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ABSTRACT: Work from home or WFH is nascent method of working arrangement where the employees work remotely from the comfort of their home. This was an existing method specially in IT and ITES sectors but was not a common practice. During the pandemic of Covid 19 this work method gained momentum and was not confined to a specific sector only. The sudden outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic forced companies to shutdown bringing in a big change in the life of mankind. This change came as shock for most of the corporates especially those in manufacturing and service industries. The prevailing state rules and regulations forced the organization to adopt the Work from Home method to keep up their existence. This was a very uncommon practice in Indian context as our way of living, our society is very different from the western world. The employees were more familiar to face to face working culture, this change in workplace took time to get accepted. This was a tough challenge for many employees. This sudden change in work set up impacted the employee performances. It took a toll on mental wellness and wellbeing of the employees. The employees became like a rudder less ship with a distance from their team mates, workplace, leaders. This upside-down situation prompted the organisations to restructure their welfare measures to support this work from home facility and also introduce Hybrid work model. The research showed the positive and negative impacts of this welfare facility of work from home and the Hybrid model on the performance of the employees. Work from home, once considered a welfare measure became a mandatory work model due to this pandemic and forced organization to remodel their measures to motivate the employees. A temporary shift became a permanent and effective measure to maintain a productive and successful work force. Hybrid model is the restructured version of work from home model which is more accepted world wide.

Keywords: Work from home, pandemic, mental wellness, wellbeing, welfare measures, employee performance, Hybrid work model

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The newest weapon of the corporates to attract skilled work force and to boost up the morale of existing employees. It is an 80/20 model where employees need to work from office for three days and rest 2 days from the comfort of their home. After the pandemic though this model has become well accepted by organizations but basically it has become confined to IT and ITES sector.

While doing the research the Delphi method was an important instrument which helped to bring out the advantages and disadvantages of work model and its impact on the employee performance.

Advantages-

1. Flexibility of work. Employees showed better performance with this measure. This is the major advantage. This not only gives the freedom to work from a comfortable and preferred location but also helps to retain the team activities and corporate feel due to the two days office visit. This hybrid model has shown proven result as it gives the flexibility to customize your work time which gives boost to positive attitude.
2. Work- Life Balance- With modernization people have mostly moved out of their hometown which in turn have seen a rise in nuclear mode of family. The hybrid model have become a boon for them as it helped them maintain a proper work life balance and take care of their child too. This acted as a more loyalty towards their work and in turn increased the productivity. It in turn controlled the stress level of working parents.
3. Commute free work life- This Hybrid mode have saved time for employees as they can cut down on their travel time to office. This in turn have helped the employees to utilized this time in a more productive work. The tension of reaching office on time some times create distractions which got solved with the introduction of this model.
4. Environment friendly- Though not vast but this Hybrid model have shown contribution towards the environment also. Less commute means less carbon emission which gifted us clean environment. Research shows that by remote working for 3 days a week one can reduce upto 29% of emission compared to regular commuters.
5. Office distractions- Working from Home for at least 3 days can help the employee to concentrate more on work. The research shows that office distractions, politics, acts as a demotivator and a stress creator. Employees working remotely have full control over their work ambience which in turn help them to innovate and complete deadlines easily.
6. Win- win situation- This Hybrid model is a win-win situation for both employee and employer. As Employers can save a lot on infrastructural and logistics cost. The organisation can hire more resources with their existing infrastructure and don't have to increase to fit in a large workforce. This way they save on cost as well as create a strong and productive workforce.



Disadvantages-

1. Isolation from team work-The absence of an office environment and lack of face- to- face interactions with office mates can act as a demotivator. The feeling of isolation and devoid of in person interactions is set back of this model.
2. Distraction in home environment- Some going to work everyday is like following a daily routine which give one a sense of discipline and responsibility. The distractions at home while work time can create work errors. Intrusions from family members can create a challenge for the employee to stay focused.
3. Lack of proper work station- Though organisations have gone to a greater extent to motivate their employees by providing them with support to create an ergonomic work station to help them focus some employees have suffered to create one due to absence of proper space. This creates a huge impact as an employee have to shuttle between office and home and have to maintain his calm in two different work zone which can create a stress impacting his mental well being and in turn deteriorate his performance.
4. Proximity Bias- This refers to a tendency of the leadership to favour the employees who are working physically from office over the hybrid workers. This is a perception problem which can cause stress among the work force creating a fall in performance. Recognition is a big driving force for any employee
5. Need of Physical presence- In case of new joiners this hybrid model can be a disadvantage for the employer. As a person joining the job direct from college should blend with the corporate life to understand the flavour of it. The office space, the team, the mentor gives a boost to the work life of the younger workforce. The office space and brainstorming with team members can bring out innovations. In view of certain MNCs the Kick off meeting should be done in physical presence. This helps to bring out ideas. The Hybrid model cannot bring out loyalty new joiners until the employee is more tenured.

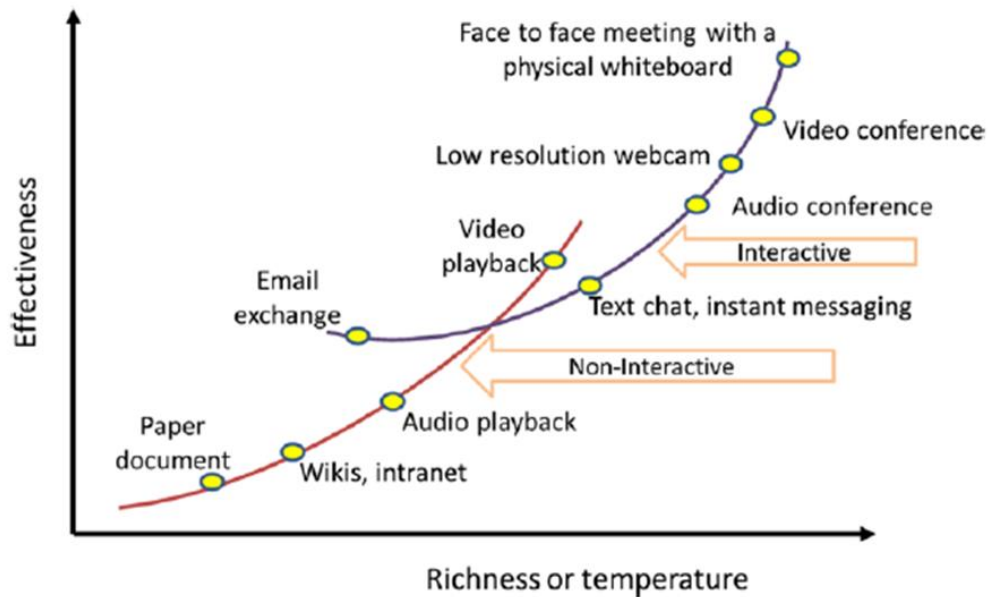
6. **Balancing Priorities-** Virtual team meetings are crucial for connecting hybrid teams but this at times become monotonous. The physical presence in a meeting is more motivating as person's body language can be studied which impacts the flow the meeting. Sometimes technology also fails and this creates a break in connectivity which can be avoided in office.

The Women work force- Impact of Hybrid model of work.

This workforce now covers half of total employee strength irrespective of organisations. The hybrid model is a boon as well as a curse for women. It is a boon as women are keen to get flexible working hours so that they can engage themselves in family affairs. Stress free life helps them to focus on work with better performance.

To some it is a curse as [Gallup's research on hybrid working and women](#) proved that it is acting as disadvantage for specific group of women. Certain ideas of leadership is forcing the women workforce to think that the hybrid working model is hampering their growth and reduced opportunities to learn. They are now keener to go back to office due to socio economic factors.

Communication Gap- The burning problem of Remote Working



- This graph is an adaptation of the effectiveness vs. richness graph introduced by Alistair Cockburn.
- On the X-axis is the richness or temperature of communication. And on the Y-axis we see the effectiveness of communication.
- As we observe from the graph, as the mode of communication increases in richness, its effectiveness also increases.

The richest and most effective mode of communication as per the graph is a face-to-face meeting between a few individuals equipped with a physical whiteboard.

- It is easy to understand such kind of communication conveys written, verbal and nonverbal (like body language, emotions, facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures) traits of communication very easily.
- With real-time feedback and active listening skills applied on top of it, this is the most recommended mode of communication wherever feasible. This impacts the performance of employees as problems gets instant solution which lacks in remote working culture
- On the lowest portion of the graph are written documentations, which is the coolest mode of communication as it is left to interpretation of the reader and does not transmit emotional content.
- Other variations like audio recording, e-mail exchanges, audio and video conferences lie somewhere in between.
- Also notice that there are two lines in the graph – one that denotes interactivity between the parties in communication and there is capability to ask a question or answer it, while the other line denotes zero opportunity for any bidirectional interaction.
- Note that while we just discussed the positives of face-to-face communication within the Agile team, there are times where a cooler communication channel is desired especially when there is a heated exchange of emotions between two parties whenever they confront each other. In such a case, emotion takes over and acts as a barrier for any exchange of messages.

Studying this graph on communication within the Agile team which is most happening topic in the current scenario. The graph portrays that communication occupies a very important portion in corporate life. Somewhere this remote working model creates disharmony as communication gap prevails among the team members due to communication barriers like distance, absence of physical presence, technological barrier etc. Research shows that face to face communication enhances work performances of the employees which in turn shows the weakness of the Hybrid or remote working model. The warmth of the office space, the corporate infrastructure and continuous communication among team members and leadership kindles a positive feeling among all age group of employees which enhances productivity.

Conclusion-

A disconnected work force can create errors in work. With this idea and research work it is seen that though Hybrid work life is worldwide accepted model it cannot be a permanent solution. Though it has certain advantages and can boost up go getter workforce it might not work for every industry. Even IT and ITES sectors which are midlevel cannot afford to keep up with hybrid model. The impact of this model varies depending on factors like individual preferences, job challenges, socio economic condition, age factor etc. Companies which can combat the challenges and utilize this Hybrid model as per the need of the employees can get performance driven and loyal workforce.

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