

Unveiling the Motivation Drivers in Start-Up Workspace

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Abstract

This article delves into the relationship between workplace happiness and productivity in startup settings. Its primary objective is to dissect the multifaceted factors impacting employee well-being, aiming to enhance overall efficiency by customizing the work environment in myriad ways. For this study, a descriptive causal methodology was employed to investigate the impact of workplace happiness on productivity within start-up companies. A carefully structured questionnaire was administered to 256 employees within well-established organisations in Bangalore, India. Participants were selected through a Judgement sampling process to ensure impartial and unbiased representation. Survey respondents preferred the pre-COVID working conditions, acknowledging their advantages. However, the increased autonomy and flexibility in work arrangements have led to enhanced productivity under the new hybrid model. Notably, when employees are entrusted with greater responsibility, their job satisfaction rises, resulting in increased work output. Organizations are now tasked with offering additional incentives to remote employees, thereby elevating the satisfaction and job fulfilment experienced by these individuals. Effectively tackling challenges necessitates the alignment of learning and development objectives with the internal business processes that maximize each employee's abilities and potential. This involves meeting the criteria outlined in the balanced scorecard components.

Keywords: Startups, Job satisfaction, Workplace environment, Efficiency, Employees.

Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak changed the way practically all workers worldwide operate. (1). Working remotely has pros and cons. It makes commuting easier in flexible work environments. Employers and workers overlook issues, including task management, stress, and lack of support. Human resource specialists are worried that the switch would impair workers' physical and emotional health and performance efficiency. Fixing the difficulties will improve employee benefits and performance (2). There are numerous Tech startups due to the outgrowth of digital platforms (3). Startups fail on many grounds, and one of the reasons for their failure is personal factors (4). Hence, it is essential to satisfy their work expectations.

Pre- COVID'19 Era

Remote working was not so prevalent before COVID-19, but it has become the new normal after COVID-19. It was found that there were emotionally intense and comparatively less

depression, and the feeling of job security was relatively higher before COVID-19 (5).

New- Normal the post-Covid-19

Employers around the world must ensure the company should be safe and productive. Employees must feel safe and enjoy the workspace and should break the inertia to achieve the organization's objective (6).

Work Expectation

The employee expects clarity in the vision and mission statement from the standpoint of skill development in the startups. Startups must work on employee engagement techniques and tools, which employees expect from startups. Strategic management practices are effective (7).

Job Satisfaction

The leader's characteristic is to nurture a quality workforce with energized employees by satisfying the psychological needs in this new average era (8). Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership improve virtual team effectiveness (9).

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Efficiency

As the economic cost of the startup is high, it is essential to maintain the balance between resources and spare capacity for efficiency (10). Employees prefer a hybrid model over a conventional or virtual setup; they expect the Flexi setting to perform efficiently with the freedom to decide their work environment in the organization (11).

Methodology

This research employs both quantitative and descriptive approaches. Data collection involves a web-based questionnaire for quantitative aspects, utilizing survey methods, and a self-administered questionnaire for obtaining participant comments. The sample selection is done through judgment sampling. Differential and Comparative analyses were used to determine the cause-and-effect connection between variables in this study.

Data and Measures

We assessed data from Qualtrics and a questionnaire designed with Instrument scales, focusing on workers in established startups in Bangalore. Most data came from an online

Qualtrics survey, with a smaller number collected via phone and interviews, resulting in a 60-70% response rate.

Using a shortened 20-item version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) "short form" (12), we organized our study into three domains: job efficiency, expectations, and satisfaction. We compared pre- and during-COVID-19 working conditions. To verify the questionnaire's reliability, we used Jamovi and SPSS, finding Cronbach's alpha of 0.854, indicating high reliability. This assures us of the questionnaire's dependability as we continued to assess workplace efficiency post-COVID-19.

The questionnaire's reliability and the variables it measured were carefully examined. The goodness of fit index and the p-value were less than 0.001, indicating a high reliability level. The RMSEA value is 0.144, falling within the range of 0.0914 to 0.193. The collected data demonstrates both construct validity and discriminant validity. This means that the measurements accurately represent the intended constructs and can be distinguished from each other. Moreover, a positive correlation was observed among similar variables.

Conceptual Model

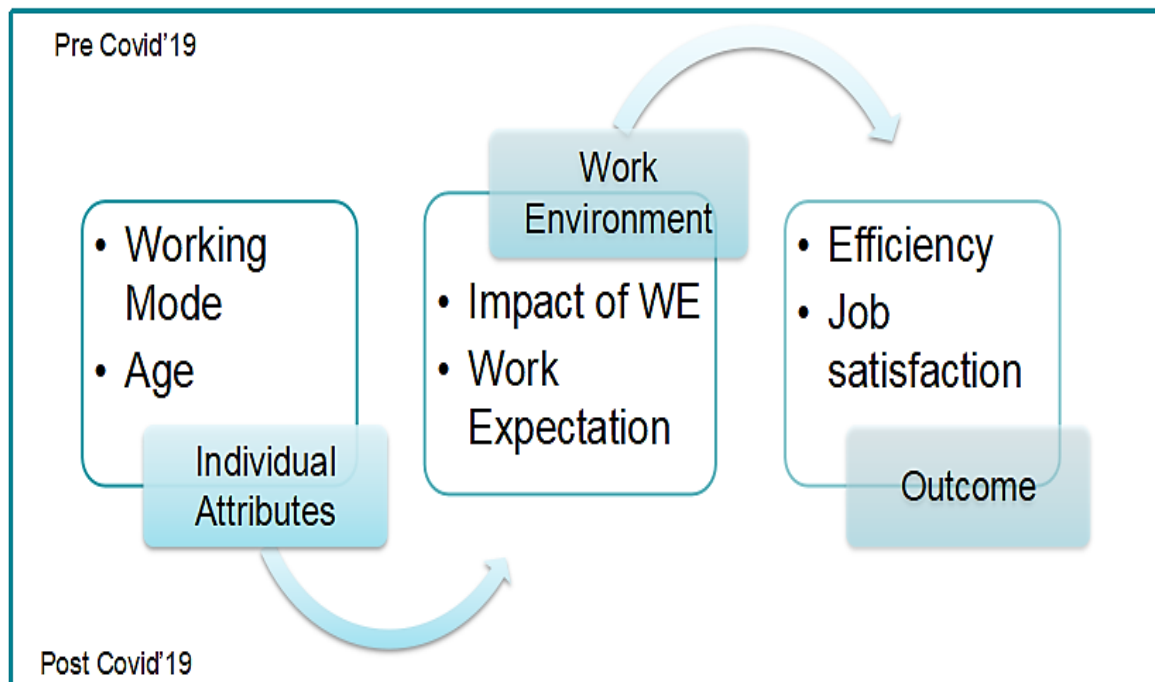


Figure 1: Conceptual model

Hypotheses

- H01: There is no difference between the age of the respondents and the factors of job satisfaction. Used one way, ANOVA and descriptive statistics applied.
- H02: There is no association between working mode and performance in the pre and post-pandemic situation. Used Independent sample t-test.
- H03: There is no significant difference between levels of working mode and efficiency. Used Independent sample t-test.

Data Analyses Techniques

This study employed comparative analyses using descriptive Statistics in SPSS. Studies using descriptive statistics proposed comparative study aims to explore variations, utilizing consistent data collection and descriptive statistics (13).

Hypothesis Testing

The research involves testing three hypotheses using statistical techniques such as ANOVA and Independent Sample T-tests. Hypothesis testing is a critical analysis component, allowing researchers to make inferences about the population based on sample data.

Analyses and Interpretation

Pre-COVID Working Conditions

The survey revealed that 65% of the sample found excessive five to six weekly workdays. Additionally, 69% of the respondents expressed a desire for reduced working hours, with an equal percentage preferring meetings via email. Moreover, 70% of employees felt the operating hours were overly extended.

The New Normal

In the new normal, 58% of virtual employees reported higher productivity while working from home. Half of the respondents believed remote work required less time to accomplish tasks. A significant 72% of the participants found their homes comfortable workplaces, and 82% were pleased with the flexible working hours. The elimination of commuting was a key benefit for 81% of the sample. Although 84% felt they had more quality time at home, only 44% believed they were resourceful while working there.

Impact of Remote Work in a Traditional Setting

Remote work had varying impacts on work-related activities. Notably, 70% of meetings were deemed effective in the remote setup, and 73% believed they could meet their work-related deadlines. However, 63% felt comfortable sharing work-related information on time. The absence of in-person interactions led to a perceived lack of team cohesion, with 46% noting the absence of a personal touch.

Company Response to COVID

The organization demonstrated support for employees' job performance at an impressive rate of 86%. However, about 17% of employees experienced reduced salaries. Despite this, over half of the sample lacked confidence in their company's emergency contingency plans. Nevertheless, 72% felt secure in their positions due to the company's efforts to motivate and inquire about their overall well-being. Additionally, 97% reported that the organization implemented proper COVID-19 safety measures in the workplace.

Employee Efficiency

Regarding efficiency, employees generally favoured the office environment over remote work. A significant 71.6% believed they performed better in the office. 67.3% of respondents found hybrid work environment effective, allowing them to choose between office and home. For 66.6% of employees, remote work was acceptable when traditional office space wasn't available.

Post-COVID Work Expectations

Looking ahead, 62% of companies expected employees to return to the office. Conversely, 83% of employees expressed a preference for remote work, while 93% were content with a hybrid work setup. A substantial 76% of employees would be satisfied with a four-day workweek, and 89% anticipated having flexible working hours.

Comparison between Pre-COVID and Post-COVID Work Expectations

Before the pandemic, 65% of employees desired a reduction to a four-day workweek, a figure that increased to 76% in the post-COVID era. The inclination towards remote work also grew, as reflected in the 69% who originally sought reduced in-office hours, compared to the 89% now desiring flexible working hours and the autonomy to determine their work schedule.

Results and Discussion

H01: There is no difference between the age of the respondents and the factors of job satisfaction. Accept the null hypothesis since there is no difference in the factors affecting job satisfaction

based on respondents' ages, with the exception of the impact of the work environment factor. It reveals that workers between the ages of 31 and 40 have a substantial difference with impact of working environment and job satisfaction when the age component is still examined to ascertain the precise age.

Table 1: SPSS Output on the age of the respondents

ANOVA		
Parameter		Sig. Value
Pre-covid	Between Groups	Sig.
	Within Groups	0.42
	Total	
Current WC	Between Groups	0.893
	Within Groups	
	Total	
Impact WE	Between Groups	0.002
	Within Groups	
	Total	
Post-covid WE	Between Groups	0.095
	Within Groups	
	Total	
Total	Between Groups	0.075
	Within Groups	
	Total	

Table 2: SPSS Output on the factors of job satisfaction

Descriptive				
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Impact WE	0-20	35	3.6857	1.79495
	21-30	89	3.8764	1.55081
	31-40	70	2.8857	2.10962
	41-50	45	2.8889	2.13437
	>51	16	4.0625	1.06262
	Total	255	3.4157	1.88857

Table 3: SPSS Output on the working mode and the efficiency factors

Independent Sample T test		
		One Sided -P
Pre-covid WE	Equal variances assumed	<.001
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001
Current WC	Equal variances assumed	<.001
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001
Impact WR	Equal variances assumed	<.088
	Equal variances not assumed	<.113
Post-covid WE	Equal variances assumed	<.077
	Equal variances not assumed	<.090
Total	Equal variances assumed	<.001
	Equal variances not assumed	<.001

Table 4: SPSS output on Efficiency

Efficiency	Independent sample T test				
	N	Mean	Statistic	df	p
Working Virtual	80	66.5	23	79	<.001
Working Co-located	81	72.1	35.1	80	<.001

There is a significant association between working mode and the factors of performing efficiently – Reject H02 except Post-covid expectation.

Accept the null hypothesis from the standpoint of the Post covid Work environment since there is no relation between the Post covid Work environment and the working style.

There is a significant difference between the working mode and the efficiency in performance, so we tend to reject H03.

Despite the fact that there is a significant difference, the Co-located working mode performs more efficiently with the statistic value of 35.1.

To conclude the interpretation, The study suggests that the Post-COVID work environment does not significantly influence working style. However, substantial age-related differences in job satisfaction indicate the need for targeted strategies. Notably, the Co-located working mode demonstrates higher efficiency, highlighting its effectiveness in the workplace. These findings provide valuable insights for tailoring workplace policies and optimizing performance.

The study aimed to evaluate job satisfaction using Herzberg’s two-factor theory, analyzing hygiene and motivator factors. Data analysis through

Jamovi software yielded a statistically significant outcome with a P-value < 0.001.

The analysis highlighted that a hybrid (mixed) working approach, where employees have the freedom to choose between remote and office work, demonstrated a statistical improvement of 8-9% in efficient working compared to solely remote or office-based work. This choice-based approach contributed to job satisfaction, suggesting that office-based work fosters better efficiency compared to remote work.

Job satisfaction was found to vary based on employee age and working environment. Working in an office setting was associated with higher efficiency performance than other modes, particularly with post-COVID employment expectations and working style.

The recent scenario highlights a strong motivation for flexible working arrangements, particularly remote work and adaptable schedules. Employees express satisfaction and higher productivity while working from home, emphasizing the desire for reduced working hours, comfortable home workplaces, and flexible schedules. For startup company management, it's crucial to observe and ensure that adopting flexible work arrangements

among employees contributes positively to achieving the company's targets. (14). This signals a significant shift towards a more autonomous and adaptable approach to work in the post-COVID era, with employees valuing benefits such as eliminating commutes and the ability to choose between office and remote work environments. Granting employees, the autonomy to determine their work hours and tasks led to increased job satisfaction. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. The study noted that pre-COVID working conditions were moderately satisfactory. However, post-COVID working conditions that offered flexibility in choosing the work location and hours were associated with higher job satisfaction. The statistical value of 30 obtained through a one-sample T-test had a P-value < 0.001, emphasizing the significance of the flexibility factor in promoting job satisfaction in the new normal era.

One of the studies utilized the Equity Theory, suggesting that government organizations can improve employee retention by carefully implementing flexible work arrangements. The key focus is on considering employee preferences, acknowledging the impact on work-life balance, and advocating for leadership support to enhance overall well-being (15).

Socio-economic implications

Individual interests are highlighted by the study. Mutual excellence requires ownership based on a common interest. Ultimately, this should achieve employee potential through a win-win strategy in line with Henry Foyal's concept of individual interest and subordinate interest. Employers benefit from cost-cutting measures like paying for property taxes or rent, Internet connections, equipment, electricity, air conditioning, drinking water, and other costs associated with having employees on site. However, as a result, employers must provide more benefits to employees who work remotely, which might also increase their happiness and job satisfaction. Hence, they will function more efficiently. The balance scorecard's components must be satisfied in order to solve the issues in a way that is compatible with the perspective of learning and growth and internal business processes that improve the employer's

ability to utilise each employee's skill set and potential to the fullest extent possible.

Opportunities and difficulties unique to the start-ups and their motivational impact:

Opportunities

- **Enhanced Productivity:** Hybrid work boosts efficiency.
- **Employee Satisfaction:** Autonomy fosters job satisfaction.
- **Adaptable Culture:** Embrace diverse work preferences.
- **Technological Advances:** Invest in remote collaboration tech.

Difficulties

- **Maintaining Culture:** Balance hybrid work with a unified culture.
- **Communication Barriers:** Address challenges in remote communication.
- **Equity and Inclusivity:** Ensure fair treatment and opportunities.
- **Training Needs:** Provide resources for adapting to new workflows.
- **Legal Compliance:** Navigate diverse labour laws in different regions.

Addressing these can create a positive and productive work environment.

Conclusion

When workers anticipate a hybrid work environment, the company must guarantee a unified atmosphere so that employees feel comfortable and content to work in a comfortable location. It is preferable to improve the virtual work environment to be more efficient. When workers anticipate a hybrid work environment, the company must guarantee a unified atmosphere so that employees feel at ease and content to work in a pleasant location. Working in an office significantly influences productivity, and there is a correlation between working style and productivity. So, it is the responsibility of the employer to make the workplace more fulfilling and productive.

Suggestions to HR and researchers

We hope HR will take remedial action based on the study results. It is essential to implement the outcomes for good organisational transformation.

Human resources and employers must build a sustainable atmosphere for a pleasant and productive workplace.

Abbreviations

Pre-covid WE: Pre-Covid working Environment.

Current WC: Current Working condition

Impact WR: Impact of Working remotely

Post-covid WE: Post-Covid Working Environment

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Authors' contributions

The author's contributions to the research article are as follows: study framework, Data collection, conception, methodology, draft manuscript preparation, Data analysis, Results: Jenifer Esther D. Data interpretation, Suggestions, editing, reviewing and supervising; Dr. Rashmi Rai. Both the authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Ethics approval

Not applicable.

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