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Impact of COVID 19 on employee morale during work from home among corporate employees in Kochi

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Abstract---Morale turns out to be a significant part in a company's success. But due to the outbreak of COVID-19, morale has been affected. Employee morale gives an overview on the personality and job satisfaction of employees. When employees have a positive attitude towards work, it leads to better organizational performance, otherwise it leads to lower productivity. Pandemic has made a great change in the work culture, environment and so many other factors. The research been done discovering COVID-19's repercussions on employee morale during work from home. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS tools. The findings show that employee morale has been declined in companies due to the pandemic.

Keywords---COVID-19, Employee Morale, Employees, Company, Work from home.

Introduction

The pandemic has changed the working style of people all around the world. Households, scholars, associations and workmen likewise has been directed to maintain social isolation and to in general to be more mindful towards their habits. Employees are being more considerate while purchasing items like groceries. Due to the extensive spread of the virus work from home has been opted widely by the organizations as a whole. Education institutions follow online classes and tutoring remotely at home. It is essential to carry on the business

even when the pandemic exists and at the same time we need to make sure that workers feel appreciated even while they work online. At the very moment there are greater challenges to be faced by the people like global warming, weather emergencies, diplomatic turbulences and so on goes the list. With the prevalent epidemic federations have to deal with enormous demurrals of incommensurate dimensions which call for the immediate management of unrivalled terrene where they create various ways to alter workforce.

A person who acts as a hired help for the employer where he is bound by a contract with the organization and is paid for the same is called as employee. They're hired for a specific job or to give labor in the service of someone differently. When an employee begins a long- term working relationship with a business, they are called as employee, however there are exceptions for the same. How you feel about coming to work on a daily basis, their approach towards the assigned tasks and the attitude towards the actions taken by the corporate is morale. Thus we can say that employee morale is the morale of workers in workplace. It has an instant outcome on productive capacity. In short it is a summation on the career gratification, individual perspective and demeanor.

A vital a part of the company's culture for bringing a positive collaborative attitude that will produce a positive environment is workspace morale thus clearly enhancing attitude. Last year was one among the foremost difficult times for companies and their workers. COVID-19 caused extreme trade cycle variations, which not only include shutting down of small organizations, relieves, redundancies, but also need for an enormous pool for figuring work from home. This in all epitomized the exigency of health, which in turn affected the psychological state of the workers, their profoliceness and consciousness. In a study conducted about the pandemic and its effects the analysis showed that about 35% of the employees has a circumspection during exigencies. Workers with low employee morale will be uninvolved, unenterprising and inactive. Ameliorating morale enhances efficiency and workplace culture as it is bound by one another. The aim of this study is to briefly explain the torments faced by employees and various opportunities that the pandemic provides to the employee morale.

Review of Literature

[1] Randa Diab-Bahman, Abrar Al-Enzi December 2020: The goal of this study was to give HR policymakers an understanding of the impact of a sudden change in working circumstances as reported by their major stakeholders – employees. 192 Kuwaiti employees who are now working from home were polled about how the lockdown has affected their traditional work expectations. The vast majority of responders said that overall work impacted in a favorable manner, and a large part of the people stated that about 80% of their employment responsibilities can be met. Additionally, as a result of the post-COVID-19 environment, employee expectations are shifting. The work could have been enhanced with concentrating on the psychological impact of workers on work execution also.

[2] European Journal of Business Management and Research May 2020: The study's objectives were to discuss the basic element of working at home during

COVID-19, examine the present situation of work from home, study the factors effecting employees' willingness to work from home, and study the influence of COVID-19 on work performance of the work from home employees. Telephonic interviews with consultants and a few industry's senior HR executives and employees were used to gather primary data. Secondary sources from a variety of research papers, articles, and publications from the 2019-2020 academic years, depending on the study's needs. It then came to notice that working from home isn't like it seemed let alone the time management. Employers and HR must create a bond with the employees they employ.

Objectives of the study

- To interpret the basic concept of work from home during COVID-19.
- To study the present scenario of work from home.
- To analyse the factors effecting work from home for employees.
- To examine the impact of COVID-19 on work performances of employees when working from home.

Primary data is collected from the telephonic interviews and questions asked from the HR consultants and few industry top level people in HR positions and working professionals. The secondary data is based on the current data and scenario. Secondary data is collected from various research papers, articles and publishing of 2019-2020 year according to the need of the study.

A corona infection (SARS, CoV-2). The flare-up was recognized in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. However, because of initial mishandling by multi-lateral bodies like WHO, people were allowed to travel globally which led to spreading of the COVID-19 across the world, thus causing pandemic of epic proportion. It was only in March 11th, 3 months after the initial detection of COVID 19, that the WHO declared it as a pandemic. By that time, the damage is already done; the virus had spread across many countries. As on 1 May 2020, more than 3.27 million instances of COVID-19 have been accounted for in 187 nations

[3] Pooja Singh and Swati Mishra Research Scholar, [2020](#): This research was undertaken to find out thereasons for employees' stress and panic amidst COVID crisis, understanding how COVID-19 has affected workplace happiness, and offering measures to restore a feeling of routine lives to the employees. With regard to maintaining employee morale, organizations should educate employees about the signs of COVID-19 and the measures to be followed. They need to concentrate on gaining staff support. They should also revisit leave policies, travel, and meeting protocols. The researcher could have given much more importance to the employee morale and team morale.

[4] Sirpa Helena Syvänen and Kaija Riitta Loppel: Technology driven development has brought many changes to the development plans and thus affecting interaction, dialogue, and the tools to be used during the pandemic. The purpose of this study was to find out more about the challenges, and learning experiences to the development work of The Sote Dialogues - project, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The qualitative materials were collected by using multifactor assessment and self-reflection. It was traced that when the projects' development work was transferred to remote and technology-based, it

was difficult due to the pandemic to recover such issues. Here the limitation is that the researcher did not give stress to employee morale.

[5] Kılıç, Ü. Güdük, Ö. Güdük, and Ö. Göküz, S. 2021: The study was a detailed study which was undertaken to find out workers' degrees of job satisfaction and anxiety during COVID-19. A total of 184 biologists from 17 diagnostic facilities made up the sample. It was visible that out of the survey participants 89% were voluntary participants and 94% were committed workman and thus the anxiety and satisfaction took a positive phase. It was observed that lengthy working hours and a hefty workload affected their psychological wellbeing during such calamities but some participants lacked insomnia and psychological problems as well. The overall survey was very inclusive. But the researcher did not concentrate on morale factor of the employees.

[6] Aiswarya v Kumar 1, V.P. Velmurugan 2020: This report focuses on identifying the factors that influence the employee's morale. The main purpose of the study was to examine the link between morale and attitude. The sample consisted of 40 respondents. Thus we could conclude that self-financing college teachers weren't getting paid in spite of heavy work load that effected their work. This study was restricted to morale and attitude whereas there are various other factors of employee morale which could have been studied.

[7] Sapta, Muafi and Setini 2021: The research briefs about the corporate culture and career satisfaction in Bali's rural banks during a pandemic. The samples comprised of 350 employees in total and 100 samples were taken. Employees weren't satisfied with their incentives and working hours. It was very important because employee performance at Bali's regional banks influenced their satisfaction strongly. It was put forth that the corporate culture must be examined because each region's culture is unique, and it must be updated. The research was very inclusive.

[8] Dr Jolly Sahni 2020: This study focuses on the behavioral consequences of the employees during the pandemic. The objective of the research is to show how organizations, and people are volatile to various obstacles. Outcomes depict a direct requisite for psychological, community and societal support. Also, there is a need for support of the firm in order to stabilize worker's mental health. They also have found that COVID – 19 raised the employees' fear and tension which caused a high stress level and challenging atmosphere at work from home. There are certain limitations i.e. sample size was limited and collected from employees in peer organizations.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the decline in employee morale while working from home during COVID – 19.
- To identify the factors affecting employee morale during COVID -19.
- To analyze that high income employees enjoy high employee morale in the company during COVID – 19.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no association between 'Annual Income' and Experiencing high employee morale in the company during COVID-19.

Statement of the Problem

Many previous studies have been conducted on employee morale in various organizations. This study completely focuses on employee morale in corporate companies with respect to Kochi. Also, this study has been prepared to find out the factors that affected employee morale in the organization due to COVID-19.

Research Methodology

The research design is descriptive in nature. The project is built using primary and secondary data: Primary data used for identifying the impact of COVID-19 on employee morale among workfrom home employees in corporate companies in Kochi. The sample for the study has been taken from Kochi alone. Simple random sampling of probability sampling is used here A sample of 126 responses has been collected. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Questionnaires with 25 questions which included both open-ended and close-ended questions were prepared, and the same was distributed to the employees working in corporate companies in Kochi, through 'Google Forms' online. The collected data has been analyzed using Frequency tool and SPSS tool, in which the tests conducted are Factor Analysis and Chi-Square. Other data for the research was collected from secondary sources which included journals, research papers, google, etc. The collected data is interpreted as charts and tables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis of decline in employee morale while working from home during COVID – 19

Table 1

RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS (%)
YES	52	41
NO	34	27
MAYBE	40	32
TOTAL	126	100

Source: Primary Data

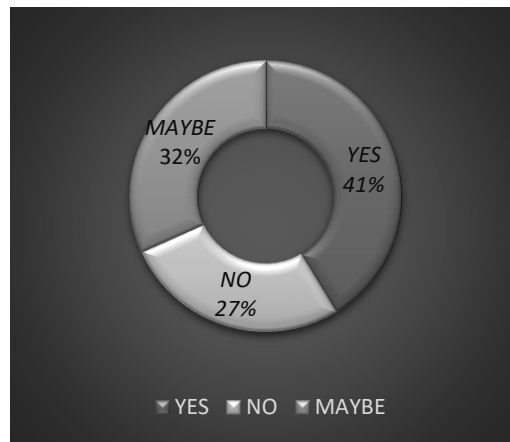


Chart 1

Interpretation:

The above table shows that 41% of employees feel that the employee morale has declined on a general basis during COVID-19 whereas 27% doesn't feel that there is a decline in the employee morale. Also 32% people are not sure if there is a decline.

Factors affecting employee morale during COVID -19.**Factor Analysis:**

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.943
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2893.969
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

The KMO value is .943 and Bartlett's test is significant indicating that factor analysis is possible using the above figures. 23 variables are being minimized to three factors which establishes 75.06 % of the variance in data.

Table 3

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Leadership	1.000	.657
Employee Recognition and Praise	1.000	.765
Incentive Programmes	1.000	.767

Employee Interaction	1.000	.698
Compatibility with Fellow Employees	1.000	.718
Communication with the top-level management	1.000	.802
Job Enrichment	1.000	.646
Participation in Management	1.000	.810
Professional Progress and Development	1.000	.746
Monthly Income	1.000	.722
Promotion	1.000	.723
Relationship with Superiors and Subordinates	1.000	.834
Target Fulfilments	1.000	.754
Teamwork	1.000	.785
Work Environment	1.000	.729
Work Execution	1.000	.716
Transparency within the management	1.000	.793
Work Satisfaction	1.000	.684
Work Load	1.000	.836
Work/Life Balance	1.000	.766
Mental Health	1.000	.741
Work Timings	1.000	.808
Employee Training	1.000	.762
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

The Communalities table indicates the variance in the variables that has been accounted for by the extracted factors. It can be seen that all the variables have variance greater than 0.4. Therefore none of the variables were removed from the Factor analysis stage.

Table 4

Rotated Component Matrix ^a			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Relationship with Superiors and Subordinates	.851	.188	.273
Participation in Management	.841	.275	.165
Communication with the top-level management	.826	.222	.266
Transparency within the management	.822	.247	.237
Employee Interaction	.689	.198	.428
Compatibility with Fellow Employees	.686	.308	.390
Teamwork	.645	.414	.445
Monthly Income	.143	.832	.098
Incentive Programmes	.153	.803	.314

Promotion	.235	.784	.231
Professional Progress and Development	.383	.731	.253
Employee Training	.345	.715	.363
Employee Recognition and Praise	.427	.706	.291
Job Enrichment	.182	.629	.467
Target Fulfilments	.352	.615	.502
Leadership	.489	.492	.419
Work Load	.299	.275	.819
Work Timings	.319	.236	.807
Work/Life Balance	.337	.287	.755
Mental Health	.200	.525	.652
Work Execution	.418	.362	.641
Work Environment	.496	.312	.621
Work Satisfaction	.441	.483	.506
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a			
'a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations'.			

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

From the rotated component matrix, three components factors have been derived. They are:

- The first component was identified as synergy factors like relationship with superiors and subordinates, participation, communication, transparency, interaction, compatibility and teamwork.
- The second component was identified as headway factors like monthly income, incentive programmes, promotion, professional progress and development, employee training, employee recognition and praise, job enrichment, target fulfilments and leadership.
- The third component was identified as wellbeing factors like work load, work timings, work/life balance, mental health, work execution, work environment and work satisfaction.

Association between annual income of employees and their employee morale in the company during COVID – 19

Table 5

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.641 ^a	3	.130
Likelihood Ratio	6.133	3	.105
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.547	1	.214
N of Valid Cases	126		
a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.37.			

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

(0.130) was acquired as a significant value, which is higher than the required rate (0.05). As a result, during COVID-19, there is no link between 'Annual Income' and Experiencing strong employee morale in the organization.

Findings

Based on the responses collected from employees, graph analysis and SPSS analysis tests like factor analysis and chi-square tests have been conducted. The findings are as follows:

Graph Findings

From the pie-diagram, it was concluded that majority (41.3%) of the employees feel that the employee morale has declined on a general basis due to COVID-19 work from home.

Factor Analysis Findings

From the rotated component matrix three component factors have been identified:

- The first component was identified as synergy factors like relationship with superiors and subordinates, participation, communication, transparency, interaction, compatibility and Teamwork.
- The second component was identified as headway factors like monthly income, incentive programmes, promotion, professional progress and development, employee training, employee recognition and praise, job enrichment, target fulfilments and leadership.
- The third component was identified as wellbeing factors like work load, work timings, work/life balance, mental health, work execution, work environment and work satisfaction.

Chi-Square Test Findings

A chi-square test was conducted and identified that there is no association between 'Annual Income' and Experiencing high employee morale in the company during COVID-19. That is, it cannot be said that high income employees enjoy high employee morale in the company during COVID – 19. The income factor does not determine the degree of employee morale in a company. Therefore, the null hypothesis has been accepted.

Suggestions

1. The company should focus on enhancing employee morale in online platforms while employees are working from home during COVID-19.
2. The company should provide more motivational programmes.
3. The company must have an all-time access to doctors/counselors to handle to the stress and mental health of employees.
4. The company should provide an off-time/ free time for employees to relax even though it is online mode.

5. The employees should be given a break time to specifically increase the rapport between the employees.

Conclusion

The research is based on the impact of COVID-19 on employee morale during work from home among corporate employees in Kochi. From this research, it is concluded that there has been a decline in employee morale in corporate companies in Kochi due to COVID-19 outbreak. Also, the income factor does not determine the degree of employee morale in a company. COVID-19 has created a major impact on the synergy, headway and wellbeing of the employees in corporate companies in Kochi. While workers are engaged from home during COVID-19, businesses should focus on improving employee morale using online platforms.

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