

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF WORK FROM HOME ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF SALARIED EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Work life balance has become an integral part of both an employee and employer in an organization. Managing both professional life and personal life is always a problem to be conquered by almost every second working employee in today's era. Work from home has given a new dimension in maintaining work life balance specially to salaried or jobholder employees. Due to Covid 19 the increment in work from home has created both pros and cons for employees in dealing with their work and personal life simultaneously. The study has considered all the factors which is affecting work life balance of employees while working from home and analyzed some suggestive measures for managing same.

KEYWORDS: *Work Life Balance, Work from Home, Employees, Covid-19.*

Introduction

Work life balance is related to maintaining equation between your work life and personal life. Put simply, it's all about making sure you balance out the time you spend working with the time you spend enjoying everything else in life; your family, your friends and your hobbies. "Work-life balance" came into use in the 1970s and 80s, as stressed baby boomers strove to achieve a balance between career, family and other areas of their lives. Yet shifting generational experiences have encouraged HR leaders to reevaluate the term.

Businesses that gain a reputation for encouraging work-life balance have become very attractive – especially when you consider how difficult it can be to attract and retain younger workers these days. The Oxford Economic suggests, "Replacing an employee costs on average around £30,000 and it takes up to 28 weeks to get them up to speed." It is no easy task to achieve work-life balance in today's unpredictable and fast-paced business world. As we grow increasingly more connected through technology and social media, it is becoming more and more difficult to separate work from our personal lives.

Importance of Work Life Balance

Some of the importance for maintaining work life balance for an organisation are:

- **Fewer Health Problems**

When we are stressed and over-worked, we run the risk of jeopardising more than just our social lives – our physical and mental health is in danger too.

It's no secret that when we are overworked, tired or stressed – our health will suffer. A poor work-life balance can lead to a variety of symptoms that can affect our wellbeing. This ranges from the flu to serious health conditions like strokes and respiratory problems. *A study conducted by UCL of more than 10,000 participants stated that white-collar workers who worked three or more hours longer than required had a 60% higher risk of heart-related problems than those who didn't work overtime.*

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By encouraging your people to look after themselves and find balance, you will significantly limit health problems and absences. This will ensure your organisation is more efficient during business hours and people want to be part of the business and culture.

- **More Engagement**

By helping your people to find the perfect balance between work and home, you will increase their engagement levels. This has many positive effects: According to Tower Perrin's 2006 global survey; *"Companies with highly-engaged employees had a near 52% gap in performance improvement in operating income."* Additionally – *"Companies with high levels of employee engagement improved 19.2% in operating income while companies with low levels of employee engagement declined 32.7%."*

Having an engaged workforce will lead to your people going 'the extra mile' for you and becoming loyal advocates for your brand and product. This is evidenced by Temkin Group, who suggests that *"engaged staff are 2.5 times more likely to stay at work late if something needs to be done after the normal workday ends."*

- **Less "Burnouts"**

We all get stressed from time to time. It is unavoidable. However, workplace burnouts are avoidable, and you should make efforts to ensure this doesn't happen to your people. Burnouts occur when we feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. The negative effects of burnout can affect every aspect of our lives. The inability to separate work from home will massively increase the chances of burnout, so it is important to encourage your team to take time off and "leave work at work."

- **More Mindfulness**

When we find and sustain a healthy work-life balance, we develop greater control over our focus and ability to concentrate on the task at hand – this is known as mindfulness. ***Wouldn't you prefer a team that is fully focused on whatever they are doing, instead of worrying about work/home?***

By encouraging your people to have a healthy work-life balance, you will create an environment where everyone is dedicated to the task at hand. This will improve retention rates, productivity and ultimately profit.

"Work from home" is considered to be a good Human Resource management strategy when it comes to employee engagement and retention in organisation but now after covid 19 pandemic it has become a new normal for every working employee. It has become a necessity in spite of an option for management. Even in 2019, before COVID-19 hit, around 8% of workers worldwide were already working remotely – that's 260 million people. These days, some people in your company are probably online in the early morning, while some are online late into the evening, and others, much of the weekend.

Although work from home has created a big support in continuing the working operation of organisation; it has created a huge impact on work life balance of employees as well. Employees' personal and work life are not separated anymore. Some feel that they get adjust work according to their necessity while few feel like their leisure time is being affected badly due to work from home. The same scenario lies with management as well. In some cases, management feels to continue it for longer period of time even if the covid ends while on the other hand management also feels that work is being delayed by employees as now, they can't be monitored by the management.

Literature Review

Nizath, Karunarathne (2020) examined the effect of Work from Home on Work-Life Balance and examines the moderating role of gender. Their study made a significant theoretical contribution by addressing the inadequacy of Work from Home policies by supporting the argument that the employees face so many challenges when performing organizational activities at their home. They suggested that managers and practitioners should have a better understanding of the individuals and organization before implementing Work from Home practices to the employees. Cross-validation of this study's findings in various industries and different cultures comparatively among a more extensive sample in subsequent studies is recommended, which will add more insights to the present study's substance.

Gadecki, Jewdokimow, Zadkowska (2018) Their article has shown the impact of new technologies (ICT) on people working at home and their families. This technology, which was supposed to help in achieving work-life balance, turns out to complicate the lives of teleworkers. By using the perspective of teleworkers and their partners they unveiled how new technologies have become a problematic element of the teleworkers' "toolkits".

Putri, Amran (2021) stated that the sudden change in the operational activity system can have an impact on the work-life balance of employees. Their study revealed the work-life balance of the employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of work from home. The results showed that work from home respectively has a positive and significant effect on the work-life balance on the employees. There are dimensions and indicators that are the highest and lowest in constructing each variable and the results of this study are expected to be used by the company to minimize and anticipate the occurrence of negative effects on work-life balance in terms of the aspects of work from home.

The above literature review has given an overview the importance of work life balance of employees and also how it is being achieved from work from home. However, this study will explore more the above research study by specifically focusing on salaried employees.

Objectives of Study

- To study the impact of work from home on work life balance of employees
- To analyse the factors which are affecting the work life balance of employees while working from home
- To understand the pros and cons of working from home.
- To analyse some suggestive measures for maintain work life balance of employees in work from home.

Limitations of Study

- The study has been restricted to only to salaried or white-collar employees and other professions are not considered.
- Primary Data has been collected through online questionnaire and chances of dishonest answers by respondent can be present

Research Methodology

The research is mainly descriptive in nature and data is collected through primary method.

Source of Data Collection

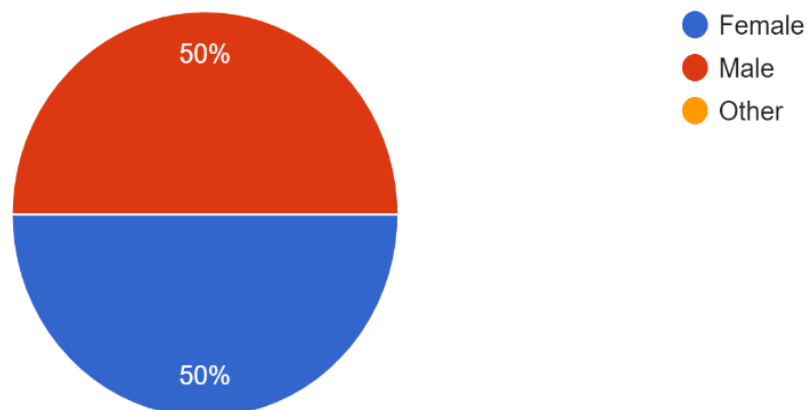
The primary data was collected through online questionnaire method from 70 respondents from all over India mainly from metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and semi urban and urban district of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

Data Analysis

- From the total response of 70 respondents 35 i.e. 50% were female and 35 i.e.50% were male.

Gender

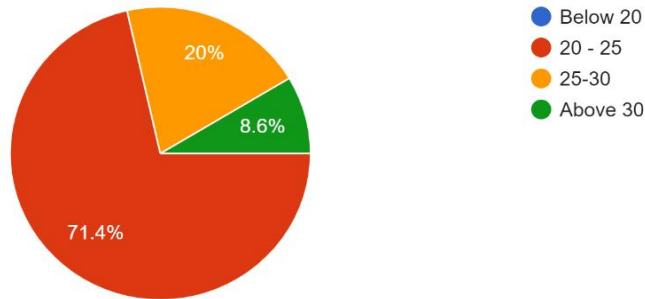
70 responses



- 50 respondents (71.4%) were from 20-25; 14 (20%) were from 25-30; 6(8.6%); were above 30.

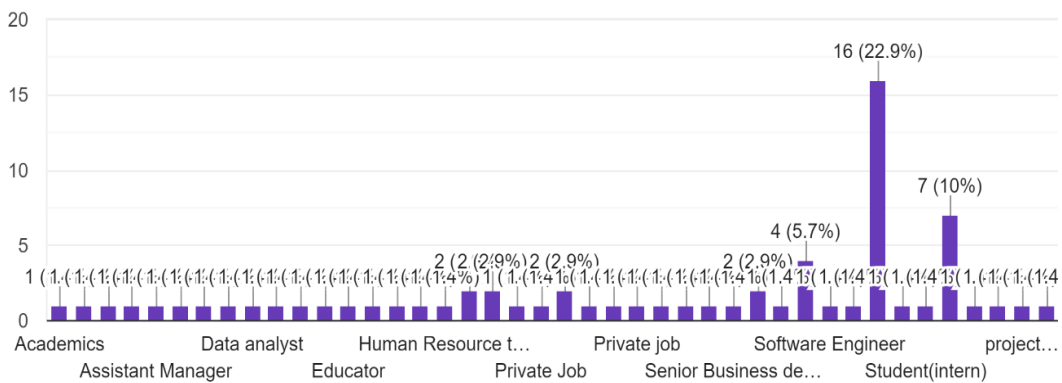
Age

70 responses



Occupation

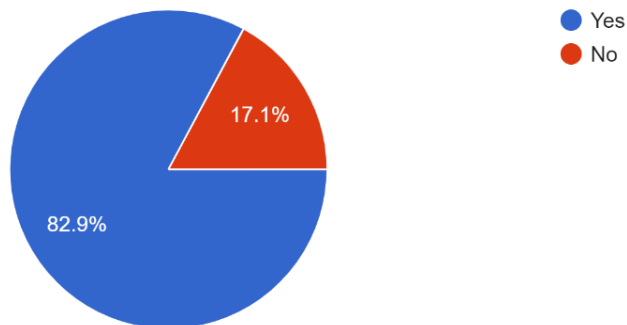
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- 16(22.9%) were students;8(10%) were teachers;4(5.7%) were software engineers;2(2.9%) were private job employees from IT sector;2(2.9%) were software engineer;2(2.9%) were educators;
- 82.9%(58) agreed that they work from home and 17.1% (12) respondents said that they do not work from home.

Are you working from home?

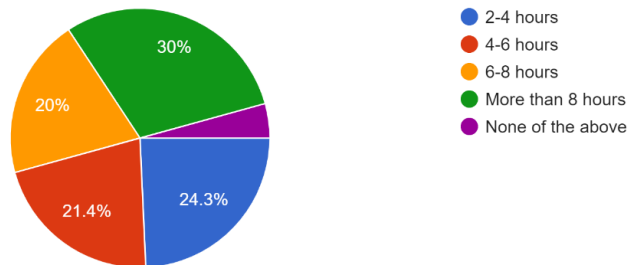
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- Majority of respondents 30% (21) work for more than 8 hours at home; 24.3% (17) works for 2-4 hours; 21.4% (15) works for 4-6 hours; 20% (14) works for 6-8 hours and 3 respondents do not work from home.

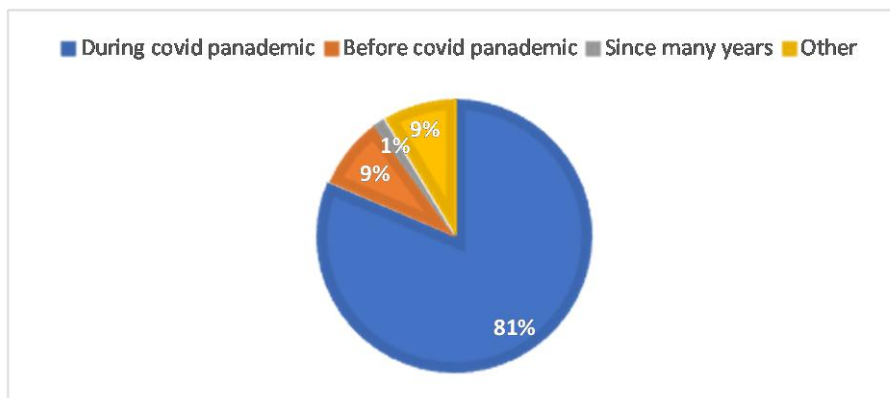
How many hours do you spend while working from home?

70 responses



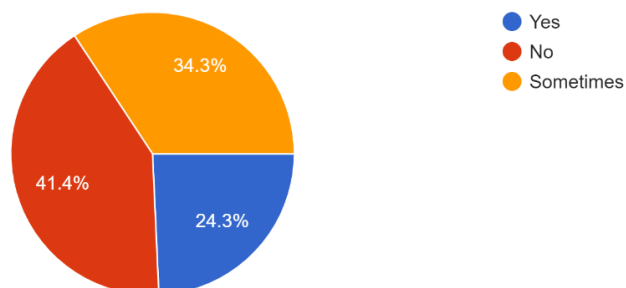
- 87% (57) respondents stated that they were working from home during covid pandemic; 9% (6) stated they have been working before covid pandemic; 29% (6) respondents collectively stated as they were working since 1 year, 18 months and several years.

For how long you have been working from home?



Do you work on weekends as well?

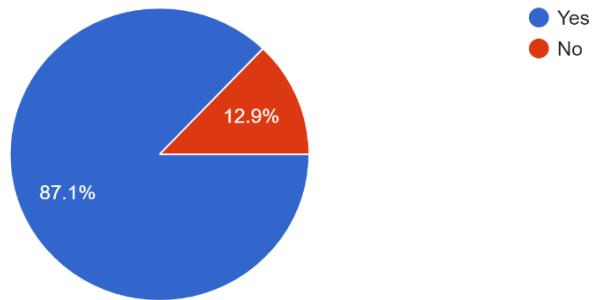
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- Majority 41.4% (29) respondents denied working on weekends; 34.3% (24) said that sometimes they work on weekends and rest 24.3% (17) agreed that they work on weekends as well.
- 81.7% (61) respondents agreed that they get support from their employer to work from home and 12.9% (9) respondents do not get any support from employer.

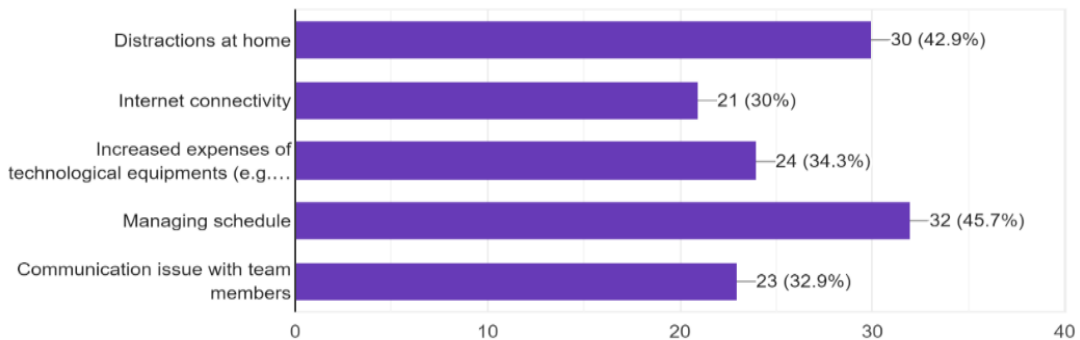
Do you have all support from your employer to work from home?

70 responses



What challenges do you face while working from home?

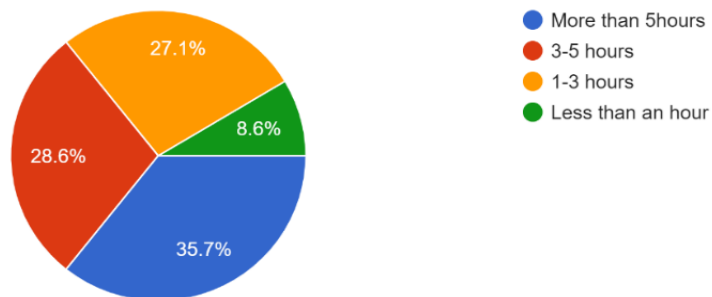
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- On asking about challenges faced by them in working from home majority 45.7% (32) respondents stated that managing schedule was the issue;42.9%(30) respondents stated distractions from home was the challenge,34.3%(24) respondents found increased expenses on technological equipment one of the issues,32.9%(23) respondents stated communication with team members was a challenge and 30%(21) found internet connectivity as one of the challenge.
- Majority 35.7%(25) respondents stated that they spend more than 5 hours with their family and friends;28.6%(20) respondents spend 3-5 hours;27.1%(19) spends 1-3 hours and 8.6%(6) respondents stated that they get less than 1 hour to spend with their family and friends.

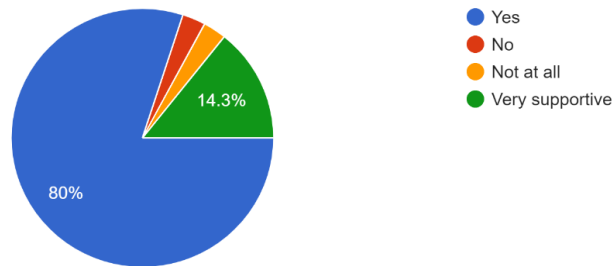
How much time do you spend with your family & friends?

70 responses



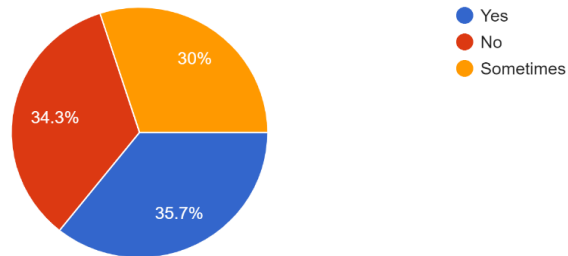
- 80% (56) said that they get support from family and friends while working from home ,14.3%(10) said that their family is extremely supportive towards work from home while 2.9%(2) said that they no and not at all receive any support from family.

Do you get support from your family & friends for working from home?
70 responses



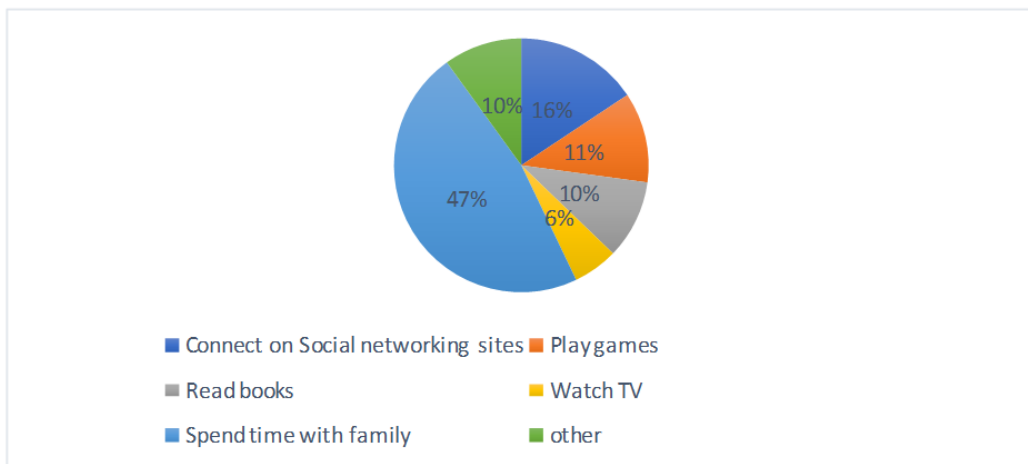
- 35.7%(25) respondents agreed that working from home is affecting the routine activities of their family members;34.3%(24) stated that it does not affect and 30%(21) respondents were of the opinion that sometimes it does affect.

Does your work affects the routine activities of your family members?
70 responses



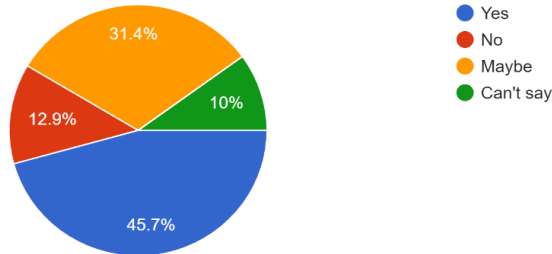
- Majority 47% (33) respondents preferred spending time with their family;16%(11) prefers connecting on SNS like Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram etc;11%(8) respondents stated that they like to play games;10%(7) respondents prefer to read books; 6%(4) stated that they prefer to watch TV and rest 10%(7) respondents prefer doing other activities.

What else you prefer to do when not working



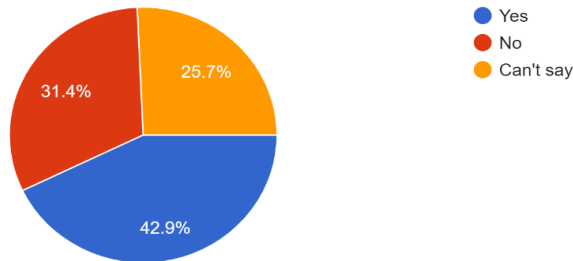
- On asking whether they are able to manage their work life and personal life,45.7%(32) respondents agreed that they were able to manage;31.4%(22) responded as maybe;12.9%(9) stated that they were not able to manage and 10%(7) respondents were not sure.

Do you think you are able to maintain a balance between your work-life & personal life?
70 responses



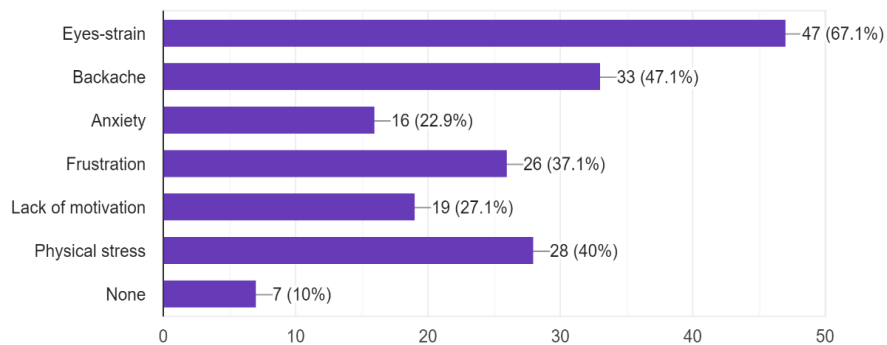
- Majority 42.9%(30) respondents agreed that work from home has enhanced productivity and dedication level of employees;31.4%(22) do not agree and 25.7%(18) respondents were not sure about it.

Do you think WFH has enhanced the productivity & dedication level of employees?
70 responses



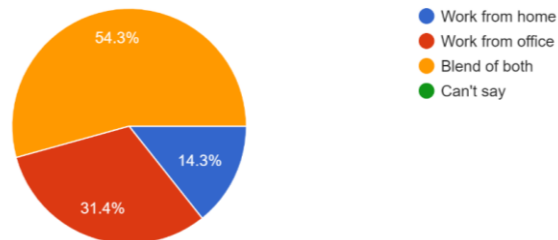
- On being asked health issues faced by them due to work from home majority 67.1% (47) respondents stated eye strain as a major problem;47% (33) found backache as the issue;40% (28) respondents mentioned physical stress as the problem;37.1%(26) stated frustration as a health issue;27.1%(19) found lack of motivation as an issue;22.9%(16) respondents stated about the problem of anxiety and 10%(7) did not found any health issue.

What health issues are being faced by you due to work from home?
70 responses



- Majority 54.3% (38) respondents found blend of both a better option;31.4%(22) found working from office to be better and 14.3%(10) respondents stated that working from home is better.

According to you which one is better?
70 responses



Recommended Suggestions

The researcher has also collected the suggestions in survey for working from home. Some of the relevant suggestions are as under:

- A blend of work from home and work from office were suggested by many employees so that flexibility in work environment will help them to work with more enthusiasm.
- There should be proper co-ordination between employer and employee regarding work to be accomplished within manageable schedules.
- There should be some flexibility in working hours considering employees' health as a major concern.
- Giving one or two days off will boost employee's motivation towards their work.
- Management should also work on providing the best internet facility at home to the employees so that work does not get affected in between office hours.

Conclusion

The above study has given the overall view that how work from home is affecting the work life balance of employees. Although the employees and specially the blue collared employee have adopted this in a positive way during covid pandemic but majority of them have agreed that it is affecting their personal life to a great extent .A balance between proper scheduled time for working hour and also allowing employees to adjust their working hour as per their requirement will only help the management to achieve their desired goal without compromising employee's mental health. Work life balance of employee is very relevant managing the human resource and certainly recommended suggestions will foster its development in an organisation.

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