

Influence of Working from Home During Covid-19 Pandemic on Work Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Work life balance is recognized as an essence for employee work efficiency and performance. The Covid-19 pandemic has put a great threat and turbulence in shifting work life balance of employee work profile. The move to Working from home pattern of work schedule has largely been adopted by many organizations. The aim of study was to learn the impact of working from home on work life balance in Indian print media industry. The study undertook an exploratory cum correlational research design. The study was based on primary data via a structured questionnaire collected from 150 respondents from print media companies. Data was analyzed and interpreted through inferential analysis based on correlation and regression. Correlation analysis suggested that family and individual factor were significantly related with Work life balance while organizational factors were less strongly related. The results indicated that working from home leads to increased level of work life balance. It was inferred that individual and family factor contributed to increased level of work life balance whereas work life balance was not found strongly connected with organizational factors.

Key Words: Working from Home, Covid-19, Work life balance, Print media industry

1. Introduction

Covid-19 is a new disease and it begun circulating in human since December 2019. Currently, the known main mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets, and hence is considered to spread through close contact with other people. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a global health emergency on 31 January 2020 (World Health Organization 2020). Since then, the virus has spread rapidly. Before Covid-19 a very small percentage of professionals belonging to print media, IT and some other sectors had that opportunity to Working from home. However, the spread of Covid-19 made a major change to organizational policies of various private and public firms and psychological change in professionals thinking with respect to their job responsibilities that can be performed only in organization premises. It was a significant and one of the most observable changes because of Covid-19. It can be speculated that working from home will remain in some organization even after the pandemic. This the demand of new normal phase in current organizational settings.

In today's era Working from home is essential part of professionals belonging to most of the sectors which facilitates alternative and safe working in order to protect from Covid-19. In recent time it has become foremost policy for leading private and public sectors. However, the

concept of Working for home was initially described by Nillesin 1988. Further it has been known as Telework, remote work, flexible work, e-working and telecommuting.

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) defined working from home as the ability to use technology to complete job responsibility from flexible workplaces most preferably from home.

In recent time the acceptance of Working from home has been increased in our nation but still there are some areas Healthcare, hospitality, and grooming industries where this concept does not work at all. WFH is recently became the alternative working to minimize the risk of Covid-19.

WFH has beneficial effects for both employers and employees. The advantages, include and are not limited to reduced commuting time, avoiding office politics, using less office space, increased motivation, improved gender diversity (e.g., women and careers), healthier workforces with less absenteeism and turnover, higher talent retention, job satisfaction, and better productivity (Mello 2007; Robertson, Maynard, and McDevitt 2003). Studies indicated evidence for these benefits; for example, the research in the Greater Dublin Area by Caulfield (2015) found employees saving travel time and value of travel time. Some studies point out that telework can reduce turnover rate and increase employees' productivity, job engagement, and job performance (Collins and Moschler

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2009; Delanoëije and Verbruggen 2020). Similarly, e-working can increase productivity, flexibility, job satisfaction, WLB, including reducing work-life conflict and commuting (Grant et al. 2019). Additionally, Purwanto et al. (2020) argued that WFH could support employees in terms of flexible time to complete the work and save money for commuting to work. Conversely, the drawbacks of WFH, include the blurred line between work and family, distractions, social isolation, employees bearing the costs related to WFH. According to Purwanto et al. (2020), there are certain drawbacks of WFH, such as employees working at home must pay for electricity and the internet costs themselves. Collins and Moschler (2009) found that workers were isolated from their coworkers, and managers concerned about reductions in productivity while working from home. Moreover, the relationship between coworkers could also be harmed (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007). Employees might be distracted by the presence of young children or family members while working at home (Baruch 2000; Kazekami 2020) along with blurred boundaries between work and family life lead to overwork (Grant et al., 2019). In a similar vein, the management of boundaries between work and family of remote workers studied by Eddleston and Mulki (2017) revealed that WFH relates to the inability of remote workers to disengage from work.

2. Significance of the study

The pandemic facilitated a trial run for implementing Working from home setup. Before the pandemic Working from Home was a privileged and limited facility for professionals but during pandemic implementation of Working from home policy can be seen at various private and public sectors to protect them from Covid-19.

Many businesses in India implemented Work from Home setup for the first time. And there was a time lag to accept the new normal Work from Home to all the professionals working in the various domains. It affected them on work domain and life domain.

Hence the need arises to study the influence of working from home on work domain and life domain of a professional during Covid-19. This study describes about factors that influence working from home thereafter it aims to talk about the influence of working from home on Work life balance in Indian print media context.

3. Review of Literature

Work from Home

The concept of working from home first came around in 1970 that facilitated performance of work from home or any other location. Using technological assistance (Van Meel 2011). Working from home has always been

discussed considering risk and benefits of flexible working hours. There are some advantages of doing work from home, namely, time planning skills, the possibility to work during the most productive time and to access an organization's documents from home, the suitability of having a workplace at home, the possibility to work from home in cases of sickness and being able to take care family members (Nakrošiene, 2019).

Work from home has been implemented by various public and private sectors in the recent years. It has been defined a double-edged sword by various studies. (Schieman and Glavin 2017; Kim et al. 2019) that gives mixed effect on work life balance. Many studies suggest that working from home has positive impact on work- life balance (Fisher et al. 2009; Ellis and Webster 1998; Fedákoyá and Ištónová 2017) whereas some suggest this effect as negative (Wessels et al. 2019; Novianti and Roz 2020). Moreover, some researchers suggested that there were blurred boundaries between work and family life (Grant et al. 2013) and may lead to overwork and in turn reduce WLB. Nevertheless, several studies found that WFH is positively associated with family factor. (Eddleston and Mulki 2017; Virick, DaSilva, and Arrington 2010, Chan et al. 2016; Noda 2020).

Work life balance: Work life balance means to make the balance between professional and personal life. Professional life consists of career counseling, training, self-development whereas personal life consists of family, friends, hobbies, self-care, interest etc. That means the individual can impart time to both the area with maintaining a balance. If the person can make a balance between every role of his life, it is called work life balance (Hudson, 2005). In other words, we can say that it is an equilibrium between qualitative measure in terms of effort and quantitative measure in terms of time that an individual imparts to his professional and personal life

Fig 1.1 describes the factors that makes work life balance. This 4-scale work life balance is adapted from Fisher and Bugler (2009).

1. **Work Interfering Personal Life:** It refers to work interference with personal life. It demonstrates the suffering of employee due to which he is not able to meet his personal demands also neglecting personal needs frequently and feeling too exhausted after coming home.
2. **Personal Life Interfering Work:** It refers to personal life interference with work. It demonstrates the suffering, lack of concentration at work, lack of energy at work due to personal life, not effective enough to maintain quality of work.

3. **Work Enhancing Personal Life:** It refers to work enhancement of personal life. Due to job work the employee can do good decision making at her personal life and other aspects which are useful for her to deal with routine issues at personal life. Employee feel productive due to his good work at home.
4. **Personal Life Enhancing Work:** It refers to personal enhancement of work. Due to better personal life the employee can do good decision making at her work life and other aspects which are useful for her to deal with routine issues at work. Employee feel productive at work due to his personal life.

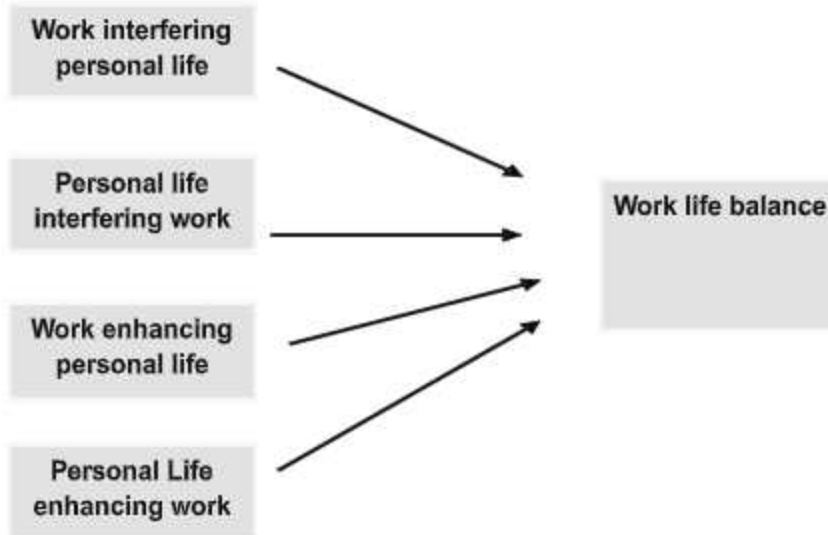


Figure 1: Framework of Work life balance (Adopted from Fisher, 2009)

Conceptual framework: It is made up of 3 factors: individual, organizational, and family factors (Baker, Avery, and Crawford 2007; Solis 2016). First one is Individual factor that talks about the perception regarding belief and attitude while working from home. In other words, how the employee depicts the overall picture of working from home including advantages and disadvantages. As a result, how the individual feels ultimately working from home. The second factor tells us

about the support and atmosphere an individual gets while WFH. Whether his family members are creating a suitable atmosphere to facilitate easy WFH functioning. The 3rd factors are organizational factor under which Supervisory support, trust & communication comes.

Conceptual framework has been adopted from the study of L. Vyas and N. Butakhieo (2020). Fig 1.2 describes that work life balance is measured through the 3 factors of working from home.

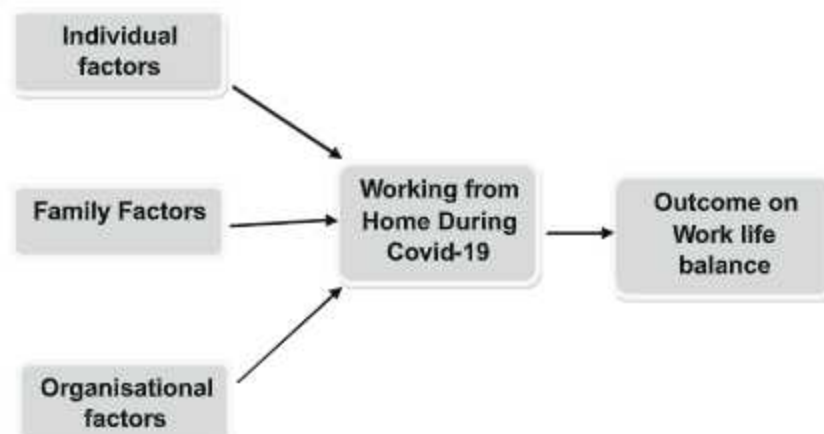


Figure 2: Analytical framework of measuring work life balance (Adopted from L. Vyas and N. Butakhieo, 2020)

3. Research Methodology

In this study we have used Exploratory and Correlational research design. This design was based on the quantitative approach to measure the impact of working from home on work life balance. We therefore hypothesize that:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Working from home and Work life balance

H2: There is a significant influence of Working from home on Work life balance.

4. Objective of the study

- To measure extent of association of factors of individual, family and organizational on work life balance.
- To examine the effect of Working from home on work life balance.

5. Sample size and data collection

In this study Primary data was extracted through online questionnaire to collect demographic information and data about study variables. The responses were taken from various professionals the only criteria for respondents that they must be working from home and thereafter recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. Total 200 questionnaires were distributed by using social media and WhatsApp, out of which 175 responses were received and 150 questionnaires with complete responses were taken into consideration. We have used nonprobability based purposive sampling technique in this study.

5.1 Data analysis tools

Data analysis was done by using SPSS version 24. First reliability of instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha test. Further Statistical technique such as linear regression and correlation were applied for inference purpose.

Correlation was done to see the relation between variables under studies. Moreover, Linear regression was used to propose a model to measure working from home and work life balance.

5.2 Instrument Design

This study was conducted using a questionnaire which was based on a 5-point Likert scale which evaluated work life balance through working from home. The scale to evaluate working from home consist of 13 items. These 13 items come under working from home Individual factor, family factor and organizational factors and were taken from multiple sources. Similarly, the scale to evaluate work

life balance consist of 13 items. These items are taken from Fisher and Bulger (2009) These 13 items come under work Interfering Personal Life, Personal Life Interfering Work, Work Enhancing Personal Life and Personal Life Enhancing Work. Table 1 represents all the 26 items are reliable and highly consistent. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.860	26

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of reliability and consistency of instrument taken for study. Its acceptable values range from 0.70 to 0.95 (Mohsen tavakoi, Reg Denick). We ran Cronbach's alpha test for 26 items of working from home and work life balance.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents: A total of 200 respondents participated in this study, out of which 150 were taken for consideration. With regards to working

Table 2: Demography of respondents

Particulars	Item	(n=150)	Percentage
Job hierarchy	Entry	32	21.3
	Middle	106	70.7
	Top	12	8
Dependents living while WFH	Yes	88	58.7
	No	62	41.3
Working hours per day while WFH	0-40	42	28
	40-50	44	29.3
	50-60	52	34.7
	60-70	8	5.3
	70-80	4	2.7
	0-1	108	72
WFH service period (yr)	1-1.5	24	16
	1.5-2	10	6.7
	2-2.5	8	5.3

from home, 72% respondents had been doing so for 0-1 year ago. Concerning Dependent status, the majority of respondents were living with their dependents (58.7%) and the remaining were living without dependents (41.3%). Similarly Concerning Job hierarchy status, the majority of respondents comes under middle level (70.7%), and the remainder comes under Entry and top level (21.3% & 8.0%). The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in this study are summarized in Table 2.

Hypothesis testing: This section explores and analyze answers to research objective and testing of Hypothesis.

H₁ testing: There is a significant relationship between Working from home and Work life balance.

Correlation was done to check the relationship between study variables. Correlation is an effect size and the strength of the correlation using absolute value of r was given by Evans (1996) as follows:

.00-.19 "very weak", 0.20-.39 "weak", 0.40-.59 "moderate", 0.60-.79 "strong" and 0.80-1.0 "very strong".

Table 3 represents the results of correlation coefficient (r) between dimensions of Working from Home and Work life balance. The findings show a statistically significant moderate to low positive correlation between all the dimensions of Working from Home and Work life balance. The above findings show a significant positive high correlation between family factor and Work life balance (r=.482, p<0.01), followed by Individual factor and Work life balance (r=.401, p<0.01) and organization factor and Work life balance (r=.213, p<0.01). Thus, the (H₀) null hypothesis was rejected. It is inferred that the significant positive relationship exists between work from home dimensions (WFH1, WFH2, and WFH3) and Work life balance.

Table 3: Correlation between WFH (3 factors) and WLB

		WFH1 Individual Factor	WFH2 Organizational	WFH3 Family	WLB
WFH1 Individual Factor	Pearson Correlation	1	.400**	.502**	.401**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150
WFH2 Organizational	Pearson Correlation	.400**	1	.055	.213*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150
WFH3 Family	Pearson Correlation	.502**	.055	1	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	150	150	150	150
WLB	Pearson Correlation	.401**	.213*	.482**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	150	150	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 represents the results of correlation coefficient (*r*) between Working from Home and Work life balance. The findings show a statistically significant moderate positive correlation ($r=.511$, $p<0.01$) between Working from Home and Work life balance.

Table 5 represents the value of $R = 0.511$ shows the strength of correlation between Working from home and work life balance which is moderate. R square value as 0.261 which represents that the working from home explains 26.1 % variance in work life balance and adjusted R square value is 0.511 which cross validates the model.

Table 4: Correlation

		WFH	WLB
WFH	Pearson Correlation	1	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
WLB	Pearson Correlation	.511**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H₁ testing: There is a significant influence of Working from home on Work life balance.

Table 5: Model summary

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.511 ^a	.261	.251	.513	.248	48.871	1	148

a. Predictors: (Constant), WFH
b. Dependent Variable: WLB

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.173	1	7.173	27.510	.000 ^b
	Residual	20.338	78	.261		
	Total	27.511	79			

a. Dependent Variable: WLB
b. Predictors: (Constant), WFH

Table 6 represents the p- value which shows if the overall model is significant. Model with p-value less than 0.05, is considered statistically significant. Moreover, the value of $F(1,78) = 27.5$ and $p = .000 < 0.05$ that shows the proposed model is a good fit and significant. Moreover, p value shows given line is best fit for the data taken.

Table 7: Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.286	.281		4.576	.000
	WFH	.509	.097	.511	5.245	.000

Table 7 represents significant value of t test 0.000 shows that our study variable working from home is a significant predictor of work life balance. Moreover, when working from home changes by one unit, there will be 0.509 units change in Work life balance. It also shows the direction of relationship. The coefficient is positive, which indicates a direct influence of working from home on Work life Balance. The results of the Beta Value (β) indicate the degree of relative impact of working from home on work life balance. It can be concluded that working from home has significant influence on work life balance.

7. Conclusion

Result of the study indicates that working from home is a significant predictor of work life balance. In reference to working from home factors Family & individual factor shares moderate positive relation (Arntz, Sarra, and Berlingieri 2019; Virick, DaSilva, and Arrington 2010) whereas weak positive relationship with organizational factor was observed. This shows that support and understanding from family members as well as homely environment promotes work life balance of the individual also an individual's belief on work efficiency constraints for career growth and positive experiential outlook for life found related with work life balance. Organization direct interaction among superior and subordinate sense of mutual trust and frequency of communication did not affect work life balance much. As people are more experienced and specialized in their task. So, with the differences of these factors work from home was not strongly affected by organizational factors. Thereafter having confirmed with statistically significant effect of working from home on work life balance we measured influence by the proposed regression model.

The proposed regression model states that 26.1% variance in work life balance is explained by working from home. Further positive and large effect on work-life balance through working from home is observed. Moreover, it has been supported by various researchers that working from home support work life balance positively (Fisher et al. 2009; Ellis and Webster 1998; Fedáková and Išto Žnová 2017). This finding indicates that working from home leads to increased level of work life balance. It is inferred that Some Pattern of the result are consistent with prior research on work life balance. Employees can divide their time between work and personal life. Creating boundaries between work and personal life to create a work-life balance condition is not an easy thing, especially in the pandemic situation that has many restriction policies. Therefore, it is noted that the positive consequences may impact on personal well-being in a positive way.

8. Implications

In reference to Individual factors an individual must try to keep his personal and professional life separate. He must work upon boundary management. Further, he should Create a dedicated workplace where once can focus with minimal distractions. He must not do over commitment and analyze his working hours quantitatively and qualitatively to maintain work life balance. In context to organizational factors of work from home Employer Avoid unnecessary long online meetings. It may Provide its employee flexibility to choose timings as well. Workload

should be given by supervisor considering time constraint. Social support from colleagues must be there. Encourage work from home policies where it has not been started yet fully-fledged. While designing work from policy employee's feedback and participation can be taken positively. Work from home policy should be designed while considering severity of covid. Further, It Can provide ergonomically designed furniture to its employees to do work from home.

9. Limitations

This study has some limitation, despite using online questionnaire some google forms got incorrect response which were not analyzed. Moreover, due to time limitation only 150 samples could get response. Open ended questions could not be added for designing detailed instrument.

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