

Mini-Review Article

The Effect of Working from Home as A Result of Covid-19

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Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic hit the world unexpected, and to respond swiftly to it, lockdown and social distancing measures had to be implemented to combat its spread. Due to so many COVID-19 waves that affect different countries now and again, it proves impossible to return to the office entirely possible and to avoid being unsettled.

Keywords: COVID-19; Work from home; WHO; Corona virus**Introduction**

The coronavirus pandemic hit the world unexpected, and to respond swiftly to it, lockdown and social distancing measures had to be implemented to combat its spread. As a result, that forced changes to the working environment since many could not commute to work and have since been working from home. Due to so many COVID-19 waves that affect different countries now and again, it proves impossible to return to the office entirely possible and to avoid being unsettled, and many workers are advised to work from home full time, which previously was only done by unique employees for certain types of work on occasional bases. However, they now seem to be adopted thoroughly by many companies. All these changes were done because COVID-19 spreads primarily through respiratory droplets or contact with contaminated surfaces, and exposure can occur at the workplace. While travelling to work, during work-related travel to an area with local community transmission, as well as on the way to and from the workplace (WHO 2020) [1]. According to Xiao et al. [2], working from home will become more common even after the pandemic since employers have already paid the fixed cost to set up remote work systems for their employees and seek to reduce operational cost be adopted permanently. Studies show that the transition from the office seemed to be a great challenge at first, but it is now proving to be successful.

Advantages

- Working from home saves daily commuting time and cost.
- Vyas et al. [3], report that it allows flexibility, flexible time to complete the work. You get to work around times where you are the most products to enable flexibility and a relaxed time

to complete the job. You get to work around the most effective times.

- It gives one freedom to cultivate the most comfortable space to work by controlling environmental factors such as space, lights, temperature, humidity, air quality, and noise, all of which influence work positive attitude and behavior.
- Xiao Y et al. [2] reports that it can be beneficial for avoiding distractions from coworkers and only encourages the necessary work engagements, which in turn impacts satisfaction.
- Research studies suggest working from home influences increased productivity.
- Reduces unnecessary distractions and thereby encourages employee performance.

Disadvantages

It is reported by Vyas and Butakhieo [3] that according to Baker, Avery and Crawford (2007) that household characteristics such as the size of the living are:

- Number of family members sharing the same accommodation and the number and age of the children in the household are considered as family factors influencing working from.
- Extended hours of screen exposure due to full-time computer work could lead to fatigue, tiredness, headaches, and eye-related symptoms.
- Complications balancing the stress of dealing with a COVID-19 infected person in the house should there be one and a need to focus on your work.
- Complications in health as a result of lack of physical movements as restricted by lockdowns which could affect productivity.
- Lack of social support due to less social engagements with colleagues could lead to mental issues such as social isolation and depression [2,4].
- Lack of boundaries where work interferes with family or vice versa and that work-family conflict can lead to emotional

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exhaustion and possibly changes in routine and eating habits.

- Difficulty monitoring performance.
- Confidentiality and Information security risk: many companies currently do not have policies that safeguard the company's intellectual property other than office bout. This will need to be explored urgently.
- Abuse and misuse of the internet, companies will need to develop stringent monitoring data and internet usage to ensure optimal use of company resources to the benefit of company objectives.
- Many companies continue to incur the rental cost of office space as many entities have adopted a working from home stance. Many entities will need to review their business operating model in this regard and may need to check their lease arrangements and agreements.
- Working from home is more challenging for women since they tend to be more responsible for household chores and other home activities. They may feel pressure from kids due to a lack of support from daycare centers and babysitters during working hours. Working from home has also seen a much-needed balance between work, homeschooling, and normal home-based activities and chores. The uncertainty around the pandemic and its effect on many families has even become more overwhelming for some employees.
- Increase in work volumes when working from home, a recent survey revealed that a larger number of respondents experienced an increase in their volume of work, the intensity of work, the pace of work and pressure of work compared to when working in the office (Taylor, Scholarios and Howcroft 2021 [5]).
- Employees bear some costs to working from home since they now buy their stationery etc.
- Challenges in connecting virtually may include network connection or signal.
- Unreliable power infrastructure such as Load shedding impacts the ability or risk of optimal connections, which may limit contact from home, and most companies have generators or backup systems that are enabled as soon as there is a power outage.
- Lack of social and human interaction, which in some instances may impact emotional stability. A Robert Walters' 2021 Salary Surveys showed that the lack of social interaction or physical contact between employees has made professionals less formal and more conversational with colleagues and acquaintances [6].

Gaps in the Work-From-Home Transition

The transition from office to work from home happened abruptly, and due to that, many policies had not been made that seek to govern the new working arrangements to seek better working rules and oversee those employees continue to do their work effectively. That initially led to challenges, and companies have since been forced to make rules and policies that seek to advance the company and protect its employees from unfair situations due to the new working arrangements. Vyas and Butakhieo [2] advise that policies must

be made keeping in mind both the practicality of employers and employees. Better guidelines and procedures from the government and individual companies should be in place to properly regulate and make working from home feasible. Digital orientation and digital capacity are of utmost importance, and they significantly affect productivity in the case of working from home. So proper access to IT training, management support, and digital infrastructure needs to be prioritized, significantly affecting employees' productivity. IT has undoubtedly been the most considerable area affected by transitioning or working from home. This is at various levels, including readiness and preparedness. Studies have already identified areas that could be improved and make working from more effective and efficient. A survey conducted by (Metova 2020) showed the following findings (Figure 1) [7].

Conclusion

Proper mental health support should also be made easier and accessible because not only are people working from home, but they are also affected by the effects of the pandemic, which could negatively affect their job performance. High tech security and binding laws need to be implemented to protect the company information and confidentiality issues.

- 48% are more productive working from home (29% say they are less effective)
- 57% would prefer to work from home in the future
- 68% have others in their household also working from home (including students)
- 31% think working from home is less secure than working in the office
- 18% say their employer does not have clear security guidelines for working from home
- 20% do not always follow their company security guidelines or do not have guidelines
- 37% have encountered possible security issues while working from home
- 76% use video conferencing as part of their daily work
- 53% have experienced glitches or dropped audio, with video conferencing
- 54% have upgraded their technology (computer, printer, laptop) to work from home

Figure 1: Metova working from home covid-19 survey results [7].

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