

## **POST – PANDEMIC METAMORPHOSIS IN HR CURVATURES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

With global Pandemic Covid 19, many production organisations today are facing a new challenge of keeping the business afloat. With the recent government guidelines as well failing demand, many of the small as well as medium production units have temporarily shut down their factories but then there are production units which have seen a significant increase in demand for essential supplies. The front line production workers in the production unit cannot carry their work to the relative safety of their homes. So the critical focus for every such organisation is to keep their workforces specially the front line production workers safe. But for the other sub - divisions the organisations in order to minimise the risk have allowed remote working facilities for their workforces.

With this, attempt had been made to understand the perception of workforce's particularly working in production unit about the factors that will influence the different aspects of work from home. A questionnaire containing different factors affecting the work from home perception of the workforces is designed and distributed. Data is collected from 71 white collar respondents (Male 63 and 8 Female workforces). Analysing the data, it was found that professional isolation, perceived job performance with virtual work; independent working and perceived organisational support are the major factors that contribute to the perceptions of work from home workforces.

**Keywords:** Post - Pandemic, Work from Home, Production Organisation and Business Inferences.

## **Introduction**

Among the notable metamorphosis which came as inference of the Covid19 Pandemic has been the transition of many office workers across professions to work from home setups. Individuals from some occupational classes who had little background of working from home were switched to such arrangements (teachers, production staffs, sales). While workforces who never had worked from home were pushed to such setups. The transition wasn't that easy. For some it was easier to shift and for another group they witnessed an aggressive changeover.

In a developing economy like India, there are a huge number of people who work in the production Sector (according to data from corporate government sectors). In these sectors earlier remote working was an absurd concept. For companies in the production sector, the big challenge is psychological rather than operational. Command and control isn't just a by word for how India's economy has been confined for decades. In a traditional hierarchical world, how most firms run. The work from home is seeing its own challenge in terms of infrastructure and technology. The work from home is a form of Modern Organisation, questioning the bureaucratic structure of conventional organisations. This further poses a challenge on the influence and power of the managers whose identity and sense of power was defined on their role. Middle Level Manufacturing leaders and the Supervisors play a

very crucial role in the success/failure of the work from home plan.

A point of reference study analysing 20 different companies where work from home initiatives are followed found that manufacturing leaders may act as an obstacle to virtual work spread, and their co-operation is necessary if virtual work initiatives are to succeed. As manufacturing leaders attitude's play such a major role in the transition to virtual work, the relationship between manufacturing leaders and their workforces is very important for the adjustments to virtual work. Considering all these, in a production setup where the traditional pattern of work from home is followed this study makes an attempt to understand the factors that the workforces perceive that will affect their work from home.

**Objectives:** This paper is based on the following objectives;

1. To identify major factors affecting work from home of professionals working in production sector in the present day context.
2. To study relationship between work from home and factors influencing work from home.

## **Literature Review**

According to The Business Line reports that it is difficult for production sectors to setup WFH practices and industry experts are anticipating job loses which will further lead to economic slowdown. In Comparison with the IT Sector, the availability

of server connectivity and security threats are a major challenge before a production firm to allow its workforces to WFH. In order to deal with these “contingencies” Business Continuity plans are laid down and production sectors are devising new ways and means to being open to the concept of remote working.

According to The Economic Times (Covid-19 Impact: For manufacturers, work from home doesn't work, March 2020) with the pandemic overhead, many Indian companies are encouraging WFH option to their workforces. Keeping in the trend production companies are also encouraging remote working as a part of “Social Responsibility”. The production companies do not want to put their workforce in risk and also wants to avoid unnecessary medical and insurance cost. With workforces WFH the companies will save from administrative costs as well the pressure of daily commute for workforces will reduce.

A study conducted by Leesman (2020) says that 53% of workforces in U.K do not have any remote work experience. The study covered 700000 workforces working in various production and industrial setup. The study stresses out that with large scale remote working the production and industrial engineering sectors must prepare itself for a reduction in productivity and innovation. In future the production sectors across the world should start practising the non traditional work setting to supplement the traditional work setting.

Lane, Mullen and Logan (2020) in their research work state that, with the pandemic many workforces have preferred to remote working. Staying in the safety of their home they have brought the work from the workplace to their homes. But with the work at home some unique challenges have crept up. Challenges in terms of parenting, co-ordinating schedule, separating work hours and personal hours, issues with communication with the supervisors are observed. The authors conclude that these very challenges can be dealt with keeping oneself flexible and confident. More and more communication with teammates and supervisor will also help in solving issues in professional life.

Kramer and Kramer (2020) stated that this pandemic situation will reshape the perceptions of companies as well as workforces about the traditional work practices. It may also eliminate a few traditional workplace setting. Work from home will be the new concept for many workforces across the world. The authors in this changing context have tried to focus on three occupational related domains. The first may be change in terms of value and status of the work which will in future lead to change in demand and supply of meaning of different occupations. Second the work from home concept will lead to better understanding of work/job perspective and individual characteristic associated with it. Third there will be an increased splitting of the job into categories like “Good Job” and “Bad Job” which will further

contribute to inequality. The authors conclude their work by stating that some occupational group would be immensely benefitted and some not but overall it will increase and broaden the income, gender, racial and ethnic inequality.

**Research Tactic**

Population in this research are 71 workforces in the executive level. Data is collected through the questionnaire which included eleven WFH factors as independent variables measured on a seven -point Likert scale items developed for this study

(the number of items is indicated in brackets): The scale was further defined as 1: Strongly Agree and 7 Strongly Disagree. These factors are further then defined in statements. The collected data is further analysed using factor analysis. The data is analysed through SPSS Version 22. Factor Analysis is used to identify the factors that workforces perceive will affect their work from home. Further a regression test has been runned to understand the relationship between factors extracted and work from home.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

TABLE -1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Sub Category	N	%
Age	18-25	1	1
	26 -35	13	19
	36-45	27	38
	46-54	27	38
	Above 55	3	4
Total		71	100
Gender	Male	63	89
	Female	8	11
Total		71	100
Education Qualification	Diploma/Degree	31	44
	Post Graduate	40	56
Total		71	100
One Way Travelling Distance	0-10	11	15
	11-20	36	52
	20-30	7	10
	30-40	17	24
Total		71	100

**Demographic Architecture**

The above table shows the demographic distribution of the participants. It is observed that the number of female workforces is less as compared to male workforces. The adequacy of data to run factor analysis is tested by

and is statistically relevant at the 5% confidence level. This means that the number of variables predicted would decrease 11 variables to key factors. The Bartlett's measure of sphericity shows that the factors are significantly classified into groups. factors. The study further has employed principal

TABLE II: PRINCIPAL COMPONENT (FACTOR) ANALYSIS

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.249	22.494	22.494	2.249	22.494	22.494
2	1.316	13.157	35.652	1.316	13.157	35.652
3	1.309	13.090	48.741	1.309	13.090	48.741
4	1.178	11.783	60.524	1.178	11.783	60.524
5	.924	9.263	69.760			
6	.841	8.407	78.167			
7	.697	6.973	85.140			
8	.573	5.731	90.871			
9	.498	4.973	95.844			
10	.256	2.563	98.407			
11	.159	1.593	100.000			

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis.

From the above tables, it is observed that out of eleven variables only four factors are extracted.

Kaiser Meyer Oklin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. Normally more than 0.5 values for KMO are considered satisfactory for acceptance. In present study by applying Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, the value being 0.785 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity the estimated Chi-Square value is 2.154

component analysis or factor analysis to factor analyse 11 factors.

Among the extracted factors Perceived Isolation is the most significant factor that is affecting the workforce's perception of work from home, followed by perceived job performance with virtual work,

TABLE III: COMPONENT MATRIX

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Independent working	.474	.377	.627	-.155
Cost savings for company and workforces.	-.319	.472	-.308	-.397
Ever changing and abnormal working Schedule	.195	-.036	.065	.777
Clarity of Assessment Standards.	-.691	-.158	-.106	.052
Perceived organisational Support	.438	-.550	.267	-.214
Interpersonal Confidence	-.619	.042	.540	-.064
Professional isolation	.705	.411	-.026	.091
Perceived experience with virtual work	.149	-.021	.547	.273
Perceived job performance with virtual work	.678	-.174	.082	-.312
Role Anxiety and Virtual Job Efficiency.	.066	.648	-.368	.242
Current Education System and virtual work	.253	.040	.052	0.72

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis.

a. 4 components extracted

Independent Working and Perceived Organisational Support is the least significant factor. 7 factors were deleted as factor loading values were less than 0.5.

To analyse the relationship between multiple independent and dependent variables, a Linear Regression

Analysis was performed. As a rule, the degree to which two or more predictors (independent or X variables) are related to the dependent (Y) variable was expressed in the correlation coefficient R, which was the square root of R-square. In linear regression, the R-values were assumed between 0 and 1.

TABLE IV: MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.318a	.489	.479	.3523

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factors like (Independent Working, Interpersonal Confidence, Professional Isolation, Current Education System and Virtual Work)

Table V: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.856	4			
	Residual	25.304	66	.714	2.681	.036b
	Total	28.160	70	.266		

a. Dependent Variable: Work from Home

b. Predictors: (Constant), Factors like (Independent Working, Interpersonal Confidence, Professional Isolation, Current Education System and Virtual Work)

TABLE-VI: COEFFICIENTS<sup>A</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	-.307	.771		-.399	.691
	Factor 1	.014	.124	.013	.110	.913
	Factor 2	-.205	.111	-.199	-1.840	.069
	Factor 3	.054	.087	.067	.619	.537
	Factor 4	.456	.160	.289	2.859	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Work from Home.

It was found from the ANOVA Table that, since the p -value was .03 which was less than .05 indicating that the regression is statistically significant. The relationship between work from home and factors affecting work from home by the workforces is significant. From Table in the correlation coefficient, R was 0.318. Therefore, we can conclude that work from home

is positively influenced by the factors that the workforces perceive while working from home.

The table VII shows Coefficients represented the Beta ( $\beta$ ) values and its interaction with all known variables was calculated. Factors like professional isolation, perceived job performance with virtual work, Independent Working and Perceived

Organisational Support were taken as independent variables while the work from home, as dependent variable. The factors extracted exerted a positive correlation with the dependent variable.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

In the wake of Covid19, adopting WFM for a production company is a tough task. Model of work from home has not well evolved for non IT companies. Since these companies do not have adequate IT tools practising it and accepting the WFM will take some time. The findings are clearly in line with the emotions of the workforces. Studies have shown that Professional Isolation has been a physical and behavioural health threat to the workforces who are on remote working. Even on the workforces side there is feeling that on remote working they won't get the social stimulation which helps them in motivation and engagement with the work. So the organisations can plan for interactivities and to combat the isolation feeling, it can also increase the interpersonal trust.

Another cause of this professional isolation can be resource isolation. As in a workplace resources for better functioning are readily available but that may not be the case in work from home set up. In case of perceived job performance with virtual work, the job performance may be defined as the output that the workforce generates and it must be definable and measurable. In remote working a insecurity in terms of output

measurement is felt by the workforces. This has a both positive as well as negative aspect. In terms of positive aspect workforce's remote working will have better productivity than the traditional pattern working as there will be work/life balance and flexibility but on the negative side a decreased communication with the peers and supervisors sometimes raises doubt on individual performance hence leading to decreased job satisfaction?

Work from home can decrease workforce affiliation with the organisation and lessen the confidence in leadership and has the potential to cause frustration from colleagues working in the office. Therefore a good manufacturing leaders-workforce relationships, workforce organisational support, clear communication on consistent performance expectations and effective communication strategies may help the workforces to adjust to remote work and retain identification with their company.

Additionally companies should also offer remote work coaching and training for workforces to improve their ability to organise workdays and retain a self efficacy to successfully adapt to remote work. Since the negative effects of remote work on team functions are concentrated mostly in short term teams, organisations should aim and organise long-term teams and conduct remote collaboration and avoid creating and deploying new teams under remote conditions.

Earlier, it was not a practical option



for those who are in production, hospitality, performing arts and heavy production units. But the production organisation experts are voicing their opinion on solving the issues of remote working. The study concludes that the interplay of characteristics of job as well as humans have a significant research and functional inferences. When individual characteristics trump

job characteristics, shifting from remote working to traditional pattern of working can entail a selection of workforces best suited to work from home. Training those workforces on more efficient methods of remote work and greater monitoring of the quality and productivity of those assigned work from home will always contribute to higher efficiency and productivity.

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