

Research Article

Factors Influencing Work from Anywhere Effectiveness: An Empirical Study of Indian IT and Consulting Organizations

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Article History

Received: 01.05.2026

Accepted: 25.05.2026

Published: 30.06.2026

Abstract: One of the key flexible work arrangements, especially in technology-driven organizations, is Work from Anywhere (WFA). There are a number of organizational, technological and individual factors that are important to the success of WFA for employees to work efficiently in remote environments. The current study focuses on the impact of Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness and Digital Competence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness in selected IT and consulting organizations in India. The study is based on primary data collected from 399 HR professionals. To explore the relationships between the study variables Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) was used for the analysis. The results show that Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness, and Digital Competence positively and significantly affect Work from Anywhere effectiveness. Digital Competence became an important factor to consider in successful WFA implementation among these factors. The study reinforces the value of being digitally prepared, having good communication systems, and having supportive organizational practices in place to ensure the success of flexible working. The results have added to the emerging body of research on Work from Anywhere and offer some concrete examples for organisations looking to improve their approaches to remote and hybrid working.

Keywords: Work From Anywhere, Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness, Digital Competence, Flexible Work Arrangements.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies are moving at a fast pace, and the unprecedented events of the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted the workplace all over the world. Flexible work arrangements were more and more widely used to keep businesses operating and employees healthy. Within these arrangements, Work from Anywhere (WFA) is an important workplace model that allows workforce to complete their job tasks from anywhere in the world, using digital technologies and virtual communication systems. Work From Anywhere is more flexible than traditional remote working, as it eliminates the need for location-based restrictions, enabling employees to work outside of the traditional office setting. In the information technology and consulting industries, where flexible working practices are enabled by digital infrastructure and knowledge-based work, there has been a significant increase in the acceptance of WFA. With ongoing implementation of WFA in organizational practices, the factors affecting effectiveness of WFA are becoming more relevant. Several organizational, technological and individual factors are necessary for successful implementation of WFA. Technological readiness, organizational support, communication systems, and employee digital skills are all critical factors identified in previous studies that contribute to a productive remote work environment. Seamless access to organisational resources through reliable technological infrastructure, and organisational support to help employees adjust to flexible working. In a similar way, communication skills help to coordinate and collaborate with geographically dispersed colleagues and digital skills help staff to use technology effectively in remote environments. While empirical studies have been conducted to understand the factors that affect WFA effectiveness in other contexts, there is a dearth of such studies in an Indian context despite the

growing popularity of WFA. Previous research has tended to focus on remote work and hybrid work arrangements, and little research has examined what influences the effectiveness of Work from Anywhere practices. The importance of this research gap can be understood in the context of IT and consulting industry in India where flexible work arrangements are an integral part of organizational strategy. In this context, the present study is set to find out influence of Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness and Digital Competence on effectiveness of Work from Anywhere in selected Indian IT and consulting organizations. The study aims to make contribution to the literature on flexible working and offer practical implications for organisations looking to improve the effectiveness of their Work from Anywhere initiatives by identifying key factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As digital technologies and flexible working become more prevalent, the nature of work in each sector is changing. Flexible work practices have become a subject of great interest for researchers and practitioners because they can increase the agility of the organization, employee autonomy and business continuity. The COVID-19 pandemic has speed up the shift to remote and flexible working and organizations have embraced Work from Anywhere (WFA) arrangements on an unprecedented scale, Kniffin et al., (2021) reported. Work From Anywhere is an elevated level of flexible working, that allows employees to deliver their work from anywhere in the world, through digital technology and virtual communication tools. WFA is not a traditional remote working practice as it is not constrained to location and provides flexibility in work execution. Studies indicate that WFA depends on a number of factors that influence the creation of productive work in a remote setting, such as technological, organizational and individual factors (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Technological infrastructure has been acknowledged as one of the many factors that affects the effectiveness of WFA. For WFA to work, one needs to have an internet connection, digital tools for collaboration, secure information systems and access to resources within the organization. The technological readiness plays a key role in employee productivity and the effectiveness of remote working, as noted by Wang et al. 2021. Similarly, Galanti et al. 2021 discovered that providing proper technological support positively impacts employee performance and minimizes work stress in the remote work environment. Organisational support is also an important factor that influences the success of flexible work arrangements. Eisenberger et al., (1986) proposed Organizational Support Theory (OST) which posits that employees who feel the organization is supporting them will have positive work attitudes and will be more productive. In a remote work environment, it can involve support such as flexibility, resources, and employee wellness programs. The literature has indicated that supportive organizational practices help employees to adapt and also help in having successful implementation of remote work systems (Bentley et al., 2016). When you have employees working in various locations, communication effectiveness is critical to ensure coordination and collaboration. The digital communication channels are essential for sharing information, collaborating, and making decisions in remote work settings. According to Contreras et al. (2020), effective communication helps to mitigate uncertainty, foster collaboration, and improve employee engagement in virtual work environments. Waizenegger et al. (2020) have found that the quality of communication can have a major impact on the experience of employees and the effectiveness of teams in remote work situations. Digital competence has become one of the major individual factors affecting the effectiveness of WFA. Digital competence is defined as the competence of an employee to use digital technologies, communication and virtual working tools appropriately to complete their work tasks. Digital competence is higher among employees and makes it easier to adjust to flexible working conditions and be productive in flexible workplaces. Van Laar et al. (2020) state that digital skills have become key competencies for people working in digitalised workplaces. In fact, Spagnoli et al. (2020) found a positive relationship between digital competence and adaptability and work performance of employees in remote working situations. While previous research has explored different facets of remote working and flexible work arrangements, there is a lack of studies on the combined impact of Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness, and Digital Competence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness, especially in the context of India. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical support from the IT and consulting industry in India where WFA practices are widely adopted. Thus, the present study aims to fill this gap by understanding the factors affecting the effectiveness of Work from Anywhere in selected IT and consulting companies in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is: To study factors affecting the effectiveness of Work from Anywhere (WFA) in selected Indian IT and Consulting Organizations.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the review of literature and conceptual framework, the following hypotheses were developed:

- H1: Technological Infrastructure has a positive and significant influence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness.
- H2: Organizational Support has a positive and significant influence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness.
- H3: Communication Effectiveness has a positive and significant influence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness.
- H4: Digital Competence has a positive and significant influence on Work from Anywhere effectiveness.

Research Design

The research design used in the present study is Descriptive and Analytical which aims to analyse the factors that affect the effectiveness of Work from Anywhere. The research adopted quantitative approach with structured questionnaire as a data gathering tool.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The study was done with HR professionals from certain IT and consulting firms in India having remote, hybrid, or work from anywhere culture. A purposive sampling method was used to select respondents who have experience of working with flexible working arrangements. The data was primary in nature and gathered by using a structured questionnaire which was administered electronically. 399 valid responses were received and analysed.

Measures

Five constructs were measured on a 5-point scale with Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

Technological Infrastructure (TI): Technological Infrastructure indicates the availability and sufficiency of digital tools, connectivity and technological resources needed to enable effective working from home.

Organizational Support (OS): Organizational Support is employees' perception of how much the organization supports, provides resources and policies for Work from Anywhere practices.

Communication Effectiveness (CE): Communication Effectiveness is the quality, clarity, and effectiveness of communication processes that help to enable collaboration and coordination in remote work settings.

Digital Competence (DC): Digital Competence is employees' capacity to use digital technologies, virtual communication and collaboration tools effectively in the performance of work-related tasks.

Work From Anywhere Effectiveness (WFA): Work from Anywhere Effectiveness is a measure of how well workplace employees are able to work effectively and efficiently within a geographically flexible, technology-enabled work environment.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCEDURE

All data collected were screened for completeness, consistency, missing values and duplicate values. The questionnaires were used with reverse coding when necessary and non-completed questionnaires were eliminated. A total of 399 valid responses were used in the analysis of the data after cleaning. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for the data analysis. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate the measurement model, as well as the results for the discriminant validity. Next, the structural model was analysed to test the hypotheses and investigate the factors behind the effectiveness of the Work from Anywhere using path coefficients, t-values, p-values and coefficient of determination (R^2). The results of the data analysis are presented.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Measurement model assessment

Reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model were tested. Table 1 shows that all factor loadings are greater than the suggested factor loading margin of 0.70 and therefore are satisfactory on indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2019). The Cronbach's Alpha (α) values ranged from 0.819 to 0.862 and the Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.874 to 0.906 and were above the recommended value of 0.70, thus confirming internal consistency reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were greater than the minimum value of 0.5, indicating that all variables had convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Fornell–Larcker criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used to compare the square roots of each construct's average variance-extracted (AVE) value with the correlation between the AVE of two constructs to verify the discriminant validity. The square roots of the AVE for each construct in Table 2 were higher than the inter-construct correlations, thus meeting the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Furthermore, the HTMT values of all constructs were found to be below the suggested criterion value of 0.85; the range of values were from 0.053 to 0.403, thus providing further support for the discriminant validity among constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). The results show that, as a whole, the measurement model exhibits acceptable reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity and is thus appropriate for the subsequent analyses of the structural model and testing of the hypotheses.

Table 1. Item loadings, reliability and convergent validity

AS	λ	α	CR	AVE
Technological Infrastructure (TI)		0.846	0.896	0.683
TI1	0.804			
TI2	0.811			
TI3	0.843			
TI4	0.823			
Organizational Support (OS)		0.828	0.885	0.659
OS1	0.849			
OS2	0.746			
OS3	0.831			
OS4	0.854			
Communication Effectiveness (CE)		0.862	0.906	0.708
CE1				
CE2	0.854			
CE3	0.781			
CE4	0.841			
Digital Competence (DC)	0.828			
DC1		0.843	0.895	0.680
DC2	0.802			
DC3	0.844			
DC4	0.824			
Work From Anywhere (WFA)	0.813			
WFA1		0.819	0.874	0.581
WFA2	0.754			
WFA3	0.755			
WFA4	0.738			
WFA5	0.732			
	0.767			

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

		CE	DC	OS	TI	WFA
01.	Communication Effectiveness	0.826				
02.	Digital Competence	0.049	0.821			
03.	Organizational Support	0.010	0.001	0.806		
04.	Technological Infrastructure	0.118	0.087	-0.007	0.820	
05.	Work From Anywhere	0.336	0.330	0.239	0.323	0.749

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

		CE	DC	OS	TI	WFA
01.	Communication Effectiveness					
02.	Digital Competence	0.075				
03.	Organizational Support	0.063	0.065			
04.	Technological Infrastructure	0.138	0.102	0.053		
05.	Work From Anywhere	0.403	0.396	0.280	0.391	

Structural Model Assessment

After the measurement model was validated, the structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships between the latent constructs. This stage was carried out to check the proposed hypotheses and assess the predictive relationship in the model by examining the path coefficients and their statistical significance.

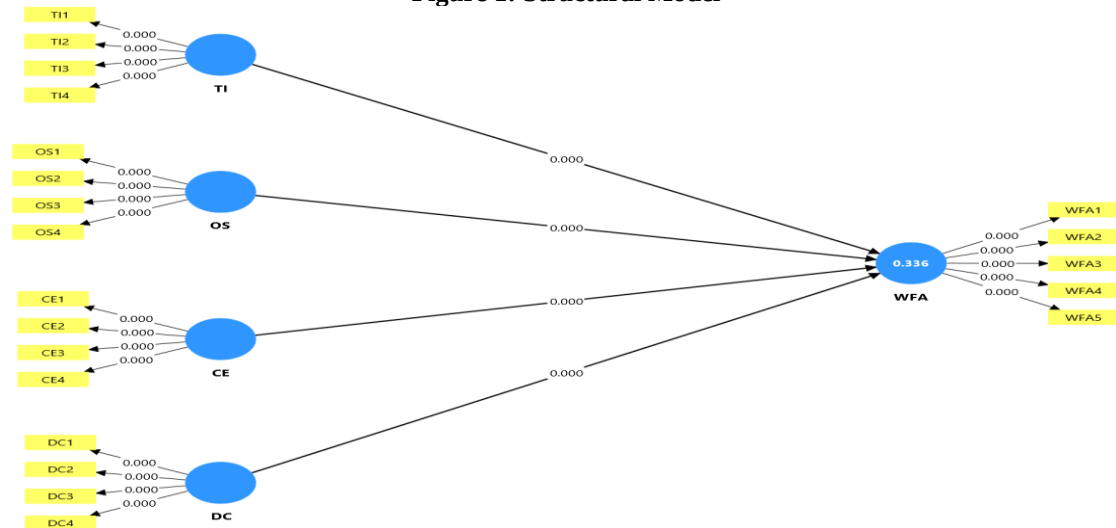
Table 4. Direct Relationships

Hypotheses	B	SE	T	P	Results
H1: CE $\rightarrow$ WFA	0.288	0.037	7.774	0.000*	Supported
H2: DC $\rightarrow$ WFA	0.293	0.039	7.445	0.000*	Supported
H3: OS $\rightarrow$ WFA	0.238	0.039	6.090	0.000*	Supported

H4: TI → WFA	0.266	0.039	6.844	0.000*	Supported
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Note. B = Beta Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, T = t- Statistics, P = Probability (P) value, *Relationships are significant at $P < 0.001$, CE = Communication Effectiveness; DC = Digital Competence; OS = Organizational Support; TI = Technological Infrastructure; WFA = Work From Anywhere.

Figure 1: Structural Model



The findings of the structural model reveal that Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness and Digital Competence have positive and statistically significant impacts on Work from Anywhere (WFA) effectiveness. Of the predictors, Digital Competence ($\beta = 0.293$) had the highest influence, followed by Communication Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.288$), Technological Infrastructure ($\beta = 0.266$), and Organizational Support ($\beta = 0.238$). The model accounted for 33.6% of the variance in the effectiveness of WFA ($R^2 = 0.336$) and was able to support all the proposed hypotheses.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study investigated the factors affecting the effectiveness of Work from Anywhere (WFA) in selected Indian IT and consulting companies. The results showed that Technological Infrastructure, Organizational Support, Communication Effectiveness, Digital Competence are significant positive factors affecting WFA effectiveness, and Digital Competence and Communication Effectiveness are the most important factors. These results highlight the importance of employees' digital skills, effective virtual communication, adequate technological resources, and organizational support in facilitating successful remote work practices. The study adds to the body of literature on flexible working arrangements, and offers practical insight for organisations looking to improve the effectiveness of WFA via investing in technology, employees' competencies and supportive work policies.

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