

## **Work From Home – Analysis of Satisfaction Levels Across Various Work Sectors**

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### **Abstract**

*Work from Home has been a common phenomenon for quite some time. It came into existence in a huge way when Internet as a part of telecommuting flooded the world. Combining work space and home is always a convenient option for families with the faith that they can balance both their family needs as well as the official needs and can work efficiently by fulfilling the needs of all, for the good of all. In recent times this convenience has turned out as more of an obligation. The purpose of this paper is to analyse that once Work from Home was considered as privilege but during the Covid phase it has made life even more complicated rather than making it a contentment. This paper tries to analyse the problems faced by employees during work from home and how it ends up impacting the mental wellbeing of the individual.*

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## **Introduction**

All through Human evolution, Man has been always working for his survival. For Survival - it could be for food, for Shelter or for safety. As Human evolved through different civilization today, he is at a juncture where the whole world has become a small village for him. Every nook and corner is accessible to this Human. All the revolutions that Man has seen till date, there has been significant changes applied at every stage. Work from home has been ever existing in our lifestyle. It dates to centuries where we started working as Hunter Gatherers. The interesting comparison that exists between Hunter gatherers and current trend of Work From Home culture is that in the initial phase of life to survive and get work done, Humans would be working as hunters in gathering raw materials and food to a finished product with targets, in the same way current trend shows that each person is running behind the targets, to get things done there is no other option then adopting the lifestyle of work from home to balance both official targets as well as satisfying the family needs and responsibilities. Today Work Life Balance has become an important aspect. Many Organizations have started the work from home culture with the objective of having a good work life balance. During the current Pandemic, this culture has taken more prominence.

Industrial revolution brought out profound changes for both men and women. With Industrial age a new movement of skilled workers were born. Factory work came across as a boon for women, that was the first time when they stepped out of their home for external work. With this idea in mind a work outside the home model developed. Here, the working hours were not fixed until the target of the day is met, the work would keep on continuing. The working hours were not flexible either. This phenomenon was even seen in the Hawthorne studies. Due to these conditions still prevalent, in corporate sectors, productivity from the corporates got transferred to work from home or work site.

With a tight competition from competitors, the companies tend to outperform, which results in putting pressure on fellow associates leading to inflexible working hours. Another reason that comes down to the aspect of time management. This reminds the pioneers of Industrial psychology where Max Weber, Frederick. W. Taylor and Henri Fayol. They believed on disciplined work culture and pointed that still a major attention was on working methods decided by the Managers, Leaders. They gave high importance to Bureaucracy and Pyramidal organizational structure. The purpose is to highlight these pioneers here is because the Leaders and Managers are under so much pressure to remain competitive. They end up setting high targets

on par with the Competitors. Employees are forced to focus all their time and energy in achieving these targets even if they try to maintain the work life balance.

### **Literature Review**

One positive effect of working from home is protection from the outbreak of Coronavirus and also having freed from travelling, but experts warn that unintentionally spending more hours could disrupt the work-life cycle and unfavourably impact the mental well-being of employees.

One of the main reasons for women to start working is to give financial support to the family. More and more competitive the world is becoming; it has become essential for women to also work.

In 2009, Sharon Meers and Joanna Strober published *Getting to 50/50*, a comprehensive review of governmental, social science, and original research that led them to conclude that children, parents, and marriages can all flourish when both parents have full careers. The data plainly reveal that sharing financial and child-care responsibilities leads to less guilty moms, more involved dads, and thriving children. Professor Rosalind Chait Barnett of Brandeis University did a comprehensive review on work-life balance and found that women who participate in multiple roles actually have lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of mental well-being. Employed women reap rewards including greater financial security, more stable marriages, better health, and, in general, increased life satisfaction. (Pg 11: Lean in: Nell Scovell and Sheryl Sandberg).

Work from home took a larger shape when world became resource hungry and employees across the globe made full utilization of the technology that is available to fulfil their work needs.

On contrary, there was a situation, where Yahoo had banned work from home for its employees under the leadership of CEO – Marisa Mayer in February 2013. The employees considered the ban unfair. Along with others, they argued that work from home was beneficial to employees, particularly married employees having children, in their struggle to balance work and family (Guynn 2013).

As per the saying goes, any technology if over used has its own consequences, likewise, there are personal and psychological consequences of home-based work (Ahrentzen;1992; Gurstein, 1991) which include personality as well as developed strategies for working from home (Anderson, 1998; Gurstein, 1991; Lamond, 2000). A study in one of the papers revealed that many people who took part in the research had developed numerous strategies for coping with motivation, isolation and stress. These included: developing support networks with colleagues, setting personal targets

for the completion of work; making appointments to socialise with friends or relatives, taking part in regular social activities outside of the home and developing daily and/or weekly work timetables or schedules. Personal time became fragmented for some homeworkers. (work Life balance , crossbie : Moore)

Many multinational companies across the globe have repeatedly highlighted work from home as an employee benefit that they provide. Further, companies even portray work from home as a privilege given to employees (Mescher et al 2010), even at a cost to the employer. (Bathini and Kadanthil : Missing piece of employee).

As per an article from a News Paper from UAE suggests that some employees consider work from home as a boon even-though it has increased their work pressure exclusively by leaps and bounds. Current job is centred around less face to face meetings and more web meetings and the entire world is following that now. The employee thinks the cut in commute time, the sustainability of working from home and the reduction in stress, is a complete boon.

Another employee interviewed from the same company said that “But there is also the issue of work-life balance as work has spilled much beyond nine hours and I find myself answering mails and conducting meetings way past my normal office timings. I think in terms of physical and mental health, we need to recalibrate and reallocate our time well so we truly enjoy the benefit of working from home” even though work from home seems good it does affect the work life balance in a large way.

In a daily magazine, A lecturer was interviewed regarding online classes and he believed remote learning is a challenge for senior teaching faculty who had to undergo intensive training for the transition. Moreover, the effect of face to face learning and teaching is better than the online platform.

A recent research was done in the year 2018 In Baylor University on working from home as the opportunity to work stress-free and the research showed that “If something stressful happens at work, a person who is high on emotional stability would take it in stride, remain positive and figure out how to address it. A person low on emotional stability might get frustrated and discouraged, expending energy with those emotions instead of on the issue at hand,” The research further concluded that working from home seemed to suit those employees reporting high levels of autonomy and emotional stability the best, with employees reporting high levels of job autonomy with lower levels of emotional stability appearing to be more susceptible to strain. Apparently working from home isn't stress-free. (Entrepreneur Asia Specific; Oct 2018)

On further readings there are some articles which could see both the positive and negative side of work from home. The overall positive opinion shows that the Remote working can result in more productivity – Remote workers feel less stressed or less watched and hence able to work better. When people work from home, they are away from office distractions, such as noise and interruption from colleagues. This helps them to focus more and get their work done more efficiently. It is highly beneficial in saving a lot of travel expenses, could make time flexible and hope that the work life balance is made successful.

In general negatives compared to positives are high like remote working leads to loneliness and complete cut off from the normal face to face communication in teams, working more than the allotted hours, need to be on work and call 24/7. Many people feel by working from home they can have a good work life balance but that hardly happens. Irregular sleep timings affects biological cycle, adds more stress and depression, qualitative time spent with family is less. Challenges related to communication and collaboration – Effective communication, team building, and bonding can be hard to achieve when co-workers and colleagues work from their respective homes. The entire concept of spontaneity is lost and every action becomes deliberate and thought through. Building a company's culture turns challenging. Acquiring and learning skills from seniors also turns out tough. The Knowledge transfer and other induction related content becomes more of a segment rather than having a practical experience through a day to day interaction. Another important problem with work from home is that operational managers find it challenging to get their tasks and work done. Network connectivity issues, speed of the internet all at some time hinders the smooth functioning of a process.

Work from home which was mainly introduced with the agenda of helping the working women, in this pandemic time it is observed that the work pressure for working women, mothers increases manifold than what it needs to be as by default. It is expected from women, that even today the responsibilities and demands of each member in the family needs to be fulfilled and also at the same time the official work targets needs to be taken care too. So from a woman's perspective work from home has become even more challenging and more of an obligation at the cost of her mental health as well as her physical health adding to discomfort.

### **Methodology**

The method used for this research was through survey, where the population range from 20 years to 60 years of age. The survey questionnaire was self-designed and consisted of 31 items based on 5 different criteria. The criteria are as follows-

Efficiency at work- This Criterion determines how efficient the employees feel when they are doing work from home. The higher they rate , higher the satisfaction levels are.

- a) General stress level- Stress is the body’s reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Stress is a normal part of life. You can experience stress from your environment, your body, and your thoughts. General Stress level has a tendency to pull down the overall satisfaction of a candidate.
- b) Family Commitments- In this criterion we are assessing how conveniently is the employee able to fulfil all his family responsibilities alongwith his office work culture. If the employee is showing higher discrepancy in work and family obligations, then he is not satisfied, as it adds to more pressure to his or her stress levels.
- c) Work Life Balance- work-life balance involves looking at how working people manage time spent at and outside of work. Time outside of work may include managing relationships, family responsibilities, and other outside interests and hobbies.
- d) Time Management- *Time management* is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your *time* between specific activities. Good *time management* enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less *time*, even when *time* is tight, and pressures are high. This criterion also helps us to understand whether the employee is able to reach his deadlines on time so that he doesn’t have much of lagging work and can equally balance between office time, sleep timings and family time when he is working from home. These criteria help in deciding whether work from Home is a Boon or a Bane.

The data was collected from the 3 work sectors-Teaching/Educational Sector, IT/ITES Corporate Sector, Service Sector. The data collected was based on the above criteria mentioned , quantitative analysis on the same was done in every sector individually.

### **Results And Discussions**

The Survey was conducted among employees belonging to different sectors-Teaching/Educational Sector, followed by IT/ITES Corporate Sector and Service Sector respectively. Both Female and Male employees took part in this survey. The analysis was done manually with excel where the overall Work From home satisfaction

percentages and Dissatisfaction percentages were calculated. While looking at the holistic results we found the overall satisfaction percentage was 66 % and overall percentage of dissatisfaction was 34% respectively (Chart 1) when it comes for work from home. This indicates that work from home has been more of a boon but when we individually look into the sectors, we find that the levels of satisfaction percentage varies. The discussion further would be on individual analysis of each sector based on the Work from Home (WfH) satisfaction levels as per the mentioned criteria.

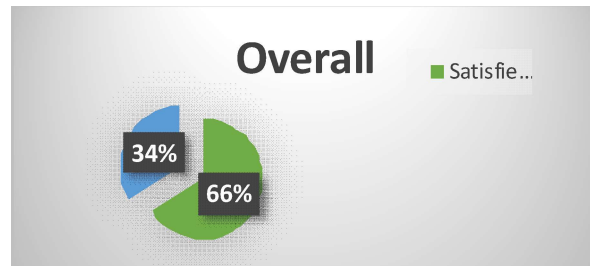


Chart 1: Overall Satisfaction Rate

### **Educational Sector**

Employees from this sector at the overall level were the least satisfied with only 51% satisfaction rate. The General Stress level of employees is at 54% which is highest compared to other categories. The possible contributing factors are like the shift of teaching methodology from in-person coaching to a virtual training. Where more efforts are put in to educate the educator on tools that aid the virtual training. This would mean that the Education sector takes time to adapt for the new training mechanisms even though they are able to manage time efficiently at 61.33% and they are also able to satisfactorily also maintain the work life balance at 54.55%. It also shows that the efficiency at work is least exhibited with 47.78% satisfaction as the candidates feel less confident that their training reaches to all the students or in other words. This could also bother the candidates from thinking that not all students would have been physically/mentally paying attention to the lecture. This further leads the candidate to put more efforts to grab the attention of the class and thereby putting their commitment to family comes at stake with 53% feeling dissatisfied.

Sector:	Educational Sector	
Category	Satisfied %	Not Satisfied %
Efficiency at Work	47.78%	52.22%
Family Commitments	46.67%	53.33%
General Stress Levels	45.71%	54.29%
Time Management	61.33%	38.67%
work life balance	54.55%	45.45%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>51.83%</b>	<b>48.17%</b>

Table 1: Educational Sector – Satisfaction Levels

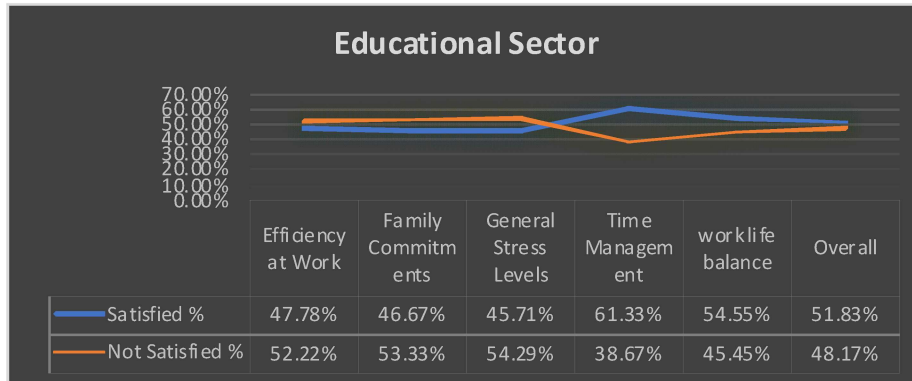


Chart 2: Educational Sector Satisfaction Graph

**IT/ITES Sector:**

Employees from this sector have overall average satisfaction levels at 66.72%. The contributing factors for their high satisfaction levels are family commitment with the satisfaction percentage as 76.86% followed by efficiency at work with 69.53% followed by work life balance with 66.55% and good time management at 64.16% and General stress levels at 57.29% respectively but when we look into this data critically we find that the difference between General stress levels, time management and work life balance isn't so prominent. If this trend continues then the General stress levels of the employee would increase leading to a drop in his or her performance thus impacting his or her satisfaction levels.



Sector:	IT/ITES	
Category	Satisfied %	Not Satisfied %
Efficiency at Work	69.53%	30.47%
Family Com mitm ents	76.86%	23.14%
General Stress Levels	57.29%	42.71%
Time Management	64.16%	35.84%
work life balance	66.55%	33.45%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>66.72%</b>	<b>33.28%</b>

Table 2: IT/ITES Sector – Satisfaction Levels

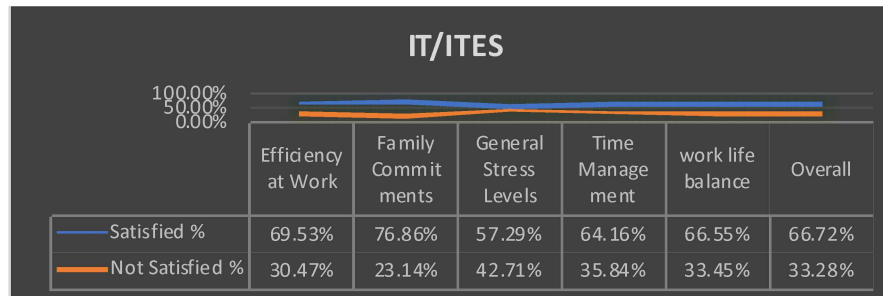


Chart 3: IT/ITES Sector Satisfaction Graph

### Service Sector

Employees belonging to the service sector seem to be enjoying the maximum benefit of Work from Home. The overall satisfaction of the employees in this sector is 70.97%. The contributing factors for the high satisfaction levels are work life balance with 83.33% followed by the percentage of Family commitment and efficiency at work at 80% and 77.27% respectively. The satisfaction levels when it comes to general stress is 64.29% and the percentage of satisfaction in time management is 55.25%. As per the response we find that they find it difficult to manage time eventhough their percentage of satisfaction is high. If there is a lapse in time management then it is obviously will lead to higher stress levels impacting the satisfaction rates of Work from Home.

Sector:	Service	
	Satisfied %	Not Satisfied %
Efficiency at Work	77.27%	22.73%
Family Commitments	80.00%	20.00%
General Stress Levels	64.29%	35.71%
Time Management	55.56%	44.44%
work life balance	83.33%	16.67%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>70.97%</b>	<b>29.03%</b>

Table 3: Service Sector – Satisfaction Levels



Chart 4: Service Sector Satisfaction Graph

## Conclusions

From the above analysis and details received in the survey we can conclude that the Work from Home option is more of an obligation in the Educational Sector where there is an entire shift in technology, lack of face to face interaction leading to the dissatisfaction rates high between the faculty and students increasing the general stress levels. When it comes to the IT sector, we find though the data shows average satisfaction, but the general stress levels of the employees increases with every new target. Finally, in the service sector the overall satisfaction rate is high but time management shows a dip where there is every possibility to build up the general stress levels of the employees. General stress level seems is the key factor impacting the overall satisfaction levels of an employee. If the general stress levels are affected it impact the overall performance of the employee leading to mental pressure. In a

longer run, when employees continue to work from home, it will only increase the General Stress levels and contribute to universal dissatisfaction where the very objective of work from home would be defeated making the process more of a binding rather than a privilege.

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