

Employee Satisfaction when Working from Home during COVID-19: Comparison between India and US

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Abstract: -Purpose: This paper aims to measure and compare the employee satisfaction of Indian and American employees when working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also investigates the impact of various telework factors and demographic factors on the employee satisfaction when working from home.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Based on a literature review, eight telework factors were identified for the purpose of measuring employee satisfaction when working from home. Data were collected from 125 contract-based employees in India and US through an online survey. The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis using statistical tools like independent sample t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression was done using SPSS Statistics software.

Findings: Employee satisfaction in US was greater than employee satisfaction in India when working from home. Suitability of working place at home was found to be the most important telework factor impacting employee satisfaction when working from home. Changes in remuneration was the least significant telework factor affecting employee satisfaction. The most satisfactory telework factor was superior's trust and support in India; and suitability of working place at home in US. Finally, flexibility of working hours was revealed to be the least satisfactory, suggesting that work from home does not offer any significant benefit over traditional offices in terms of stress and fatigue faced by employees.

Practical Implications: This study provides insights about management of work from home arrangements in Indian and American organisations by highlighting the factors that most significantly promote employee satisfaction when working from home. It suggests changes/improvements to existing work from home arrangements that employers can make in order to maintain a continuously motivated workforce during these uncertain times.

Originality/Value: This paper provides a comparative study between India and US in terms of employee satisfaction when working from home. The paper focuses on the impact of work from home arrangements adopted by organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Words: COVID-19, Employee Satisfaction, India, US, Work from Home

INTRODUCTION

On 11th March 2020, the World Health Organization officially declared the COVID-19 virus as a pandemic after it had rampaged through 114 countries in three months, infecting over 1,18,000 people [1]. In order to curb the spread of the virus, affected countries imposed partial or total lockdown of their economies. On 25th March 2020, the Indian government announced the three-week phase one nationwide lockdown, which was subsequently extended by three more phases up until 31st May 2020. It is estimated that India operated at only 49%-57% of its capacity during the lockdown with 143 million to 186 million unemployed non-farm workers. [2]. In fact, according to the estimates by Acuite Ratings & Research Ltd, the Phase 1 of the lockdown resulted in a Gross Domestic Product loss of Rs. 35,000 crores every day [3]. Even after the economy started to gradually open up in the subsequent unlock phases, commercial and private establishments were urged to

function at minimum capacity and all educational, training and research institutions remained suspended.

The coronavirus pandemic and the resultant lockdown had severe consequences on commerce and economy as a whole. Several industries like tourism and hospitality were forced to shut down all together whereas several other industries like online communication, online shopping and online entertainment witnessed an unprecedented growth. Small businesses were run out of business whereas large brands and retailers were forced to recalibrate their business operations in terms of health and safety practices, supply chain, human resource management, sales and marketing. In order to conform to the social distancing norms, offices were shut down and employees were forced to work from home. This paradigm shift to remote work posed a new set of challenges for the employees. As the lines between work and home got blurred, employees struggled to remain motivated and

productive. The job satisfaction took a back seat to health and safety. It is well known that a satisfied and happy workforce are an organization's greatest asset. Studies have shown that high employee satisfaction corresponds to higher productivity and increased profits. Therefore, there is a need to assess the overall impact of such work from home practices on employee well-being. Hence, our research study aims to measure the employee satisfaction when working from home. We contribute to the literature in three ways: first, we draw upon the existing literature to identify the factors that most contribute to the satisfaction of employees while working from home. Second, we empirically state how these work from home factors impact the overall employee satisfaction when working from home. Finally, we undertake a comparative study between the employee satisfaction of Indian employees and the employee satisfaction of American employees. The comparison would give a clear idea of how successful both the countries have been in making the transition to a remote-work centric economy. Most importantly, it would enable us to pin-point the most satisfactory telework factor as well as the most unsatisfactory telework factor of each country. The results of the same could guide formulation of future work from home policies. The purpose of this research is to help employers make the necessary changes/improvements in the existing work from home arrangements to maintain a continuously motivated workforce in these uncertain times.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Factors like face-to-face contact and mobility highly affect employee satisfaction while working from home [4]. Most employees are struggling with the increase in working hours. Challenges like lack of communication, interruptions and fear of 24/7 reporting are seen and decreased time for communication with co-workers was a major factor affecting employee satisfaction while working from home [5]. On the other hand, employees have reported several advantages of working from home such as increased creativity, better decision making and greater time for enrichment and development of career-relevant skills as well [6]. However, since every individual's personality is different, they may adapt to this concept differently. The decreased supervision by managers while working from home also affected the performance of the employees [7]. Superior's trust and support was observed to be one of the most important determinants of telework satisfaction. Working from home has its pros and cons. While some see the time saved on travelling is an added advantage, others find striking a work-life balance when working from home to be more difficult and strenuous [8].

After conducting this review of existing literature, we observed that studies have been isolated to specific industries/sectors of an economy. No study gives an image of how teleworking has had an impact on the employees of the economy as a whole. Also, the studies have been carried out by collecting sample data from a mixture of geographical locations, some even spanning across countries. This heterogeneous mixture of sample cannot be subjected to comparative studies. The research gap identified is that there is a need for a comparison of employee satisfaction when working from home during COVID-19 between two countries. It would give a clear idea of how successful the two countries (for instance, India and USA) have been in making the transition to a remote-work centric economy and how their respective models have impacted the satisfaction of their native employees.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Work from home is a practice where employees do not travel to a central place for work such as an office, warehouse or store [9]. Work from home is also known as telework, telecommuting, remote work, mobile work and flexible workplace [9]. In other words, work done from home instead of a traditional office space is defined as work from home. The concept of telework depends on various telework factors [10]. According to Nakrošienė and Butkevičienė, there are three important considerations when assessing telework; telework intensity (how often?), telework timework (when?), and telework place (where?) [11]. It is assumed that these telework characteristics have an influence on the various telework outcomes including employee satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction or job satisfaction is a measure of an individual's contentedness with their job [12]. Whereas, Locke, defines employee satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" [13],[14]. In simple words, it is the degree to which an individual likes his or her job. Popularly, employee satisfaction is measured through cognitive (evaluative), affective (emotional), and behavioral components [15].

In order to establish a relationship between work from home and employee satisfaction, we used the framework of telework factors and outcomes proposed by Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I. and Goštautaitė, B., based on the job demands-resources theory [16],[17]. Along with the framework of Nakrošienė, A., Bučiūnienė, I. and Goštautaitė, B., a thorough review of existing literature revealed the following work from home factors that impact employee satisfaction:

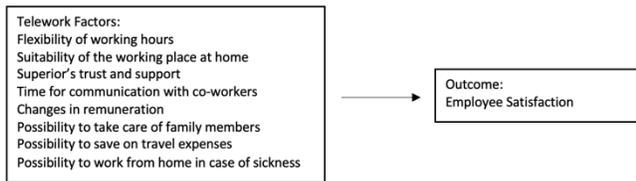


Fig. Theoretical Framework

Flexibility of Working Hours: Work from home allows the employees to start and finish their workday as and when they want. Work from home also makes it possible for the employee to work during the most productive time of the day. Flexible work timings are shown to improve employee morale and well-being due to lower risks of fatigue and burnout [18]. This increased autonomy raises the job satisfaction [19] which in turn leads to higher productivity [20],[21].

Suitability of the working place at home: Work from home is only possible if the employee has an appropriate working place where work can be carried out without any hinderances or distractions. Additionally, adequate infrastructure like computer, furniture, internet connectivity, etc. if not provided by the company can act as a barrier to working from home. Other factors like workspace ergonomics and background noise, temperature and lighting also influence the overall satisfaction [22].

Superior's trust and support: Employees face lower visibility and lower supervisory support while working from home [23]. Lack of face-to-face interaction reduces the frequency of communication between the director manager and employee. Active participation, timely responses and clear communication of company news is required for an effective working relationship between the direct manager and employee. Therefore, we consider supervisor's trust and support as an important factor affecting employee satisfaction while working from home.

Time for communication with co-workers: Work from home leads to professional and social isolation of employees. Reduced interactions with colleagues lead to weaker organizational identification in the minds of employees [24],[23]. On the other hand, some employees viewed the lack of unnecessary interactions [25]-[27] and fewer interruptions [28] as an advantage of working from home. Thus, the time for communication with co-workers also influences the employee satisfaction when working from home.

Changes in remuneration: Remuneration or compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee satisfaction. If the compensation received by the employee is better or higher then it will increase the employee's job satisfaction. On the other hand, any cuts or decrease in compensation such as slashing of salary or perks, will decrease the employee's job satisfaction. Therefore, changes in remuneration policy of the company due to the pandemic will have a direct impact on the employee satisfaction while working from home.

Other factors: Other factors include possibility to take care of family members, possibility to save on travel expenses and possibility to work from home in case of sickness [16]. Work from home provides the opportunity to balance work and family responsibilities and helps maintain a better work-life balance. Work from home also eliminates the need to travel back and forth from the office, thereby saving time and money. Similarly, the ability to work from home even during sickness can also influence the employee satisfaction when working from home.

It has been found that social-demographic factors like gender, marital status and number of children also have a bearing on the employee satisfaction when working from home. Thus, we also take into account the following demographic factors for our study:

Gender: It is important to take into consideration the gender differences when working from home. Women tend to value work from home more than men as it allows them to balance work with household and family responsibilities [29],[30]. Work from home also offers greater autonomy and flexibility and greater career opportunities for women than for men. On the other hand, the increasing participation of men in delivering household responsibilities is reducing this gap in recent times.

Marital Status: Prior research has shown contradicting evidence regarding the effect of marital status on satisfaction with telework. Some studies have supported the argument that married couples have more perceived advantages of telework than unmarried couples due to the possibility to have a more balanced lifestyle [31]. Whereas others have cited no difference of opinion between married and unmarried with regards to telework [32]. Therefore, we consider marital status of the employees as an important determinant affecting satisfaction with telework.

Number of children: Various studies have shown that work from home is an effective way for employees to take care of their dependents [33],[34]. Individuals with children

traditionally value work from home more than those without children and those who live alone. Therefore, we consider number of children as an important factor affecting employee satisfaction while working from home.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The employee satisfaction when working from home was taken as the dependent variable. The telework factors – flexibility of working hours, suitability of working place at home, superior’s trust and support, time for communication with co-workers, changes in remuneration, other factors; and the socio-demographic factors – gender, marital status and number of children; were taken as the independent variables for the study.

On the basis of review of literature and theoretical framework, we formed the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between employee satisfaction in India and employee satisfaction in US when working from home
2. There is no significant relationship between telework factors and employee satisfaction when working from home
3. There is no significant difference between genders with respect to telework factors and employee satisfaction when working from home
4. There is no significant difference between marital status with respect to telework factors and employee satisfaction when working from home
5. There is no significant difference among number of children with respect to telework factors and employee satisfaction when working from home

Our research study was quantitative in nature and used primary data collected through an online survey. The responses were collected from contract-based employees who were asked to work from home during the pandemic. The locations of the study were India and US. Thus, the survey data were collected from the Indian employees and the American employees individually. The time period under study was five months from April 2020 to October 2020. The data were collected from 125 respondents in total i.e., 65 responses from India and 60 responses from US using convenience sampling.

The questionnaire was formed using the independent variables (factors) as questions/statements. The questionnaire consisted of 18 closed-ended questions. It included six factors as independent variables (the number of items is indicated in brackets): flexibility of working hours (3), suitability of the working place at home (3), superior’s trust

and support (3), time for communication with co-workers (3), changes in remuneration (3), and other factors (3). The responses were treated as the dependent variable (employee satisfaction). We assumed employee satisfaction to be a sum total of the telework factors (independent variables). The scale was a five-point Likert scale, each measuring the degree of agreement. We also measured gender, marital status and number of children as independent variables.

INDIA

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis using SPSS Statistics software. The data were tested to be reliable with a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.881. With a P value of more than 0.05, the data were proved to be normally distributed.

The respondents comprised of 61.5% males and 38.5% females. 58.5% of respondents were unmarried whereas 41.5% of respondents were married. Majority of them had no children, whereas 38.5% of them had at least one child, out of which only 3.1% had more than two children. The hypothesis statements were tested using tools like independent sample t-test, ANOVA, Karl Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis.

| Code | Telework Factor |
|------|------------------------------|
| FWH | Flexibility of working hours |
| SWP | Suitability of working place |
| T&S | Superior’s trust and support |
| TFC | Time for communication |
| CR | Changes in remuneration |
| OF | Other factors |

Table 1: Mean & SD of telework factors and employee satisfaction

| | FWH | SWP | T&S | TFC | CR | OF | Employee Satisfaction |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Mean | 10.63 | 11.49 | 11.97 | 11.34 | 10.85 | 11.40 | 67.68 |
| SD | 2.765 | 2.829 | 2.586 | 2.647 | 2.890 | 2.849 | 11.811 |

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Table II: Karl Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between telework factors and overall employee satisfaction

| Telework Factors | FWH | SWP | T&S | TFC | CR | OF | Overall Employee Satisfaction |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|
| FWH | 1 | 0.527** | 0.536** | 0.472** | 0.278** | 0.646** | 0.807** |
| SWP | - | 1 | 0.487** | 0.409** | 0.330** | 0.595** | 0.786** |
| T&S | - | - | 1 | 0.442** | 0.372** | 0.252* | 0.712** |
| TFC | - | - | - | 1 | 0.125 | 0.452** | 0.669** |
| CR | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.239 | 0.556** |
| OF | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.750** |
| Overall Employee Satisfaction | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |

Note: ** denotes that correlation is significant at 1% level

* denotes that correlation is significant at 5% level

Table III
(a): Multiple Regression Model Summary

| Model | R | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. Error of Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 |

(b): Multiple Regression Coefficients

| Telework Factors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | P value |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 0.000 | 0.000 | - | 1.000 |
| FWH | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.234 | 0.000 |
| SWP | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.240 | 0.000 |
| T&S | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.219 | 0.000 |
| TFC | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.224 | 0.000 |
| CR | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.245 | 0.000 |
| OF | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.241 | 0.000 |

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The average employee satisfaction when working from home in India is 67.68 out of a possible 90. Employee satisfaction was categorized as low, moderate and high. 26% of the employees reported a low level of satisfaction; 46% of the employees reported a moderate level of satisfaction; and 28% reported a high level of satisfaction when working from home. In other words, majority of the workforce (72%) claims to have low-moderate level of satisfaction while teleworking. Thus, there is a massive need for employers to improve the existing work from home conditions. The telework factor that observed the highest satisfaction was 'Superior's trust and support' indicating that companies have been successful in setting up effective communication channels between managers and employees during the transition to work from home. On the other hand, 'Flexibility

of working hours' and 'Changes in remuneration' were the least satisfactory telework factors. The possibility to work during any time of the day had no significant effect on stress and fatigue experienced by the employees. Moreover, employees were unsatisfied with the compensation and benefits offered by companies during the pandemic. Our study also revealed that these employees failed to understand the reasons behind such changes in compensation during the pandemic. Thus, companies can focus on effectively communicating the reasons behind such management decisions to prevent bad will amongst employees during these uncertain times.

Our empirical findings related to the demographic characteristics of teleworkers revealed some interesting facts. We found that men and women had similar satisfaction while working from home. These results challenge the predominant literature which states that women value work from home more than men. This could be a consequence of changing gender roles where men are increasingly becoming more involved in the delivery of household activities. Our findings on the impact of marital status and number of children on overall satisfaction with work from home support the results of previous studies. Married employees had higher satisfaction than unmarried employees due to the possibility to take care of children and family members, and work-life balance. Similarly, employees with children reported more perceived advantages of working from home than those with no children. In particular, those with more than two children reported a higher satisfaction than those with one or two children. Therefore, we conclude that number of children is directly proportional to overall satisfaction with telework.

Our results revealed that 'Flexibility of working hours' and 'Suitability of working place' are the most important telework factors impacting employee satisfaction when working from home. These two factors have the highest positive correlation with overall employee satisfaction. Thus, employers should focus their efforts on improving the work timings and providing requisite equipment to ensure the desired standard of work. Employers can implement stress management programs and employee assistance programs; and provide adequate coverage for mental health services in order to reduce work timings related stress and fatigue. Moreover, provision of requisite equipment and remote work tools would help in ensuring a suitable working space for the employees. Finally, regression analysis revealed that variation in employee satisfaction can entirely be explained through variations in the telework factors. Thus, we can conclude that a greater satisfaction with telework factors like 'Flexibility of working hours', 'Suitability of working place',

‘Superior’s trust and support’, etc. leads to greater overall employee satisfaction while working from home.

US

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis using SPSS Statistics software. The data were tested to be reliable with a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.885. With a P value of 0.044, the data were assumed to be approximately normal.

The respondents comprised of 53.3% males and 46.7% females. 8.3% of respondents were unmarried while 91.7% of respondents were married. 21.7% of them had no children, whereas 78.3% of them had at least one child, out of which only 3.3% had more than two children. The hypothesis statements were tested using tools like independent sample t-test, ANOVA, Karl Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis.

| Code | Telework Factor |
|------|------------------------------|
| FWH | Flexibility of working hours |
| SWP | Suitability of working place |
| T&S | Superior’s trust and support |
| TFC | Time for communication |
| CR | Changes in remuneration |
| OF | Other factors |

Table IV: Mean & SD of telework factors and employee satisfaction

| | FWH | SWP | T&S | TFC | CR | OF | Employee Satisfaction |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Mean | 11.31 | 12.75 | 12.73 | 11.70 | 12.11 | 12.41 | 73.03 |
| SD | 2.619 | 2.120 | 2.530 | 2.592 | 2.351 | 2.644 | 10.743 |

Table V: Karl Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient between telework factors and overall employee satisfaction

| Telework Factors | FWH | SWP | T&S | TFC | CR | OF | Overall Employee Satisfaction |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|
| FWH | 1 | 0.545** | 0.361** | 0.476** | 0.401** | 0.438** | 0.747** |
| SWP | - | 1 | 0.537** | 0.606** | 0.482** | 0.436** | 0.816** |
| T&S | - | - | 1 | 0.618** | 0.230 | 0.455** | 0.741** |
| TFC | - | - | - | 1 | 0.312* | 0.555** | 0.827** |
| CR | - | - | - | - | 1 | -0.030 | 0.534** |
| OF | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.674** |
| Overall Employee Satisfaction | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |

Note: ** denotes that correlation is significant at 1% level

* denotes that correlation is significant at 5% level

Table VI

(a): Multiple Regression Model Summary

| Model | R | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. Error of Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 0.000 |

(b): Multiple Regression Coefficients

| Telework Factors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | P value |
|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 0.000 | 0.000 | - | 1.000 |
| FWH | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.244 | 0.000 |
| SWP | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.197 | 0.000 |
| T&S | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.236 | 0.000 |
| TFC | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.241 | 0.000 |
| CR | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.219 | 0.000 |
| OF | 1.000 | 0.000 | 0.246 | 0.000 |

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The average employee satisfaction when working from home in US is 73.03, out of a possible 90. Employee satisfaction was categorized as low, moderate and high. 22% of the employees reported a low level of satisfaction; 48% of the employees reported a moderate level of satisfaction; and 30% reported a high level of satisfaction when working from home. There is a massive scope for improving the work from home conditions since a total of 70% of the workforce observed low-moderate level of satisfaction while teleworking. Employees were most satisfied with ‘Suitability of working place’ indicating that employees were provided with the requisite remote work tools and equipment to perform to the usual standard during the transition. However, ‘Flexibility of working hours’ and ‘Time for communication with co-workers’ were seen to be least satisfactory telework factors. Contrary to existing literature, it was observed that freedom to work at any time of the day did not relieve the workers of the usual stress and fatigue faced in the office. In fact, some employees reported facing more stress and fatigue while working from home than while at the office. Additionally, employees were unhappy with how frequently they connected with their co-workers indicating social isolation and lack of informal communication as one of major disadvantages of telework. Considering the benefits of working from home, it is interesting to note that employees had trouble maintaining a healthy work and life balance even while teleworking.

Our findings related to the demographic factors revealed that men and women had a similar level of job satisfaction while working from home. These results challenge the

findings of existing literature. This could be attributed to the changing gender roles in recent times where both men and women share the household responsibilities. We found that number of children had no significant impact on the employee’s level of satisfaction with work from home. This lack of statistical significance challenges previous studies that cite work from home as a significant opportunity for employees with children. These results could be due to the following reason: employees with more children at home find it more difficult to balance work and family related matters which leads to lower satisfaction with telework.

An analysis of the relationship between telework factors and overall employee satisfaction revealed ‘Suitability of working place’ and ‘Time for communication with co-workers’ as the most important telework factors. These telework factors had the highest positive correlation with the overall satisfaction. Existing literature associates reduced time for communication with co-workers with reduced career opportunities due to lower visibility. Deficiency of social interaction and lack of informal communication can also cause dissatisfaction among employees. Thus, time for communication becomes an important determinant in the overall satisfaction while working from home. Similarly, an ergonomic workplace equipped with the necessary tools required to perform the job increases overall employee satisfaction. Finally, regression analysis revealed that variation in employee satisfaction can entirely be explained through variations in the telework factors. Thus, we can conclude that a greater satisfaction with telework factors like ‘Flexibility of working hours’, ‘Suitability of working place’, ‘Superior’s trust and support’, etc. leads to greater overall employee satisfaction while working from home.

COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIA AND US

DATA ANALYSIS

The independent sample t-test revealed a significant difference between employee satisfaction in India and employee satisfaction in US when working from home. Based on the mean values, we found that the employee satisfaction in US when working from home (72.03) was more than the employee satisfaction in India when working from home (67.68).

Table VII: t-test for significant difference between employee satisfaction in India and employee satisfaction in US when working from home

| | Country | | | | t value | P value |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|-------|--------|---------|---------|
| | India | | US | | | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Overall Employee Satisfaction | 67.68 | 11.811 | 73.03 | 10.743 | 2.645 | 0.009 |

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The comparative analysis revealed that the employee satisfaction with work from home in US (73.03) is greater than the employee satisfaction with work from home in India (67.68) indicating that US companies have been more successful in making the transition to remote work than Indian companies during the pandemic. Over 70% of employees reported a low-moderate level of satisfaction while working from home in both India and US. Thus, there is a massive need to improve the existing work from home conditions in both the countries. In India, the telework factor with the highest satisfaction was ‘Superior’s trust and support’ indicating that Indian employers have been successful in implementing effective channels of communication between managers and employees during their transition. Whereas, in US the telework factor that yielded the most satisfaction was ‘Suitability of working place’ indicating that US employers were more successful in assisting the employees with the right tools and equipment to build a productive workspace at home. It is interesting to note that ‘Flexibility of working hours’ was the least satisfactory telework factor in both the countries. The possibility to work at any time of the day did not relieve the usual stress and fatigue of the office. Thus, it is concluded that telework does not offer any significant benefits over traditional workplaces in terms of stress and fatigue. Moreover, US employees reported a higher satisfaction with the advantage of not having to commute to work daily.

Our empirical findings related to demographic factors revealed that both men and women had similar employee satisfaction while working from home in both India and US. Our findings on women’s attitudes towards work from home challenge the results of predominant literature that woman perceive more advantages with work from home than men. We attribute these findings to the changing gender roles in the 21st century, where both men and women share the burden of household responsibilities. In India, those who were married were more satisfied when working from home than those who were unmarried due to possibly perceived advantages of ability to take care of children and family,

work-life balance. Whereas in US, married employees and unmarried employees expressed similar employee satisfaction. In India, those who had children were more satisfied with telework than those who did not have children. In particular, employees with more than two children reported higher satisfaction than employees with either one or two children. However, in US, employees with and without children reported a similar level of satisfaction. Hence, the evidence of the positive effect of number of children on employee satisfaction with telework are inconclusive.

In India, ‘Flexibility of working hours’ and ‘Suitability of working place’ were the most significant factors affecting employee satisfaction with work from home. In US, ‘Time for communication with co-workers’ and ‘Suitability of working place’ were the most important determinants of satisfaction with telework. Therefore, it can be concluded that ‘Suitability of working place’ is the most important factor impacting the employee satisfaction. Employers must focus on providing a well-arranged workspace with requisite equipment and remote work tools (e.g. Remote work access, communication tools, VPN) that are needed to perform the desired standard of work. Surprisingly, ‘Changes in remuneration’ was the least significant factor affecting satisfaction with telework in both India as well as US. These results can be attributed to management’s increased efforts in effectively communicating the reasons behind such controversial corporate decisions. Finally, it was found that all variation in employee satisfaction could be explained through variations in telework factors through a regression model.

Table VIII: Comparison between India and US

| Particulars | India | US |
|---|--|--|
| Overall employee satisfaction | 67.68 | 73.03 |
| Telework factor with the highest employee satisfaction | Superior’s trust and support | Suitability of working place |
| Telework factor with the lowest employee satisfaction | Flexibility of Working Hours | Flexibility of Working Hours |
| Quartiles of employee satisfaction | Q1: 60 Q2: 70 Q3: 78 | Q1: 65 Q2: 74 Q3: 80 |
| Levels of employee satisfaction | Low: 26% Moderate: 46% High: 28% | Low: 22% Moderate: 48% High: 30% |
| Statement of telework factor with the highest satisfaction | ‘I can connect with my direct manager as well as if I were in the office’ (Superior’s trust and support) | ‘I am glad that I do not have to commute to work on a daily basis’ (Other factors) |
| Statement of telework factor with the lowest satisfaction | ‘I face less stress and fatigue working from home as compared to the office’ (Flexibility of working hours) | ‘I face less stress and fatigue working from home as compared to the office’ (Flexibility of working hours) |
| Whether there is a significant difference between male and female with respect to overall employee satisfaction (at 5% level of significance) | There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to telework factors and overall employee satisfaction. | There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to telework factors and overall employee satisfaction. |
| Whether there is a significant difference between unmarried and married with respect to overall employee satisfaction (at 5% level of significance) | There is a significant difference between unmarried and married with respect to overall employee satisfaction. | There is no significant difference between unmarried and married with respect to overall employee satisfaction. |
| Whether there is a significant difference among number of children with respect to overall employee satisfaction (at 5% level of significance) | There is a significant difference among number of children with respect to overall employee satisfaction | There is no significant difference among number of children with respect to overall employee satisfaction |
| Whether there is a significant relationship between telework factors and overall employee satisfaction (at 1% level of significance) | There is a significant relationship between the telework factors and overall employee satisfaction. | There is a significant relationship between the telework factors and overall employee satisfaction. |
| Most significant telework factors | ‘Flexibility of working hours’ and ‘Suitability of working place’ | ‘Time for communication with co-workers’ and ‘Suitability of working place’ |
| Least significant telework factors | ‘Changes in remuneration’ | ‘Changes in remuneration’ |

CONCLUSION

The aim of our study was to measure the satisfaction of employees when working from home in two different countries, namely, India and US. Our study contributes to the existing literature in numerous ways. First, we identified eight factors related to employee satisfaction when working from home from existing literature: flexibility of working hours, suitability of working place at home, superior's trust and support, Time for communication with co-workers, changes in remuneration, possibility to take care of family members, possibility to save on travel expenses and possibility to work from home in case of sickness. We assumed a functional relationship between employee satisfaction (dependent variable) and the various telework factors (independent variables) for the purpose of data analysis and interpretation.

Our findings indicate that 'Suitability of working place' has the most significant impact on the overall satisfaction with telework. Therefore, this study supports the results of previous research that establishment of working place at home should be considered an important factor by employers while deciding the work from home arrangement. Whereas unexpectedly, 'Changes in remuneration' was observed to be the least significant telework factor. These results can be attributed to management's increased efforts in effectively communicating the reasons behind controversial corporate decisions. It is worth mentioning our empirically findings concerning the 'flexibility of working hours'. We found that the freedom to work at any time of the day did not reduce the usual stress and fatigue faced by the employees. Thus, it is concluded that telework does not offer any significant benefit over traditional workplaces in terms of stress and fatigue. We also analyzed the relationship between employee satisfaction and various demographic factors. We found that men and women have similar employee satisfaction when working from home. The comparative analysis revealed that employee satisfaction in US is greater than employee satisfaction in India when working from home, suggesting that US employers have more successful in transitioning to work from home than Indian employers. However, over 70% of the workforce reported a low-to-moderate level of satisfaction indicating the need for revamping existing telework arrangements in both the countries.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has a few limitations that could be considered for future research. Although our research used convenience sampling due to limited availability of resources, use of sampling techniques like simple random

sampling would allow for increased accuracy and generalization. We limited the scope of our research to only contract-based employees who telework either part-time or full-time. Future studies may cover independent employees without a labor contract such as freelancers. Similarly, countries other than India and US could be used for further detailed comparative studies. It is also recommended that the impact of moderating variables like government rules and regulations be taken into account which was ignored for this study. Finally, whereas our study focused on employee satisfaction when working from home, future research could investigate other telework outcomes like employee productivity and subjected career opportunities as well.

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