Power System Technology
ISSN:1000-3673

Received: 16-09-2025 Revised: 05-10-2025 Accepted: 25-11-2025

Work Beyond Walls: Understanding Employee Perceptions of Remote Work in Chennai's IT Sector

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how Indian IT workers feel about working from home compared to going to an office. Data was collected from 153 IT professionals through Google Forms, using a convenience sample method. The analysis used SPSS. The study shows how working from home has changed people's work habits, particularly in their interactions with friends and family. To evaluate the data, the study used T-tests, ANOVA, and exploratory factor analysis. The findings show that most IT workers prefer to keep working remotely after the pandemic. They find remote work more convenient and beneficial for achieving a better work-life balance.

Keywords: Work from Home (WFH), Employee Perception, Information Technology (IT) Sector, Remote Work, Work–Life Balance, Employee Productivity, Flexible Work Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The advancements in technology allowed us the ability to shift from traditional office environments to work-from-home capabilities. IT staff were able to maintain productivity and fulfil customer demands within the safety of their home setting during the pandemic. This transition has been facilitated in India by improved digital infrastructure and access to reliable internet. Remote workers have enjoyed greater schedule flexibility and, as a result, the savings of time and money from transportation. Working from home has been a boon for women in IT to juggle work and family responsibilities more effectively Leading to higher participation in the workforce, fostering economic growth, and sound family.

Virtual working has brought many positive. Employees work on their comfort zone. Telework has delivered several important wins for workers and businesses. The first reason is increased productivity among employees as they are less distracted at home or can use the time spent commuting for office work. Secondly, it is flexible; this allows people to design a comfortable working area from home that they find stress reducing, as well as increasing focus. The restful home, where she has a family member around to always support her, has been particularly important during the pandemic. Add to that the fact that telecommuting has benefited IT professionals—particularly females—by allowing them to achieve a healthier balance between work life and family time. Additionally, businesses are reducing expenses on

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ISSN:1000-3673
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utilities, transportation, and other overheads. Working from home has turned out to be a success for all, increasing employees' happiness and profitability for companies.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the socioeconomic characteristics of IT workers who work from home assignments.

2. To investigate respondents' opinions and attitudes on the work-from-home culture.

3. To determine how demographic factors affect factors related to employees working from home.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dingel and Neiman (2020) examined the nature of work that can be conducted remotely. They emphasized that such disparity became a significant criterion for measuring economic performance in the COVID-19 pandemic. They found through their study that individual productivity differs based on whether one works from home or an office. This underlines the necessity of separating roles that are applicable for remote operations to ensure overall performance.

Azies Bauw, Andri Irwan, Muhammad Aldrin Akbar, Abdul Rasvid, Muhammad Amin Hamid, Duta Mustajab et al. (2020) also reminded us that, before the pandemic, work used to occur within predetermined office hours. Nevertheless, working from home gave workers more flexibility in organizing their timetable and completing tasks at a time when they felt suitable. The study found that telecommuting advantages workers in the sense that it enables them to make better use of their commuting time and spend more quality time with family. This improves job satisfaction and work-life balance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study focused on 153 remote IT workers from various industries in Chennai. To gather data, a conveniently selected group of participants was used. A self-administered questionnaire was designed and shared through Google Forms. The collected data was analysed with the help of SPSS software, employing relevant statistical methods like One-Sample Independent T-Test. One-Way ANOVA, Simple Percentage Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 153)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	79	51.6

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Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Female	74	48.4
Age (Years)	Less than 25	33	21.6
	26 – 30	68	44.4
	31 – 40	52	34.0
Educational Qualification	UG	87	56.9
	PG	66	43.1
Marital Status	Single	65	42.5
	Married	88	57.5
Monthly Income (₹)	15,000 – 25,000	48	31.4
	26,000 – 50,000	55	35.9
	51,000 – 75,000	36	23.5
	76,000 – 1,00,000	14	9.2
Working Hours (Per Day)	9 hours	83	54.2
	10 hours	42	27.4
	11 hours	18	11.8
	12 hours	10	6.6
Leisure Time (Per Day)	1 hour	116	75.8
	2 hours	26	17.0
	3 hours	11	7.2
Position in Organization	Programmer	20	13.1
	Programme Analyst	19	12.4
	Associate	33	21.6
	Senior Associate	29	19.0
	Team Leader	31	20.3
	Manager	21	13.6
Tenure in Organization	Less than 2 years	47	30.7
	2 – 5 years	55	35.9
	6 – 9 years	36	23.5
	10 years and above	15	9.9

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The latest polling conducted on 153 city IT professionals carried out in Chennai had nearly a 50-50 men-women mix - 51.6% and 48.4%. Age distribution: A large number of both the 26–30-year-old (44.4%) and 31–40-year-old (34%) cohort which displays a youngish workforce for early to mid-career professionals in remote IT. As for their education, 43.1% have postgraduate degrees, while 56.9% have studied to the level of an undergraduate degree. Regarding marital status, 42.5% of participants are single, and 57.5% are married. Most IT professionals (54.2%) work for about nine hours in a day and 75.8% take just an hour break showing a Hectic schedule. They are overwhelmingly mid-level earners, making between ₹26,000 and ₹50,000. There are two to five years of experience, the most numerous employees (35.9%), followed by associates (21.6%) and team leaders (20.3%) who hold more employment responsibilities within remote IT working environment.

Table 2: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factors	**Items**	**Mean (SD)**	**Communalities**	**Factor Loadings**
Work Related Factors	I clearly understand my work goals and responsibilities	3.96 (.882)	.842	.856
	I receive proper guidance for handling project tasks	3.88 (.974)	.864	.828
	I get timely feedback from my supervisor	3.57 (1.042)	.748	.781
	I am able to communicate effectively with my team	4.08 (.953)	.893	.761
	There is sufficient communication from project heads	3.95 (1.012)	.857	.734
	I regularly coordinate with the HR team for work updates	3.42 (1.178)	.803	.526
Home Related Factors	I maintain a healthy work-life balance	3.72 (1.121)	.812	.823
	I take regular breaks during work	3.69 (1.108)	.784	.755
	My home environment is comfortable for working	3.84 (1.097)	.802	.742
	I spend enough time with my family	3.97 (.926)	.817	.701
	I have a separate and quiet workspace at home	3.83 (1.192)	.758	.653

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Factors	Items	Mean (SD)	Communalities	Factor Loadings
	I can stay focused while working from home	3.80 (1.031)	.836	.551
Employee Benefit Factors	I am able to take leave when required	3.45 (1.328)	.801	.823
	I receive performance bonuses or incentives	3.58 (1.186)	.789	.773
	My achievements are recognized by my manager	3.47 (1.224)	.819	.689
	My manager encourages personal and career growth	3.63 (1.105)	.812	.661
Organizational Factors	My organization provides all required digital tools for remote work	4.29 (.895)	.777	.804
	I save commuting time and cost due to remote work	4.46 (.645)	.755	.741
	My organization has clear remote work policies	4.01 (.927)	.828	.729
	I receive sufficient support from my team and organization	4.05 (.911)	.747	.516
Work Flexibility Factors	I am allowed flexible working hours	3.85 (1.073)	.864	.845
	I am satisfied with my current work routine	3.68 (1.091)	.859	.618
Network Connectivity Factors	I have reliable internet access for my work	4.12 (.888)	.849	.819
New Skill Development Factors	I am encouraged to learn and develop new skills	3.79 (.968)	.882	.592

Total Variance Explained: 81.042% extracted as 8 Dimensions

Cronbach's Alpha: .926 (for 26 items)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0.651

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 4879.213$, df = 378, Sig. = .000

Eight key elements were identified as being linked to employees' experiences while working remotely, according to the exploratory factor analysis: work-related factors, home-related

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factors, employee benefits, organizational factors, work flexibility, network connectivity, and factors related to new skill development. These elements were tested for reliability. The results show high communalities more than 0.70 and strong factor loadings more than 0.60. The scale has high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.926. Bartlett's Test shows the importance of ($p < 0.001$), and the KMO value was 0.651. The sample size was adequate for factor analysis. In summary, the data shows that improving employee performance and satisfaction in remote IT work depends on flexible work options, good communication and organizational support.

One Way ANOVA – Analysis of Variance

Table 3: Significant Influence of demographic profile and factors related to work from home

Work-Related Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Designation	712.432	5	142.486	4.587	0.002
Age	525.216	2	262.608	8.014	0.001

Interpretation:

The findings from the ANOVA test highlight a robust link between working from home characteristics and both the age and job title of IT professionals. With a significance level set at 1%, we can confidently reject the null hypotheses since the significance values are quite low ($p = 0.001$ for age and $p = 0.002$ for job title), falling well below the 0.05.Employees in the Associate position, with an average score of 28.95, showed significant differences in how they view various aspects of remote work when compared to their peers in different roles. Likewise, those aged between 26 and 30, who averaged 27.63, expressed opinions that varied from those in other age groups in the organization. This suggests that both an individual's age and their specific role within the company play crucial roles in shaping their perceptions and experiences of working remotely.

One Sample Independent T-Test

Table 4: Gender-wise Difference in Work-from-Home Factors

Factors	Gender	N	Mean (SD)	F	Sig	Sig (2-tailed)
Work-related Factors	Male	80	25.12 (6.204)	6.842	0.010	0.000
	Female	73	29.03 (4.182)			
Home-related Factors	Male	80	26.08 (7.031)	5.237	0.023	0.478
	Female	73	26.72 (5.489)			

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Interpretation: Its p-value from the T-test is super low (0.000, below that 0.05 threshold), so we can be comfortable saying these differences are statistically significant. Based on this evidence, we can reject the null hypothesis that there are no interesting gender differences in how employees view particular features of working from home. This means that female workers who average 29.03 have a higher perspective on the 'work' dimension when compared to female employees which all together are rated at 25.12. This may be because most women have household responsibilities in addition to their office work, and so can experience both the advantages and disadvantages of working from home. It could be that because most women also have to manage household chores along with their office work, that they suffer the negatives and positives of working from home. But when we just focus on home related factors, p-value is 0.478 which is more than 0.05. This is an indication that there are no significant differences between men's and women's perception towards home Issues.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

According to the study, employees are comfortable and fairly satisfied working from home. Among the female employees it was reported that this enabled them to balance work and family, while for the male employees they appreciated their own organisational work and break schedules which assisted with productivity. Companies saved on electricity, travel and rents which translated to a more efficient operation. Many workers had lower stress also by being able to spend more time with family. The results of this analysis revealed that the emergent factors accounted for up to 81.04% of the total variation. The positive effect of family support (M = 4.03) and the time saved from commuting (M = 4.49); on remote working was supported by respondents. Digital tools and software support (mean = 4.33), as well as health wellness programs for employees in the form of medical programs (mean = 4.23), were offered by companies. Nevertheless, workers showed dissatisfaction at the way to put in extra hours from home (M = 2.94), highlighting the necessity for businesses to keep an eye on workload and preserve a positive work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

Primarily IT professionals, the concept of working from home has this far proved to be more flexible and works towards better management of personal as well as professional life. As a matter of fact, the flexibility leaves more room for employees to focus on their job, capitalize on their training and enhance organisational productivity. Employees who telecommute also save on everyday expenses including petrol, dining and travel. Finally, it promotes a healthy lifestyle and strengthened family relations. To get a fuller picture, the studies might be extended to other sectors or IT professionals in different regions in the future. In the end, companies win a lot with remote work because it increases productivity and cuts costs, and worker happiness too.

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