A study of the emotional wellbeing of private-sector employees working from home during Covid-19

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A study of the emotional wellbeing of private-sector employees working from home during Covid-19

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Abstract

Employee emotions have a direct relationship in achieving objectives of the organization and have an important role in the overall growth and sustainability of both employees and the organizations. Covid-19 was declared as pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organisation, and most companies have adapted work from home on very a short notice. This paper studies the emotional wellbeing of private sector employees working from home during Covid-19. A detailed review of the literature was undertaken, and the PERMA framework was used for measuring the emotional wellbeing of employees. The study shows that employees' emotions were mildly positive along with mixed sentiments of anger, sadness, and loneliness. There are recommendations for employers to have a process and governance framework in place for work from home, be prepared for such uncertainties in future, followed with recommendations for employees. The study additionally shows that there were some positive outcomes of working from home, such as a cleaner environment and a better work-life balance.

Keywords: Emotions, Wellbeing, Happiness, Loneliness, Private Sector, Employee, Work from home, Covid-19.

1. Introduction

The human body is a complex system, with the brain as the central processing unit, gathering, and processing round the clock information from the nervous system. This generates feelings, which are acted upon by human beings in a given situation. These complex sets of feelings, also called emotions, may result in physical and psychological changes, influencing thought, behaviour, and human action. Emotions can lead to both positive as well as negative feelings in an individual. Multiple studies have shown that an employee's emotions have a relationship in achieving the objectives of the organization and play an important role in the overall growth and sustainability of both employees and the organizations. "*The consistency of findings across a range of settings demonstrates that the organizational health framework provides a robust evidence-based approach to the management of employee wellbeing and the prevention of occupational stress".* (Cotton et al, 2003).

Covid-19 was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, by the World Health Organization. (WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020, 2020). This was an unprecedented event, wherein lockdown, curfew, social distancing, and other measures were enforced in different countries to control the spread of disease. Most companies and employees were forced to quickly adapt to a work from home model. While some organizations had well-defined processes for this model, many others had never worked remotely before - either due to business constraints like data security concerns or there was simply not a need for such a mode in the past. Some employees lost their jobs or went through pay cuts. Others were forced to adapt to a different lifestyle with no gyms, health clubs, creche facilities for working couples, outside meal options for busy professionals, or any outdoor activities. The pandemic also impacted important family events: marriages were postponed; funerals where some of the immediate family members could not attend; a new baby was born in the family where parents or relatives could not support the couple; medical exigencies; cancellation of the domestic or international holidays etc. These events naturally had an impact on employees' emotions and wellbeing. Many business events, domestic and international travel programs, expansion, and other strategic plans were either

differed or cancelled, which impacted the growth of the organization and its stakeholders like employees, supplier organizations, etc. This may have short to mid-term impacts on businesses and would influence employee emotional wellbeing. (72% of the organizations stated that the Covid-19 impact will be felt much beyond six months – EY survey 2020, 2020). This paper studies the private sector employee's emotional wellbeing during the covid-19 work from the home and provides recommendations to employers and employees based on derived results.

2. Literature review

The primary objective of the review of literature is to understand the concept of the emotional wellbeing of employees, and key attributes for measuring it.

Emotions are feelings, thoughts, moods, temperaments, expressive behavior of the individual, which lead to an action or a reaction due to an internal or external impetus. (Myers, D. G. 2004). These emotional actions are triggered by the human nervous system, which is the core function of the human brain. "*Emotions are identified with action readiness change". (*Frijda, N. H., 1986). The emotions have associated actions and a person's ability to do a certain thing may differ, depending upon his emotion. An individual with positive emotions may be more productive and engaged as compared to an individual with negative emotions. (Cotton et al, 2003). "*Emotions constitute a primary motivational system for human beings"*. (Izard, C. E., 2013). An employee working from home or office under a normal condition may have a different motivational system, as against, when they are forced to work from home, under constraint. Basic emotions have a facial expression like happy, excited, sad, angry, fear, amusement, contentment, desire, embarrassment, pain, relief & sympathy. These emotions are discrete, measurable, and physiologically distinct. (Ekman, P. 1999). Emotions can vary from negative to positive and in some cases, people can experience both these emotions simultaneously. (Watson et al, 1985).

Wellbeing may simply mean a state of happiness, being healthy, or satisfied. *Employee wellbeing is a term for which "everyone understands the meaning, but nobody can give a precise definition".* (Lyubomirs, 2001). The wellbeing of an individual depends upon the individual's physical health, mental health, and social attributes. Wellbeing is an aspect of an individual's emotions. *"Wellness refers to diverse and interconnected dimensions of physical, mental, and social well-being that extend beyond the traditional definition of health. It includes choices and activities aimed at achieving physical vitality, mental alacrity, social satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and personal fulfillment".* (Naci et al, 2015). This definition of wellbeing refers to a sense of accomplishment, like completing a task on or before time, doing more than expected, winning an award, getting recognized or appreciated, etc. Maintaining wellbeing is important when an individual is working for an organization. "*Wellbeing is the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced".* (Dodge et al, 2012). The state of an individual's wellbeing is dynamic and depends upon how his psychological, physical, and social resources face psychological, physical, and social challenges. When both sides are the same, then this is the stable wellbeing of an individual.

Employee wellbeing is an important aspect of HRM (human resource management) practices in the organizations, and studies have found a positive impact between employee's wellbeing and achievement of organization objectives. Emotional wellbeing is influenced by the growth of trust and relationship by line function leadership with the employees. (Baptiste, N. R. 2008).

The measurement framework of OECD for emotional wellbeing has eleven dimensions consisting of material condition (income & wealth, housing, work & job quality) and quality of life factors (health, knowledge & skills, environment, quality, subjective well-being, safety). The quality of life factors is related to being healthy, feeling healthier, relationship, engagement, work-life balance, and social connections. (Capital, N., 2020). The PERMA framework for the measurement of the emotional wellbeing of employees has five components, P for positive emotions, E for engagement, R for a relationship, M for meaning, and A for accomplishment. These five domains can be defined and measured as separate but

correlated constructs. (Seligman, M. E., 2012). These five attributes are included in most of the international surveys for measuring emotional wellbeing. This model measures across multiple domains and presents a multidimensional structure rather than presenting a single score at a time. (Butler et al, 2016). This framework has additional measurement for Health, Happiness, Loneliness, and Negative Emotions, and is presented as mean score along with PERMA.

Employee's positive emotions (P) are associated with joyful feelings, a sense of satisfaction, and a positive approach. *Organizations are more likely to see results by fostering positive emotions rather than simply concentrating on negative emotions and dealing with problems* (Kular et al, 2008). Organizations and managers can focus on the positive emotions of employees, motivate and leverage them to achieve organizational goals and objectives. (Butler et al, 2016).

Employee engagement (E) and wellbeing go hand to hand in an organization. Employee engagement includes regular updates on the growth plans, progress, opportunities, challenges, and updates on key strategic initiatives of the organization. By doing this, employees have a sense of ownership, belongingness, and engagement with an organization, as they have first-hand information from leadership. The individual difference of employees has a direct impact on the potential level of engagement in the organization. (Robinson, I. 2006).

The relationship (R) brings a sense of togetherness and are an integral part of a human being in a society, and has a sense of belongingness. Social relationships are fundamental to life. (Berscheid et al, 1998).

Meaning (M) or purposeful existence provides a direction in life, connecting to the larger picture and provides a sense of being valuable and worthwhile. (Steger, M. F. 2012). Employees with these emotions feel that they are important for the organization, and the work they do is meaningful.

Accomplishment (A) is a sense of achievement of a goal or an award or an appreciation or winning a tournament or completion of a task, etc. and applies to individuals as well as organizations. Accomplishment signifies leading a productive and meaningful life. (Mahajan, A. 2020).

Health attribute is state of general health, current health and comparative heath as compared to individual of same age & sex. Happiness is overall feeling of how happy an individual is and similarly Loneliness is overall feeling of how lonely an individual is. Negative emotion is feeling of anxiety, sad and angry. (Butler et al, 2016). Financial attributes were to measure feeling of job safety & security, timely receipt of salary & perks and future increment & promotion. Social emotions were feeling of work life balance, and ability to meet social obligations towards family, friends & relatives. The work from home included feeling towards missing office environment, and future of work from home. These additional attributes provide additional information that can be useful for analysis of emotional wellbeing of employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown. The inclusion of negative emotions ensures importance of negative emotions, instead of purely measuring the positive construct of emotional wellbeing. Marsh, H. W. (1986).

Research Gap: The review of literature provides insight on emotional wellbeing, however, there is limited or no literature available on the study of the emotional wellbeing of employees working from home during lockdown situation like the covid-19 pandemic. The main aim of this research paper is to bridge the research gap so identified based on the review of literature on the topic carried for this study. This study will be useful for employers, employees, society, and the academic world.

3. **Objectives**

The main purpose of this study is to assess the emotional wellbeing of private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad.

This study has the following sub-objectives:

3.1. To assess the presence of Health emotions of private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad;

3.2. To assess the presence of Negative emotions of private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad;

3.3. To assess the presence of Loneliness emotions of private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad;

3.4. To assess the presence of Financial emotions private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad;

3.5. To assess the presence of work from home attributes of private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown in India and abroad;

4. Methodology

A comprehensive review of the literature on emotions, employees' wellbeing, happiness, loneliness, etc was undertaken to define the scope of the study and ensure its objectivity. The selection criteria were based on top-cited research papers on google scholar website. Some information and key data were taken from websites of leading organizations.

4.1. **Method:** A descriptive research method was adopted for this study, to define the characteristics of the population from the sample data collected and to understand employee's emotional wellbeing of working from home during the covid-19 lockdown. This method is expected to provide systematic information about an employee's emotional wellbeing while working from home during covid-19. The primary data was collected using a survey questionnaire tool.

4.2. **Survey Tool:** The tool "*The Workplace PERMA Profiler*" was used, to measure the emotional wellbeing of employees working from home, seeking online permission with an undertaking to use the tool for non-commercial purposes. (Kern, M.,2014). This tool measures positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, accomplishment, health, negative emotions, lonely, and happy emotions of the workplace. This tool measures wellbeing across various domains and it recommends presenting the multidimensional structure of the measure for individual or group presentation. In the original set of questions, few words like lockdown, covid-19, work from home were added appropriately. There were nine additional questions added to the questionnaire to include financial emotions, social emotions, and the future of work from home. The demographic section was added in the beginning, and an option to provide comments on the current situation as the free text was provided at the end.

4.3. **Survey administration:** The eligible population for this survey was all private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown. The population size for this study is very large and is considered as an infinite number. The sampling method adopted for this study was a mixed sampling method where the researcher identified the requisite sample size based on judgemental and snowball methods. Considering the constraints of lockdown, a personally administered method was chosen to contact respondents in the professional network of family and friends and requested them to share the survey within their network with eligible respondents. The survey questionnaire was created using an online google form. Some of the advantages of launching an online survey questionnaire are ease of administration, larger reach, lower costs, and greater accuracy. (Fricker, R. D. 2008).

The survey period was open for 15 days from April 19, '20 to May 3, '20. The start date of the survey was almost one month after the declaration of the covid-19 pandemic and was considered, assuming employees working from home would have settled by then. There were in all 655 respondents, of which, 59 respondents were removed from the analysis, as they were out of scope (30 government employees, 24 not working from home, and four were students). The total number of respondents for data analysis was finally 596. The data was suitably re-grouped or re-classified to be more meaningful. The Microsoft Excel 2016 and IBM SPSS v26.0 Statistics subscription tools were extensively used for the data analysis.

4.4. **Reliability & validity:** The original PERMA tool used for this study had tested and validated 23 questions. There were another nine questions added, to measure emotions for financial, social, and work from home factors. The pre-testing of the complete set of questionnaires was carried out on a pilot test of 55 respondents. The study also attempted to validate the work from home during the covid-19 lockdown context and for the same reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach alpha and content validity was established with the discussions with the peers and main stakeholders.

4.5. **Delimitation of the study:** The study is restricted to private-sector employees working from home during the covid-19 lockdown period. The time frame of the study was from 19th April 2020 to 3rd May 2020.

4.6. **Limitation of the study:** The survey method for this study was snowball and purely judgemental. This limitation was due to the lockdown situation, wherein the researcher could not have used a scientific method of selection of sample.

4.7. **Ethics:** All participants were made aware of the purpose of the survey and the *suo moto* consent of participants was taken while submitting the questionnaire. Respondents were assured that the confidentially of the responses will be maintained. During the analysis of the data, no co-relation of findings with any organization or individual was carried out and will not be done in the future as well. Participants were requested for voluntary participation in the survey, and they were not forced or influenced or paid for attempting the survey. Some of the participants were gently reminded a maximum of twice or thrice to participate in this survey. Some of the participants had eagerly requested for sharing with them a soft copy of this study, and this was agreed upon.

5. Findings/discussion

The research objectives were achieved by undertaking an appropriate survey, testing the validity of responses, and analysing the data collected. The characteristics of respondent's demography like country/ region, gender, marital status, age group, and the type of industry they work with were studied, to understand from the sample population, the demographic profile of respondents, and have a meaningful outcome of the analysis.

Within the total valid sample of 596 respondents, 85.6% were from India, 8.9% were from the US region— USA, Canada, and Mexico, and 5.5% from the rest of Asia. The survey was published to both employees working in India and to the professional network of Indians working outside of India, and this may be the reason for higher participation from India as compared to other countries.

The respondents were 79% male and 21% female, indicating majority participation of male employees as compared to female employees. 43.1% of respondents were in the age group 30 to 40 years, followed by 25.2 % in the age group of 40 to 50 years. 79.4% of the respondents were married while remaining 20.6% were unmarried or divorced or separated. From the industry demographic perspective, IT & ITES industry has 56% of the respondents, followed by 15.8% from manufacturing, 8.2% from utility sector (telecom, power, and water), 6.5% from financial services (banking, insurance, investment, taxation, etc.), 5.9% from consulting services (legal firms, architects, design, placement, real estate, etc), 4.4% from education and balance 3.2% from all remaining sectors (construction, entertainment, aviation, shipping, etc.).

Table 5.1 Respondent Profile			
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Cumulative %**
Country / Region			
India	510	85.6%	85.6%
Rest of Asia	33	5.5%	91.1%
US Region	53	8.9%	100.0%

Gender			
Male	471	79.0%	79.0%
Female	125	21.0%	100.0%
Marital Status			
Married	473	79.4%	79.4%
Other than married	123	20.6%	100.0%
Age Group			
Under 30 years	127	21.3%	21.3%
30 years to 40 years	257	43.1%	64.4%
40 years to 50 years	150	25.2%	89.6%
50 years or above	62	10.4%	100.0%
Industry Type			
IT &b ITES	334	56.0%	56.0%
Manufacturing	94	15.8%	71.8%
Utility	49	8.2%	80.0%
Financial Services	39	6.5%	86.6%
Consulting Services	35	5.9%	92.4%
Education	26	4.4%	96.8%
Other Sectors	19	3.2%	100.0%

The correlation between different types of PERMA emotions was computed using the Pearson correlation method, and the analysis signifies a strong correlation amongst positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, accomplishment, health, and happiness. There is an inverse correlation of these positive emotions with negative emotions & loneliness. These relationships establish the right nature of co-relation.

Table 5.2 Correlations										
		Postive Emotions	Engagement	Relationship	Meaning	Accomplishment	Health	Happiness	Negative Emotions	Loneliness
	N	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596	596
Postive Emotions	Pearson Correlation	1	.573**	.639**	.707**	.670**	.512**	.742**	-.405**	-.290**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.573**	1	.419**	.586**	.563**	.250**	.469**	-0.052	-0.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.206	0.237
Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.639**	.419**	1	.664**	.647**	.520**	.534**	-.301**	-.249**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Meaning	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.586**	.664**	1	.864**	.420**	.624**	-.292**	-.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Accomplishment	Pearson Correlation	.670**	.563**	.647**	.864**	1	.379**	.610**	-.263**	-.216**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Health	Pearson Correlation	.512**	.250**	.520**	.420**	.379**	1	.447**	-.329**	-.183**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
Happiness	Pearson Correlation	.742**	.469**	.534**	.624**	.610**	.447**	1	-.386**	-.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Negative Emotions	Pearson Correlation	-.405**	-0.052	-.301**	-.292**	-.263**	-.329**	-.386**	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.206	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
Loneliness	Pearson Correlation	-.290**	-0.049	-.249**	-.255**	-.216**	-.183**	-.326**	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.237	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).										

A similar analysis of the correlation between overall wellbeing, negative emotions, and loneliness was computed against financial, social, and work from home attributes. The computed values signify a strong positive correlation between overall wellbeing and work from home, while a weak correlation between financial and overall wellbeing, social and work from home. Financial factors have a positive correlation with loneliness and negative emotions, while other factors have an inverse relationship with loneliness and negative emotions.

| Table 5.3 Correlations							
		Overall Wellbeing	Financial	Social	Work from Home	Negative Emotions	Loneliness
	N	596	596	596	596	596	596
Overall Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	.297**	.552**	.531**	-.354**	-.289**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Financial	Pearson Correlation	.297**	1	.253**	0.079	0.068	0.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.054	0.098	0.317
Social	Pearson Correlation	.552**	.253**	1	.359**	-.266**	-.227**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
Work from Home	Pearson Correlation	.531**	0.079	.359**	1	-.344**	-.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.054	0.000		0.000	0.000
Negative Emotions	Pearson Correlation	-.354**	0.068	-.266**	-.344**	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.098	0.000	0.000		0.000
Loneliness	Pearson Correlation	-.289**	0.041	-.227**	-.332**	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.317	0.000	0.000	0.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

The reliability of responses was established using Cronbach's Alpha test, with the positive category of emotions alpha value as 0.867 signifying data is highly reliable. Similarly, the alpha value for the negative

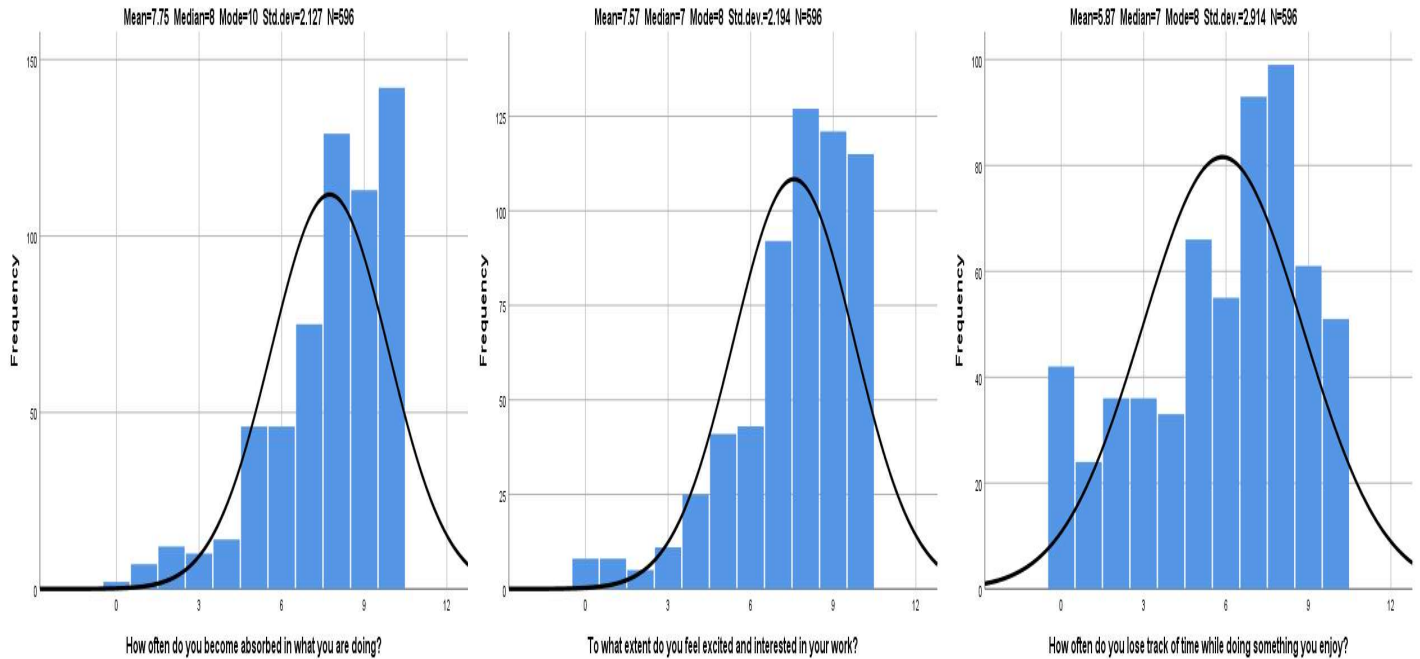emotional wellbeing category of attributes is 0.573 and this is also reliable as responses were negatively recorded.

Table 5.4 Reliability & Scale Statistics							
	Reliability Statistics			Scale Statistics			
Emotional wellbeing category	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
Positive	0.867	0.869	10	74.98	234.067	15.299	10
Negative	0.573	0.576	2	9.66	27.822	5.275	2

5.1. **Positive emotions:** The analysis showed that the normal probability curve is positively skewed towards employees feeling joyful, positive, and contented while working from home. Additionally, respondents are less contented as compared to feeling joyful and positive.
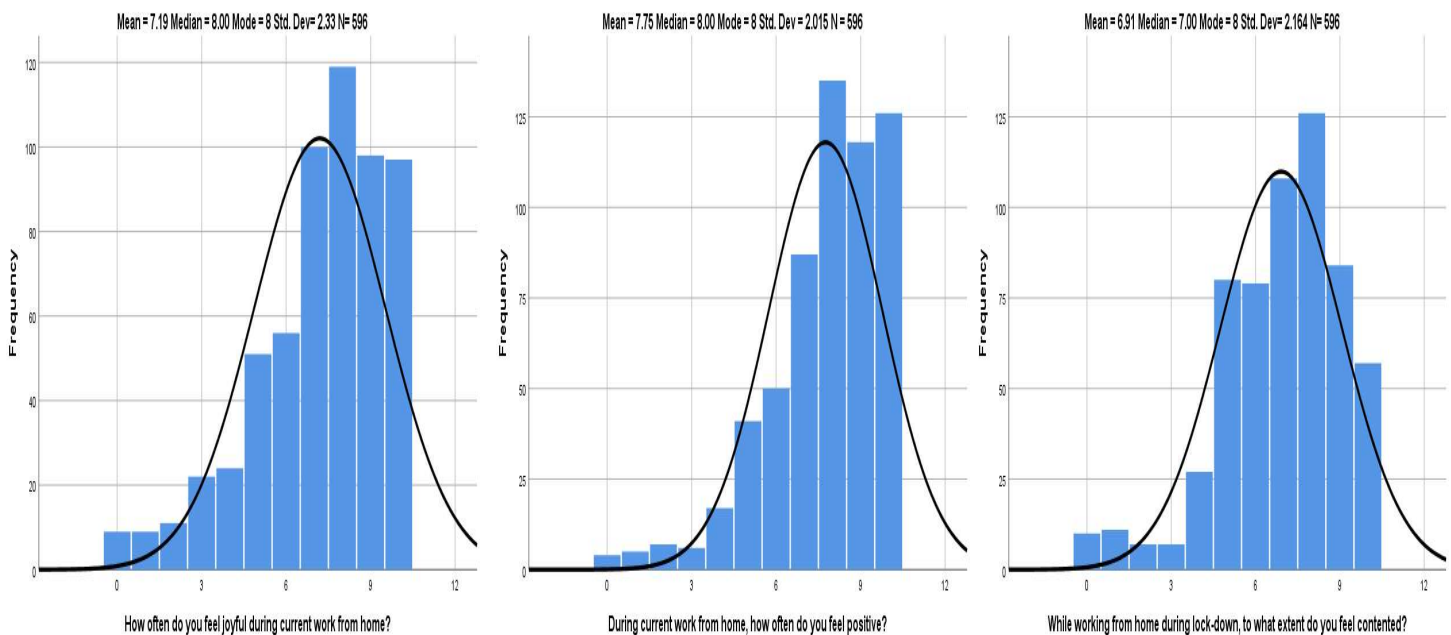
Figure 1. Positive Emotions

5.2. **Engagement:** The analysis indicates that the normal probability curve is positively skewed, and most of the respondents were positively absorbed, excited, and enjoy working from home. However, it also indicates that employees were more absorbed and excited as compared to losing track of time something they enjoy working.
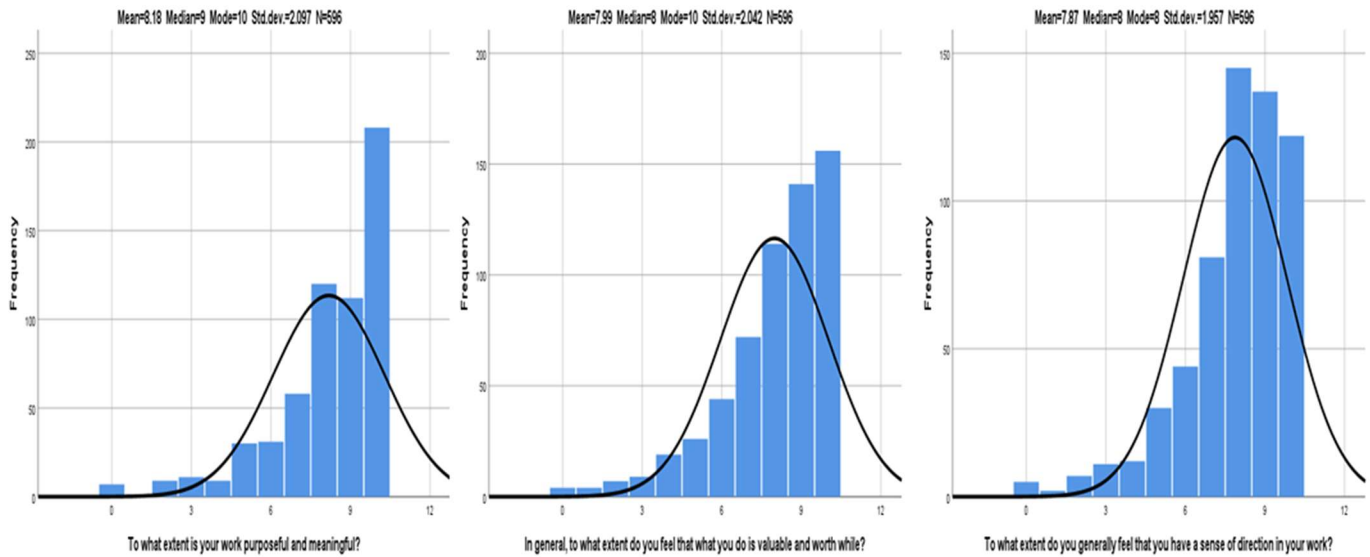
Mean=7.75 Median=8 Mode=10 Std.dev=2.127 N=596

How often do you become absorbed in what you are doing?

Mean=7.57 Median=7 Mode=8 Std.dev.=2.194 N=596

To what extent do you feel excited and interested in your work?

Mean=5.87 Median=7 Mode=8 Std.dev.=2.914 N=596

How often do you lose track of time while doing something you enjoy?

Figure 2. Engagement

5.3. **Relationship:** The analysis reveals that the normal probability curve is positively skewed indicating most of the respondents were receiving positive support and appreciation, however, there were challenges in maintaining a professional relationship while working from home.

Mean=8.04 Median=8 Mode=10 Std.dev=2.002 N=596

To what extent do you receive help and support from coworkers when you need it?

Mean=6.81 Median=7 Mode=8 Std.dev.=2.462 N=596

To what extent do you feel appreciated by your coworkers?

Mean=7.73 Median=8 Mode=8 Std.dev.=2.088 N=596

How satisfied are you with your professional relationships?
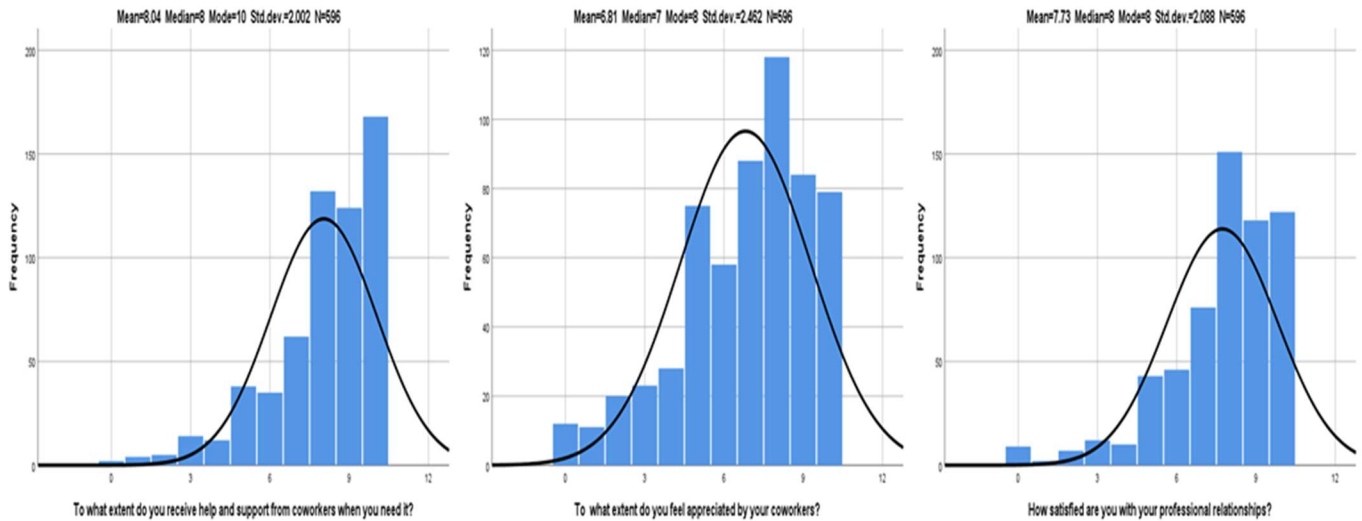
Figure 3. Relationship

5.4. **Meaning:** It was found from the analysis that, the normal probability curve is positively skewed and respondents feel that their work has meaning and purpose, are worthwhile, and have a sense of direction while working from home.

Mean=8.18 Median=9 Mode=10 Std.dev.=2.097 N=596

Mean=7.99 Median=8 Mode=10 Std.dev.=2.042 N=596

Mean=7.87 Median=8 Mode=8 Std.dev.=1.957 N=596

To what extent is your work purposeful and meaningful?

In general, to what extent do you feel that what you do is valuable and worth while?

To what extent do you generally feel that you have a sense of direction in your work?

Figure 4. Meaning or Purpose

5.5. **Accomplishment:** The analysis of data on accomplishment reveals that the normal probability curve is positively skewed, and respondents feel that they are progressing and achieving important work goals, and can handle professional responsibilities while working from home.

Mean=7.97 Median=8 Mode=10 Std.dev.=2.08 N=596

Mean=7.77 Median=8 Mode=8 Std.dev.=1.982 N=596

Mean=7.99 Median=8 Mode=9 Std.dev.=1.94 N=596

How often do you feel you are making progress towards accomplishing your work-related goals?

How often do you achieve the important work goals you have set for yourself?

How often are you able to handle your work-related responsibilities?
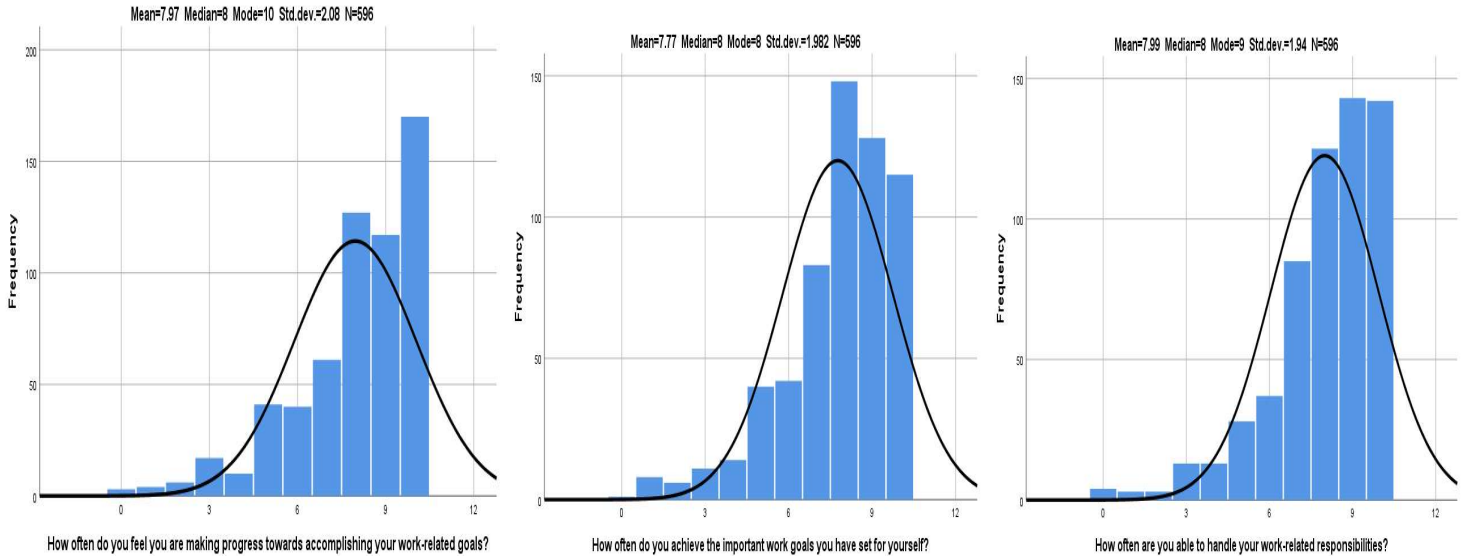
Figure 5. Accomplishment

5.6. **Negative emotions:** The analysis found that the normal probability curve is negatively skewed and respondents are less angry and sad; however, at the same time, respondents felt anxious.
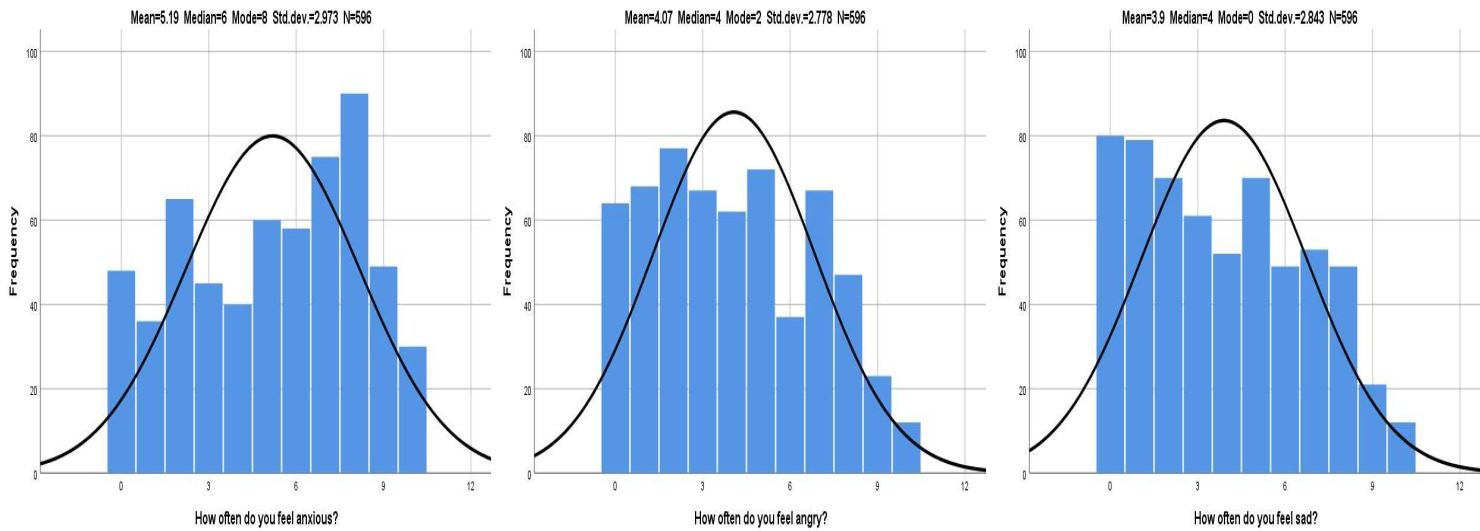
Figure 6. Negative Emotions

5.7. **Loneliness:** There was only one specific question on the degree of loneliness and it was found from the analysis that the NPC curve is negatively skewed indicating respondents have a lower feeling of loneliness. However, there are respondents, who are away from midpoint towards extreme loneliness (maximum score 10).
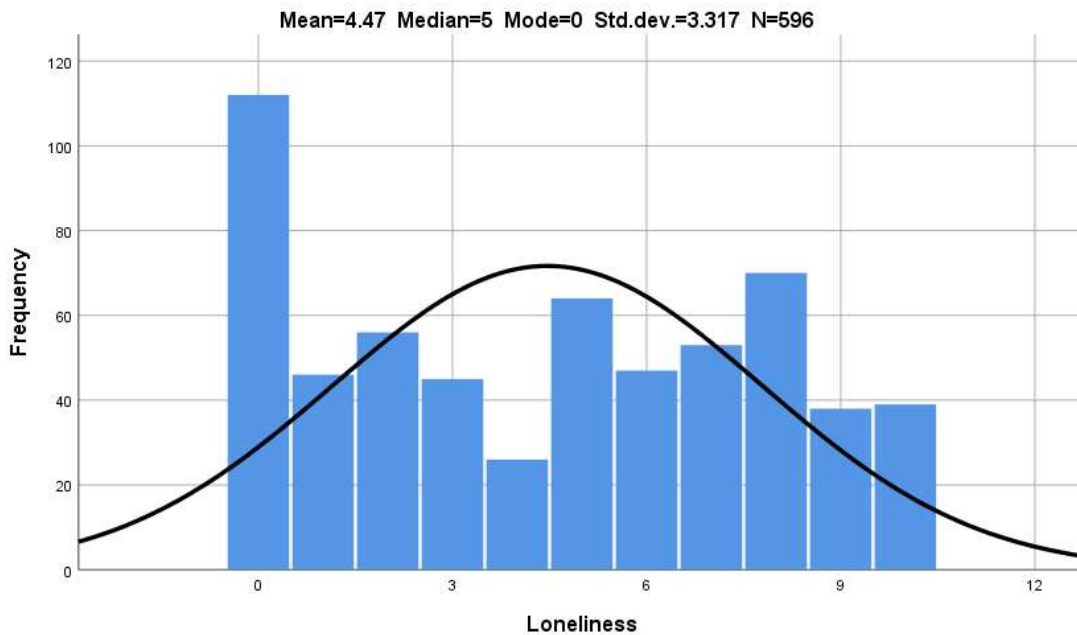

Figure 7. Loneliness

5.8. **Happiness:** The data analysis indicates that the NPC curve is positively skewed indicating employees are generally feeling happy while working from home, with 13.8% of the employees always feeling happy.
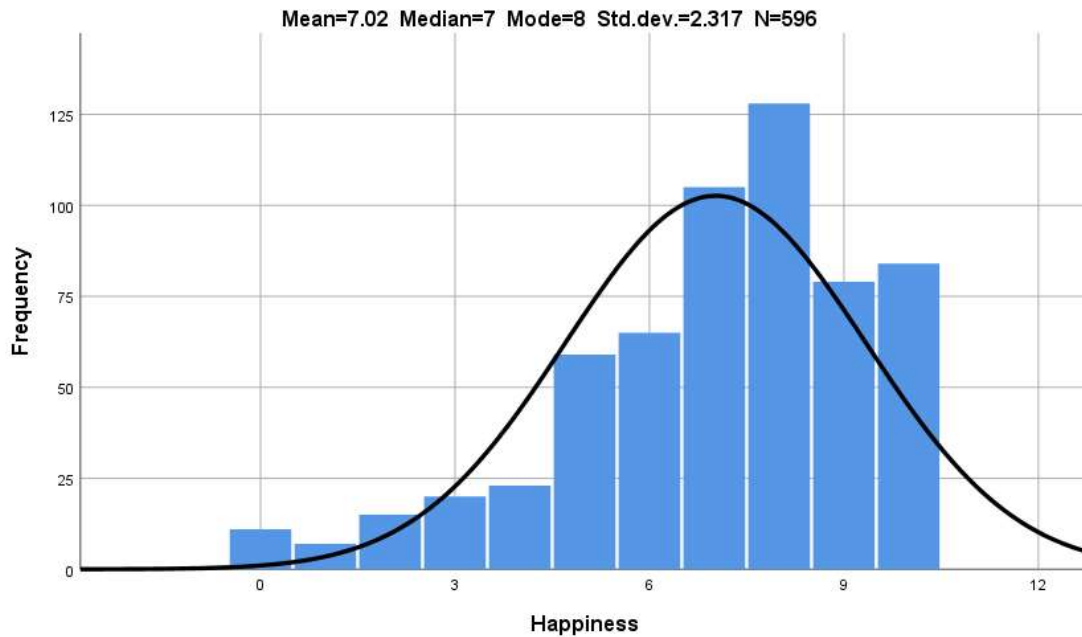
Figure 8. Happiness

5.9. **Health:** The analysis found that the normal probability curve is positively skewed for all three factors of general health condition, current health condition, and comparative health with colleagues of the same age and sex, indicating generally the health of employees is good.
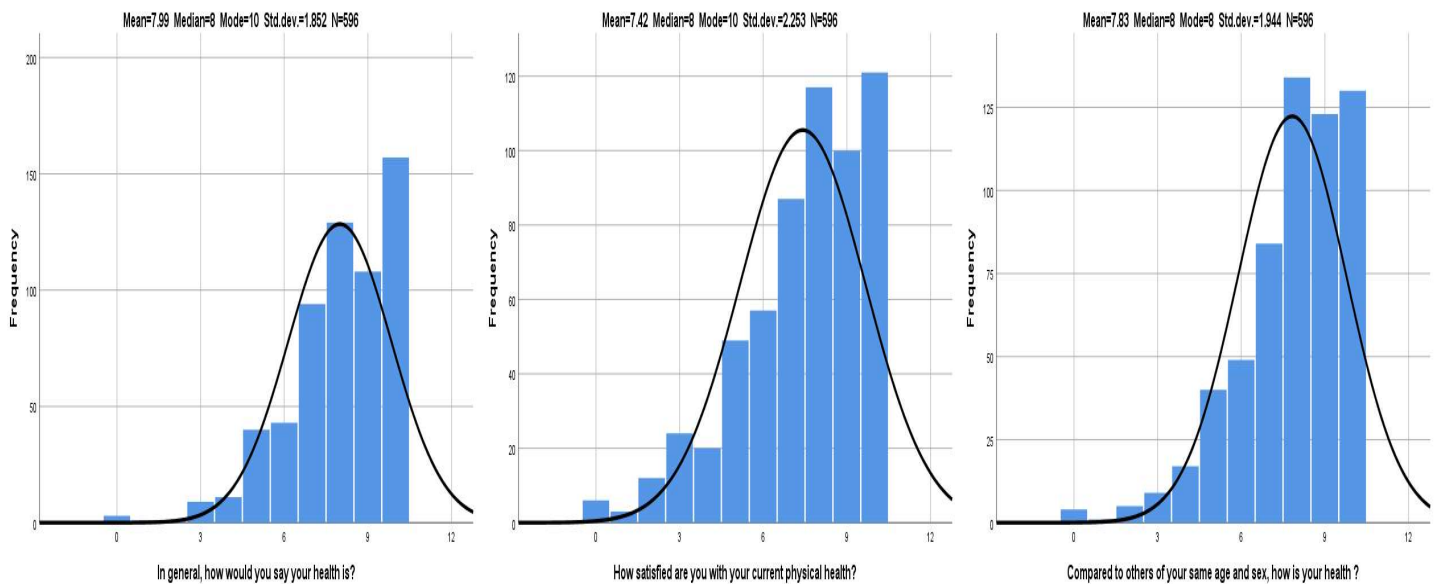
Figure 9. Health

5.10. **Financial:** The data analysis indicates that the normal probability curve is highly positively skewed for timeliness of payments, as compared to the security and safety of the job and future growth. This indicates

that respondents are currently receiving their payments in time, however, there may be a risk in the future of job security, promotions, and increments.
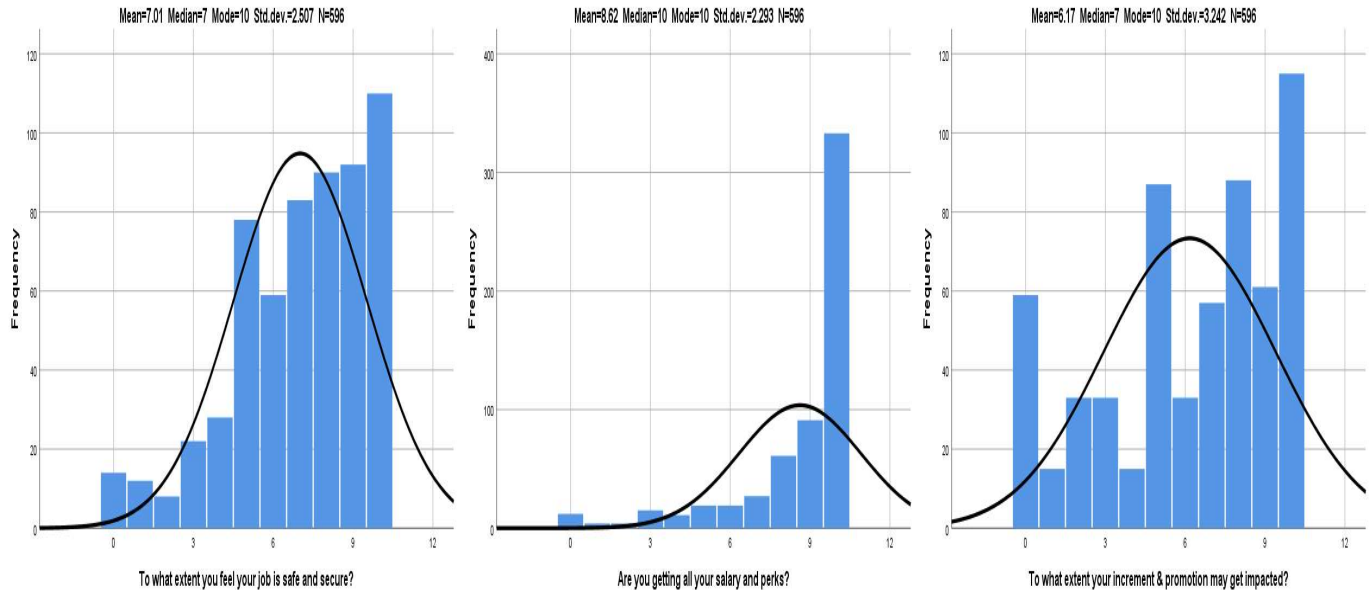
Figure 10. Financial

5.11. **Social emotions:** It was found from the analysis that the normal probability curve is positively skewed for work-life balance and overall family mood, however, it is slightly negatively skewed for the ability to meet social obligations.
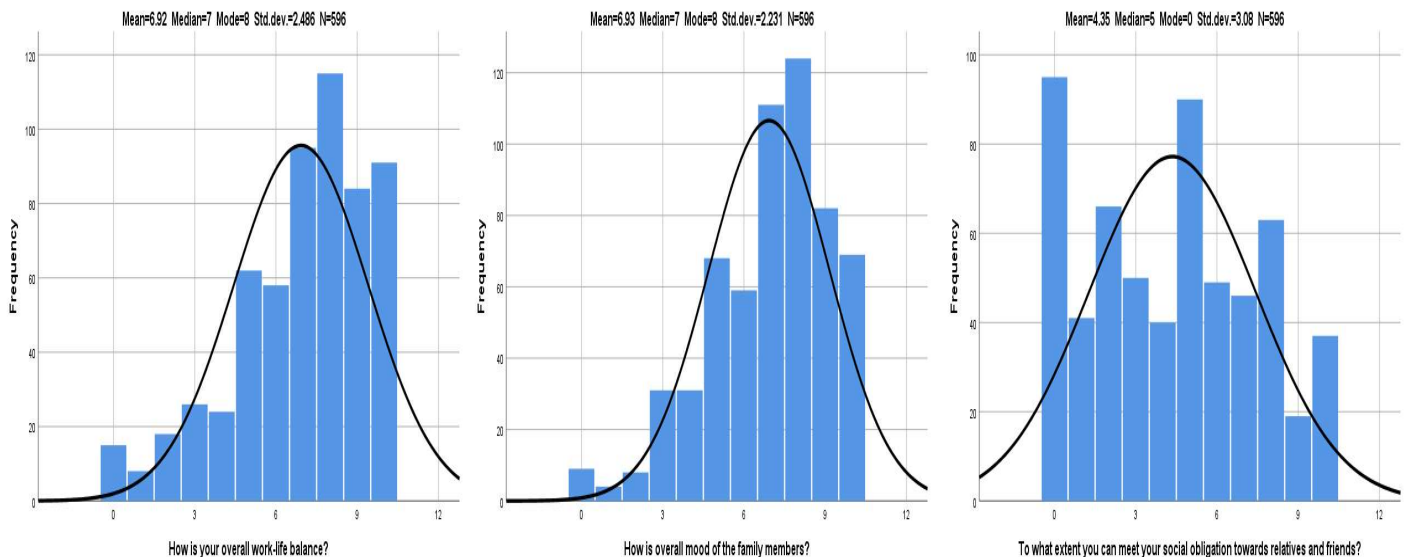
Figure 11: Social

5.12. **Work from home:** The analysis of data reveals that the normal probability curve is positively skewed; respondents are strongly recommending work from home, and it will be a new norm in the future.

However, respondents are missing the office environment, and recommend a mix of work from home and working from the office.
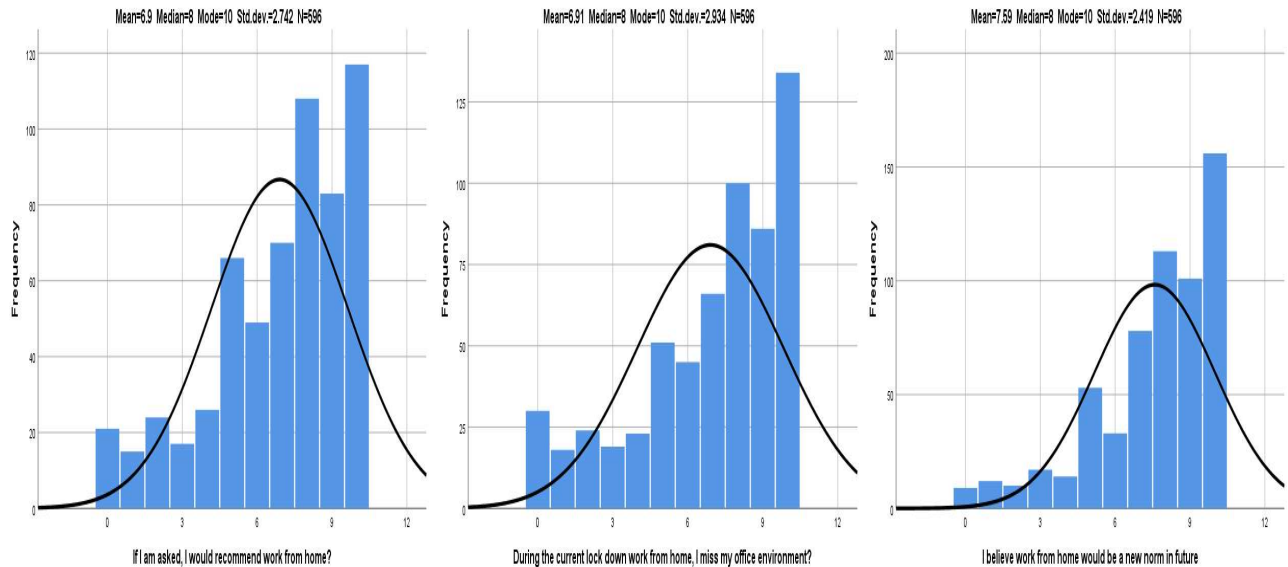
Figure 12: Work from home

5.13. **PERMA:** PERMA scores were computed as a mean score for positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, accomplishment, health, happiness, negative emotions, and loneliness along with mean scores for financial, social, and work from home. These scores were then plotted together in a graph and analysed in various categories. There were overall 596 respondents, 85% from India, 5.5% from the rest of Asia, and the remaining 8.9% were from the US region. The analysis reveals that the comparative PERMA score for the U.S. is better than that of India and the rest of Asia on both, positive and negative emotions.
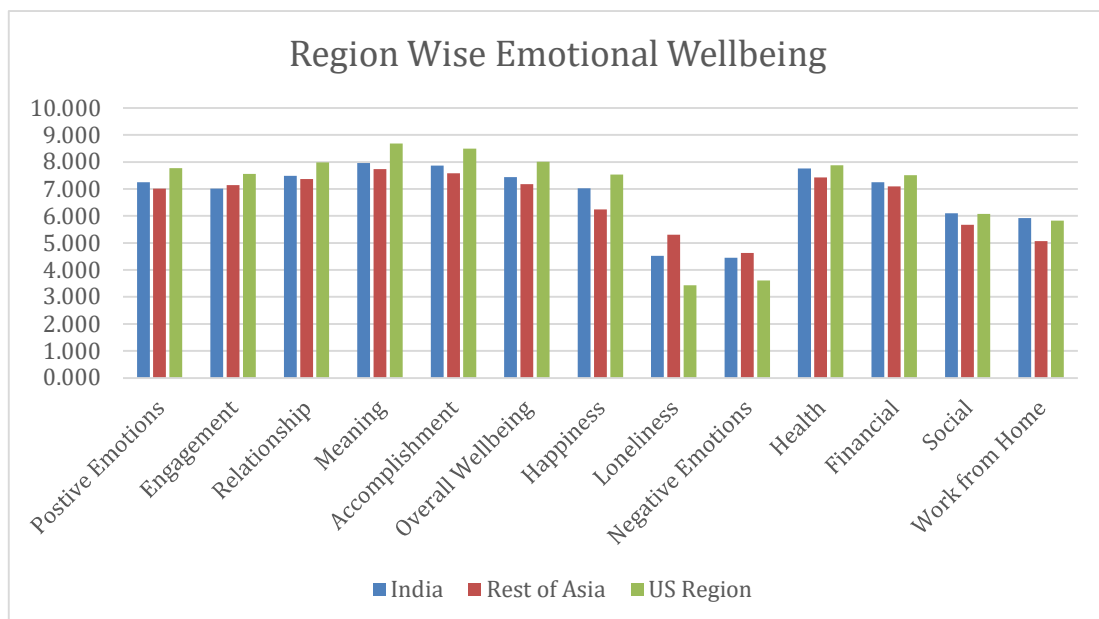
5.14. **Gender wise analysis:** There were overall 596 respondents, of which 471 (79%) were male, and the remaining 125 (21%) were females. The analysis reveals that the comparative PERMA score for females is better than those of males on both positive and negative emotions. Females have shown a better preference for work from home and have a better social life as compared to male employees. Females are feeling less lonely as compared to male employees.
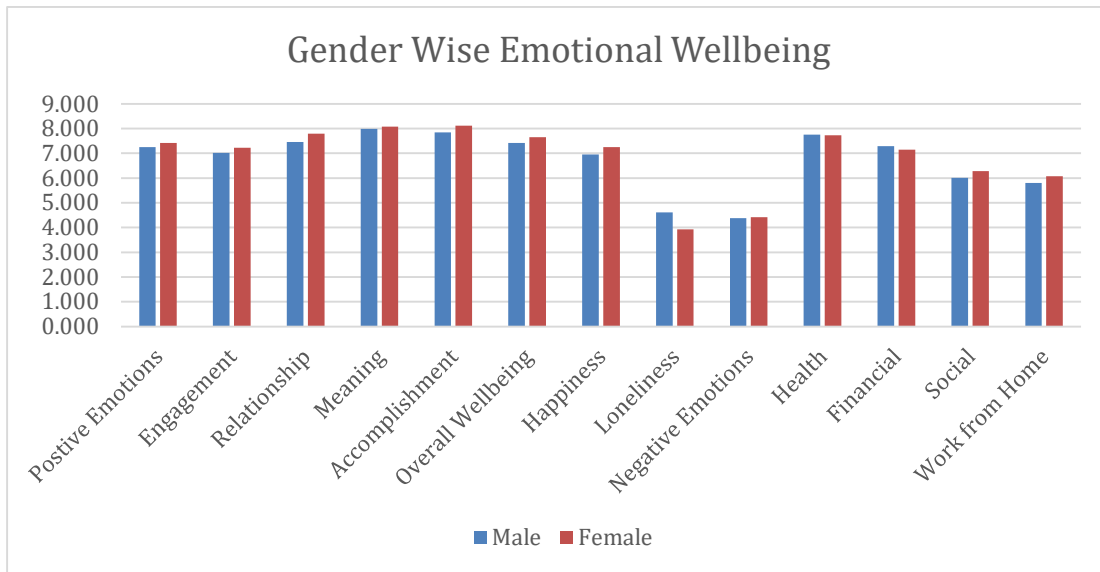

Figure 14: Gender wise

5.15. **Marital Status analysis:** The analysis of data shows that the positive emotional measures for married and other than married (unmarried, separated, divorced) are similar, however, respondents in other than married category are feeling more loneliness and have higher negative emotions.
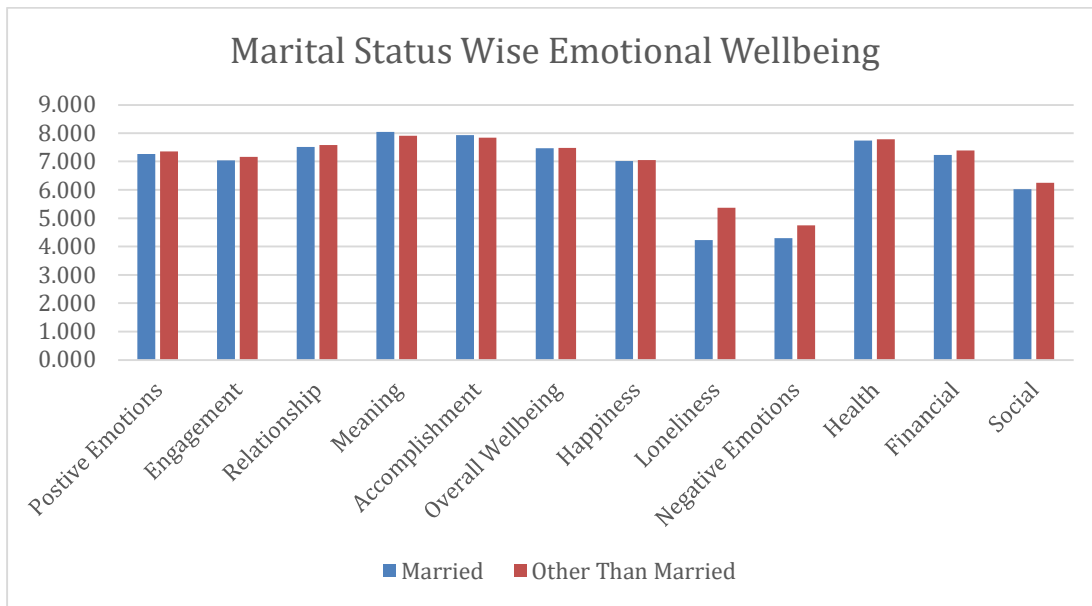
Figure 15: Marital Status

5.16. **Age-wise analysis:** The age-wise analysis shows that respondents in the age group of 41 years to 50 years have better positive and negative emotions as compared to other age groups. The respondents in the age group of under 31 years are feeling lonelier and have higher negative emotions as compared to other age groups.
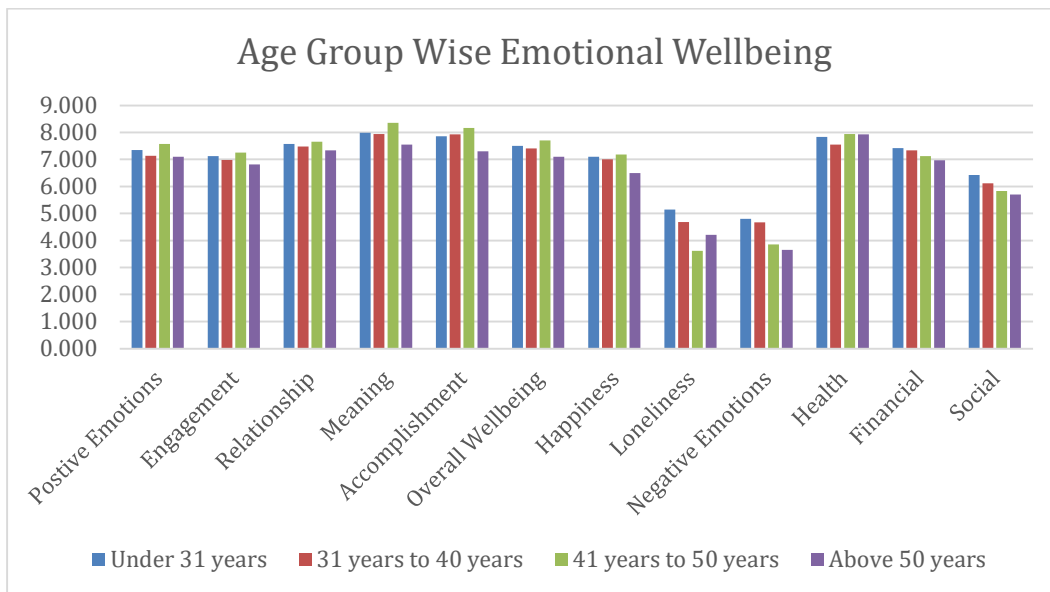

Figure 16: Age Group-Wise

5.17. **Industry-wise analysis:** There were overall 596 respondents, 334 (56%) of which were from the IT sector, and 94 (15.8%) from the manufacturing sector. The analysis reveals that normally the comparative

PERMA score for the IT sector and education sector is better than other sectors. Manufacturing sector employees have higher loneliness emotions and have shown a lower preference for work from home.
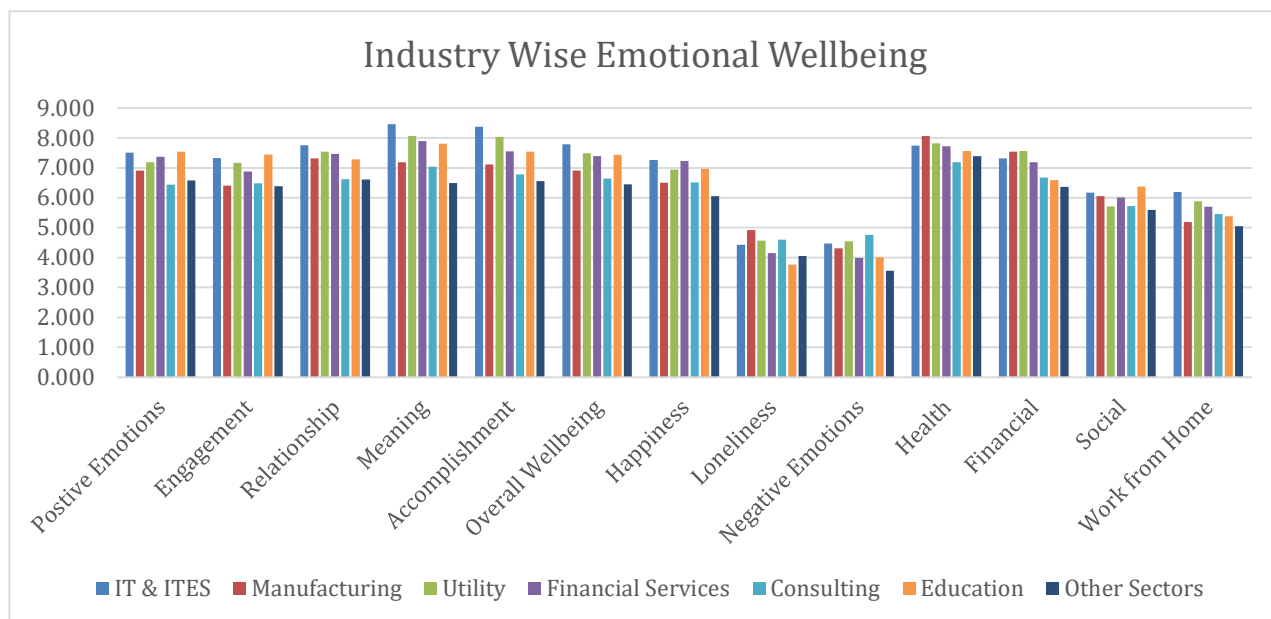

Figure 17: Industry Wise

5.18. **Covid-19 WFH Period:** Most of the respondents from India, the rest of Asia, and the US region believe that work from home may continue till June'20, and this is followed by period till Sep'20. Interestingly, a small section of respondents believed that this can continue till Dec'21.
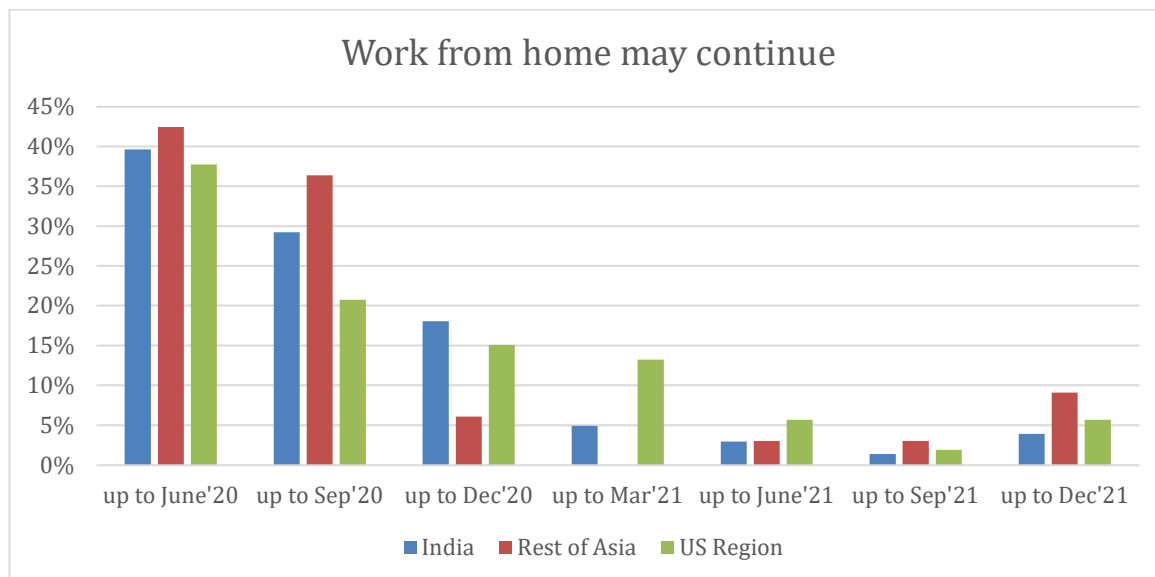
Figure 18: Work from home

5.19. **Feel good factor:** One of the top-voted (39%) feel-good factors from the current lockdown period is environmental friendliness. During the lockdown period, most industries were closed or were operating below capacity, and most of public transport (road, train, air) were operating at a minimum level. The air quality improved in many countries, rivers were cleaner, the temperature came down and in some cases, animals were spotted public places. Both, India (23%) and rest of the world (28%) gave the next best scores for commute time-saving and then improvement in work-life balance.
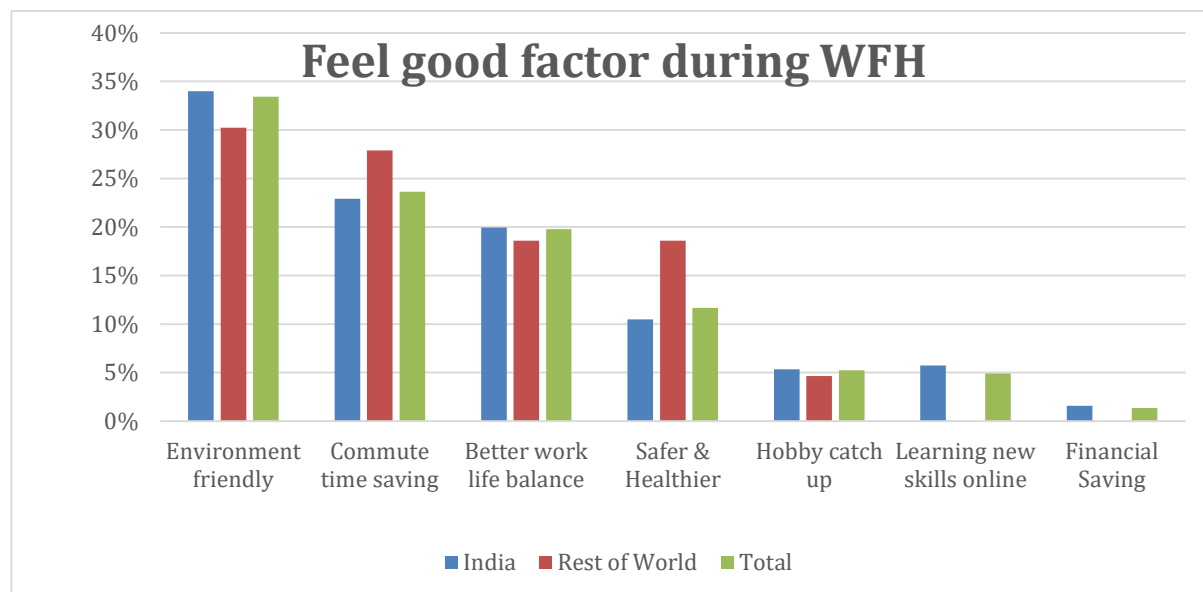
Figure 19: Feel Good Factor

6. Conclusion

Human resources are knowledge assets for organizations, and their emotional wellbeing is important in achieving individual goals and organizational objectives. In the study, employees have shown positive emotional wellbeing for all the attributes considered, i.e. positive emotions, engagement, relationship, meaning, accomplishment, health, finance, happiness; however, there are mixed responses to loneliness, negative emotions, social emotions, and work from home. The study also reveals that the emotional wellbeing of females is better than that of males on both positive and negative emotions. Females have further shown a higher preference for work from home and believe that this has resulted in a more balanced social life for them. Females are feeling less lonely as compared to male employees. As for marital status, positive emotions are similar irrespective of their marital status. However, employees in other than married category (unmarried, divorced, separated) are found to be feeling lonelier and have higher negative emotions as compared to married respondents. Further, employees in the age group of 41 years to 50 years have better positive and negative emotions as compared to other age groups. On the other hand, respondents under 31 years are feeling lonelier and have higher negative emotions as compared to others. Finally, from an industry perspective, the IT sector has better PERMA emotional wellbeing measurement as compared to others, whereas manufacturing sector employees observed higher loneliness and have shown a lower preference for work from home.

Most of the employees (39%) believe that work from home may continue till June'20, while another 29% believed that this may continue until Sep'20. A small section of 4% believes that this can continue further until Dec'21. The majority of the employees consider environment-friendliness as the top positive outcome of work from home, followed by commute time-saving and better work-life balance. The other feel-good

factors were healthier and safer feelings, catch up with hobbies, learning new skills online and a small section considers financial savings as the top outcome for them.

The above results provide significant insights into the emotional wellbeing of employees from India and other countries, different genders, marital status, age group, and different industry sectors. The information from this study provides a point in time reference of participating employee's emotional wellbeing and this information will be important for employers, employees, society, and researchers.

6.1. **Recommendation to Employers:** Employees have an important role in meeting an organization's objectives and goals. Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:
    6.1.1.   On positive emotions, employers can plan an intervention to improve satisfaction and joyfulness.
    6.1.2.   On engagement, it is recommended to find out ways to make work more enjoyable while working from home.
    6.1.3.   For relationships, employees need support to improve their professional relationships.
    6.1.4.   On negative emotions and loneliness, there is a need to develop solutions targeted to certain sections of employees e.g. bachelors or working couples needing support systems for daily needs. This is in line with age group-wise analysis, wherein employees in the age group of under 31 years have the least positive emotions and are feeling lonelier as compared to other age groups.
    6.1.5.   On financial security, employees are concerned about their job security, future growth, and promotions, and this can be addressed by bringing transparency in the organization's communication.
    6.1.6.   On social obligations, employees can be provided counselling to improve work-life balance and on overcoming anxiety or fear of missing out on social obligations.
    6.1.7.   Employees have shown a preference for work from home and this can be leveraged by employers for mutual benefit. Post covid-19, we may have new work models with work from home location and work from home country. Employers need to define the process and good governance framework, which should address how remote work can be made more joyful and engaging. Employers should also think of ways to make remote work experience holistic by not only instilling a sense of meaning in day-to-day work activities but also planning virtual recreational fun events.
    6.1.8.   Some respondents also raised concerns regarding lack of infrastructure which hinders work from home. Organizations can assist employees in meeting their infrastructure needs to ensure a smooth transition to the remote working model. For instance, Google recently gave an allowance to its employees for purchasing office furniture to assist them to work comfortably from their homes. (Google Gives Employees $1,000 Work-From-Home Allowance. 2020).
    6.1.9.   Employers can plan regular surveys to measure the emotional wellbeing of employees and check the effectiveness of the intervention, especially under these types of circumstances.

6.2. **Recommendation to Employees:** The study provides useful insights, which can be used by employees for self-improvement as well as for understanding and supporting fellow team members while working from home. Some of the specific recommendations are as follows:
    6.2.1   Managers can play an important role in making their team members feel positive, making work enjoyable, and by appreciating them regularly.
    6.2.2   Managers can have one on one discussions with team members to understand those employees who are feeling anxious, angry, and lonely and address them systematically. This discussion should not be mixed with discussions about setting objectives and review of performance. However, from this discussion, some actionable can be included in the personality development of individuals.
    6.2.3   This insight provides useful information to employees for self-introspection and self-development.

6.3. **Further Research:** The scope of the current topic was limited to the private sector and the majority of the respondents were from India. There is further scope of research on the emotional wellbeing of employees while working from home, especially for the government sector employees, country-specific, or for a

specific industry. The study can be carried out more frequently during the pandemic period to understand how emotional wellbeing is impacted if work from home continues for a longer time duration say three months or more. Such research can provide good insight and recommendations to the industry.

In conclusion, the emotional wellbeing of employees is important for an organization's success, and this study reveals that employees are feeling positive in working from home. Employees believe work from home would be a new norm in the future. This is an opportunity for organizations and employees to prepare themselves for the future of smart working and ensure the emotional wellbeing of employees is taken care of.

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