AN IMPACT ON PRODUCTIVITY OF WFH IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR
(AN ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES DURING AND AFTER COVID-19)

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Abstract

The pandemic, Covid-19, that swept the world has rendered a large number of educationists unable to commute to their work, to cope with the lockdown policies of the Indian Government. This has resulted in work from home for adults and online classes from home for children as well as new learning opportunities in terms of webinars, e-conferences, E-FDPs and other virtual teaching & learning methods. The new ways of learning & teaching has caused a direct impact on the productivity as most of the educationists are new to the work from home environment. While some, if not all coming from a classroom environment, had to face difficulties in working from home, the others have learnt and adapted the new patterns of the online environment. Covid-19 has especially challenged educationists who had experience mostly in teaching in classroom environment. This study examines their experience using the data of 50-100 samples through questionnaires and interviews. It investigates the question of whether working from home improves productivity and creates new opportunities in the educational sector. This study also analyse the changes in productivity due to factors like experience, age, gender and family background. This research provides insight to understand how work from home be designed and blended with traditional working system. It helps to reshape the current structure of teaching and learning as well as working hours and flexibility.

Keywords – *Work from home, Productivity, Educationists, Covid-19 Pandemic, Lockdown*

Introduction

The outbreak of covid-19 disease affecting the world had brought social and economic losses to the people, who specifically work in the educational sector. This will reshape the way of teaching and learning. As of December 8, 2020, more than 67 million confirmed cases had been registered worldwide, with more than 1.5 million deaths (BBC News, 2020). In order to prevent the spread of this hazardous disease, governments had ordered a lockdown of whole nations. This has resulted into a change in the working patterns of people in every sector of the economy. The major change that has been observed in the working patterns is telecommuting or Work from Home system. Telecommuting has been suggested by the World Health Organization which is to be implemented by governments and organizations around the globe as a new work innovation in order to prevent the spread of the virus as well as to provide a solution to continue work as usual without any hurdles. In comparison to working from home system,

WFH has the potential to reduce commute time, provide more flexible working hours and improve work-life balance.

In this paper the researcher has analyzed the impact of WFH on the productivity levels of educationists as it is a major transition in the educational sector for both the teachers and the learners. It is speculated that this work arrangement will continue even after the pandemic ends not in the form of complete WFH system but in the blended form. As the technology advances where everyone owns a mobile phone or computer, it has become important that we evolve with this change. Educationists made use of technology to be able to teach students even during lockdown and in a better way.

The researcher has analyzed that whether a possibility of working from home in the educational sector is to be considered as a means of work life balance because it provides the time to spend with family members. However there can be the possibility of risks at the same time that must be considered while working from home. Working from home is effective to improve the quality of life (Azarbouyeh and Jalali Naini 2014), employee happiness, work satisfaction (Kazekami 2020), and openness to creativity that will lead to innovation (Ellis and Webster 1998).

One of the side effects and risks that need to be considered when introducing telecommuting work such as social isolation can be a serious problem that causes workers to be detached and leads to reduced motivation and performance (Martin and MacDonnell 2012). The purpose of this study is to find out the major predictors impacting the productivity of the educationists while working from home. It also investigates whether online education is more convenient to the teachers in comparison to classroom teaching, whether it gives more scope for work life balance and whether online education adds to the quality of content delivery. The study investigates the psychological aspect of the teachers regarding the work from home setup.

Review of Literature

Review of literature is done to understand the areas of study previously undertaken work which throws a light on the potential areas that are yet to be discovered. An effort has been made to make a brief review of past work in relation to the work from home environment. It is essential to make a review on this field in order to develop an understanding on the relationship between productivity and work from home.

Rahman and Arif (2020) has a conducted a study on 'Working from Home during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Satisfaction, Challenges, and Productivity of Employees'. This study has investigated on how professionals have collaborated with each other while working online from home during covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. The researcher has used both the primary and secondary data to conduct a research. The findings of the study state that the participants of the research are fairly satisfied with the work from home environment.

Irawanto, Novianti and Roz (2021) conducted a research on 'Work from Home: Measuring Satisfaction between Work–Life Balance and Work Stress during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia'. The purpose of the study was to fill the gaps in literature by finding out the various predictors of job satisfaction during

working from home. The researchers used a quantitative approach and the responses were analyzed using a Smart-PLS software. The study points out that working from home, work–life balance, and work stress have a significant effect, both directly and indirectly, on job satisfaction.

Gibbs, Mengel and Siemroth (2021) conducted a study on 'Work from Home & Productivity: Evidence from Personnel & Analytics Data on IT Professionals'. The aim of the study was to investigate productivity while working from home during and before the pandemic at an Asian IT service company. The researchers presented various factors that have affected employee's productivity in the working from home environment. They have investigated the challenges that employees are facing while working from home.

Abi Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) have conducted a study on 'Work Tasks That Can be Done From Home: Evidence on the Variation Within and Across Occupations and Industries'. The researchers have presented the models to determine the possibility of work from home including models that are used to analyze the impact of the pandemic policies pointed at reopening the economy.

Erik Brynjolfsson et al., Von Gaudecker et al. (2020) have done a study on 'Covid-19 and Remote Work: An Early Look at US Data'. In this study the researchers have concluded that professionals, managers, knowledge workers, young employees and those with other related occupations make more use of work from home system.

Barrero et al. (2020) have done a study on '60 Million Fewer Commuting Hours Per Day: How Americans Use Time Saved by Working from Home'. The researchers found out that people in USA have saved more time by more than 60 million hours per work day from WFH.

Bloom et at. (2015) conducted a study on 'Does Working from Home Work? : Evidence from a Chinese Experiment'. The researchers have done a study on call center employees in Chinese firm. The findings suggest that the output of those employees rose who were assigned work from home partly because they have worked more hours and partly because their productivity has increased in WFH environment.

Research Objectives

This study's general objective was to analyse the productivity level of educationists while working from home during the pandemic. To get a clear understanding of overall aim of the study, certain specific objectives were set out as follows:

1. To determine the scope of work life balance in online education.

2. To know the challenges involved in telecommuting.

3. To know the psychological aspect of educationists related to telecommuting.

4. To determine the perceived level of ease of use of e-learning tools.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is a systematic approach of describing the problem of research scientifically. It provides a clear thought of how research has been done. In this study, the exploratory research design has been employed. Both primary as well as secondary data has been used to collect the information for the conduct of the study. Primary data was collected through online survey conducted by creating Google forms. The sample consisting of 50 educationists as respondents working remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic in Jaipur city of Rajasthan has been taken. While secondary data was collected from reviewing previous research literature, published articles, journals, books, websites, etc.

Due to the strict measures of lockdown during the pandemic and busy WFH schedule of educationists and due to the non-availability of sampling frame or the database, probability sampling was not possible to employ. Convenient sampling method was adopted which is otherwise known as a non random sampling. In this non-random sampling, data collection is done conveniently by well suited members of the education sector.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

For the purpose of the study, primary data has been gathered from 50 educationists who were remotely working during the pandemic. Online questionnaire created on Google forms had been filled by the participants and their responses are recorded below.

Microsoft excel has been used to analyze the data which involve various quantitative aspects viz. percentage, mean, standard deviation etc.

The following tables depict the information provided by the participants for the purpose of the study.

Table 1 depicts the positions of the educationists who have taken participation for the successful conduct of the study. In this assistant Professor (44%), Lecturer (20%) and Teacher (18%) have made up most of the sample.

Table 1: Job Positions of Educationists

Job Title	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Teacher	9	18%
Lecturer	10	20%
Assistant Professor	22	44%
Associate Professor	7	14%
Professor	2	4%
Total No. of Respondents	**50**	**100%**

Working hours in WFH

Table 2 shows the online working hours of Educationists during the Covid-19 pandemic. The respondents on an average work for about 26.58 hours per week. Subsequently, there are four weeks in a month which amounts to 106.3 hours per month on an average.

Table 2: Online Working hours of Educationists

Duration of work (Per Week)	Percentage of Respondents	Mean of work hours
Less than 20 hours	35.9%	Mean = 26.58 hours/week
20-30 hours	23.1%	
30-40 hours	30.8%	
More than 40 hours	10.3%	

Demographic Factors Affecting the Efficiency Level of Educationists in WFH System

Some of the demographic factors also affect the efficiency level of educationists. Online survey reveals that younger age group participants were more satisfied with WFH system rather than old age group participants as they were more technologically savvy. Similarly, male faculties were more satisfied than women as the woman faculty find it difficult to balance both home and work. They got more distractions at home while working from home. In addition, marital status also affects the efficiency level of educationists. The efficiency of married participants with dependents at home has reduced considerably than unmarried participants with no dependents.

Table 3: Demographic factors affecting the efficiency of educationists

Demographic factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
Age	Below 35 years - 23	46%
	Above 35 years - 27	54%
Gender	Male -15	30%
	Female- 35	70%
Marital Status	Married – 36	72%
	Unmarried - 14	28%
Family background	Less than 5 members - 40	80%
	More than 5 members - 10	20%

Satisfaction level of Educationists While WFH

42% of respondents have expressed that they are "disagree" with the statement that online education is more convenient to teachers while 15% of respondents are "strongly disagree" with the statement. This shows that the satisfaction level of educationists with respect of online education is fairly low in comparison to physical setup.

Table 4 shows the factors that are somewhat positively contributing to the satisfaction level of educationists from WFH. 'Comfortable in using E-teaching tools' seem to be most significant factor (70%), followed by 'E-learning platform is user-friendly (56%).

This strongly indicates that educationists are more inclined towards the blended teaching rather than the proper work from home system.

Table 4: Factors contributing to the satisfaction level of educationists from WFH

Factors contributing satisfaction levels	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Scope for work life balance	16	32%
Quality of Content Delivery	22	44%
E-learning platform is user friendly	28	56%
Comfortable in using E-teaching tools	35	70%
E-learning platforms help in simplifying teaching ability	26	52%

*Multiple responses were present

Challenges Faced by Educationists While Working from Home

Challenges are always present in any work environment. Table 5 shows some of the major challenges faced by educationists while working from home are 'distractions at home' (50%), 'social isolation' (44%) and 'internet connectivity' (40%). Usually, educationists have 6 hours of work per day but in WFH setup they were facing difficulty in keeping a regular schedule. Educationists were also facing a challenge in having proper access to the equipments needed for working from home.

Some previous literatures also have some similar findings. According to Werber (2020), 25% of the respondents believe that the most challenging factor of working from home is social isolation. 13% of the respondents have also mentioned about the distractions caused by children at home.

Table 5: Challenges faced by educationists while working from home

Challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Access of tools/equipments needed	11	22%
Social Isolation	22	44%
Difficulty in coordinating with coworkers	10	20%
Internet Connectivity	20	40%
Distractions at home	25	50%
Physical workspace	12	24%
Other reasons	20	40%

*Multiple responses were present

Source: Online Survey

Psychological Aspect of Educationists towards WFH

Table 6 shows the psychological aspect of educationists towards the work from home system. The most significant factor which is essential in educational sector is the interaction of the teachers and their students which is missing in the WFH system. 76% of the respondents believe that 'inconsistent or poor contact with students' (76%) and 'personal attention is less in WFH' (74%) are the most significant factor which is lacking in WFH system. Moreover, 70% of the respondents believe that there is continuous distractions both teachers and learners are facing while taking online education. This clearly indicates that educationists are not convenient in taking the classes online more often.

Perceived level of productivity

Level of productivity of educationists can be measured by the number of students present in the class and their understanding level. Only 26% of the respondents believe that there was a satisfactory level of attendance of the students while only 22% of the respondents believe that online education is helping the students in understanding their subjects.

Productivity of educationists can also be measured by the knowledge they have gained by attending the seminars or workshops. Due to the restrictions on the gatherings during pandemic

Table 6: Psychological aspect of educationists towards WFH

Psychological aspect	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Personal attention to students is less in WFH	37	74
Possibility of distractions at both ends	35	70
Difficulty in coordinating with colleagues	22	44
Inconsistent or poor contact with students	38	76

*Multiple responses were present

educationists were able to attend seminars at home with the help of internet. Table 7 clearly indicates that 86% of the respondents believe that E-webinars, FDPs, E-conferences are more convenient to attend at WFH rather than attending physically. This indicates that WFH system in the education sector can be both productive and unproductive in different ways.

Table 7: Perceived level of Productivity

Productivity level of educationists	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Satisfactory attendance of the students	13	26%
Understanding level of students	11	22%
More than 4 webinars attended during pandemic	30	60%
E-webinars, FDPs are more convenient to attend	43	86%

Conclusion

Research findings make it evident that work from home system in the education sector has not proved to be a best option for the educationists of Jaipur city of Rajasthan. This study brings to light the changed scenario of working pattern in the educational sector during the Covid- 19 outbreak. The findings of the study suggest that the respondents did not find the working from home system convenient in comparison to the physical setup. In addition, some of the factors that contribute to the satisfaction level of educationists like quality of content delivery, e-learning platform being user friendly etc. Moreover, some of the challenges like social isolation, internet connectivity, physical work environment at home, distractions at home etc have also been highlighted. The study also highlighted the productivity level of educationists which is both also low and high varying under different factors. Specifically, the study has concluded that for the successful implementation of WFH system, there should be an access of tools/equipments required at both ends.

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