

# Work Home Interaction: A Challenge to HRM

NISHIGANDHA GANESH SHIMPI

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**Abstract:** As home based working grows in the India, more evidence is needed of how working from home shapes the employment relationship and the implication this may have for those line managers responsible for a home based work force. Work-home balance issues have become a very important challenge for both management and employees in the 21st century. This paper is to examine work-home balance practices from a management perspective. This is a research in relation to work-home balance practices. It found that the needs of the organization are supreme with profitability considerations being the main driver of work-home practices and benefits. While the majority of managers agree that people work best when they can balance their work and home life. There is evidently a gap between the theory and practice. The interdependent relationship between home and work needs urgent attention as this not only impacts on the quality of working life but on the individual and on the greater good of society. Management would do well by broadening their perspective, not just considering the needs of the organisation but also the employee's home life. Organisation requires greater productivity so there should be happy employees.

**Keywords:** Work Home Interaction (WHI), Management, Time Flexibility, Work Locations, Normative Climate.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The benefits of home based working for employers appear self-evident; these are regularly reported as greater productivity, reduced accommodation costs, lower absenteeism, improved customer services, reducing travelling time and optimizing the use of technology.

It can be considered somewhat restrictive as it divides “employees” lives between only work and home (or more concretely, family), forgetting other important aspects of individual's lives, such as leisure.

In today's society, the two most significant domains in the life of an employee or employer

Individual are work and home. It is increasingly important for employees to integrate responsibilities at both work and home. The integration between these two domains has become more difficult since major changes have taken place in the composition of the workforce and in the nature of work itself. There has been an increase in working women, dual-career couples, single parents and fathers who are actively involved in parenting. These demographic and structural changes in the workforce and family structure have not only affected work and family roles.

## 2. WORK HOME INTERACTION

Initially, research on work home interaction focused almost exclusively on the negative impact of work on the home situation (that is, work family conflict). As a result, the most widely cited definition of work family conflict states that it is a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role. However, it seems that we have to realize that the work home interface is a much broader concept, which also encompasses a positive side, and studies have started to address the prevalence and correlates of positive interaction between work and private life.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

- To implement certain measures with the purpose of protecting the worker's minimum rights.
- To create a normative climate for employees and employer that will allow to voluntarily proposing conciliation strategies for home and working life.

**3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Baruch & Nicholson (1997) argues for attention to be paid in assessing the suitability of teleworking to the fit between the nature of the job, the technology, family circumstances, the organizational culture and individual culture and individual attitudes and qualities. Their view is that a fit between all these factors is a prerequisite for effective home working.

The likelihood of all these factors being satisfied would suggest that reaching a perfect balance between employer and employee inclination will not be a frequent occurrence and employer led initiatives due to cost rationalization are likely to remain a major influence in the adaption of working.

One of the professor says managers who want to maintain work-at-home options can foster interactions among remote workers, not only by structuring their time, but also by taking advantage of technology like Skype and other videoconferencing programs. "Maybe you say that from 10 a.m. to noon or from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., everyone is available for Skype or for conference calls," Rothbard suggests. "That allows people to ask questions of one another and get things done interactively." She adds that it is important for companies to train managers on this technique and other best practices for getting the most out of employees who work at home.

Employees who work at home need to do a little extra work to manage how their colleagues perceive their engagement and productivity. Indeed, a Stanford study shows that people who work remotely are 50% less likely than their peers to get a promotion. "The employee has to manage his or her impression actively, "You have to make sure that people feel that when you are available, you are fully present. If you sound distracted, or you have kids crying in the background, or you don't seem focused on a conference call, that's going to be a difficult impression to overcome."

Rothbard also suggests that work-at-home employees be as visible as possible. "If somebody posts a question on the company's Intranet, you want to be one of the people who are responding. You need to get people to know your value, even if you're not physically present."

**COMPANIES WHO OFFER WORK FROM HOME JOBS:****1. TeleTech:**

Helping companies grow through simplifying and personalizing interactions with customers, Teletech is international with work that spans many industries.

**2. Convergys:**

A leader in the customer management industry, Convergys Corporation has annual revenues approximating \$3 billion and over 125,000 employees who serve clients from locations all over the globe. Their recent acquisition of Stream, a competitor, should help them continue to expand in the months to come.

**3. Sutherland Global Services:**

Sutherland Global Services provides business process and technology management services across 40-plus operation centers across the world. As one of the world's largest BPO companies, continued growth is anticipated in the future.

**4. Amazon:**

The world's largest online retailer, Amazon.com now also produces consumer electronics, such as the Kindle, and is a major provider of cloud computing services. As Amazon works to expand their business and stay competitive, they are expected to hire many work home employees.

**5. Kelly Services:**

Founders of the temporary staffing industry in 1946, Kelly Services has continued to evolve and adjust alongside workplace changes for decades. In 2013, they provided employment to more than 540,000 employees, and revenue was

\$5.4 billion. This company is tried-and-true, and expected to continue to expand opportunities for remote workers in 2015.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article is a conceptual study, based on Secondary Data from Books, Articles, journals and websites.

##### **VARIABLES RELATED WITH WORK-HOME INTERACTION:**

Although empirical results show that whereas the consequences of work-home are negative, those of the homework are positive, a series of studies focused on analyzing the intervening variables grouped into two large clusters: socio-demographic variables and other related variables.

In relation to the socio-demographic variables, only the gender and family structure interaction appears to be significant. Concretely, a negative relationship is shown between both domains in women with small children. With regard to the rest of socio-demographic variables and their relationship with the WHI (age, level of education, income and career), the results are mainly inconsistent or nonsignificant.

The rest of the variables studied in relation to WHI (see Geurts & Demerouti, 2003 for a wider explanation) are as follows:

- Personality characteristics: Neuroticism, Type A behavior (in particular, the irritability and impatience components), and negative affectivity have been positively associated with the WFC, whereas extraversion and internal locus of control are negatively associated.
- Home demanding aspects: These aspects (in particular, parental load, family criticism, and discord in the couple) are also related to the negative influence of the home domain on the work domain.
- Family and work characteristics: Results show that demanding work aspects are responsible for the negative influence of work on the home domain. On the other hand, motivational aspects of the job (resources, in agreement with the theoretical model of demand-resources, seen previously; e.g., job control and social support) and of the home (overall, the partner's support) diminish the negative interaction, and they even evoke a positive one.
- Personal attitudes: Results show that a high implication in a domain (e.g., home) is associated with a high conflict originated in that domain (e.g., conflict from the home toward work) owing to the (excessive) investment of time and effort in this central domain.

##### **FLEXIBLE WORK LOCATIONS:**

- Include home,
- Satellite offices and
- Working on the move.

##### **BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYEE:**

- Less time spent commuting to and from work
- Increased control over when work is done. For example, an employee might choose to work in the evening and spend time with children in the afternoon.
- Escape from the everyday disruptions of the office environment
- Improved balance between work and home life

##### **BENEFITS FOR THE EMPLOYER:**

- May need smaller office space, less furniture and/or less equipment
- Fewer parking spots required
- Reduced absenteeism and/or lateness

- Increased productivity because of fewer distractions or interactions between colleagues

The goal in designing flexible work arrangements is to make sure that work gets done in the most effective way, from the most effective location. Here are some ideas to help make sure flexi-place arrangements work:

Maintain a high level of contact by encouraging a two-way flow of communication between management and the distance worker, and the distance worker and their other colleagues. This is especially important if an off-site employee is working on their own.

Use a combination of face-to-face communication, the telephone and e-mail. Face-to-face is best for key management tasks focused on motivation, team building, performance management and introducing changes in the work or the relationship with the employee. Telephone communications can be effective for planning, reviewing, and strategizing. E-mail is best for quick contact and confirming conversations.

Informal processes may need to become more formal. For example, comments and ideas made over lunch break or by the water cooler may need to be e-mailed to off-site workers.

Be super-organized and plan well. Reliance on face-to-face meetings often results from disorganization, with managers spending their days reacting to situations and solving problems that would not arise as often as they do if work were well managed.

Beware that "out of sight" can mean "out of mind". Take care that off-site workers get access to training and promotion opportunities. Career development is important for all employees no matter where they work.

Ensure appropriate orientation for staff that work in the office so that they are assured that all employees - regardless of their work location - are equally pulling their weight.

Promote team building between on-site and off-site employees by inviting employees who work at home to come in for a special lunch, training or other activity.

Ask home-based employees to provide occasional office coverage to keep them in touch with the realities of the workplace.

**TIME FLEXIBILITY**, both in the working schedule as in the calendar (i.e., flexible starting and leaving times, temporal work, shared work, part-time work, reduced working day, annual hours, shift work)

#### **WORKING PLACE FLEXIBILITY (AS TELEWORKING):**

Leaves or permissions (flexibility in choosing holidays, leaving the workplace because of a family emergency, increase of maternity/paternity leave, additional nonpaid holidays, professional breaks, sabbatical periods, etc.)

These flexible systems in companies are starting to be appreciated, such as a strategic business needs to establish priorities such as cost cuts, working performance, job satisfaction, increased motivation, lowering of stress due to overload, less absenteeism, and increased career development opportunities.

## **5. RESULT AND CONCLUSION**

When attempting to prevent mental illnesses, such as depression, it is important to develop strategies aimed at reducing conflict between work and personal life and promoting a positive exchange between these two domains. The results suggest that while negative work-home interaction is associated with an increased risk for depressive symptoms, positive work-home interaction is correlated with a lower risk. Neither positive nor negative interaction in the home-to-work direction demonstrated a significant association with depressive symptoms. Positive work-home interaction was positively associated with experiences of psychological meaningfulness and availability at work. It is a time of change—a time to look for quality of life.

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