

# A Study on Mindfulness in Sustainable and Virtuous Management during Work from Home

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## Abstract

Mindfulness is the founding capacity for a person to take up any activity, including employment. Mindfulness optimizes the productivity. Healthy mind relieves the stress and support qualitative thinking. Fresh mind supports novelty in thinking and as well in execution of thoughts. Modern work culture has been struggling for increasing the percentage of mindfulness through various activities like yoga, gym, paid vacation etc. COVID-19 pandemic has created a new work culture in the name of Work from Home. During the adaptation to new work culture, they were facing some challenges. While overcoming these challenges and settle themselves, they found that Work from Home is facilitating mindfulness. Accordingly, the demand is growing for hybrid work culture. This empirical analysis shows the Adaptability, Accessibility, Admissibility, Feasibility, Flexibility and Interoperability as the beneficial factors for the employees and organizations. There is a significant impact on mindfulness through environmental factors, credibility factors, Work from Home, sustainable factors, whereas organizational factors are insignificant. Mindfulness has been enjoyed by the employees during Work from Home life in spite of the challenges. The difficulties faced by the employees during work from office, have been transformed into advantages towards mindfulness. Work from Home has created certain challenges like work-life balance, extended working hours etc. but a scientific approach may resolve the concerned challenges. Work from Home with mindfulness is facilitating the employees to overcome the challenges by adopting new technologies and strategies.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Pandemic, Remote Working, Environment, Sustainability

## 1. Introduction

Indian Culture is known for its philosophical perception of 'mindfulness', since conscious and responsive human behavior is its motto. Passage of time has created a deviation in this regard. But scientific studies conducted for the purpose of finding out the remedial measures against human odds, once again mindfulness regained its significance. For securing mindfulness, we started adopting various measures like recreation through Nature, meditation, art, social gatherings, domestic and official relationships etc. Unwarranted situations like pandemic, increased the demand for adoption of 'mindful activities' to all sections of people including employees. Pandemic protocol required the measures to break the chain of spread of virus. In pursuance with the same Work from Home culture has been

adopted to draw a balance between economic and health needs across the globe. This research is focused to assess the impact factors like environment, physical, psychological, sustainable and organizational that influence the 'mindfulness', so that we can assess the future of Work from Home culture.

Though Work from Home (WFH) is not a new concept, due to COVID-19, the same has become regular from being occasional. Work from Home has narrowed down the distinction between official time and personal time. The weekend has lost its importance and lines between personal and professional lives have diminished. They have blurred to the extent of being non-existent. Before pandemic Work from Home culture was taken by an employee when they are sick or need to work from home for their personal needs, due to pandemic situation everyone is stuck at home and stuck to the screen due to which the movement has been reduced, which in-turn reflected positively on the environment. We come across many such news like "Jalandhar can now see the Himalayas" (Jalandhar residents were left amazed as they get view of Himalayan range, 2020) and "the Ozone layer is getting reconstructed" which gives a thought - maybe we need to change this rare phenomenon into a permanent solution not only to protect the environment but also have a quality time with the family members. But for the sustainability there are certain issues like power, internet/Wi-Fi/Data issues that need to be consistently provided in all the regions for better performance.

This paper attempts to study the relationship between mindfulness of employees in the current work scenario in a pandemic environment, i.e. Work from Home as part of pandemic situation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the influence of environmental factors on mindfulness of virtual employees.
2. To analyze the impact of credibility factors on mindfulness of virtual employees.
3. To study the influence of Work from Home on mindfulness of virtual employee.
5. To study the influence of sustainability factors on mindfulness of virtual employees.
6. To study the impact of organizational factors on mindfulness of virtual employees.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant influence between environmental factors and mindfulness of virtual employees.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant influence between credibility factors and mindfulness of virtual employees.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant influence between Work from Home and mindfulness of virtual employees.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant influence between sustainability factors and mindfulness of virtual employees.
- H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant influence between organizational factors and mindfulness of virtual employees.

## **2. Review of Literature**

We come across a lot of news, personal experiences that we face as well as the experience shared by our peers, family and friends. For example, prior to COVID-19 in 2016 signifies that there is statistically a good impact over the productivity of the employee when they Work from Home. The environmental aspect (India Release: Latest air pollution data ranks world's cities worst to best, 2019) that is necessary to be discussed prior to COVID-19 reveals that there is enough research and data supporting the fact that health emergency in India can be addressed with the help of political will. This political will can act as

an artificial limb to achieve the “Greener India”. In this research paper, we are of the opinion that COVID-19 has proved the same which is similar to our hypothesis.

Though a lot research articles of late are being published on impact of Work from Home on employee in terms of productivity, morale and motivation, job satisfaction, work-life balance very few on mindfulness or holistic impact on an employee. The following are some of the research articles reviewed for the present paper.

Mariana Toniolo-Barrios, Leyland Pittin: Their study paper “Mindfulness and the Challenges of Working from Home in Times of Crisis” bring out the importance of mindfulness especially in Work from Home situations, they have identified three important benefits of mindfulness in the Work from Home environment which can (1) help employees mentally disconnect from work when they need to; (2) improve individuals’ attention to work tasks and thereby improve their performance; and (3) allow workers to better manage screen fatigue. In their paper the authors also explained how mindfulness can be cultivated and applied to work related issues.

Laxmiprada Pattnaik & Lalatendu Kesari Jena in their paper titled “Mindfulness, Remote Engagement and Employee Morale: Conceptual Analysis to Address the New Normal”, make an attempt to establish the relationship between mindfulness, remote engagement and morale of employee during pandemic while working from home. Paper after making an analysis come up with suggestions mindfulness can play a prominent role in organizations in dealing with the tough challenges they face in engaging their employee while they work remotely and found that practicing mindfulness can enhance the morale thereby improving the productivity.

“Staying Mindful when You’re Working Remotely” - an article in Harvard Business Review, by Alyson Meister and Amanda Sinclair state - remote working doesn’t have to be a barrier to your capacity to deliver leadership presence, empathize and connect with colleagues, and build strong workplace communities. According to the authors of this article Mindfulness helps to combat the stress the employees face while working from remote locations. According to them cultivating mindfulness helps overcome the stress authors recommend applying three mindfulness principles to your remote work to reduce stress levels and reconnect with your purpose. First, offer your team your presence by eliminating distractions and focusing on how you’re being with the people you’re speaking to. Next, be in the moment by focusing on where you are now, rather than thinking about the future. Finally, enable connection and community by practicing deep listening and paying close attention to inclusion.

Nabil Al Nahin Ch, Alberta A. Ansah, Atefeh Katrahmani, Julia Burmeister, Andrew L. Kun, Caitlin Mills, Orit Shaer, John D. Lee (2023): Virtual reality (VR) could compensate for some of the adverse effects of working remotely by improving some aspects of workers' well-being and creativity. Results show a positive effect of virtual reality on increasing focus and reducing stress. When VR nature and mindfulness practices were combined, we also found an increase in convergent thinking task performance.

Julia James states in her article “Mindfulness and Challenges of Working from Home during Pandemic” that COVID-19 posed some unique challenges to employees while they work from home; like, as there is little differentiation in terms of work from office life and personal life, morale of the employees is

getting affected and productivity is coming down. So, she suggests that practicing mindfulness is beneficial to employees particularly help employees mentally disconnect from their work when they are done with work, improve individual's attention and improve performance, allow employees to better manage and recover from video conferencing (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) screen fatigue.

Mariana Toniolo-Barrios, Leyland Pitt (2021): In this Work-Life Balance, authors elaborate on how mindfulness may help employees deal with working from home. How mindfulness can be cultivated, and provide a list of mindfulness techniques and also provide a set of recommendations for managers responsible for their employees' well-being and productivity.

Haun, V.C., Nübold, A., & Rigotti, T. (2020) have investigated quantitative and emotional demands as contextual antecedents of mindful awareness and acceptance both in the work and home domains. We did not find strong evidence for cross-domain relations between demands and mindfulness on the one hand and between mindfulness and goal attainment and satisfaction on the other hand.

Sharma, Kanupriya, Anand, Akshay, and Kumar, Raj (2020): Yoga can provide the necessary tool for risk reduction, amelioration of stress and anxiety and strengthening of the immune function. The online platforms provide a good media for Yoga training at workplaces and homes. As the lockdown cannot last forever and workplaces must be functional soon, there is an increased possibility of recurrent infection.

Verena C. Haun, Annika Nübold, Anna G. Bauer (2018): The authors have examined the moderating role of employee domain-specific mindfulness within the stressor-detachment model. Sixty-five employees completed two daily surveys (i.e., after work and before going to bed) over five workdays. We found that mindfulness at home moderated the relation between psychological detachment and positive affect at bedtime.

### 3. Study Methodology

The current study is empirical in nature, using data collected through questionnaire and personal interviews from respondents who are part of this virtual engagement.

- (a) **Sources of Data:** The data is largely collected from primary sources, secondary data is also gathered from journals, magazines, newspapers and internet as well.
- (b) **Sample Design:** The population for the study includes all people like employees, teachers working in a virtual environment.
- (c) **Sampling Technique:** The sampling technique used for the current study is convenience sampling.
- (d) **Sample Size:** The size of the sample is 100; responses obtained from respondents is 60.
- (e) **Data Collection Methods:** The data for the study is collected from sample respondents through a well-designed structured questionnaire using and administered through Google Forms. Personal interview was also conducted to know environmental sustainability and its impact on mindfulness of employees.
- (f) **Tools and Techniques used for Data Analysis:** Data is analyzed with simple percentages to get understanding of the employee's responses and draw inferences using hypothesis testing with Multiple Regression Analysis.

#### 4. Understanding Mindfulness from Virtual Employee Experience

The pandemic situation has made certain things effectively possible towards achieving the mindfulness. Though the lockdown has impacted on blue collar job-seekers to lose their jobs or get half pay, on the bright side there are many delightful advantages that both the employee's outcome of work has improved and cost incurred by the organizations have been drastically reduced with which employee and organizations are being equally benefited. The long waited unfulfilled desires of taking care of their health, preparing food at home, having three meals at home, spending time with family, playing with children, involving in a new hobby or old hobby are few factors that have a positively impacted on their lives. On the other hand, work-life balance and unable to maintain the boundaries between office time and personal time has always been overlooked which is a negative impact considering a sustainable change. Though there are pros and cons which is usual the idea of this paper is to evaluate all the possible and probable credibility factors on a person at the same time analyzing how remote working practice would benefit towards mindfulness of employees. As the lockdown situation had been momentous impact on environment as, air pollution, water pollution, Green Houses Emission gases, carbon emissions, usage of paper, usage of fuel, traffic which were at an alarming state have transformed the planet back into its original shape. The pollution has been reduced, the greenery has improved, we are able to even spot some animals coming out of their hideouts and roaming freely not only in the wild but also in the towns and cities. Though this was an unpredictable transformation, for sustainable results there are few workarounds that need to be corrected for a permanent impact and preservation of environment for future generations.

#### 5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data for the study collected through questionnaire and interviews is analyzed.

##### Data Analysis using Multiple Regression Analysis

###### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.809 <sup>a</sup>	.704	.622	.44393	1.954
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Benefits, Work from Home, Environment, Sustainability, Credibility Factors.				
b. Dependent Variable: Mindfulness of Virtual Employee.				

##### Interpretation

From the above table, it is significant that 70% of mindfulness of virtual employees are influenced by Work from Home factors, environmental factors, sustainability factors, and credibility factors.

###### ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression	20.140	5	4.028	20.439	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	10.642	54	.197		
Total	30.782	59			
a. Dependent Variable: Mindfulness of Virtual Employees.					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Benefits, Work from Home, Environment, Sustainability, Credibility Factors.					

### Interpretation

The result of the present study is showing that  $P < .005$ , indicating that there is significant influence of Work from Home, Environmental Factors, Sustainability Factors and Credibility Factors on mindfulness of employees.

Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-value	P-value	Collinearity Statistics	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	
(Constant)	0.365	0.375		0.974	0.335		
Environmental Factors	0.173	0.094	0.193	1.833	0.072	0.578	1.729
Credibility Factors	0.306	0.155	0.298	1.978	0.053	0.283	3.539
Work from Home	0.209	0.103	0.246	2.031	0.047	0.435	2.301
Sustainability	0.292	0.106	0.349	2.751	0.008	0.398	2.512
Organizational Factors	-0.057	0.081	-0.076	-0.702	0.486	0.543	1.841
a. Dependent Variable: Mindfulness of a Virtual Employees							

### Interpretation

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant influence between environmental factor and mindfulness of virtual employees.**

From the above analysis, it is observed that the coefficients of regression analysis signify that environmental factor ( $\beta = 0.173$ ) are having significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees.

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant influence between credibility factor and mindfulness of virtual employees.**

From the above analysis it is observed that the coefficients of regression analysis signify that credibility factors ( $\beta = 0.306$ ) reveals that there is a significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees.

**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant influence between Work from Home and mindfulness of virtual employees.**

From the above analysis it is observed that the coefficients of regression analysis signify that Work from Home factors ( $\beta = 0.209$ ) reveals that there is a significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees.

**H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant influence between sustainability factor and mindfulness of virtual employees.**

From the above analysis it is observed that the coefficients of regression analysis signify that sustainability factor ( $\beta = 0.292$ ) reveals that there is a significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees.

**H<sub>05</sub>: There is no significant influence between organizational factors and mindfulness of virtual employees.**



From the above analysis it is observed that the coefficients of regression analysis signify that organizational factor ( $\beta = -0.057$ ) reveals that it do not have significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees.

### Conclusion

COVID-19 has brought a drastic change in every walk of life, including the employment and education, in securing the mindfulness among all the stakeholders. The present study proved that there is a significant influence on mindfulness of virtual employees by environmental, sustainability, credibility and Work from Home factors.

The data furnished by the respondents has been analyzed with all its minute details and identified the predictability factors for future verification and further research. Organizational factors did not established significance on mindfulness of virtual employees. This factor facilitates further research.

### Suggestions

1. Suitable legal framework may be created for classification of employments based on the location of the job work.
2. The effective guidelines may be evolved for the employers to adopt remote working practices mandatorily by incorporating equitable and ethical principles.
3. Appreciation of environment maybe incorporated in this remote working practice as a mandatory norm periodically.
4. During the COVID-19, it is proved that environmental pollution can be avoided. This is a blessing in disguise to proceed ahead with a stronger global sustainable development policy and implementation.
5. Working strategies through this remote working practice shall be reformulated especially in the light of the proven skills of the employees in reaching the targets to ensure the quality, quantity and mindfulness of work.
6. Strengthening of inter personal skills and family relationships should be considered with in their limitations as they are the boon through this COVID-19.
7. The remote working practice during this pandemic has proceeded towards mindfulness of virtual employees with active participation from the public. This transformation may be expanded towards many more sustainable practices for achieving the conservation of nature towards the future generations.

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