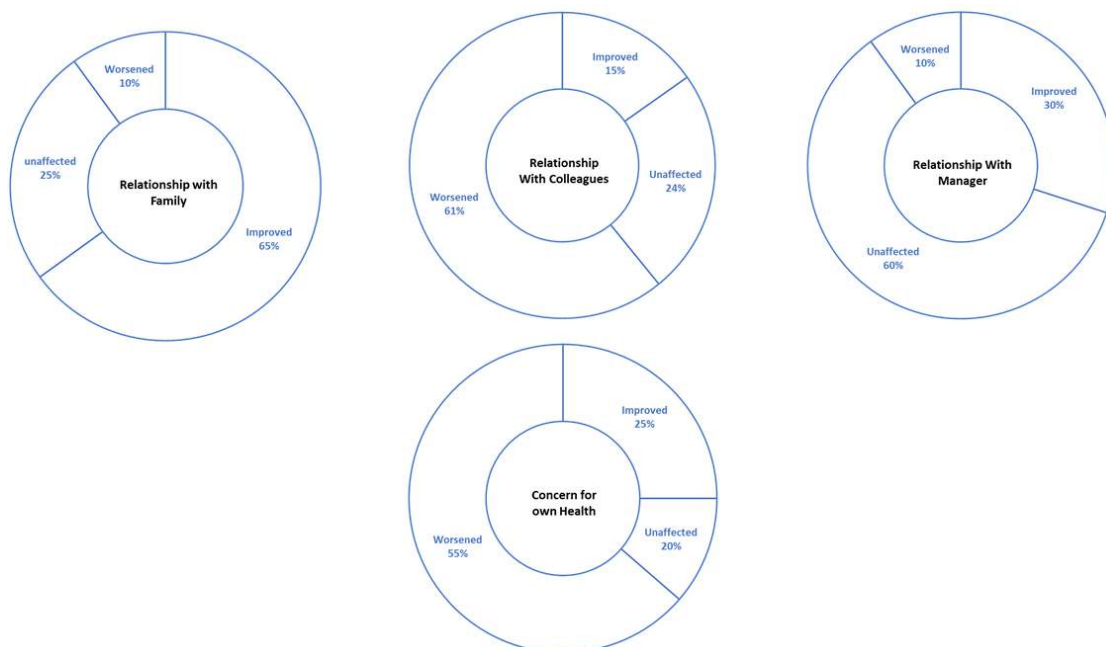


Figure 2.

Most respondents (approx. 65%) agreed to their relationships with family members has improved since the lockdown began and WFH arrangement implemented. Approximately 86% of employees said their relationships with their bosses or peers were unaffected, while around 30% said their relationships with their bosses and coworkers had improved. During the pandemic, employees were forced to work in a very confined home environment, and approximately 55% of employees were concerned about their own safety and personal health.

Employees were More Likely to Miss Social Activities during Pandemic

Responses to the question: *'Which of the activities from pre-covid times do you miss?'*

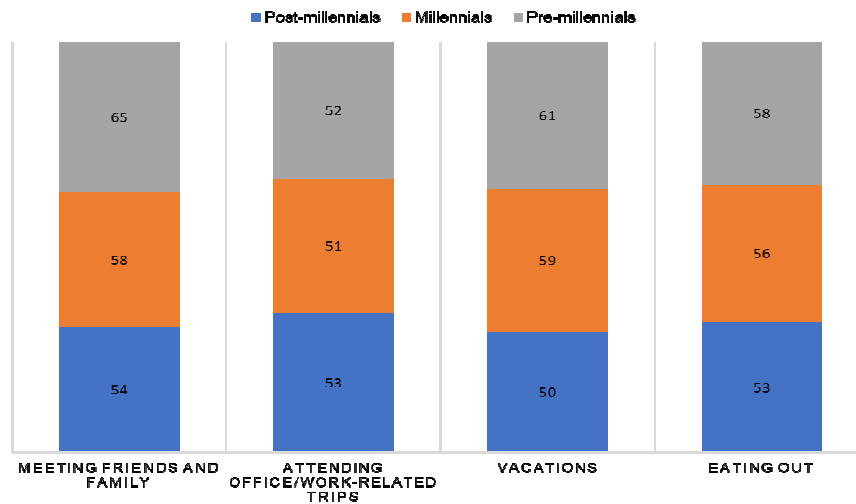


Figure 3.

Millennials (Aged 24-40) Post-Millennials (Aged 18-25) & Pre-Millennials (above 40).

Almost everyone said, they missed some aspect of social life while the lockdown was in effect. Meeting up with friends and family was at the top of the list, but more than >50% of respondents said they missed going to work or work-related meetings or tours. Pre-millennials, as opposed to post-millennials, were more likely to miss social gatherings with friends and family. The data demonstrates here that the employees missed their social lives and felt lonely.

Working from Home is Identified as a Negatively Impact on Employee

Responses to the question: *"Below listed statements/choices that would be True for you?"*

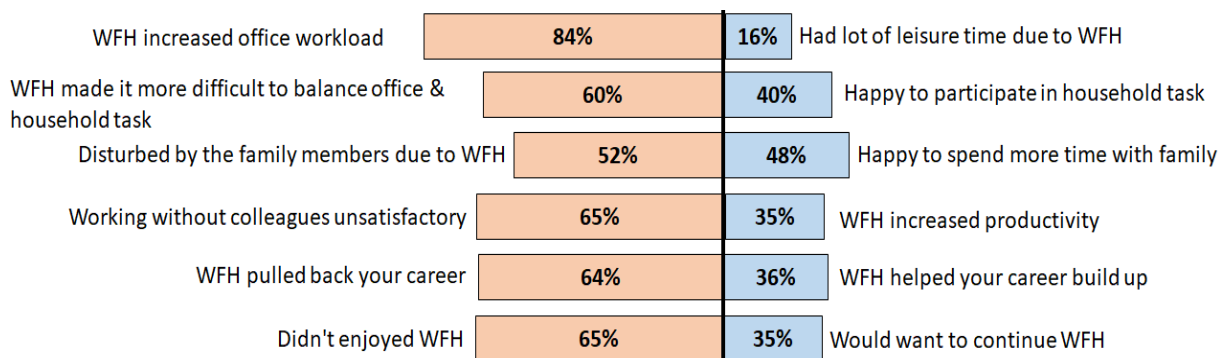


Figure 4.

Working from home, on the other hand, was not always a positive experience for everyone. Only about 35% want the practice to continue. Although the household environment made work safer for most people, it also resulted in an increase in office workload 84%, with 60% reporting difficulty balancing household chores.

Anxiety Levels Have Risen during WFH, both at Home from HOME Set up.

Responses to the question: *"How have the following changed for during WFH arrangements?"*

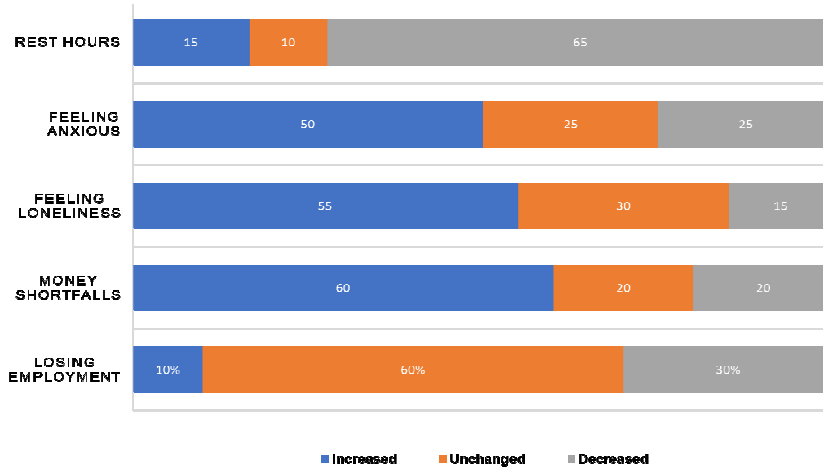


Figure 5.

The data shown here about 65% participants agreed on that their rest hours reduced drastically because of business demand. Although the 60% respondents feels that they don't have threat of losing job. Approximately 60% employees feels that money shortfall and loneliness increase due to irregular salary, medical treatment goods price hike also employee feel isolated because of virtual set up. Overall, the about 50% of respondent feels that anxiety level has been increased due to WFH set up. The other important factors can be also included that has major impacted on employee's anxiety during WFH such as architectural designs of office at home spaces, technological shifts, limited space, more than one family member also having the WFH like arrangement.

Physical and Mental Well-being have Impacted during WFH

Responses to the question: *"How the mental health and well beings impacted during WFH arrangements?"*

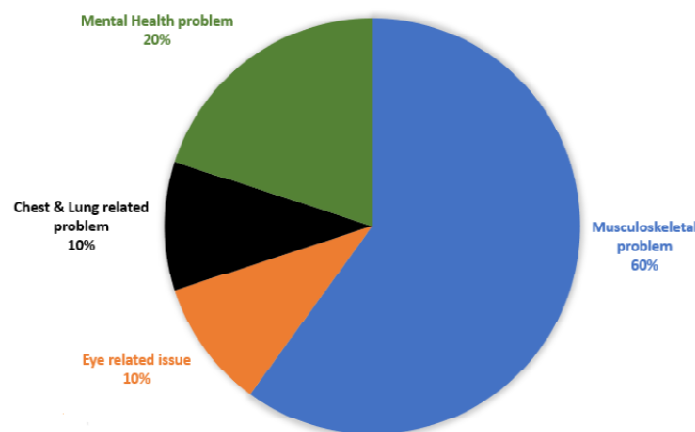


Figure 6.

Participants were experienced new physical and mental health issues they were dealing with such as musculoskeletal (pain, injury); cardiovascular (chest pains, blood pressure, heart rate); chest/lung (shortness of breath, chest tightness/pain); digestive (appetite changes, abdominal discomfort, irregularity); eye-related (burning, blurry and/or dry); fatigue or tiredness; headaches or migraines; nose/throat related (dry, runny, or bloody nose; hoarseness, chapped, itchiness, redness).

Approximately 60% of responders reported musculoskeletal or ergonomic issues, whereas 10% agreed on an eye-related concern. In comparison to the pre-COVID-19 period, 10% of respondents believe they have a chest and lung problem, whereas 20% believe they have a mental health condition.

CONCLUSION

The abrupt transition to a remote work environment was shockingly upsetting for many individuals. When the epidemic began, there was an increase in workplace anxiety and sadness apart from the tremendous business growth (Rajgopal, 2010). People appear to feel more alone in the absence of the required support. There's the issue of adjusting to working from home, which might result in an increase in burden. There's a temptation to work longer hours, and there's no separation between home and work life for individuals who don't have a home office setting. And the employees are at a crossroads, unsure where to draw the line between working from home and work from home.

In a real workplace, the trend of back-to-back virtual meetings would be impossible. Many workers are spending more time in these meetings as they have less opportunity for casual catch-up. These video sessions, in addition to being time consuming, can cause tiredness and, unfortunately, leave participants feeling alienated. All of this contributed to an increase in stress and anxiety, which is detrimental to employee well-being and corporate productivity in the long run.

Based on the presented data employees who are doing work from home must be careful of their emotional health in addition to their physical health. This is due to the fact that increased stress, worry, and, in certain situations may all have an effect on mental and physical well-being. This, in turn, can have an impact on workplace productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The below recommendations include a series of possible actions that could be taken by the Employer to make WFH more feasible in a local context.

1. In the short run, the employer should consider:

- Keep all personnel informed of COVID-19 developments and their consequences for business operations, including any changes in company policy, on a regular basis.
- Encourage the interchange of ideas and viewpoints on business continuity plans.
- Hold frequent virtual meetings to keep staff informed about the situation, discuss work, and agree on how to provide the company's services. Consequently, workers will feel less alone.
- In the same way that physical workers do, set and communicate clear goals and deadlines.
- Take frequent breaks and relax, exercise, and get some fresh air to promote a healthy lifestyle and work-life balance.
- Provide mental health treatments to employees who are suffering work-life conflict.

2. In the Long Run, the Employer Should Consider

- Considering the possibility of remote working being the new normal.
- Ensure that work hours and rest breaks adhere to national legislation, collective bargaining agreements, or the company's terms and conditions of employment.
- Provide health and safety information and training to workers in WFH arrangements (e.g., ergonomics, working in isolation, general fire and electrical safety issues).
- Offering social security and other benefits to encourage employees to embrace WFH practices.
- Focus on quality and quantity rather than time spent - change the KPIs to "tasks completed and their quality" rather than "hours spent."
- Raising awareness of employees' obligation to care for their own physical and mental health during WFH, including urging workers to keep physically active, eat properly, and walk outside for fresh air on a regular basis.
- For more information, consult the appropriate rules and regulations, as well as relevant guidelines for a good work-life balance, such as those published by the occupational safety and health or mental health departments.

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