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**Working from home: a double edged sword**
**Kathleen Farrell**

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## Abstract

*Flexible work options can be considered a benefit for many people. One type of flexible work option is working from home. Many businesses do provide some form of flexibility for mothers and parents working outside the home but this is influenced by culture and geographic location e.g. Pakistan is slow to embrace working from home policies while in western cultures or in more developed states, there are people who advocate that work from home policies should become the norm. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how working from home can be optimally managed to achieve greater work/ home harmony.*

*However there are challenges for management in adopting a work from home policy. Critics assert that employees who are not office-based are "actually not working". The challenge is the traditional management mindset which is control focused believing employees have to be in view for productivity reasons. The following are challenges of working from home:*
*-The difficulty in separating home from work*
*-Self- imposed pressure of working endlessly and*
*-The feeling of being alienated from companies' major decisions and sometimes promotions.*

*Otani (2015) argues for flexibility and cites Sheryl Sandberg, Facebooks Chief Operating Officer as making the point that it is more important to measure the results rather than watching people "try". She makes the important decision between seeming productive and being productive. Even though teleworkers can generally develop strategies that align boundaries to their preferences for segmentation or integration, employees with greater job autonomy and control are better able to do so. However, teleworkers in organizations with "always on " cultures may experience greater challenges here. When work and home activities take place in the same physical space, physical, temporal and psychological boundaries between work and home can become blurred.*
*This paper will do a critical review of the academic literature and policy at both governmental and EU level in order to shed light on how to make working from home work for businesses and for employees work/home harmony.*

*Teleworking helps to recruit and retain talented workers by providing people with the ability to reduce commuting time and fit other activities around the work tasks, thus contributing to a diverse workforce. The benefits of teleworking in terms of quality and quantity of outcomes can result from allowing employee's time away from the office to work on tasks requiring higher levels of concentration without interruption. Organizations benefit by saving costs on office space and becoming more flexible. Employees vary in how they keep work and activities outside work separate or overlapping. The following boundaries have been proposed to achieve better work/home harmony i.e. physical, behavioral, home- based and communicative tactics.*

*HR plays a significant role here and very often retention of staff is linked to the availability of flexible work options. Working from home can be beneficial for both employers and employees but might be a double edged sword if employers use it to evade responsibility for employee welfare.*

**Full Paper**
**See Book: "People, Care and Work in the Home"**
https://homerenaissancefoundation.org/resource/people-care-and-work-in-the-home/