

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF WORK-FROM-HOME (WFH) METHOD ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES DURING THE COVID-19 -FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYEES

P. SELVAM

Assistant Professor, R L Institute of Management Studies, Subbalakshmi Lakshmi pathy College of Science, Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. M. SAKTHI SARADHA

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Department of Commerce, Sri S. Ramasamy Naidu Memorial College of Arts and Science, Sattur, Tamil Nadu.

M. JANAKIRAM

Assistant professor, Department of management studies, PACE Institute of Technology and Sciences, Ongole. Andhra Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 played havoc with the national economy destructing the business operation and claiming the lives of many people. However, India, by virtue of its decisiveness, surmounted the pandemic by imposing perfectly timed lockdown, during which, the term “Work-From-Home” remained a common refrain for many of the Indian employees. In view of the unbridled growth of toll rate during the first wave of COVID-19, all the companies resorted to providing WFH Method to their employees. Hardly had the normalcy returned in the country when the number of COVID cases started spiking exponentially. Due to the resurgence of cases being reported in this second wave, companies continue to resort to WFH method worldwide. On one side of the coin, conventional wisdom has it that many of the India-based companies prefer their employees to opt for Work-From-Office method to track and monitor their performances in workplace. On the other side of the coin, as many as 88% of the employees, as per SAP Concur study in 2020, prefer opting for WFH method. Therefore, it becomes imperative to explore the productivity of employees during this WFH method. Does this WFH have really caused a significant impact on the career and individual development of the employees? This research paper attempts to answer the question casting light on the various aspects of employees’ productivity such as target achievement, performance improvement, new skills acquisition, work efficiency, result orientation, active participation in meetings and etc. Furthermore, it intends to explore the psychological perception of employees about WFH method studying their stress and satisfaction level.

KEYWORDS: Work-From-Home, Productivity, individual development, Psychological Perception and Satisfaction level.

INTRODUCTION:

Work-From-Home method has, of late, become a viable option for many companies owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Conventional wisdom holds the fact that the productivity of employees plays an indispensable role irrespective of any mode of work an employee works on, both online and offline. The employees who got used to working offline might find this WFH method a different one. The performance of employees matters a lot to sustain in the job for the long run no matter how competent a person is. It is an undeniable truth that when an

employee carries his work from home, he is highly susceptible to many other issues arising from a family every day. Therefore, chances are more likely for a person to deviate from his work-related tasks thereby bringing down his performance. Hence, It becomes essential to explore the productivity of employees for which the following ten different parameters have been chosen.

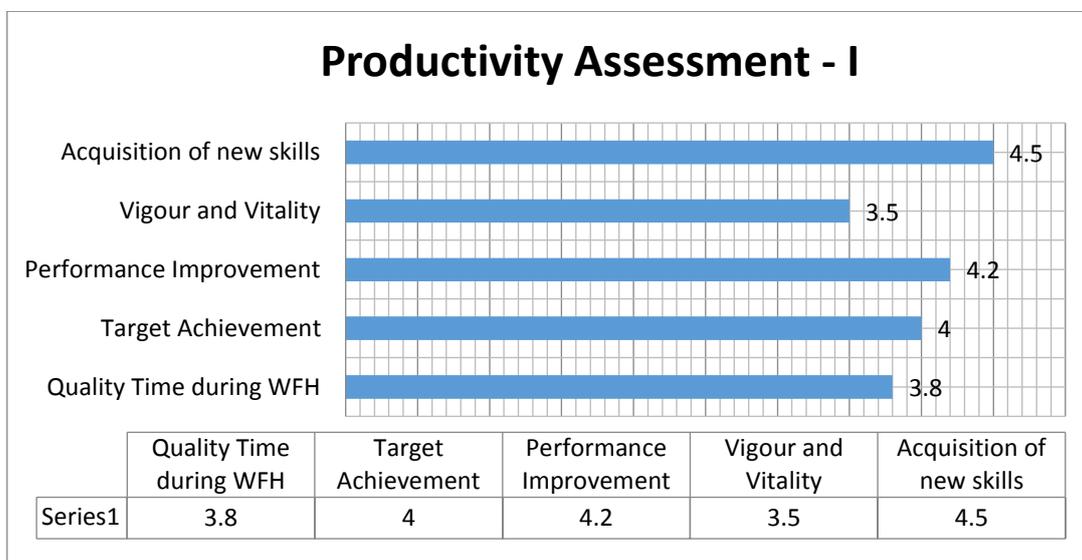
1. Employees ability to acquire new skills
2. Level of vigour and vitality of employees
3. Level of performance improvement
4. Target achievement capacity
5. Optimal utilisation of time
6. Active participation in meetings and other virtual events
7. Level of creativity
8. Ability to focus on result achievement
9. Ability to remain efficient and effective
10. Ability to plan proactively

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

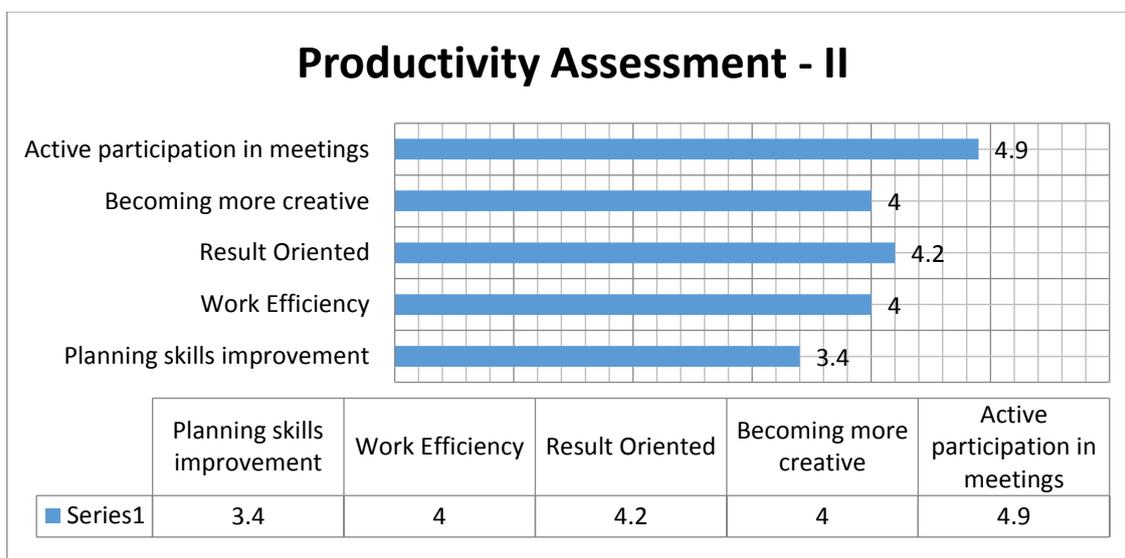
- ✓ To investigate the influence of Work-From-Home method on the productivity of employees
- ✓ To study the overall psychological perception of employees with regard to an extension of Work-From-Home Method
- ✓ To explore the satisfaction level of employees about the Work-From-Home Method

DATA COLLECTION:

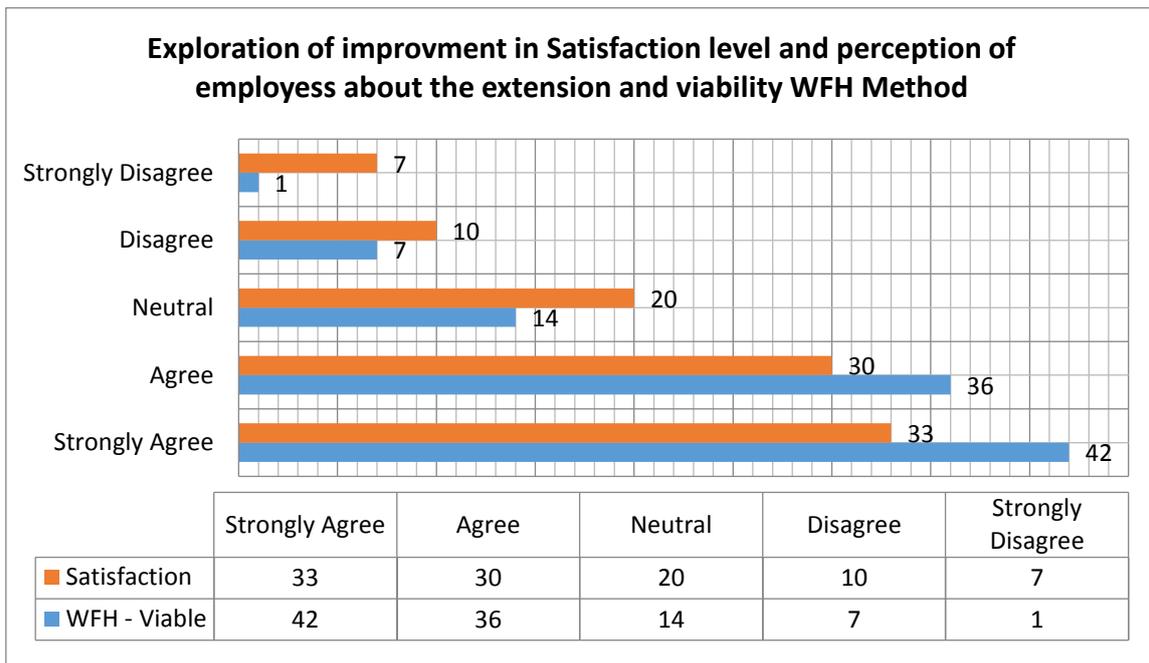
The data required for this study is primary in nature. It has been collected from both government and private sector employees numbering 100, including academicians using a sampling technique namely Chain-referral or Snowball sampling technique.



The above chart titled “Productivity Assessment-I” provides the facts and figures about the productivity of employees. Of all parameters considered, “Acquisition of new skills” tops the first place with a score of 4.5 out of 5, following which “Performance improvement” stands at 4.2. For both “Vigour and Vitality and “Quality time”, the employees have rated the score of 3.5 and 3.8 respectively. It can be interpreted that though the employees found themselves having improved their job performance during WFH method, their vigour and enthusiasm appear to have decreased slightly when compared to other parameters and this decrease can be attributed to several other factors.



The chart titled “productivity Assessment-II” reveals more information concerning employees’ productivity. Almost all the employees appear to have spent their time at home attending virtual meetings and conferences and this has secured the highest score of 4.9 out of 5. It can also be seen that the average score of both “Work Efficiency” and “Creativity” of employees stand at 4, which means this WFH method served the purpose of employees in terms of enhancing their career skills and overall individual development. However, the overall score of “Planning” of employees is 3.4 which is the lowest of low when compared to other parameters.



This chart reveals information about the satisfaction level of employees about WFH method and their perception towards an extension of this method in view of the 2nd wave of COVID-19. Of 100 respondents, as many as 63% of them feel satisfied with the WFH method with just 17% of them feel dissatisfied about it. As for the psychological perception about employees regarding extension of WFH, a significant number of respondents, ie.78%, feel that it is a highly viable and comfortable one.

OVERALL FINDINGS:

1. With regard to “Acquisition of new skills”, while it has been found that many employees have learnt new skills during WFH, the quality of time at home appears to be of less quality due to a lot of other distractions and other commitments at home for employees.
2. Though the overall performance of employees is also found to have increased, the rigour and vitality of them have slightly decreased when compared to other attributes. Employees also strongly feel that they have succeeded in improving their performance and achieving the target given to them.

3. WFH method required employees to remain virtually available throughout the day. Hence, they appear to have spent most of their time actively attending meetings with their managers. This has received an overall response of 4.9 out of 5 which is the highest when compared to other parameters.
4. As far as “Result Achievement” of the employees is concerned, its overall average is 4.2 out of 5, which is the second-highest score in the analysis. While employees are found to have performed well enough in all parameters, the employees seem to have paid less attention towards “Planning”.
5. The overall satisfaction level of employees with this WFH method is observed to be high with a score of 66%.
6. With respect to the “Psychological perception” of employees regarding the extension of WFH method ahead of the 2nd wave of COVID-19, 78% of the employees feel happy about this and they also feel that WHF method is a viable option for them.

CONCLUSION

- The study conducted by SAP Concur Survey India - 2020 reveals the fact that as many as 88% of the Indian employees prefer to have the flexibility of Work-From-Home method with which the performance of 66% of employees has progressively increased. Similarly, this exploratory study conducted among 100 employees aiming at investigating their productivity during Work-From-Home method has positively brought more facts.
- Firstly, it can be concluded based on the analysis that the employees have given more precedence to both “Acquisition of new skills and Active participation in meetings” whose average scores are 4.9 and 4.5 out of 5 respectively.
- Secondly, it also reveals that the overall efficiency, performance improvement, target achievement rate and creativity level of employees are analysed to be much better since the average score of the mentioned parameters stands between 4 to 4.2. On the other side of the coin, the enthusiasm and dynamism (average score 3.5 out of 5) of employees are concluded to be less when compared to other parameters.
- In addition to this, employees don’t seem to have paid attention to plan things effectively as its score stands at 3.4 which is also the lowest score.
- In conclusion, the overall productivity of employees is found to have increased during the Work-From-Home method with more than 60% of the employees is well satisfied with this method. Furthermore, surprisingly as many as 78% of the employees prefer opting for this method continuously as this mode of working renders effective.

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