
WORK FROM HOME IMPROVES OR IMPAIRS THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE- A STUDY CONDUCTED AMONG TEACHERS

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“The new working from home economy, which is likely to continue long past the coronavirus pandemic that spawned it, poses new challenges- from a ticking time bomb for inequality to an erosion of city centres”- according to Stanford’s economist Nicholas Bloom.

ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been increasing focus about how to adjust work and life responsibilities in both scholastic and political discussions. Work from home is one activity that has been advanced as a method of improving the work–life balance [1]. Considering this evidence this paper examines the work-life balance experiences of teachers who are working from home during the outbreak of Covid-19. Using the data from 72 teachers selected randomly from different educational institutions of Kerala, it explores the question of whether working (or not) from home improves or impairs teacher’s capacity to balance their work and life commitments. A Snowball sampling method is adopted for identifying respondents and Chi-square test is used for finding out the variable relationships. The outcomes of the study specify that working from home has a constructive impact on teacher’s work life Balance. In addition, the result also confirms that working from home certainly increases enthusiasm and satisfaction as teachers are getting more time to spend with their family. It is also found that the use of Information Technology tools in managing the life chores has a significant relationship with Work Life Balance.

Keywords: Covid-19, Work from home, Work-Life Balance, Work-Life Balance of teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, work-life balance issues have taken increased devotion to researchers in varied societies due to the rapid fluctuations in family and work roles. COVID-19 enforced many people to stay at home and adjust their lives since the home turned into a

workplace, school, playground, family sanctuary, and entertainment centre.[2]The COVID- 19 pandemic is not only a health emergency and economic threat but has also caused dramatic fluctuations in individual's personal lives and roles within families have been interrupted. During the pandemic, numerous nations have taken extraordinary measures to decrease the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, lockdowns, and shutting schools, public organizations, and workplaces[3].As a part of this, teachers were forced to continue their classes online working from home. In 2020, working from home has become an increasingly widespread trend amongst the teachers.The health dangers posed by the coronavirus, unexpected shift to remote teaching, and added caretaking duties at home have made a uniquely stressful and demanding context for teachers' work. From the explanation above, the researcher is keen on knowing the impact of work from home on work-life balance of teachers. The research is done at various educational institutions in Kerala.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Work from home

It is seen that three diverse kinds of workplaces are stated in the literature in general. These are traditional, virtual office, and working from home. Traditional work is the working environment in which people go to their office and work with colleagues in the same company. Virtual office refers to a common working environment where people go to a different environment outside the company, and people from different companies can come. Working from home is defined as the maintenance of work from home[4]

Work from home can adversely affect work-life balance for every employee. This can have various outcomes because work-life balance has a unique benchmark, namely a return to one's life values and priorities. For instance, for certain individuals, work from home can improve the nature of their associations with their families. Then again, work from home can increase the obscuring of limits among work and family, making the effort to separate time for work and family more difficult. There are 4 angles that go about as measurements in estimating work from home, namely: work location, information and communication technology (ICT), time, relationships with co-workers [5].Working from home can have both desirable and undesirable effects on work-family life. The feeling of freedom brought by working from home would increase employee performance [6]. Smartphones and internet-connected computers providing a sense of independence and developing technology could diminish business performance by using them for arbitrary situations[6][7].

Due to incessant improvements in information and communication technologies, the pervasiveness of working from home provisions in firms has increased over recent decades [8][9]The stigma associated with working from home preceding COVID-19 has vanished. Also, working remotely is currently incredibly normal. That is people started adjusting with the new normal.

2.2 Concept of Work-Life Balance

Work Life Balance of an employee is a different implication in both employer and employee outlook. For an employee it is difficulties and problems in gratifying the duties related to

family and work. And for an employer it is about the problem in making a supportive and welcoming work atmosphere so that employees can give full devotion to their job responsibilities forgetting the fears of their family responsibilities [10]. WLB is defined as “an employee’s effort towards accomplishing both the work and life role successfully such that the roles of one domain do not have any adverse effect on the other”. The concept of WLB is also related to work flexibility that determines employees’ capacity to define where, when, and how to work[2].

2.3 Why Teachers Work-Life Balance is important

Work life balance of teachers has developed as one of the supreme challenges in today’s world. Teachers need to devote extra hours each day to be effective and creative in their profession so that they could reach higher levels and face the challenging atmosphere[11]. The productivity and success of a teaching professional is enhanced in a healthy work environment. The consequences of work life imbalances can negatively impact an individual’s health in the long run which could be due to prolonged effects like poor performance, poor concentration, reduced efficacy, and work family conflicts. Research studies show that teachers find it difficult to strike a balance between work and personal life. Evidence from previous studies show that academicians who are exposed to high level of stress and work pressures experienced more of work life conflict than work life balance. The results of these studies also point towards a correlation between job stress and work life balance. Hence a study on work life balance of academicians working across different institutions is inevitable so that the managing authorities of educational institutions can implement critical changes to warrant a healthy work life balance for teaching fraternity.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To know the effect of use of Information and communication technology tools on Work life Balance
- 3.2 To know whether peer group Communication have an impact on Work life Balance.
- 3.3 To understand whether the Employee work life balance is affected when the institution monitoring their work results.

4. HYPOTHESES

H1: There is significant relationship between use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance.

H2: The communication between peer group at workplace and the work life factors have close relationship.

H3: The work life balance really affects when the institution closely monitors employee performances.

5. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a snowball sampling survey method (as the researcher was not able to directly connect the respondents since all the educational institutions were closed during the period of the study due to the outbreak of Covid-19) with descriptive analysis and verification analysis. The data used are primary data obtained through an online survey by sending questionnaires created using google form to about 100 teachers across Kerala. The number of responses were 73. The researcher had compared the score results of each statement in the questionnaire with the ideal score. After all respondents' statements are collected, the data is processed again using the SPSS application to obtain the results of the verification analysis.

Below is the framework of research paradigm related to the effect of work from home on work-life balance as shown in Fig 1

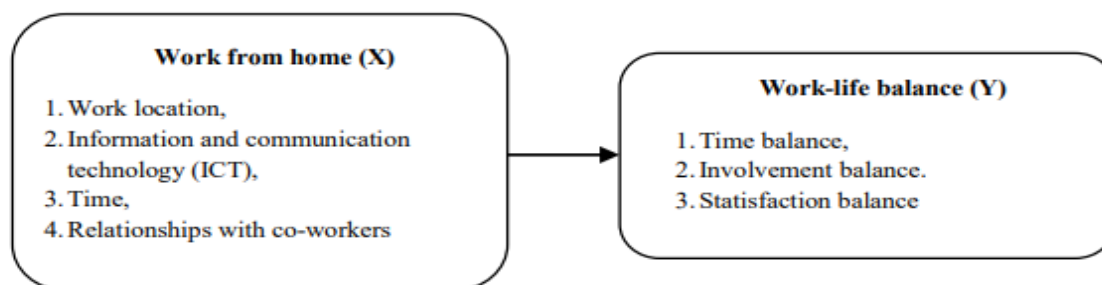


Fig1. Framework of work from home on work-life balance relation[5]

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Descriptive Analysis

The researcher has used the following ideal score in classifying the results of the questionnaire responses[12][5]

TABLE 1. Criteria for the Percentage of Respondents' Responses to the Ideal Score

No.	Score (%)	Criteria
1	20.00% - 36.00%	Very Low (VL)
2	36.01% - 52.00%	Low (L)
3	52.01% - 68.00%	Good Enough (GE)
4	68.01% - 84.00%	Good (G)
5	84.01% - 100%	Very Good (VG)

The following are the data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires:

TABLE 2. Recap of Respondents' Responses Regarding Work from Home

No.	Statement	Distribution of Respondent's answers					Actual Score	Ideal Score	Actual Score (%)	Criteria
		SD	D	NS	A	SA				
1	My location for doing office work is at home	11	23	7	24	7	209	360	58.1	Good Enough
2	I use information and communication technology tools in doing my work at home.	1	1	3	33	34	314	360	87.2	Very Good
3	Information and communication technology tools really help me in doing my job.	1	0	1	33	37	321	360	89.2	Very Good
4	Information and communication technology tools allow me to do my chores at home.	3	8	11	32	18	270	360	75.0	Good
5	I can easily get or access the data I need related to using ICT.	2	4	2	44	20	292	360	81.1	Good
6	The duration I work at home is the same as the duration I work in the office.	0	0	3	30	39	324	360	90.0	Very Good
7	I can easily communicate about work with my co-workers.	6	10	10	37	9	249	360	69.2	Good
8	The institution can monitor the results of my work easily	5	10	14	37	6	245	360	68.1	Good
	Total	29	56	51	270	170	2224	2880	71.5	Good

The Overall response of the respondents to the work from home variable have 29 items of strongly disagree, 56 disagree, 51 not sure, agree 270 and strongly agree 170. The percentage of the total actual score of the work from home variable is 71.5 % so it could be included in the good category.

TABLE3. Recap of Respondents' Responses Regarding Work Life Balance

No.	Statement	Distribution of Respondent's answers					Actual Score	Ideal Score	Actual Score (%)	Criteria
		SD	D	NS	A	SA				
1	Working time does not take up my time in carrying out my personal or family life.	9	22	8	26	7	216	360	60.0	Good Enough
2	I work from home according to the time set by the Institution	3	9	4	30	26	283	360	78.6	Good Enough
3	I still have time to do hobbies and other activities outside of work activities.	4	16	6	40	6	244	360	67.8	Good Enough
4	I can carry out my role well both in work and in family.	1	15	6	41	9	258	360	71.7	Good
5	My involvement in family activities and work activities is done in a balanced way	3	7	12	40	10	263	360	73.1	Good
6	I do not feel depressed either in doing work or when doing activities outside of work.	2	7	14	39	10	264	360	73.3	Good
7	I feel happy and comfortable with my work and family life	1	13	5	39	14	268	360	74.4	Good
8	I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work	2	8	14	39	9	261	360	72.5	Good
	Total	25	97	69	294	91	2057	2880	71.4	Good

The Overall response of the respondents to the Work Life Balance variable have 25 items of strongly disagree, 97 disagree, 69 not sure, agree 294 and strongly agree 91. The percentage

of the total actual score of the Work Life Balance variable is 71.4 % so it could be included in the good category.

6.2 Verification Analysis

The following are the results of a Chi-Square test using IBM SPSS Statistics, which examines the effect of various variables of work from home on work-life balance.

6.2.1 Analysis of Objective-1

The H0 and H1 are as follows:

H0: There exists no relationship between use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance factors.

H1: There is significant relationship between use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance factors.

TABLE 4. cross tabulation of the use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance factors

I use information and communication technology tools in doing my work at home. * I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work Crosstabulation

			I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work					
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I use information and communication technology tools in doing my work at home.	Strongly Disagree	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.0	.1	.2	.6	.1	1.0
	Disagree	Count	0	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.0	.1	.2	.6	.1	1.0
	Not Sure	Count	0	0	3	0	0	3
		Expected Count	.1	.3	.6	1.7	.4	3.0
	Agree	Count	1	4	6	21	1	33
		Expected Count	.9	3.2	6.4	18.3	4.1	33.0
	Strongly Agree	Count	0	3	4	19	8	34
		Expected Count	.9	3.3	6.6	18.9	4.3	34.0
	Total	Count	2	7	14	40	9	72
		Expected Count	2.0	7.0	14.0	40.0	9.0	72.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.870 ^a	16	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	30.012	16	.018
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.816	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	72		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Fig 2 Chi Square Test Score of the use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance factors

The Chi- Square test result shows that the p-value is less than 0.05 and hence we reject null hypothesis and can reach at a conclusion that the use of Information and communication technology tools and Work life Balance factors have a significant relationship.

6.2.2 Analysis of Objective-2

The H0 and H1 are as follows:

H0: The communication between peer group at workplace and the work life factors have no close relationship.

H1: The communication between peer group at workplace and the work life factors have close relationship.

TABLE 5. Cross tabulation of Communication with peer groups and Work life Balance factors

I can easily communicate about work with my co-workers * I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work Crosstabulation

			I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work					Total
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	
I can easily communicate about work with my co-workers	Strongly Disagree	Count	1	2	2	0	1	6
		Expected Count	.2	.7	1.2	3.3	.7	6.0
	Disagree	Count	0	2	2	5	1	10
		Expected Count	.3	1.1	1.9	5.5	1.2	10.0
	Not Sure	Count	1	1	5	2	1	10
		Expected Count	.3	1.1	1.9	5.5	1.2	10.0
	Agree	Count	0	2	3	30	3	38
		Expected Count	1.0	4.2	7.3	20.8	4.7	38.0
	Strongly Agree	Count	0	1	2	3	3	9
		Expected Count	.2	1.0	1.7	4.9	1.1	9.0
	Total	Count	2	8	14	40	9	73
		Expected Count	2.0	8.0	14.0	40.0	9.0	73.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.851 ^a	16	.004
Likelihood Ratio	34.234	16	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.427	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	73		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

Fig 3 Chi Square Test Score of Communication with peer groups and Work life Balance factors

Since the p-value is 0.004, we can say that the association between the variables are strong and hence we can reject null hypothesis and can accept the alternative hypothesis. That is, there would exist a strong work life balance if the employees were able to communication freely among the peer groups upon their work-related matters.

6.2.3. Analysis of Objective-3

The H0 and H1 are as follows:

H0: The work life balance does not affect when the institution closely monitors employee performances.

H1: The work life balance really affects when the institution closely monitors employee performances.

TABLE 6. Cross Tabulation of Institutions result monitoring and Work life Balance factors.

The institution can monitor the results of my work easily * I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work Crosstabulation

		I feel satisfied with a balanced life between work activities and activities outside of work					Total	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree		
The institution can monitor the results of my work easily	Strongly Disagree	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
		Expected Count	.1	.5	1.0	2.7	.6	5.0
Disagree	Count	0	4	3	3	0	10	
		Expected Count	.3	1.1	1.9	5.5	1.2	10.0
Not Sure	Count	0	1	3	8	2	14	
		Expected Count	.4	1.5	2.7	7.7	1.7	14.0
Agree	Count	1	2	5	27	3	38	
		Expected Count	1.0	4.2	7.3	20.8	4.7	38.0
Strongly Agree	Count	0	0	2	1	3	6	
		Expected Count	.2	.7	1.2	3.3	.7	6.0
Total	Count	2	8	14	40	9	73	
		Expected Count	2.0	8.0	14.0	40.0	9.0	73.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.985 ^a	16	.007
Likelihood Ratio	27.519	16	.036
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.032	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	73		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

Fig 4 Chi Square Test Score of Institutions result monitoring and Work life Balance factors.

The chi-square test results shows that there exists a strong relationship between variables as the p-value is 0.007. So, we can conclude that the work life balance of an employee is getting disturbed when their results are been watched by their parent institutions.

7. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 closure has instigated the requirement for the teachers to work from home full-time. This paper sought out to find out how the work-life balance, and overall well-being of the employees involved in this change were affected when they are working from home. An analysis of the data collected in the survey reveals working from home has a positive effect on the working life of teachers. Employees who have the possibility to work from home have a high autonomy in scheduling and organizing their work and are therefore assumed to have a higher intrinsic motivation[13]. Thus, it is expecting working from home to positively influence employees Work Life Balance.

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