STUDY ON MANAGING WORK FROM HOME AND FREELANCING EMPLOYEES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Jaspal Kaur, Assist. Professor, Ludhiana Group of Colleges, Chaukimann

Shubhreet Kaur, Assist. Professor, Ludhiana Group of Colleges, Chaukimann

ABSTRACT:

This research paper combines data and changes in jobs environment given via online workforce platforms. This study shows how COVID-19 pandemic change brings new aspects in online job opportunities. These changes to uncertain market of labor workforce are managing the balance between the work and family status. India has become 7th largest in freelancing work. Within last 2 years trend is likely to continue going strong. The freelancing and work from home is becoming very popular among youth now days. This paper finding suggest that part time and freelancing is providing flexible time to employees. This work has become primary and secondary sources of income for many youth. We have seen increase in the percentage of working women doing freelancing and work from home.

Keywords: COVID-19; Opportunities; Freelance work; Work from home; Motivation;

INTRODUCTION:

The recent study shows well defined demographic and organizational differences in the pandemic. The major challenges faced by organization are by different time zones of workforces. There are several proven tactics to makes managing freelancing and work from home employee's easier and more effective.

We concerned about freelancing and work from home because of its uncertainty in nature. Freelancers or work from home workforce is very new term in the market. The new word for this workforce is "Gig workers". (Kalleberg, 2003; Lehdonvirta et al., 2019), Freelance work is contract based according to the need of client. Worker is showing his/her creativity in the work and gets paid accordingly.

During pandemic work from home provide better work life balance and reduce stress. It also helps us to reduce pollution stress from our environment. This suggests that there is more demand in administration job instead of technical jobs. As per the report of 2020, Work from Home and Freelance work demand has been increase day by day. These finding suggest that online job demand has been increased during pandemic.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In literature review, it was found that numbers of studies have been conducted on different aspects of Work from Home and Freelance Work in India and abroad. The studies cover the issues like work from home and freelance needs, opportunities, motivation etc. Some of the more important studies on the subject are reviewed below:

McGregor and Doshi (2020), most of the organization leader come over from the first barrier that is allowing team for doing online work. Every time you need to remain active online. The second steps question is more important: How to motivate employees who are doing Work from Home?

During COVID 19, many employees focus on more freelance work. The world has become very challenging during pandemic time but some organization still manage to rise there standards in terms of better customer satisfaction, providing good quality of product and services. We will not forget the work of Frontline workers; they have devoted their life to safe life of other people during pandemic.

Jabagi N., Croteau A.M., Audebrand L.K., & Marsan J. (2019), the idea behind high quality employee motivation to an organization can provide long term reward with the support of better industrial relations. As compare to organization workers, the Gig workforce needs the support of technology to get motivated.

Toyin et al., (2016), both professional and work life are most important for human being. Walker et al., (2008) the good Quality of work life of the employee is greatest question in the current pandemic situation. The family members support play major role to keep you motivated in such a confusion state. Friedman (2014), study shows "Four Circles "that reflect four domains of person's life - "work, home, community, and self". He suggests that these four circles represent values and culture.

Kuek et al. (2015), explain the facts that how online gig/ freelancing work provides "a flexible working time to individuals to take care of their family members. Also they can enroll themselves in any higher education program or start their own new venture. Malone, (2004); Horton, (2010); Gratton & Johns, (2013); Kuek et al., (2015); Sundararajan, (2016); Wheatly,(2017), gave great emphases to motivate your workforce to do freelance work.

Robbins and Coulter (2014), explain the motivation is a procedure which adds efforts in encouragement, self control and to achieve goals. Organizations should work towards the employee's motivation so that they can achieve targets. Workers are always valued and get motivated through external and internal reward system. There are so many motivational theories which state that employees need reward to get motivated like Maslow's hierarchy need.

Grant et al. (2013), initiate that there is great impact of technology on work, which make task possible while sitting at home or at any different location. Kurland and Bailyn (1999) explained that jobs going to change into "limitless activity "which you can perform "anytime and anyplace".

Grant-Vallone and Ensher (2011), said that health problems and family stress problems can have huge impact on work and personal life. A study at Stanford University reflects work from home is one of the most effective ways to reduce stress from work life. Harvard Business School, study reflects work from home decease employee turnover ratio by 50% and increase job satisfaction. Females with flexible working hours feel more financially strong. A study survey in the year 2017, suggest that employee are ready to take 8% lesser salary if they are getting option of work from home. Hence this reflects, employees give more weight-age to flexible working hours as compare to financial benefits.

RESEARCH GAP:

Although several studies have been conducted on Work from Home and Freelance but there has been lack of serious studies reflecting scope of Work from home and freelance work opportunity in near future and organizational effectiveness. The present study is being conducted to address online workforce motivation and future scope.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

The study is being undertaken with the objectives as mentioned below:

1. To identify the future scope of Work from Home and freelance work in the current senior in organization effectiveness.
2. To explore future opportunities related to work from home and freelance.

Purpose of Data Collection

Data is an important input for the success of any survey/study. In order to make meaningful research a suitable methodology has to be adopted. In this study we have adopted two types data i.e., primary data and secondary data. The major part of the study is based on the primary and secondary data which was collected through various research papers and questionnaire.

Sample Design and Sample Size

In the present study, random probabilistic sampling (Stratified random sampling) technique was use for selection of sample. The study is based on 200 online workforces from various sectors.

Data Collection

The online structured questionnaire was used. The total 300 questionnaires circulated through Email, LinkedIn, and Social Media. The questionnaire was pre-tested before final data collection. The questionnaire was got filled up by 60 freelancers at pre-testing stage.

Statistical tools used Frequency, percentage, ANOVA, Cluster, and Discriminant Analysis tests were used to analyze the data. The figure below shows the Dependent and Independent variables that are taken into consideration for the research work.

DATA ANALYSIS

The important techniques used in this study are below:

T-tests, Mean, Standard Deviation, Chi-square, Regression etc.

Reliability analysis:

The reliability of the questionnaire for data collection was checked with the help of Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 1.Factor wise Cronbach's Alpha values

Factor of Effectiveness of WHF and freelance	No. of respondent	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception	200	0.440
Need	200	0.415
Awareness	200	0.419
Talent Acquired	200	0.435
Motivation	200	0.396
Satisfaction	200	0.425
Success	200	0.406
Utilization	200	0.420

Source: Based on Survey Data
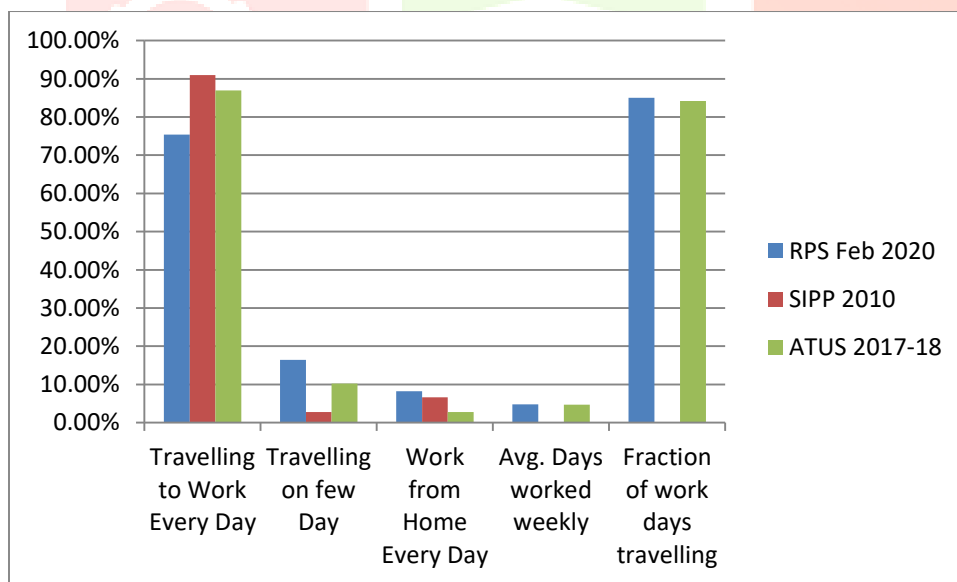
Before COVID-19 Work from Home:

Table 2 and figure 2 define, the Real Time Population Survey as well as number of other company's survey. The percentage of employees working only at home in the month of February was 8.2%. The RPS shows before COVID-19 work from home based on report likewise there are other surveys which reflect the evidence of the survey. The Work schedule Topical Module shows in the Survey of income and program participation (SIPP) regarding the work from home.
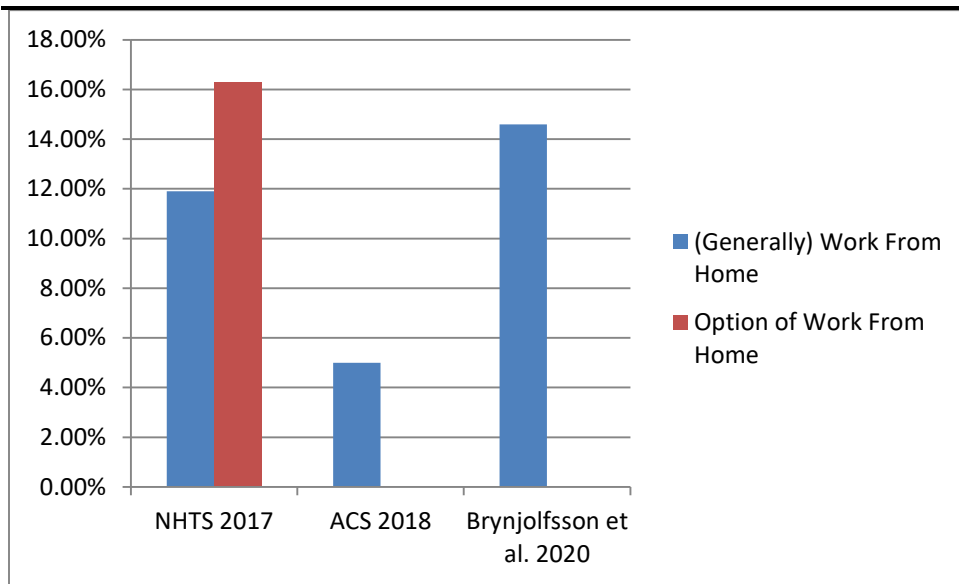
Table 2: Before-COVID Report on Work from Home

S.No	Activities	RPS Feb 2020	SIPP 2010	ATUS 2017-18
A	Travelling to Work Every Day	75.4%	91.0%	87.0%
	Travelling on few Day	16.4%	2.8%	10.2%
	Work from Home Every Day	8.2%	6.6%	2.8%
B	Avg. Days worked weekly	4.8%		4.7%
	Fraction of work days travelling	85%		84.2%
		NHTS 2017	ACS 2018	Brynjolfsson et al. 2020
C	(Generally) Work From Home	11.9%	5%	14.6%
	Option of Work From Home	16.3%		

Source: Based on Survey Data

Table 2 and figure 2, shows some extra evidence based on the survey about travelling behavior. The Department of Transportation's National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) reflects 11.9% of workers say they generally do work from home and 16.3% do work from home in year 2017. The American Community Survey (ACS), which also conduct survey on travelling behavior in year 2018, find 5% of U.S. workers of aged 18-64 generally do work from home. Last, study Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) finds14.6% workers were doing work from home before COVID 19.

Source: Based on Survey Data

Source: Based on Survey Data
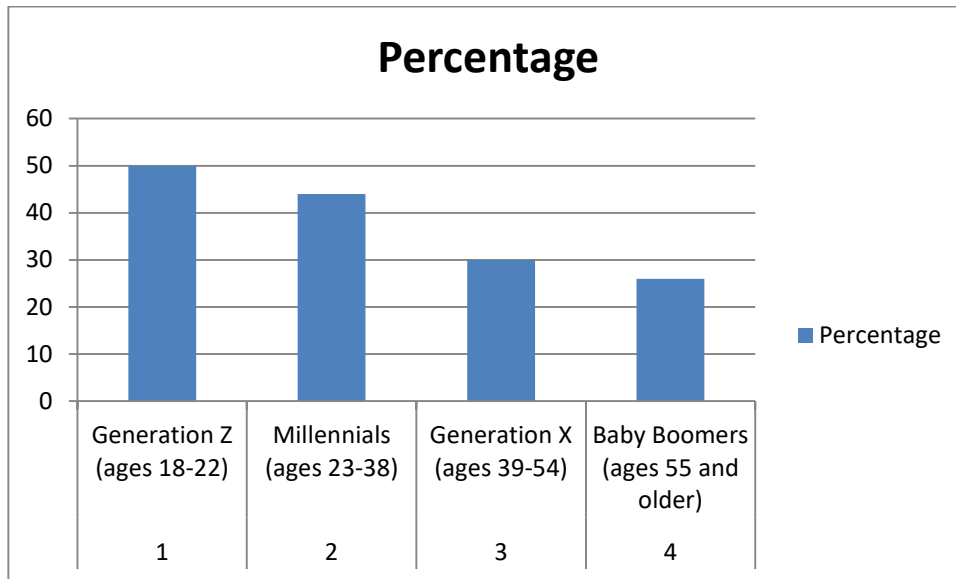
Before COVID-19 Freelance Work:

Generally, 10 percentages of freelancers start online work in between 6 months period according to Upwork, however 34 percentage of freelancers started working during COVID pandemic. "Freelance work can be classified on the basis of nature of job like giving legal advice, programmer etc," Ozimek said Due to this wide range of different category of workforce, there is no one way the virus affect the freelance work.

Table 3 represent, 59 million U.S. workforces do freelance work in the last one year, rise of 2 million workers every year.

Table 3: Past year record of Freelancing Work

S.No	Age	Percentage
1	Generation Z (ages 18-22)	50%
2	Millennial (ages 23-38)	44%
3	Generation X (ages 39-54)	30%
4	Baby Boomers (ages 55 and older)	26%

Source: Based on Survey Data
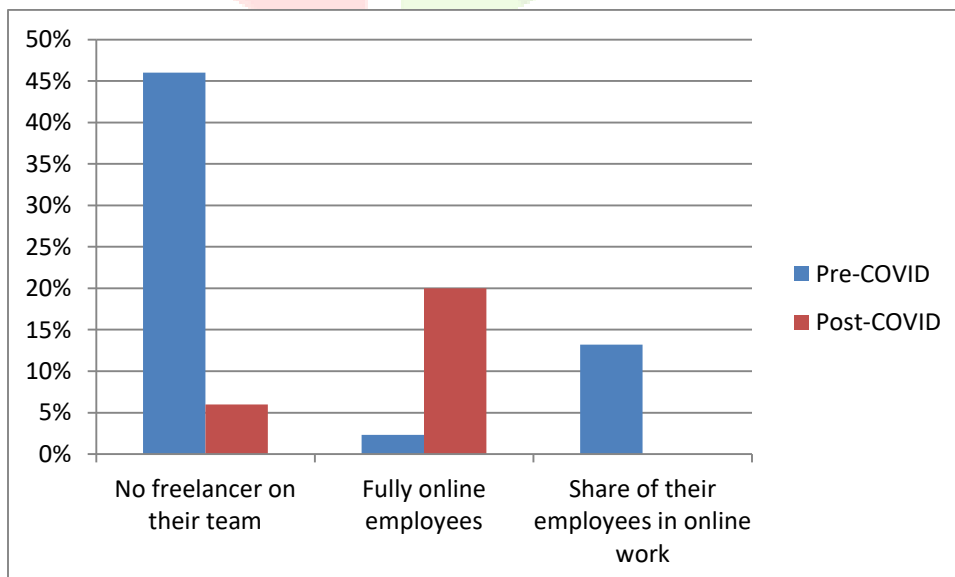
Percentage

Source: Based on Survey Data

As per conclusion of the past year survey data, 96% of new freelancer will do more online jobs in the future and 56% employees do work online.

Table 4: Pre and Post COVID Freelance Data

	Pre-COVID	Post-COVID
No freelancer on their team	46%	6%
Fully online employees	2.3%	20%
Share of their employees in online work	13.2%	56% to74%

Source: Based on Survey Data

Figure 4: Pre and Post COVID Freelance Data

Source: Based on Survey Data

reflects slight increase in freelance work in the period of COVID-19. Fully online work has showing major change in the COVID-19.

HYPOTHESES TESTING:

HYPOTHESIS 1

Null-Hypothesis: There do not exist any relationship between WFH and Freelance in Organizational effectiveness.

The Online workforce standard deviation values along with t value and P value of various factors relating to Organizational effectiveness are given in table 2 below:

Table 5: Statistics for Organizational Effectiveness

Factors relating to Online Workforce	Workforce				t value	P value
	Work from Home		Freelance			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Since when you are doing online jobs?	13.95	1.46	14.70	1.35	1.109	0.017*
How were you selected for this job?	14.71	1.65	13.58	1.04	1.188	0.011*
Which factor motivates you to join online work?	13.42	2.49	12.09	1.17	1.066	0.050
During COVID how you maintain the balance between work life and professional life?	12.28	3.25	14.77	2.15	1.100	0.011*
Issues faced during online job?	10.35	1.25	10.64	1.30	490	0.180
Have online work of the company positively influenced organizational effectiveness?	19.30	1.19	16.48	1.60	1.431	<0.001**

Source: Based on survey data

P value of less than 0.01.But in majority of the factors, the value is more than 0.01.We can, therefore, conclude that there are mixed perceptions of employees about the role of online work in Organizational effectiveness.

HYPOTHESIS 2:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant association between work from home and freelance work opportunities.

Work from home and freelance for mean, standard deviation and t-test for various factors of future opportunities are given in Table below:

Table 6: WFH and Freelance statistics for Future Opportunities

| Factors of future Opportunities | Online Workforce | | | | t value | P value |
| | WFH | | Freelance | | | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Do you think online work which you are doing of good quality?	11.45	1.46	11.70	1.71	1.099	0.012 *
The job received is relevant to your work?	13.30	2.00	12.22	1.99	1.111	0.010 *
Do you think the work you perform as per the expectation?	12.42	1.86	13.44	1.95	0.999	0.066
Do you think that online work assignment enables you to improve skills, knowledge, and new capability?	9.17	1.35	7.20	1.30	407	0.150
Would you require further doing online work assignment in as a full time carrier option?	15.10	1.98	16.24	1.45	1.432	<0.001**
What impact does online work have on future growth?	10.14	2.15	12.13	2.00	0.998	0.040

Source: Based on survey data

The data given in the above Table show that there were significant differences in the perception of WFH and Freelance employees of the online work with respect to future opportunities as a result of workforce. The null hypothesis is rejected as there is evidence to the contrary.

Regression analysis of Online Workforce with respect to Organisational Opportunities

In order to find the effect of independent variable (WFH and Freelance) on the dependent variable (future opportunities) regression analysis was done .The analysis has shown the following results.

Multiple R value: 0.455   the coefficient value is 0.455 which indicates that the relationship between online workforce and the independent variables is quite strong and positive.

R Square value: 0.467 the value of R square is 0.467 which simply means that about 42.2% of the variation is due to online workforce.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

The major findings of the study are summarized below:

1. Work from Home and Freelance in the organizational effectiveness have been very successful and it provides carrier opportunities to online work force.

2. Online workforce employee's attitude towards WFH and freelance programs is positive.

3. Impact of online work on business performance, There has been a positive impact of WFH and freelance on business performance.

4. There are significant differences in the perceptions of WFH and freelance workers towards role of online projects.

On the basis of the survey, the following suggestions are made which may improve the effectiveness of online work:

1. Provide better training & development programs to the online workforce manpower.
2. Organization should establish their infrastructure to support online work.
3. More motivational policies should be implemented to promote WFH and Freelance work

Conclusions

This pandemic has brought so many uncertainty and bad news to this world. So many workforces have lost their jobs during the lockdown. Counties economy is also suffered a lot. According to Future Workforce survey, work from home and freelance work has brought some positive impact in the economy. The online work is increasing day by day. It is also making young workforce to become self sufficient.

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