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THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON JOB SATISFACTION AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional workplace dynamics, necessitating a shift towards remote work to mitigate viral transmission. This unforeseen challenge prompted a collective exploration of alternative work arrangements by employers and employees alike. However, a notable research gap emerged regarding the impact of remote work, specifically work from home (WFH), on job satisfaction within commercial organizations. To bridge this gap, this study focused on Cytiva, a commercial entity, with a dual objective: assessing the prevalence of WFH and job satisfaction levels while scrutinizing the influence of WFH factors on job satisfaction.

Employing a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study sought to offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Qualitative research aimed to capture subjective experiences, while quantitative research gathered numerical data for broader generalizations. This mixed-method strategy aimed to provide both in-depth insights into employees' remote work experiences during the pandemic and statistically significant observations on WFH prevalence.

A pilot study involving approximately 500 Cytiva employees utilized questionnaires distributed electronically or administered through personal interviews. Descriptive analysis was applied to explore the empirical relationship between WFH conditions during the pandemic and employees' job satisfaction. The findings highlighted a substantial presence of WFH factors and high job satisfaction levels among Cytiva employees. Examining job satisfaction through the lenses of physical, psychological, financial, and technological factors revealed a departure from traditional influencers, emphasizing a significant positive impact of WFH on Cytiva employees' job satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: *Work from Home, Job Satisfaction, COVID-19*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges for the global workforce, prompting both employers and employees to seek alternative work arrangements. Business and industry shutdowns aimed at curbing the spread of the virus have forced companies to adapt and adopt different strategies worldwide (Kniffin et al., 2020). One notable shift has been the widespread adoption of remote work, with some employees mandated to work from home due to

company policies or national lockdowns, while others have the flexibility to choose between working from home (WFH), working at the office, or adopting a hybrid working (HW) model (Ford et al., 2020; Sandford, 2020).

The advantages and disadvantages of each workplace option vary based on individual circumstances. Ford et al. (2020) highlighted that WFH offers benefits such as schedule flexibility and the comfort of casual clothing, but it comes with drawbacks like the absence of social interactions and challenges in maintaining work-life boundaries. On the other hand, working at the office can provide a structured environment but may be associated with a lack of flexibility and commuting hassles. Hybrid working, being a newer concept, lacks a standardized set of benefits and drawbacks, as each implementation varies.

Research consistently points to the positive impact of WFH on employee job satisfaction. Studies by Bloom (2014), Bhattarai (2020), Schall (2019), and Tanjung et al. (2021) reveal that remote work leads to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and lower turnover rates. However, the extent of these positive effects depends on various factors, including the implementation of supportive measures and the active engagement of both employees and employers (Mohite and Kulkarni, 2019). Irawanto et al. (2021) and Vega, Anderson, and Kaplan (2015) further emphasize the significant and positive link between WFH and job satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that a supportive work-from-home environment contributes substantially to employee contentment.

This study delves into the impact of the work environment, specifically physical, psychological, financial, and technological factors, on job satisfaction. Unlike traditional job satisfaction elements, these factors represent a holistic view of the remote work experience. The subjective nature of job satisfaction underscores the importance of creating a supportive work-from-home environment to maximize its positive impact. Through empirical studies and scholarly research, the evidence consistently supports the notion that while WFH enhances job satisfaction, the effectiveness of this arrangement is contingent on the careful consideration of these multifaceted factors and the active involvement of both employees and employers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Work From Home (WFH)/Remote Work: A Comprehensive Overview

The surge in work from home (WFH), or remote work, gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, serving as an adaptive response to quarantine measures. This work arrangement, facilitated by telecommunication technologies, offered numerous benefits, including increased flexibility, enhanced work-life balance, heightened productivity, and expanded job opportunities for specific demographics. Studies by Dizaho et al. (2017), Fonner and Roloff (2010), Gurstein (2001), and Morgan (2004) underscored these advantages.

Successful implementation of WFH relies on two pivotal factors: organizational and individual-family elements. Organizational factors, such as employer trust, technology adoption, and collaboration dynamics, play a crucial role (Baruch, 2000; Grant et al., 2019; Baker et al., 2007). Individual-family factors, encompassing household characteristics and considerations like family-work balance and flexible scheduling, further influence WFH experiences (Ford & Butts, 1991; Reshma et al., 2015; Lupu, 2017). This study investigates the interplay of these factors during the pandemic's WFH era.

Time Management Abilities

Effective time planning is vital for remote work success, allowing employees to flexibly adjust schedules (Ford & Butts, 1991). Autonomous time management is crucial for home-based work (Harpaz, 2002), offering a telework advantage (Ammons & Markham, 2004). Wienclaw (2019) emphasizes flexible scheduling in remote work, catering to individual preferences and accommodating various lifestyle needs.

Support and Trust from Supervisors

Supervisors' trust in assigning remote tasks, supported by active engagement and timely results, significantly impacts successful teleworking (Baruch, 2000; Grant et al., 2019). A culture of trust is crucial for effective remote work, as supervisors lacking understanding and strong relationships may hinder employees' opportunities (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005; Lapierre et al., 2015).

Limited Time for Communicating with Colleagues

Remote work may cause isolation without interpersonal communication (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Increased interaction, however, can offset this, positively impacting job satisfaction (Martin & MacDonnell, 2012). Reduced communication at home enhances task focus.

Opportunity to Attend to the Needs of Family Members

Remote work provides flexibility, enabling individuals to balance professional and family responsibilities seamlessly (Ammons & Markham, 2004). It fosters improved employee retention, especially for parents, as it facilitates caring for sick family members (Beno, 2018; Thatcher & Zhu, 2006).

Possibility to Work Remotely When Experiencing illness

Working from home provides employees with comfort and mental relaxation when unwell, countering workplace presenteeism. Johnson, Audrey, and Shaw (2007) emphasize this advantage, while Johns (2010, p. 521) defines presenteeism.

Appropriateness of the Home Workspace

A designated, quiet workspace at home is crucial for focused work, influenced by studies (Baruch, 2000; Shaw et al., 2003). Comfortable furniture and good lighting, as per Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), enhance job satisfaction.

## Opportunity to Reduce Additional Expenses

Remote work saves employees money on commuting, work clothing, and childcare expenses, reducing stress and time spent in traffic. It eliminates the need for babysitters, daycare, and after school programs (Ford & Butts, 1991; Lupu, 2017; Wienclaw, 2019).

B. Work from Home (WFH)/Remote Work and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, reflecting positive emotions toward one's job and organization, is crucial for performance and overall life satisfaction (Courtney & Younk Young, 2017; Landy, 1978). Remote work offers benefits like increased motivation, lower absenteeism, and higher job satisfaction (Mello, 2007). E-working fosters flexibility, work-life balance, and reduced commuting, positively impacting satisfaction (Grant et al., 2019). Nevertheless, prolonged remote work may lead to

decreased satisfaction due to social distance and isolation (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Balancing these factors is essential for maintaining a positive work environment and employee well-being.

Using the Job Demands-Resources Model and insights from Vyas and Butakhieo's research in 2021, the conceptual framework depicted in figure 1 is formulated.
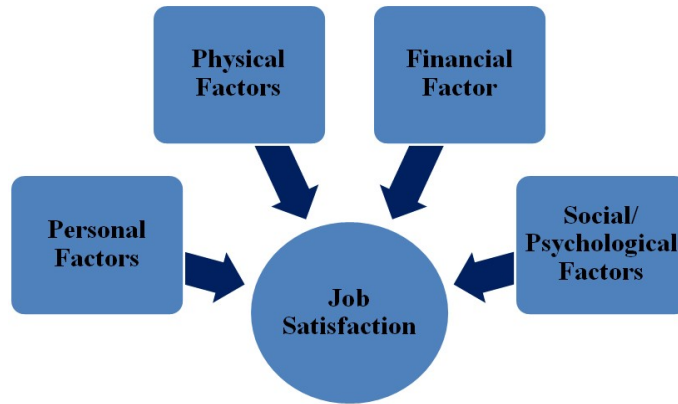
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research strategies to comprehensively explore employees' experiences of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative research delves into subjective experiences, while quantitative research provides numerical insights for broader generalization (Allen, 2017). The unique single-case focus on Cytiva India Pvt. Ltd in Bangalore necessitated this approach, enhancing understanding beyond individual methods (Creswell, 2015).

With diverse stakeholder needs, the mixed-method design accommodates various interests. It allows employees to express profound experiences, offering detailed insights. Simultaneously, it provides the management with statistical data, presenting an overview and in-depth understanding of remote work experiences.

Data collection utilizes both primary and secondary sources. A structured questionnaire employing a Likert scale was employed for primary data from 500 Cytiva employees, exploring the impact of COVID-19 on job satisfaction during full-time remote work. Secondary data from various sources enriches the research methodology.

This study contributes a holistic perspective on remote work experiences, combining individual insights with statistical prevalence. The mixed-method design ensures a nuanced understanding of the subject, valuable for both employees and management.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The survey was conducted among Cytiva employees, with nearly 500 respondents were participates from different modality such as marketing, sales, application specialist, service etc. A different set of questionnaires has been formulated.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

S. No.	Variables	Options	Total Respondents	Response %
1	Age	20-35 Years	240	48
		36-45 Years	180	36
		46-55 Years	50	10
		56-65 Years	30	6
		Total	**500**	**100**
2	Gender	Male	286	57.2
		Female	214	42.8
		Total	**500**	**100**
3	Marital status	Single	292	58.4
		Married	208	41.6
		Total	**500**	**100**
4	Job Title	Sales specialist	280	56
		Application specialist	60	12
		Manger	25	5
		General Manager	3	0.6
		R&D Associates	30	6
		Service engineers	102	20.4
		Total	**500**	**100**
5	Educational Qualification	Bachelor Degree	25	5
		Master Degree	285	57
		MBA Degree	145	29
		Engineering Degree	38	7.6
		Doctorate Degree	7	1.4
		Total	**500**	**100**
6	Year of experience	<5 Years	90	18
		5-10 years	206	41.2
		11-15 Years	132	26.4
		16-20 Years	45	9
		21-25 Years	15	3
		>25 Years	12	2.4
		Total	**500**	**100**

The survey highlights a predominant demographic of 20-35-year-olds (48%), with males constituting 57.2%. Singles dominate at 58.4% versus 41.6% married participants. Sales Specialists lead at 56%, followed by 20.4% as Service Engineers. Education-wise, 57% hold a Master's Degree, and 29% possess an MBA. In professional experience, 41.2% have 5-10 years, while 26.4% have 11-15 years.

Demography of Respondents

Data from a study on 500 Cytiva employees' socio-demographic characteristics in remote work reveals that 83.6% have been remote for a year or less. A significant majority (93.6%) have dependents. Position-wise, 85.8% hold middle-level roles, 10% are in entry-level, and 4.2% occupy top-level positions. Key findings are summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Demography of Respondents

S. No.	Variables	Options	Total Respondents	Response in %
1	Job Hierarchy	Entry	50	10
		Middle	429	85.8
		Top	21	4.2
		Total	**500**	**100**
2	Dependents living while WFH	Yes	468	93.6
		No	32	6.4
		Total	**500**	**100**
3	Working hours per day while WFH	0-9	438	87.6
		9-12	48	9.6
		12-15	14	2.8
		Total	**500**	**100**
4	WFH service period (in year)	0-1	418	83.6
		1-1.5	54	10.8
		1.5-2	14	2.8
		2-2.5	4	0.8
		Total	**500**	**100**

Work from Home and Employee Job Satisfaction during COVID-19

Research consistently emphasizes the positive impact of working from home (WFH) on employee satisfaction. Bhattarai (2020), Schall (2019), and Tanjung et al. (2021) all affirm higher satisfaction levels in remote work settings. The connection between WFH and job satisfaction is strengthened by specific activities and supportive policies, as highlighted by Mohite and Kulkarni (2019). Active participation from both employees and employers further enhances job satisfaction (Mohite and Kulkarni, 2019). Empirical studies by Irawanto et al. (2021) and Vega, Anderson, and Kaplan (2015) corroborate a positive link between WFH and job satisfaction. In summary, while WFH enhances job satisfaction, its effectiveness is optimized with supportive measures and engagement from both parties. This study focuses on the impact of physical, psychological, financial, and technological factors on job satisfaction, distinct from traditional.

Personal Factors Impacting Employee Job Satisfaction in Work-from-Home Arrangements during COVID-19 at Cytiva

Table 3: Personal Factor

Factors	Options	1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Neutral		4 Agree		5 Strongly Agree	
		Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response
1. Personal Factors	Work-Life Balance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	28	5.6%	112	22.4%	360	72.0%
	Self-Motivation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	32	6.4%	128	25.6%	340	68.0%
	Time Management Skills	1	0.2%	3	0.6%	29	5.8%	120	24.0%	344	68.8%
	Family & Caregiving responsibilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	2.2%	131	26.2%	358	71.6%
	Personal Workspace	3	0.6%	5	1.0%	22	4.4%	149	29.8%	321	64.2%
	No family disturbance	1	0.2%	2	0.4%	51	10.2%	132	26.4%	314	62.4%

A majority (72.0%) stressed the importance of work-life balance, with 22.4% in agreement. Self-motivation was recognized by 68.0%, time management by 68.8%, family responsibilities by 71.6%, personal workspace by 64.2%, and the absence of family disturbance by 62.4%. Agreement percentages varied across factors. These findings underline a collective emphasis on maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium and prioritizing personal well-being.
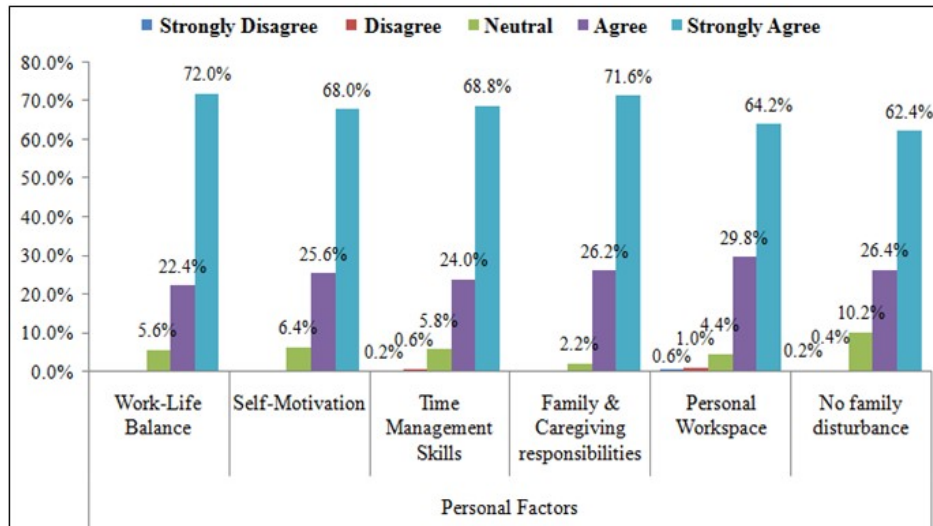

Figure 2

Figure 2: Overwhelmingly positive sentiments prevail among respondents, as 94.4% endorse Work-Life Balance and 93.6% affirm Self-Motivation. Similarly, 92.8% express agreement on Time Management Skills. A substantial 97.8% acknowledge Family & Care giving Responsibilities, and 94.0% support Personal Workspace. Additionally, 89.2% favor No Family Disturbance, with minimal disagreement across statements.

Physical Factors Impacting Employee Job Satisfaction in Work-from-Home Arrangements during COVID-19 at Cytiva

Table 4: Physical Factors

Factors	Options	1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Neutral		4 Agree		5 Strongly Agree	
		Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response
2. Physical Factors	Ergonomic workspace	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	27	5.4%	151	30.2%	322	64.4%
	Organizational Tools	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	127	25.4%	373	74.6%
	Health and Safety Measure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	123	24.6%	377	75.4%
	High-Speed Internet	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	25	5.0%	147	29.4%	326	65.2%

64.4% of employees strongly agree that an ergonomic workspace is crucial for job satisfaction, with 30.2% in agreement. 74.6% emphasize the importance of organizational tools, while 75.4% prioritize health and safety measures. Additionally, 65.2% strongly agree on the significance of high-speed internet access for job satisfaction, with 29.4% in agreement.
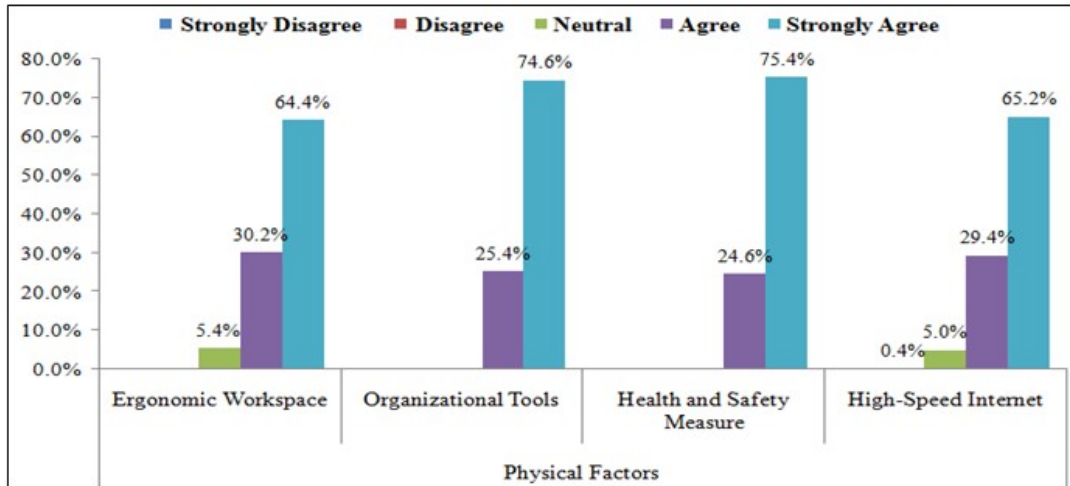
Figure 3

Figure 3: A significant majority (64.4-75.4%) of respondents strongly agree that an ergonomic workspace, organizational tools, health and safety measures, and high-speed internet positively impact job satisfaction, with additional agreement ranging from 24.6-30.2%. These findings underscore the importance of these factors in enhancing overall workplace contentment.

Financial Factors Impacting Employee Job Satisfaction in Work-from-Home Arrangements during COVID-19

Table 5: Financial Factors

Factors	Options	1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Neutral		4 Agree		5 Strongly Agree	
		Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response
3. Financial Factors	Salary & Compensation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	104	20.8%	396	78.2%
	Benefits Package	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	4.2%	131	26.2%	348	69.6%
	Expense Reimbursement	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	102	20.4%	398	79.6%
	Cost Savings on commuting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	101	20.2%	399	79.8%
	Professional Development Opportunities	1	0.2%	5	1.0%	28	5.6%	141	28.2%	325	65.0%
	Healthcare Benefits	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	107	21.4%	393	78.6%
	Paid Time Off (PTO)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	91	18.2%	409	81.8%

The survey reveals that 64.4% strongly agree that an ergonomic workspace boosts job satisfaction. Financially, 78.2% are satisfied with salary, 69.6% with benefits, and 79.6% with expense reimbursement. Commuting yields cost savings for 79.8%. Professional development is praised by 65%, while healthcare satisfaction is at 78.6%. Paid time off benefits satisfy 81.8%. Minimal disagreement exists, with 0.2% strongly disagreeing about professional development and 1.0% on access to it. Overall, positive sentiments dominate across various job-related factors.
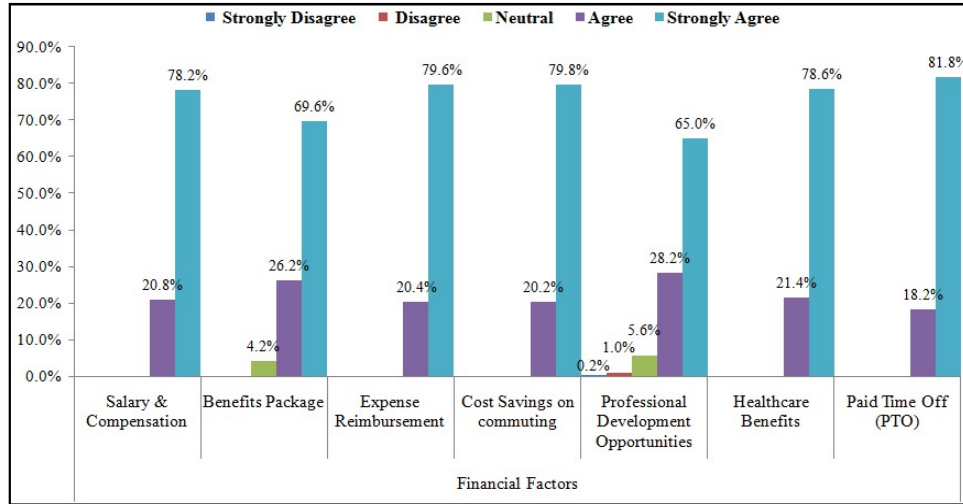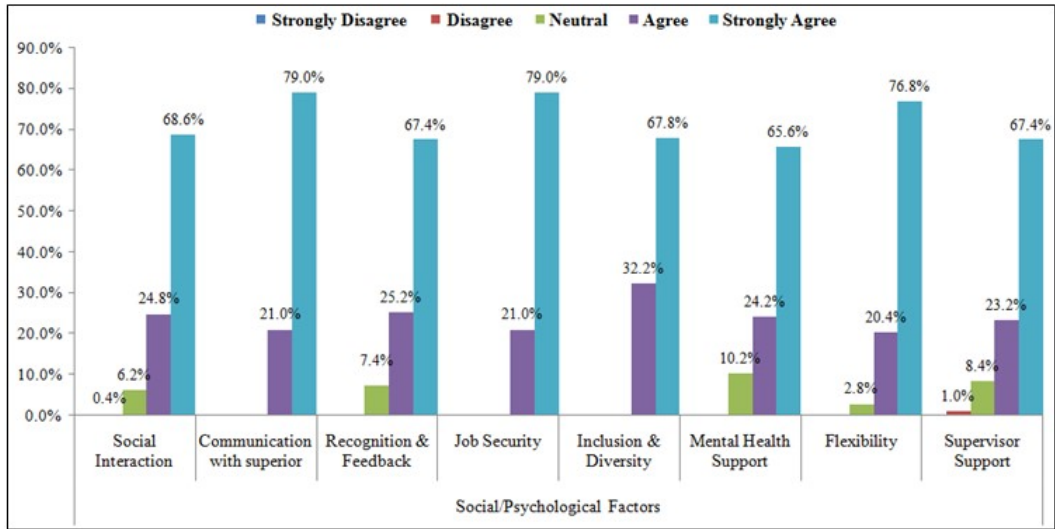
Figure 4

Figure 4: The survey reveals that a substantial majority of respondents express strong agreement on various factors influencing job satisfaction. Salary and compensation, benefits packages, expense reimbursement, cost savings on commuting, professional development opportunities, healthcare benefits, and paid time off (PTO) all garner strong affirmation, ranging from 65.0% to 81.8%. Additionally, a notable percentage agrees to some extent on these aspects. This collective feedback emphasizes the critical role these elements play in shaping overall job satisfaction among participants.

Social/Psychological Factors Impacting Employee Job Satisfaction in Work-from-Home Arrangements during COVID-19 at Cytiva

Table 6: Social/Psychological Factors

Factors	Options	1 Strongly Disagree		2 Disagree		3 Neutral		4 Agree		5 Strongly Agree	
		Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response	Count	% of response
4. Social/ Psychological Factors	Social Interaction	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	31	6.2%	124	24.8%	343	68.6%
	Communication with superior	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	105	21.0%	395	79.0%
	Recognition & Feedback	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	37	7.4%	126	25.2%	337	67.4%
	Job Security	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	105	21.0%	395	79.0%
	Inclusion & Diversity	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	161	32.2%	339	67.8%
	Mental Health Support	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	51	10.2%	121	24.2%	328	65.6%
	Flexibility	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	2.8%	102	20.4%	384	76.8%
	Supervisor Support	0	0.0%	5	1.0%	42	8.4%	116	23.2%	337	67.4%

An overwhelming 68.6% of employees strongly value social interaction for job satisfaction, with an additional 24.8% in agreement. Communication with superiors garnered a strong positive response of 79%, with 21% agreeing. Job security received high affirmation, with 79% strongly agreeing. Inclusion and diversity were positively perceived by 67.8%. Mental health support was crucial, as 65.6% strongly agreed. The flexibility in work arrangements was well-regarded, with 76.8% strongly agreeing. Overall, employees express a strong preference for positive workplace dynamics and support systems.

Figure 5

Figure 5: In the workplace, 68.6% strongly affirm the positive impact of social interaction, while 79.0% express satisfaction with communication with superiors. Additionally, 67.4% feel acknowledged and receive feedback, and an equal percentage (79.0%) feels job security. A majority (67.8%) believe the company promotes inclusion and diversity. Regarding mental health 65.6% reported receiving ample support. Work flexibility is highly valued, with 76.8% strongly agreeing. Lastly, 67.4% feel well-supported by supervisors. These findings are based on a survey conducted among employees.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data presented in **Tables 3 to 6** in the Findings and Discussion section paint a positive picture of the correlation between employee job satisfaction and key factors such as personal, physical, financial, and social/psychological aspects. Notably, **Table 3** underscores the significance of work-life balance, with 72.0% strongly agreeing on its importance. Self-motivation (68.0%) and time management (68.8%) are also highly regarded. **Table 4** emphasizes the importance of workspace and tools, with 64.4% strongly supporting ergonomic workspace and 74.6% endorsing access to organizational tools. Financial factors in **Table 5** highlight strong agreement on salary (78.2%), benefits packages (69.6%), and expense reimbursement (79.6%). Lastly, **Table 6** reveals the impact of social and psychological factors, emphasizing strong support for social interaction (68.6%) and communication with superiors (79%). These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of factors influencing employee job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Cytiva's workforce overwhelmingly indicates high levels of satisfaction across various facets of their job, encompassing both work-related and financial elements, alongside social and psychological factors. These robust findings offer significant insights into the intricacies of job satisfaction within a remote work setting amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The exploration unveils valuable perspectives on how employees perceive their work-from-home environment and its profound influence on the critical determinants of their job satisfaction.

- There have been a strong correlation between employee job satisfaction and various factors. Work-life balance, personal motivation, and time management have been highly valued, indicating the importance of personal and psychological factors.

- Access to a suitable workspace, organizational tools, and reliable high-speed internet has also been crucial. Financial factors, including salary, benefits, and expense reimbursement, have played a significant role in job satisfaction.

- The cost savings associated with remote work and professional development opportunities have further enhanced job satisfaction.

- Moreover, social and psychological factors, such as social interaction, communication with superiors, job security, diversity and inclusion, mental health support, and flexibility in work arrangements, have contributed to employees' overall job satisfaction.

This finding has underscored the need for organizations to consider and address these various aspects to optimize job satisfaction among their remote workforce. By focusing on these factors, companies can create a more conducive work-from-home environment, leading to higher employee satisfaction and productivity, ultimately benefiting both the employees and the organization as a whole.

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