

CHAPTER-VIII

Conclusion

8.1 Contribution

The study offers vital deliveries in the field of research concerning the future face of work. So far, this research is a pioneering effort to conduct a mixed-method study for exploring the work-life balance and productivity of women employees in the remote work context. It is one of a kind to add in the area of both managerial and non-managerial participants studied for their share of the experiences in remote working. A plethora of studies have been conducted in the area of remote working around the clock. Nevertheless, India has almost negligible amount of studies, and the existing studies are all in light of the pandemic and its influence on the perception of study participants. The current study makes a unique share of contribution to the body of literature by conducting the research at a distinctive time and space. It is an Indian context study of working women, attempted especially after the pandemic had eased and strict social distancing regulations were normalised, not confining employees to forcefully work from their homes. As Kumar and Alok (2022) in their study have revealed, almost a year post-pandemic, employees were acclimatised to WFH, not entirely affecting their responses by massive challenges and shock related to the sudden transition. Ascertaining that the study is less influenced by the in grown mindset of pandemic-related stress, fear and other negative effects in comparison to those carried out in the pandemic arena.

To begin with, the study contributes to the work-life balance literature within the new working context of carrying out job responsibilities outside the office premises. The women working in IT sector at non-managerial positions tend to rate work-life balance positively when working remotely, showing a statistically significant positive relation between remote work and work-life balance outcomes. The study also finds that all the three dimensions of remote working highly correlate with work-life balance with work effectiveness being on the top, followed by trust and flexibility and then wellbeing. The researcher further analyses these factors of trust and flexibility, well-being and effectiveness, the understanding of which contributes to successful work-life balance in a remote setting. Fulfilling the lack of research for setting up organisational policies and

practices in promoting work-life balance (Pillai & Prasad, 2022), through its gender centric findings of this study for non-managerial women employees. This aims to show that remote working practices in the organisation can aid the long-term presence of females in the Indian workforce by supporting the work-life balance objectives. Secondly, it adds to the significance of available e-working facilities in the remote working setup to positively influence work-life balance in the long run.

Thirdly, it also provides unique results on the barriers and positive outcomes of remote workforce management. It also lays down the challenges supervisors/managers face in supervising and communicating with their virtual/remote teams. Along with this, it highlights the managerial tasks in which managers mostly face issues while operating remotely. Further, it brings in the importance of trust in team building and collaboration for enhancing virtual team performance. It addresses the emergence of positive factors such as self-managed teams, career and skill development opportunities, open communication and productivity. Including detrimental effects such as unscheduled interaction, shadowed vacation, internet shutdowns and blurred boundaries. It also lays down paramount considerations for effective team building and performance, such as communication, timely feedback, meaningful mentoring and introduction of modern technology. Apart from these, the present study adds to the knowledge of various AI tools/software implemented while managing and supervising remote teams and the drawbacks attached to these tools, coupled with highly preferred communication channels in a virtual environment. So far present literatures have majorly focused on understanding the virtuality aspects concerned with HR management techniques of remote teams in the organisation (Depoo & Hermida, 2024; Mahtta et al., 2022); and very few studies talk about the immediate supervisors (Yang & Lin, 2023); who are in direct connection with the team members on regular basis in the face of managers, training managers, sustainability lead etc. as the face of organisational top hierarchy for their subordinates (Patanjali & Bhatta, 2022; Pianese et al., 2022). Moreover, understanding the leadership functioning in remote teams has become crucial, as organisations have started adapting to diverse teams. Since managing conflicts becomes more challenging for virtual teams, where partial reliance on distance communication combines with that of face-to-face meetings for a few, especially in the hybrid format (Sedrine et al., 2020). Therefore, the current study gains insights on specific strategies that could help managers in properly managing their time and team without letting it hamper work-life boundaries. VT leaders

and HR managers can comprehend the barriers or setbacks of distant management by the study's findings, which will assist them to develop tailored metrics for effective virtual management.

8.2 Implications and Recommendation

Current study forms a basis for judging the work-life balance effects of remote working on women employees, in order to serve as an aid or strategy for sustaining women at work (WAW). To begin with, the study showcases the positive association of remote working dimensions like; organisational trust and flexibility, wellbeing and effectiveness with WAW's work-life balance, motivating organisations to prefer a remote work setting. Considering which, the organisational leaders are suggested to acknowledge a flexible working model if not totally remote in order to retain their talented employees. Previous studies reflect that organisations which increasingly value organisational justice, policy support and climate for diversity through their initiatives to get women talent back into the labour force and further retain them by offering several workplace assistance such as flexible schedule and working from home options tend to grow big (Galetic & Klindzic, 2020; Lapshun & Gómez, 2023; Pillai & Prasad, 2022; Ravindran & Baral, 2014). Therefore, companies functioning on medium and small level should also be a part of such initiatives in order to bring ground breaking changes in this area of female labour force participation.

The study found that remote working has exposed the employees both at managerial and non-managerial levels to the changing dynamics of work and relationships and they have started valuing work-life balance more than anything else or even the pay offered (Randstad India, 2025). Hence, providing them with the preference of choosing their work setting either remote or not shall play a vital role in retaining best talents. Since, the benefits of any work system be it WFO, WFH, hybrid and remote or WFA can only be reaped when employees are voluntarily allowed to choose from. Also, proximity bias should not stand in the way of work-life balance at any workplace because balance matters. Therefore, policy formations should be duly based on the employee wellbeing needs and their situations which hinders their presence in office at times.

Work effectiveness and wellbeing is witnessed to be two of the most strong predictors (out of all three) for work life balance among the non-managerial working women in this

study, showing the need for keeping women effective at work, which seems difficult at times in case of working women due to their dual responsibilities of work and family. Hence, making HR managers as a crucial player in this aspect, because there is a need for open communication, timely resolution of work conflicts, providing of proper work ergonomics and on-time availability of tools and technologies to eliminate delays in a remote setup. Furthermore, the volatility in corporate market now demands a socially and psychologically supportive environment for maintaining the wellbeing of employees from both managerial and non-managerial strata. Since, wellbeing has been ranked the second highest predictor by non-managerial women for achieving work-life balance while functioning remotely, as well as one of the sub theme generated from managerial responses in the study. Governing bodies like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have also offered a set of valuable suggestions for occupational safety and health (OSH) guidelines for organisations in the past for mitigating any kind of health hazard while e-working, especially during the pandemic. However, now when the pandemic has eased already, but the remote working culture has taken a spike, the need to look into employee wellbeing still remains a crucial factor.

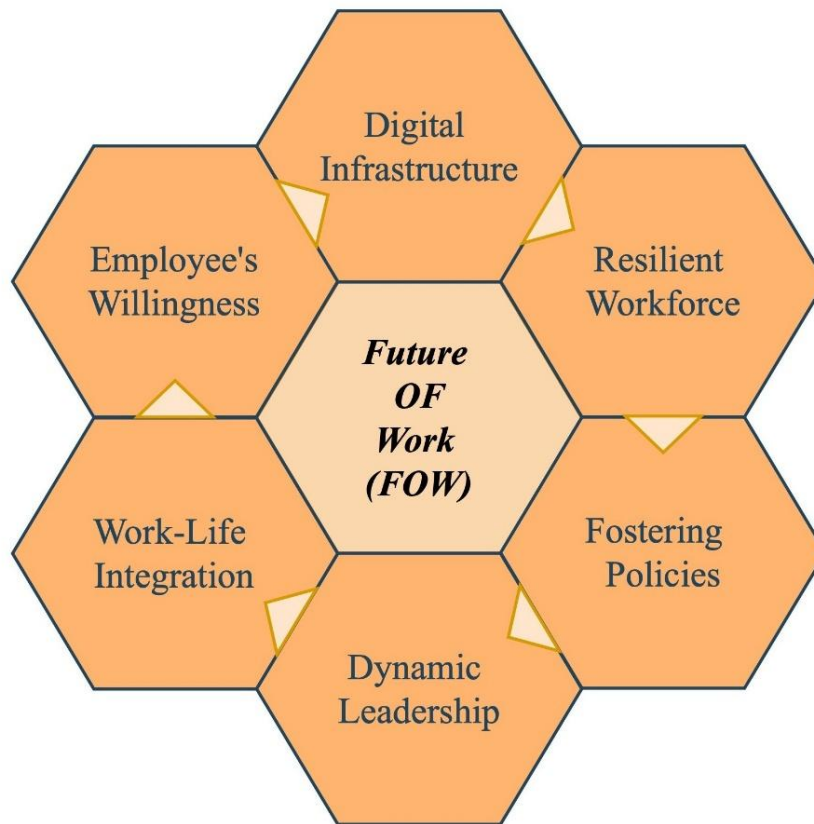
Finally, the introduction of AI is impacting jobs. Value creation and productivity are coming to focus and advancements are poised to drive profound changes. Therefore, women (both managers and employees) in the job market especially need to be prepared for the volatile changes because employers look forward to being future-ready by prioritising re-skilling of their work force. The key to success is being future resilient and open to adapting to the changes with ease by way of training and up-skilling.

The research findings aim to contribute to the existing scholarly works, making it a vital addition to the studies focusing on studying the work-life balance aspects of employees and the difference remote working can bring in sustaining a specific gender at work, who leave their career midway for several reasons. It shall also add to the understanding of multidimensional aspects of gender, sector and categories of employees studied within the Indian context. The practical aspect of the study is significant for both organisations and policymakers. The initial implication involves establishing supportive remote working policies, followed by formulating and implementing organisational policies that successfully promote and encourage a favourable environment. Hence, enhancing the distant working experiences. This may entail developing specific resources and support

for remote work (Anthonysamy, 2022; Henry et al., 2021). Together with human resource methods which foster a feeling of purpose and belongingness (Beau & Jerman, 2024; Sampat et al., 2022). Employers should design supportive environments to create conditions for greater well-being and work-life balance of employees working on a remote basis (Kantyka & Maciag, 2023), which can be done by designing and implementing corporate wellness strategies or programmes promoting employee welfare.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study demonstrate the significance of facilitating employees with e-work resources to improve remote working and effectively enhance work-life balance. Finally, the research provides more insights into the management of remote team experience, with a focus on managerial well-being and the need for adapting a transformational leadership approach by building upon existing frameworks, to foster the climate of cooperation and collaboration (Santucci, 2021; Sedrine et al., 2020). On one hand where this objective's implication is related to the preparation and training of personnel to effectively handle the outcomes of remote employment. On the other hand, it highlights the need for creating training programs for managing remote work. Specifically targeting the development of resilience and support abilities in managers/leaders of virtual teams. Overall, in any organisation, the power of collaboration among all the stakeholders (top level leaders, managers and employees) plays a vital role in making any work practice either a success or a failure. Together they establish a solid foundation for seamless operations. Hence, plans and policies combined with open communication (interaction) and action may lead to a conducive work environment and equally thriving business. Therefore, the below framework (Figure 8.1) is presented as a combination of all the critical factors witnessed as a part of the current study observations. All these factors together may be considered to build a conducive work environment fostering growth and productivity in the new era of work.

Figure 8.1: Framework of contributing factors for future of work success



8.3 Limitation of the study

Present limitations serve as the base for future studies. Hence, limitations are a critical part of any study. Much like any other empirical research, the present study constitutes of certain boundaries, that needs to be addressed when interpreting the findings. These limitations can furnish intriguing possibilities for further studies.

1. First, the current research is grounded on a cross-sectional design and not a longitudinal one, limiting the observations to a single point of time.
2. Due to lack of sampling frame, purposive and snowball sampling is used in carrying out the survey, which has its own limitations.
3. Thirdly, due to the limited pool of study participants and the absence of third gender-focused responses, the findings cannot be generalised to a wider population. Also, the respondents social status of this current study includes only married or unmarried working women not defining their further relationship status as divorcee, widowed, single mothers or in cohabitation.

4. Researcher has tested reliability for the thematic analysis, but the chances of human error in the study cannot be ignored.
5. Overall, despite being underrepresented in the current scope, the role of organisational strategies on offering a conducive work culture can be highly promising in promoting employee well-being in remote working situations.

8.4 Future Research Prospects (Scope)

(a) Generalised Prospects

The study offers significant potential for future research due to the ongoing paradigm change in management methods occurring in key businesses, both in India and internationally. The skepticism and chaos around the virtual world are gradually fading, opening up several opportunities for HR practitioners to develop inventive methods inside their enterprises, ultimately contributing to the organisation's profitability. Researchers can therefore explore such organisations to identify creative techniques that can serve as a foundation in the fields of social sciences and management. Hence, facilitating experimentation and development of new approaches to address future catastrophic scenarios. This will explore the potential of imagination in the workplace, specifically in maintaining efficiency and productivity when employees and managers work remotely. It shall also address the challenges encountered while keeping people engaged and predicting stakeholder satisfaction via digitalisation. Currently, gathering information poses a significant obstacle due to the ongoing development and adjustment of many organisations in response to changing circumstances rather than fully adapting to these evolving work forms. Therefore, there is still a considerable distance to cover before these evolved practices become the new normal, particularly in the Indian context (Misra et al., 2023). In the future, longitudinal research can be carried out to examine the effects of remote working and hybrid working on employee well-being and productivity. Scholarly works can also investigate employees' preferences on work culture, as well as their attitude towards lower salaries and future possibilities, while opting for flexible workplaces and positive work-life balance, while catering to the findings of the current study. Fully remote opportunities might also lead to migration of white collar employees from their work cities to their hometowns or tourist destinations not only in IT but various other sectors (like consulting, designing, architecture and freelancing jobs, etc). Thus,

opening prospects for studying the effects on real estate prices, infrastructural and environmental outcomes. Moreover, a comprehensive qualitative research in studying the role of organisational policies can be undertaken to gain a thorough understanding of the transformation in corporate culture throughout the new normal.

(b) Social and Demographical Prospects

Comparing gendered work-life balance by including the third gender (Trans/Bisexual/Gay, etc) can provide divergent outcomes. Work-life balance might also differ among individuals who are either married, divorced, or single mothers, or those who are cohabiting, but with no social or personal responsibilities of a marriage. Remote working effects can also showcase diverse results based on situations of especially abled (like physically impaired, deaf, blind, or neurodivergent) employees in future studies. Additionally, geographical regions like Hyderabad and Pune have transitioned as new IT hubs, making them potential cities for future research on ICT-based jobs. Further, the importance of different terms like “work-cation”, “co-working spaces”, and “digital nomadism” has received much attention from both Western and Asian countries as a type of “new normal” activity after the COVID-19 impacts. Therefore, necessitating the importance of investigating these terms and their impact on employee wellbeing, productivity and carbon emissions due to bleisure travel.

8.5 Summarising the study

This study presents a post pandemic literature investigating work-life balance and remote working by contemplating on the findings of pre pandemic and pandemic work-life balance consequences of working individuals, in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the contingencies (future face) of WLB in remote working. It also cites the available research on remote team management and its further implications to see how the term has revolutionised recently along with bringing new set of challenges and opportunities for both employees and their managers.

Fuelled by the pandemic, this work culture could be the beginning of a widespread recognition of the value to all the home-based work and the need for protection of the worker's rights, as mentioned in the study conducted on the global society history by Nilsson et al., (2021). As witnessed in past studies right from the introduction of telework

and its development to remote work or WFH before or during COVID19, few literatures noticed negative effects of this work practice on employee wellbeing, work-life balance, engagement, effectiveness/productivity and trust, based on their gender, age and job profile (Orlandi et al., 2024; Kantyka & Maciąg, 2023). Relatively, it was noticed that remote work when accepted voluntarily in different forms after COVID 19 be it WFH, agile, hybrid, flexible or WFA nature, things got comparatively better in the form of ease of working. Flexibility to choose from and availability as well as accessibility to work space and resources due to tech intervention increased. Changes in societal and family mindsets for encouraging both gender involvement into household chores and family responsibilities were seen opening new avenues for women specially in managing and maintaining work-life boundaries. It can further be said that any work form becomes feasible or problematic based on many factors revolving round the employee. If the family, society and organisations support or function in favour of the women they have, both remote working or from office becomes hassle free. Although, remote working combined with its added benefits and drawbacks cannot be ignored. Still, women mostly chose working remotely at ease because of the numerous opportunities offered till date by organisations around the world. Providing themselves options to work towards self-development, career growth and family wellbeing etc.

Finally, the study highlights several pivotal trends that will emerge in the future. Initially, the imperative of expediting digital transformation will become crucial for the workplace. Furthermore, hybrid work is expected to become the standard practice in the workplace. However, certain work practices will remain unchanged. Therefore, these trends will involve the ongoing presence of the "office," although it will be in an altered state. Additionally, all of the aforementioned factors will lead to modifications in the organisational infrastructure and the ability of workers to move amid workspaces. The telework practice which was seen to be mostly confined to the boundaries of home and satellite offices or client locations have surpassed these limiting areas of operation and extended its reach to flexible locations unbounded by any regional border. The new emerging trend towards staycations, work cations and digital nomadism are an example of which is seen to be adopted. This in turn shall be leading to creation of co-working spaces for the remote workers all round the world on a fast pace.