

Role Of Flexible Working and Work from Home on Employee Productivity and Performance: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

During the recent years, after going through several studies and research work, it is been observed, that flexible working hours are increasingly becoming important in the workplaces. Most of the companies and organisations are offering flexible working hours or work from home to their employees due to numerous benefits that flexibility gives to both the employee and employer. Therefore, there are many common benefits that lead towards greater level of employee productivity and higher organisational performance. Reduction in stress levels and increase in their well-being are some of the major outcomes of flexible working conditions. Adoption of flexible working and work from home has influenced the employee productivity and their performance in number of ways which will be discussed below in the further context. By providing, such conditions to an employee by an employer will also help them to better balance their both personal and professional lives. This study will provide some insights on how digital technology has enabled increase towards work from home arrangements. At the end, the present paper is going to be helpful to different organisations and companies and lead them to consider work from home as one of their work arrangements.

KEY WORDS: Flexibility, Organisational Performance, Employee Productivity, Digital technology, Work from home.

INTRODUCTION

Employees of an organisation are considered as a face of any organisation (Kumari & Pradhan, 2014). Inclusion of flexible working and work from home options not only benefit employees but help the organisations too (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). In the recent times, in many organisations such conditions in working environment have gained a lot of attention among different organisations and scholars as a family-friendly policy. Flexible working hours and work from home practices play a very important role both for employer as well as employee because it facilitates work life-balance (Galea, et.al, 2014). For an employee the

number of hours worked, and the way in which working hours are organised with the availability of rest durations can significantly affect their performance with respect to the quality of lifestyles outside place of work. Flexible working conditions and work from home with proper relaxation periods have a profound influence on both the physical and intellectual fitness of employees. As, employees of an organisations are not just a commodity, they are also people with hopes, dreams and aspirations for both themselves as well as their families. Therefore, limiting the number of working hours and providing options for flexible working conditions to protect an employee's health is been significantly an important issue for reconciling workers personnel lives and their paid lives. It is beneficial to both women and men employees. This paper is going to investigate numerous roles of flexible working and work from homes thereby, demonstrating their productivity as well as performance in their work (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Secondly, stress and their well-being will be discussed because they are the major key outcomes of their work-life balance. Many organisations have also introduced flexible working packages (a part of work-lifestyles policy) which is a good way to entice, recruit and preserve tremendously qualified team of employees for their businesses. Flexible working can be anything allowing employees of an organisation a certain degree of scheduling freedom. Employees of a workplace are also able to either schedule their working hours or pick their job location rather than the typical office area (Kelly, et.al, 2011). It can be anything different from the typical 9 to 5 five days a week job. Such working conditions will ensure an organisation with tones of benefits not just to employees but to employers and companies both. This research work will also let us understand, how work from home facilitates decreased commute costs as employees of a workplace is able to save much more money on transport from and to work. Employees are only not just saving money but also maximum amount of time. The time they spend during travelling back and forth are better spent with their families or loved ones. Employers of an organisation are also able to access worldwide talents, but employees can also get international job opportunities. The present study will also conclude us with whether work from home or flexible working will support and enhance work-life balance or conversely create problems towards employee's performance. Work from home permits or allows a quieter environment which will ensure employees with more focused work experience. Many employees often, feel happier and more productive during flexible working and working from home which directly results to lower sickness absences. Despite numerous advantages, working from home did not suit to many employees personality because many of them also felt a disconnect from their

colleagues and organisation as a whole, that actually a workplace environment naturally allows (Bosch-Sijtsema, et.al, 2010). Technology has also made it easier for employees to be connected with each other. But altogether, it ensures to play a very vital role in employees productivity and performance.

LITERATURE OF REVIEW

Flexible working and work from home is often, used to explain some other kinds of working arrangements than the traditional way of 9 to 5 job (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011). From the years 2003 onwards, under the UK law certain groups of working employees who have children of age 6 or below or those workers who have disabled children under the age of 18, of an organisation must be offered flexible working arrangements. The above mentioned working conditions ensure employees of an organisation with a better work-life balance, lower levels of stress and sickness absenteeism. Employees of an organisation are able to choose their working hours and create their schedules. Advancements taking place in the sector of Information and computer technology and its inclusion in organisation is providing them access to important pieces of information irrespective of where they are, therefore it makes no longer a need for the employee to work in the office and be productive. Nowadays, many companies are offering several benefits to their respective employees in addition to salaries, such as flexible working schedules. Flexibility working and work from home arrangements offered both the employee and employers or company leaders of an organisation, with an array of numerous advantages such as-higher retention and productivity rates. Therefore, flexible work is in demand. Many companies have upgraded their flexible working policies by improving work-lifestyle balance for their personnel (Hyman, et.al, 2005). It provides the employee of an organisation with a power to choose from when and where they are willing to work. Work from home also provides an opportunity to the employees of a company to spend more time with their family and exercise during the daylight hours (De Graaff & Rietveld, 2007). All the staff members are given an option to work from anywhere, choose their own work schedules and manage household works also more easily. Countries like Finland offered flexible working arrangements to their employees from the year 1996, before it was popular. The Government of Finland passed a working hour's act which provides all employees and staff members to start or finish their companies work 3 hours earlier or 3 hours later than their core working hours. Staff members of an organisation who have flexible working schedules often tend to feel tremendously valued by

their organisation. After going further it is, also going to describe us with some major key elements of a strong flexible working policy which are:

SABBATICALS: Employees of an organisation can request their management for extended time off for some personal reasons, exams, holidays or education (Bhui, et.al, 2016).

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING: The staff members and employees of a company can request adjustments in their conventional working hours.

REMOTE OR HYBRID WORKING: Employees of a company is able to negotiate their job location or select their preferred work location for some or all the time. This means that staff members have an option to continue their work part time at a designated location and part-time remotely thereby, totally depending upon the company.

COMPRESSED WORK WEEKS OR WORK FROM HOME: In the present situation, most of the companies are adopting this flexible working model in their organisational policy by allowing 3-4 day working weeks and 2-3 days work from home to rebalance their professional and family downtime.

Flexible working conditions are very helpful to most of the employees because it makes easier for them to continue their education or take part in several professional development opportunities (Chandrasekar, 2011). An employee with flexible working hours can schedule their classes, activities around their shifts. When the company offers flexible working conditions and work from home schedules to their employees, the workers tend to feel more valued by their organisation. If an employee feel highly valued and consistent support is provided to them by their workplace therefore, it makes them feel more interested towards their job. Employees, who are more satisfied with their workplace and their policies, find it more enjoyable to go to their work and perform well. Thus, higher job satisfaction can also result in better productiveness and engagement. Many workers choose to stay with their organisation for a longer period of time when companies offer flexible working (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). It has been noticed by many organisations that employees of a company feel more energetic and see their productivity levels increase when they are given flexible working options. Workers of an organisation always prioritise their job tasks when given flexible work situations. People who work from home are able to save more money which helps them to put back money back into their pocket. Overhead expenses like lunches bought out, parking and transportation fees, professional wardrobe and many others can be

eliminated from their entire monthly expenditure. Such working conditions add in a lack of commute between the employees and managerial staff and employees with flexible working have more individual time and fewer distractions. When such arrangements are done properly, it allows all employees and staff members to focus on what really matters like their performance which leads them to increased productivity. Remote, flexible and employees working from their preferred locations tend to be very happier and more loyal towards their organisations because it, shows that working from remote locations provides them more time for their hobbies and interests. Employees are able to consume and eat healthier meals as well as also devote some time in physical activities. The arrangement of flexible working helps to prevent or reduce burnout among employees (Kattenbach, et.al, 2010). Work from home or hybrid working arrangements are increasingly getting widespread in several firms. Work life balance has recently, considered the attention of both employer and organisation as it totally helps an employee to meet their work and family commitments. Telecommuting is also rapidly becoming more and more common amongst the employers to allow employees of a company to do at least some of their regular work from home instead of going to their workplaces. Flexible working will allow workers with disabilities and health issues to participate and develop skills. Increase in employee's productivity and performance helps to enhance the organisational image which leads to retention of desirable employees. Organisations with work-life balance and flexible working arrangements are also able to attract, as well as retain greater numbers of qualified applicants (Prowse & Prowse, 2015). Most of the company faces decrease in their productivity level due to their workplace environment. Employees of the above mentioned organisations are very much prone to occupational disease which directly impacts their level of motivation and subsequent performance. But, flexibility in their job working conditions will ensure employees to have control over their time by flexible working. The potential benefit of flex-type in working arrangements also reduces the rate of employee absenteeism and tardiness in a workplace. Work from home options also has a positive impact on an employee's mental health because flexible working conditions provide avail an employee with such working conditions which are often associated with less psychological strain among the employees in a company. Therefore, flexible working and appropriate work from home implementation by an employer will definitely help to increase their employee's quality, quantity and level of productivity in their work (Major & Germano, 2006).

Objective:

To find role of flexible working and work from home on employee productivity and performance

Methodology:

This study is descriptive in nature in which the data were obtained from the 220 respondents to find the role of flexible working and work from home on employee productivity and performance. A checklist question was used to analyse and interpret the data. In a checklist question respondents choose “Yes” or “No” for all the questions.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Table 1 The Role of Flexible Working and Work from Home on Employee Productivity and Performance

SL No.	The Role of Flexible Working and Work from Home on Employee Productivity and Performance	Yes	% Yes	No	% No	Total
1	Better work life balance	195	88.64	25	11.36	220
2	Less commute stress	190	86.36	30	13.64	220
3	Location independence	186	84.55	34	15.45	220
4	Improves inclusivity	201	91.36	19	8.64	220
5	Saves travel and other cost for employee	210	95.45	10	4.55	220
6	Positive environmental impact	205	93.18	15	6.82	220
7	Increased productivity and performance	178	80.91	42	19.09	220
8	Positive impact on suitability	189	85.91	31	14.09	220

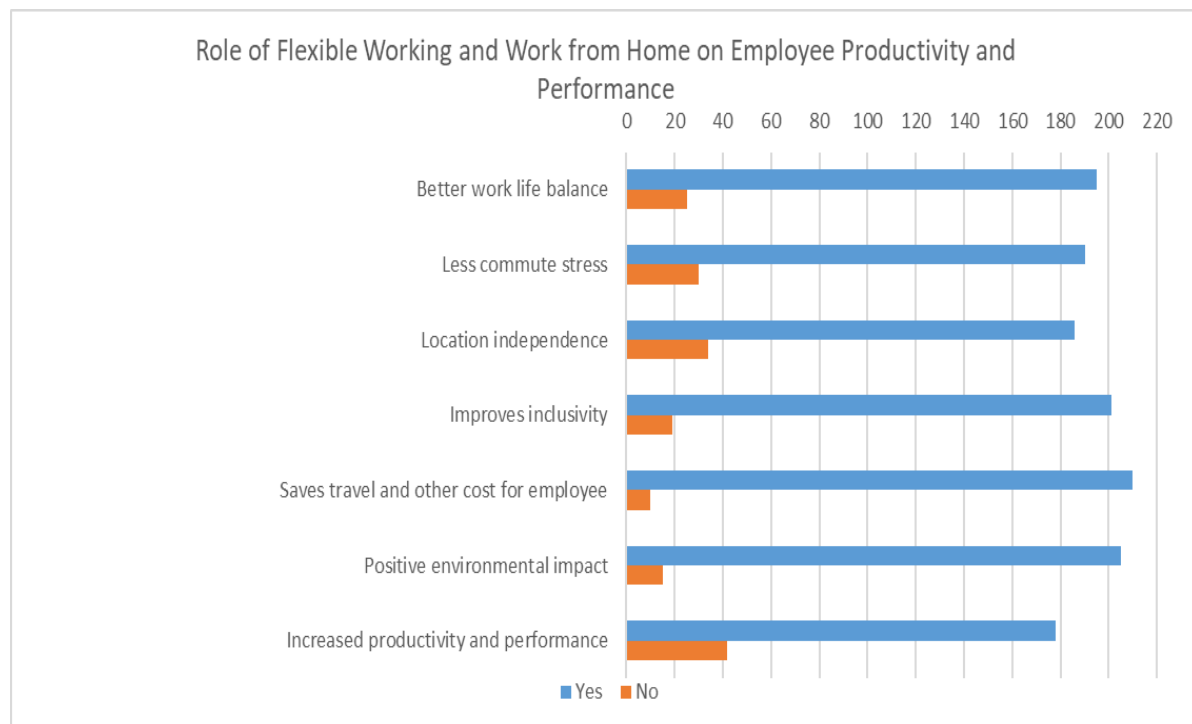


Figure 1 The Role of Flexible Working and Work from Home on Employee Productivity and Performance

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the role of flexible working and work from home on employee productivity and performance. It was found that around 95.4% respondents accept that work from home saves travel and other cost for employee, have a positive environmental impact (93.1%), Improves inclusivity (91.3%), Better work life balance (88.6%), Less commute stress (86.3%), have positive impact on suitability (85.9%) provides location independence (84.5%) and Increased productivity and performance (80.9%).

CONCLUSION

Furthermore, the above mentioned study showed a positive role of both flexible working and work from home. In general, it helps to increase both the productivity and performance levels of an employee in their work. The research work also concluded that introduction of both flexible working and work from home opportunities brought many benefits for both an employee and an employer. Flexibility in the workplace gives an employee a opportunity to perform both their household and outside of the work roles thus, it helps to balance work and family life. Despite, so many positive results numerous number of studies should be covered

by an employer to understand the drawbacks of such practices. If the working conditions are not monitored properly by an employer, the work from home and flexible working may create huge difficulties in the workplace.

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