

AN INQUISITION OF JOB SATISFACTION IN REMOTE WORKING FROM EMPLOYEE'S PERSPECTIVE**Balaji. K^{1*} and Dr. G. Udayasuriyan²**¹*Research Scholar and ²Professor, Business Administration, Annamalai University, Chidambaram- 608002**ABSTRACT**

Remote working became popular during COVID-19 pandemic and is beneficial for plenty of reasons, including the ability to work anywhere, at any moment, with no requirement for travel or expenditures, fewer demands on employees, lower operating costs, greater flexibility and furthermore. However, the impact of remote employment on job satisfaction and employee performance remains unclear. So, this study prompts the elements such as employee performance and perceived autonomy and depicts how it enhances individual's job satisfaction to plan and manage professional dynamics associated with responsibility and the remote working arrangements. To analyse data, we used descriptive statistics, coefficient of correlation, ANOVA and multiple regression. The result suggested that there was a positive association between employee performance and perceived autonomy in remote working in an organisation. This study also discovered that job satisfaction influenced remote worker's performance positively. Also, the study revealed that working remote does not contribute equally to job satisfaction and employee performance which may be attributed to a lack of social engagement and greater isolation. This implies that, in order to improve employee performance in remote work, organisations should focus on encouraging employee's job satisfaction as well as promoting mental wellness in their working environment.

Keywords: Remote working, Employee performance, Job satisfaction, Perceived autonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

Remote Working, commonly referred to as work from home (WFH) or tele commuting, is a sort of flexible work system that enables an employee to conduct business away from the corporate headquarters (Bunjak et al., 2021) (Olson & Primps, 1984) (Bellmann & Hübler, 2020). This system helps in ensuring work-life balance, access to different career opportunities, and lower commuting costs for employees who can complete work offsite. (Gemmano et al., 2023) (Demerouti, 2023) To avoid the perception that they are doing less than other employees, remote workers may feel pressure to generate more work. Lower workplace engagement is a result of this productivity pressure, as well as a lack of social interaction through strained co-worker relationships and feelings of loneliness (Miners & Hideg, 2015) (Gyekye & Haybatollahi, 2015). Excessive levels of stress can lead to low job satisfaction, which can further affect employee retention and turnover within an organisation and frequently further result in a decrease in the organization's productivity (Galanti et al., 2021) (Jalagat & Jalagat, 2019) (Felstead & Henseke, 2017). Additionally, some research reported that remote workers' job satisfaction declined when they had better ties with their co-workers, maybe as a result of their dissatisfaction with using technology to exchange conversations (Sharma & Singh, 2016) (Taser et al., 2022). Initial job satisfaction rises with the quantity of remote work, presumably due to the impacts of autonomy; however, as the amount of remote work rises, losses in feedback and task relevance cause job happiness to level out and somewhat diminish (Kondratowicz et al., 2022) (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2023). Hence, the relation between remote working and job satisfaction is influenced by the volume of distant work. So, the current study was carried out to analyse the impact of remote working in job satisfaction of employees.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the effect of remote working on job satisfaction amidst the employee performance and perceived autonomy.
- To identify the relation between job satisfaction and employee performance in remote working arrangements.
- To determine the impact of organisational factors in the remote working arrangement.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Blazhevski et al (2022) aimed to analyse the relation between remote working and job satisfaction with an emphasis on the intermediating roles of sociability and work-life conflict. In other words, the study looks at the elements that influence job satisfaction when working remotely as well as the adjustments that may be done to provide workers a sense of a working environment in their homes. Employees who work remotely reported lower levels of job satisfaction and more work-life conflict. Due to the lack of social interaction, employees report higher levels of negative feelings. (Blazhevski et al., 2022)

Nair and Prathiksha (2022) investigated how the employee's job satisfaction and job stress were impacted by working remotely. 150 employees who have worked remotely for at least an year participated in the study, and their levels of job satisfaction and stress were examined. The results showed that over 80% of employees who work remotely experience moderate levels of stress. According to this study, excessive stress levels can lead to low job satisfaction, which can further affect employee retention and turnover within an organization and frequently further result in an increase or decrease in the organization's productivity. (Nair, 2022)

Aslan et al (2022) evaluated the differences between employees who work remotely and those who do so in workplace in terms of reported task performance, as well as any potential mediating effects of job satisfaction on these differences. Call centre representatives (n = 421) took part in this study. SEM analysis was used to do a route analysis on the collected data. The findings indicate that employees who remotely full-time or occasionally perceive their general task performance as being better than those who only work from the workplace. The authors put forth the statement that workplace was not significantly involved in affecting job satisfaction. (Aslan et al., 2022)

Makridis and Schloetzer (2022) examined the WFH effects on employee job satisfaction and retention. After adjusting for employee remuneration, demographics, occupation and aspects of the office environment (such as feeling appreciated for work), a favourable link between always WFH and satisfaction disappears. In order to investigate probable mechanisms, they used models from work psychology and employee well-being. Working from home were more frequently tend to impart better happiness, suggesting a relationship between WFH arrangements and employees' psychological states. (Makridis & Schloetzer, 2022)

Abilash and Mary Siju, (2021) studied the relationship between telecommuting adoption in the workplace during a critical circumstance and how it helps the individual perform, be satisfied, and remain dedicated to working as effectively as possible. They analysed using descriptive statistics, coefficients of correlation and the one-sample t test which revealed a positive association between job satisfaction and employee commitment during the implementation of remote working win an organization. The study showed that telecommuting may coexist with formal meetings and everyday work in the present. (Abilash & Mary Siju, 2021)

Yu and Wu (2021) used an online survey tool to record the remote working experiences of 256 workers from 66 Chinese IT firms during COVID-19 by using an event system viewpoint. The study investigated how the job characteristics when working remotely affected satisfaction: job autonomy (criticality), longevity (time), digital social support (novelty), home workspace suitability (space) and monitoring mechanisms (disruption). The results showed that a proper home workstation is a necessary condition, and three layouts enhance employee job satisfaction. Long-term remote working was found to reduce job satisfaction in the absence of a suitable workspace, an effective monitoring mechanism and digital social support.(Yu & Wu, 2021)

4. METHODOLOGY

The research framework aimed to describe the intermediating roles of employee performance and perceived autonomy and to examine the relation between job satisfaction and remote work. The method used here was quantitative approach where numerical data was collected and statistically analysed to draw relevant conclusions. The study's target population was the IT Sector employees working in Chennai. The primary leading Companies

were taken into consideration as the analytical unit. The employee’s perspective and actions were reflection of the organizational belief and practises. The employees of the numerous IT Sectors located in Chennai, have thus been chosen as the study's responders. Pretest was conducted with the help of in-person interviews to decrease the issues brought on by ambiguous sentences and biases in the research. The questionnaire was prepared and distributed both in person and through google forms. 573 responses were collected from the participants of the study and the data was used for analysing the variables such as employee performance, job satisfaction and perceived autonomy associated in remote working.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected was tested for normal distribution using a Probability-Probability plot and histogram prior to the analysis of data. The cumulative probability plots or p-p plot of the residuals focuses on the skewness or asymmetry of the data and measures the closeness of the data distributions. The straight line in the figure.1a shows that the data is normally distributed which is further supported by the bell-shaped curve in histogram in figure.1b

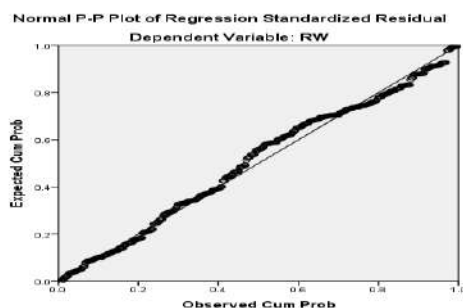


Figure 1a: P-P Plot

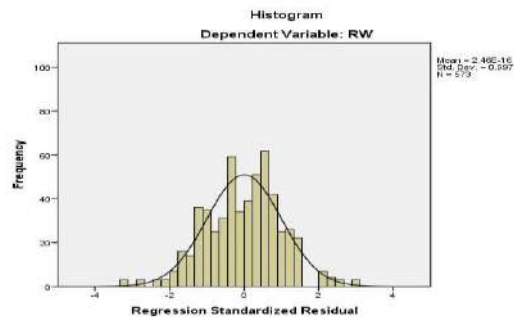


Figure 1b: Histogram of collected data

Source: Self construction with analysis

5.1. Demographic data:

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Description	Particulars	Percentage (in %)	Description	Particulars	Percentage (in %)
Age	<25 years	45.5	Experience	<5 years	71.2
	26-30 years	32.3		6-10 years	15.9
	31-35 years	13.6		11-15 years	6.5
	36-40 years	5.4		16-20 years	3.8
	41+ years	3.1		21+ years	2.6
Gender	Male	29.1	Marital status	Unmarried	75.6
	Female	70.9		Married	24.4
Area of Residence	Rural	18.8	Working Hours	1-8 hours	45.0
	Urban	64.4		9-10 hours	43.8
	Semi-rural	5.6		11-12 hours	3.3
	Semi-urban	11.2		Flexible hours	7.9
Qualification	UG (arts & Science)	14.5	Organization age	<5 years	18.3
	Post graduate	52.4		6-10 years	10.5
	Engineering	29.3		11-15 years	16.9
	Diploma	3.8		16-20 years	7.2
				21+ years	47.1

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The sample characteristics were given in Table:1 and the interpretations revealed that majority of the respondent's age was less than or equal to 25 years and the people over 41 years were lowest in proportion when compared to other aged people. The strength of female employees was found to higher than male employees in the IT sectors. Unmarried employees were more in comparison with married employees in IT sectors. The results showed that the employees were more scattered in the urban areas due to pooling of IT industries in the respective urban areas which is convenient for the employees for their daily work. Maximum of the respondents were post graduated which indicates that the employees were well- educated and well- qualified people. Respondents having equal or less than 5 years of experience were high, this indicates that maximum of the participants had experience of 5 years and above, considerably freshers and beginners. The study revealed that 1-8 hours of working time was high in count and the flexible hours and 11-12 hours of working time is very low, it seems the organization follows the proper working time in maximum places. New emerging organisations were found to implement remote working at higher rates than older organisations.

5.2. Reliability statistics:

The questionnaire had a total item of 24 items and was subjected to the consistency and reliability test using Cronbach alpha score. The overall reliability statistics of the variables in the current research showed a good Cronbach α value of 0.833 confirming its ideal reliability which is evident from Table 2. After confirming the reliability of the study and its consistency, ANOVA, Regression and Correlation analysis through SPSS software was performed to determine the relation between dependent variable i.e., Remote work (RW) and independent variables such as Job satisfaction (JS), Employee performance (EP) and Perceived autonomy (PA)

5.3. Regression:

Table 3: Summary Statistics

Model Summary									
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Estimate Error	Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.284 ^a	.081	.076	3.17278	.081	16.654	3	569	<.001

Table 4: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	502.946	3	167.649	16.654	<.001 ^b
	Residual	5727.843	569	10.067		
	Total	6230.789	572			
a. Dependent Variable: RW						
b. Predictors: (Constant), JS, PA, EP						

Table 5: Regression coefficient test

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.789	.644		24.499	<.001
	PA	.146	.039	.153	3.748	<.001
	EP	.022	.094	.028	.232	.817
	JS	.183	.118	.190	1.558	.120

H1: RW does not depend on PA, EP and JS

In the above regression analysis, Remote working (RW) is the dependent variable (Y); Perceived autonomy (PA) (X_1), Employee performance (EP) (X_2) and Job satisfaction (JS) (X_3) are the predictor variables. From table 3, the regression analysis showed a R value = 0.284 showing that 8% of variance ($0.284^2 = 0.081$), indicating a very good relationship between the study variables.

Table 5 shows that the combination of Perceived autonomy, Employee performance and Job satisfaction contributed to 28.4% Remote working on IT employees. The R^2 value of the overall study suggests that there was a strong correlation of the three independent variables with respect to remote working. Although, based on the adjusted R^2 value of 0.076, these elements contributed to about 7.6 % to the dependent variable. From table 4, the F value was found to be 16.65 and was significant which implies that the model is fit. It was clear that independent variable with higher β value has higher impact on the dependent variable. From this study, the results revealed that perceived autonomy ($\beta=0.153$, $p<0.001$) was the most influential variable in remote working. Job satisfaction and Employee performance was found to be non-significant in remote working. So, the null hypothesis was accepted and alternate hypothesis was rejected. In the regression equation, the standardized coefficients β column gives the coefficients of independent variables of the study.

$$Y = 0.153 X_1 + 0.028 X_2 + 0.190 X_3$$

5.4. Correlation:

Correlation is a measure that describes the extent to which two variables are associated. It is a bivariate analysis measuring the strength of association and direction of the relation among the two variables. Pearson's r value was the correlation statistic used here as the data has been normally distributed.

H₂ - There is no significant relationship between RW, PA, EP and JS

Table 6: Correlation statistics

		Correlations			
		RW	PA	EP	JS
RW	Pearson Correlation	--			
	N	573			
PA	Pearson Correlation	.186**	--		
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<.001			
	N	573	573		
EP	Pearson Correlation	.235**	.173**	--	
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<.001	<.001		
	N	573	573	573	
JS	Pearson Correlation	.240**	.146**	.944**	--
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	573	573	573	573
**. Correlation is said to be significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

It is evident from table 6, there was a strong correlation between RW, PA, EP and JS. Among them EP and JS was found to have a strong correlation value of $r = .944$ ($p < 0.001$) at 5% level of significance and the second strong correlation value between RW and JS was found to be significant with $r = .240$ ($P < 0.001$). All other variables were positively correlated and there was a significant relationship between RW, PA, EP and JS. So, the alternate hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis was rejected.

6. DISCUSSION

The study's primary objective was to explore how remote working influences job satisfaction and how it affects the employee's performance and job satisfaction in people working from home. It was often believed that remote

working was more convenient than traditional office work as the working environment plays different significant roles in the employee's performance and organisation's productivity. Given that the IT sectors increasingly rely on virtual employee and customer interactions, it is crucial to comprehend how remote working affects employee performance across cultural boundaries. The way that every individual adjusts to remote working may vary depending on personal factors like age, education level, gender, marital status, income level and profession, as well as preferences like leisure activities, interest in technological advancements, and relationships with family and friends. This is because each person has a unique personality and sociodemographic background. The result shows that remote working did not produce any significant change in employee performance and job satisfaction. The technical infra structure, intrinsic motivation and work environment all have an impact on job satisfaction and employee's performance when working remotely. Meanwhile, a strong correlation was seen between job autonomy and employee performance which implies that employees are satisfied with their work irrespective of onsite or remote working. Also, job satisfaction comes from fulfilment of their job roles which is more impacted by the autonomy and flexibility. Remote working showed significant impact on perceived autonomy. Employees tend to work on their responsibilities with enough freedom and self-planning of works in their own productive time, unlike in the workplace or office. Remote work offered greater responsibility to employees, resulting in less job satisfaction, that led to reduced performance of the employees. In this study, the remote work does not contribute equally to employee performance and job satisfaction which might be due to the lack of social attachment and increased isolation. The rise in job satisfaction was however directly correlated with colleague support and virtual social groups for team building, possibly as a result of the increased skill diversity that comes from cooperation and the increased task relevance that comes from more professional relationships. This suggests that, in order to boost the employee's performance in remote work, managers and directors should focus on improving employee's job satisfaction while also improving the mental health awareness in the workplace.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of the study revealed that remote work does not produce any effect on employee performance and job satisfaction while it positively impacted perceived autonomy. So, organizations must take initiative of introducing a hybrid approach where people can work in office for 3 days and work from home for 3 days. As remote working provides diverse choices of working, clashes might occur due to the changing demographic characters. Hence, organizations must take necessary implications to enhance the employee's wellbeing in order to achieve greater employee performance and higher job satisfaction.

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