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UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF "WORK FROM HOME" ON WORK AND LIFE DOMAINS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancement has allowed people to work from anywhere remotely connected through the internet and it's popularly called working from home. Like working from the office, working from home also poses some challenges to employees, and dealing with them is highly important as it can affect the employees' personal and professional life which will eventually hamper the growth of the organization. Balancing personal life and work is crucial in any mode of work. In this research, we tried to cover almost all the challenges in the questions form an employee can face while working from home. In this research, we asked questions to 345 professionals who have experience working from home using online forms. The results have been interesting as most of them face one or another type of problem. Although the majority of people have said that they would like to split the time equally between their normal place of work and home in the future, people do prefer to work from their normal place of work when the restrictions of the pandemic are lifted, more than those people who would like to work from home.

Keywords: *COVID-19, family-work conflict, job productivity, remote working, stress, work engagement, working from home*

1. INTRODUCTION

Work from home, telecommuting, or working from a remote office — whatever you call it, it means the same thing: employees working from a location other than a company office while maintaining productivity. The coronavirus outbreak has pushed businesses all over the world to operate with a remote workforce in order to keep employees safe at home while keeping operations operating. The infrastructure required for working remotely was already in place for some; nonetheless, the COVID-19 situation is a test by fire for organisations and employees who have never worked from home before..

WFH discovered that 71.7 percent of workers could work effectively (Bick, Blandin, and Mertens 2020). Governments in some regions issued WFH norms, and 60 L. VYAS AND N. BUTAKHIEO government employees WFH while advisory notices were sent to employers of private organizations, as a precaution to prevent further spread by reducing social contact (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government [HKSAR Government].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lina Vyas & Nantapong Butakhieo researched about the effect of working from home during COVID-19 on individuals personal and professional life. The research paper is named as "The impact of working from home during COVID-19 on work and life domains: an exploratory study on Hong Kong".

Teresa Galanti, Gloria Guidetti, Elisabetta MazzeiTeresa investigates the impact like family-work conflict, social isolation, distracting environment, job autonomy, and self-leadership have on employees' productivity, work engagement, and stress experienced while doing WFH during the pandemic.the research paper named "Work From Home During the COVID-19 Outbreak".

Amanda Putri1, Ali Amran studied how work from home actually affects the work life balance of employees after covid 19. The research paper named as "Employees' Work-Life Balance Reviewed From Work From Home Aspect During COVID-19 Pandemic".The researcher used a survey method with a descriptive verification research type of data collection.

Neerja Kashive, Brijesh Sharma, Vandana Tandon Khanna studied various aspects that gets affected regarding the work practices and new model of getting work done.The research paper is named "Work from home: understanding boundary management profiles using boundary-fit perspective".

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Below is the framework of the research paradigm related to the effect of work from home on the work domain and personal domain as shown in the figure below.

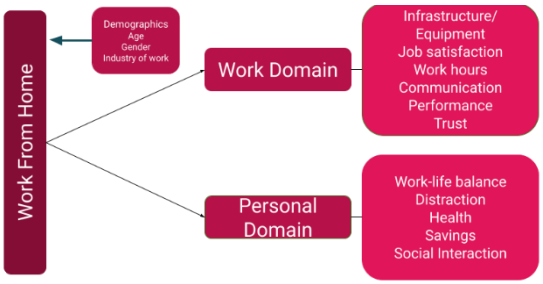

Figure 1: Framework of the research

4. RESEARCH PROBLEM / STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The need to examine how WFH (Work-from-home), as a "new way of working," has affected the well-being and productivity of employees with no prior remote work experience and to identify specific work conditions affecting remote work during the COVID-19 crisis is imperative.

5. CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

For managers, this study will provide insights into: How are team members holding up in this new age of distributed workforces? Are they as productive, and as satisfied? They may be fine, or they may feel isolated and need additional support. Furthermore, this study will help understand the diversity of genders in terms of the WFH concept, their issues, orientation, perception, productivity, aspects related to the Work domain and Personal domain, Impact on health and their long-term perception about WFH. Organizations will be able to use these data-based insights and create a sound remote work strategy and back-to-office plan.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To understand how the employees are holding up in this new age of distributed workforces? Are they as productive, and as satisfied?
2. To understand what benefits and challenges Employees are finding while working from home.
3. To understand the impact of WFH on the work and the personal domain of employees' lives.
4. To find out the gender-wise perception about WFH

7. RESEARCH DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION & TOOLS

A study on the work-life quality of remote workers during COVID-19 was conducted using a self-report and structured questionnaire administered online in December 2021, using the Google Form. Excluding some incomplete responses and 4 responses with unrevealed genders, a sample of 345 participants was decided for the final research. Hence, this sampling method is convenience sampling and it represents the population of Gujarat state, India.

Data collection was performed through circulating the Google form to the people who are working from home currently at the time of the survey, that included the family members and friends of the researchers of this study, faculties of some educational institutions, corporate professionals throughout Gujarat state, India. The entire data used for this study is primary data.

The research questionnaire consisted of 18 questions. It was divided into three sections called demographics, work domain, personal domain. 'Gender' variables had four options; male, female, other, prefer not to say. Although researchers had encouraged participants to fill in their actual gender to help with the research and understanding the gender diversity properly, for respecting ethical standards we have provided the last option. Although it was removed at the time of analysis and sample of 345 was finalized. 'Age' had 6 interval classes: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44,

45-54, 55-64, 65 & Above. The last demographic variable for 'your career field'. The classes contained 10 major areas of the career field and one as an 'other' option for the participants to write. They were: Architecture and engineering, arts, culture and entertainment, Business, management and administration, Communications, Community and social services, Education, Science and Technology, Government, Law and public policy, Sales & marketing. Some participants who were unable to comprehend this simple section about their career field wrote unimportant answers which could have been removed and labeled as 'other'. In the second section of the work domain, the first question was about asking for the familiarity of remote working experience. The options were 5 ordinal classes ranging from Very familiar, somewhat familiar to extremely unfamiliar. Question number 5 was about their working arrangement preference which involved three options of hybrid, fully remote and fully at the office. Participants were asked to rate their feeling about working from home in 5 options ranging from 'I really am enjoying it', 'I enjoy it', 'it is ok', 'I don't like it', 'I don't like it at all'. A dichotomous question about the efficiency of the internet communication channel was asked. The next question was about the company providing compensation for WFH related expenses. Participants could answer them in three options; yes, no I pay for everything, provide special compensation. For productivity, there was a question with three answers choices: I am more productive At Home than I would be in my normal place of work, I am As Productive At Home as I would be in my normal place of work, I am Less Productive At Home than I would be in my normal place of work. The next question had 6 sub-questions to rate different aspects of work-life on the satisfaction levels ranging on five classes from strongly agree to strongly disagree: I am involved in regular team meetings, I am able to contribute in team meetings, I am still able to have social interactions, with colleagues, I feel like I am trusted to work from, home, I believe my employer is being, supportive, I have all the required equipment and, infrastructure I need to work from home. The last section of this questionnaire included the personal domain. Similar to the question above it was a rating scale question, with ordinal variables: I have established a good work, I am taking regular breaks from work, I'm able to maintain a healthy work/life balance while working from home, I have created a suitable workspace, I am able to say in touch with family & friends regularly, My manager is checking up on my wellbeing. They were also asked for distractions while working from home in the three options in the answer as yes, no and, maybe. A question about their managers respecting their working hours was asked with three options: Yes, They strictly follow it (e.g. 9 to 5) as in Normal place of work, No, I receive the workload anytime and, Maybe. A dichotomous question about whether they work on holidays or not was present, too. The next question was about whether their overall savings increased due to WFH, with three options as yes, no, no difference. Participants were asked to inform their health issue status in terms of the problems increasing, decreasing or staying neutral because of working from home. Options like physical pain, eyestrain, mental stress, sleep schedule disturbance, overall sense of well-being, feelings of isolation. Lastly, the question was asked for knowing their long-term preference when the covid-19 restrictions would be lifted. It has three options depicting whether they would prefer most of their time at their normal place of work or home or splitting the time equally between them, finishing the entire questionnaire with asking their feedback and suggestions.

For the data analysis, tools like IBM SPSS statistics version 26, Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, Microsoft Power BI were used.

8. DATA ANALYSIS, INSIGHTS AND RESULT DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Insights

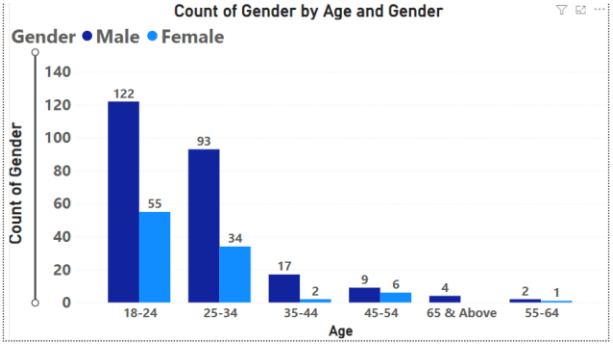

Figure 1: Chart of Gender vs Age

	Count of Age						
Gender	**18-24**	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65 & Above**	**Grand Total**
Female	55	34	2	6	1		**98**
Male	122	93	17	9	2	4	**247**
Grand Total	**177**	**127**	**19**	**15**	**3**	**4**	**345**

Table1: cross-tabulation Count of age with the gender distribution
Total Count of Gender was higher for Male (247) than Female (98), which accounts for 71.59 and 28.41 respectively. majority of the population falls between the age groups of 18 to 24 (177) and 25 to 34 (127). 18-24 age group in Gender made up 35.36% of Count of Gender.

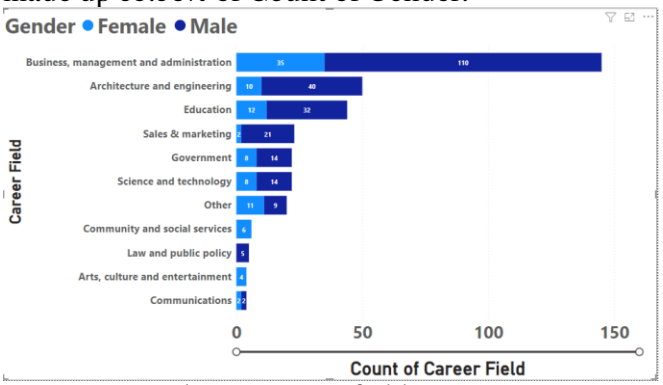

Figure 2: Gender vs Career field

The total Count of Career fields was higher for Male (247) than females (98). Business, management and administration in Gender made up 31.88% of the Count of Career Field. The average Count of Career fields was higher for Male (27.44) than females (9.80). Count of Career Field for Male and Female diverged the most when the Career Field was Business, management and administration when Male was 75 higher than females.

2. Familiarity of WFH experience

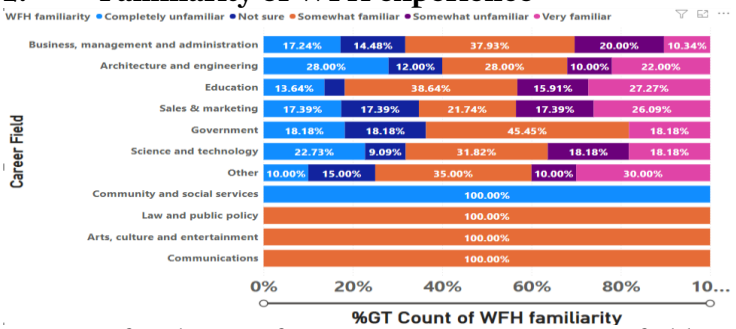

Figure 3: familiarity of WFH experience vs career field

33.91% of people were completely or somewhat unfamiliar with the work from home experience before covid-19. 54% of people were very or somewhat familiar with that experience. At 128, 'Somewhat familiar' had the highest Count of WFH familiarity, 'Not sure' had the lowest Count of WFH familiarity at 42. 'Somewhat familiar' accounted for 37.10% of the Count of WFH familiarity.

3. WFH arrangement preference

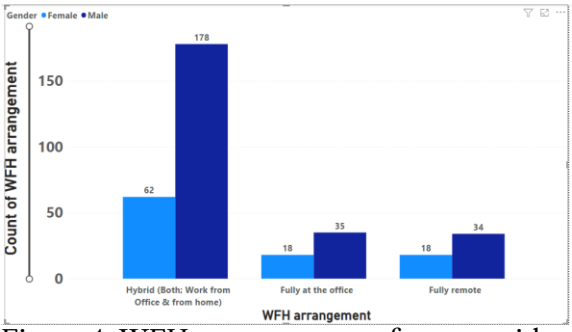

Figure 4: WFH arrangement reference with gender

At 240, Hybrid (Both; Work from Office & home) had the highest Count of WFH arrangement and was 361.54% higher than Fully Remote, which had the lowest Count of WFH arrangement at 52. Hybrid (Both; Work from Office & from home) had the highest Count of WFH arrangement at 240, followed by Fully at the office at 53 and Fully remote at 52. Hybrid (Both; Work from Office & home) accounted for 69.57% of Count of WFH arrangement. Fully at the office had 53 Count of WFH arrangement, Hybrid (Both; Work from Office & home) had 240, and Fully remote had 52.

4. Internet Channels efficiency

The total Count of Internet communication efficiency was higher for Male (247) than females (98). 57.68 % of females and 23.48% of males think that the internet communication channels for most efficient for them which accounts for the larger segment of this dichotomous questions. Only 4.93% and 13.91% of females and males thought they had a lack of efficiency through those medium respectively.

5. Experience and productivity

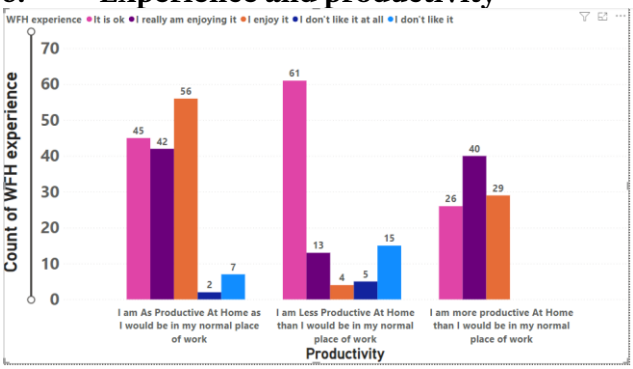

Figure 5: WFH experience vs productivity

53.34 % of people are enjoying the work from home experience but 38.86% of people are almost neutral about it. There is a very small percentage of people who are disliking that experience, accounting for almost 8%. People who enjoy working from home have also confirmed the usual perception of being more productive at home rather than at the office according to results.

6. Compensation from the company

59.13 % of all people (204) are the ones who pay for everything for their work from home expenses related to work. Only 44 out of 345 participants (12.75%) said that the company provides partial compensation and 97 of them get (28.12%) full compensation from the companies.

7. Important work-related satisfaction results

	People in numbers

	Meetings involvement	Meeting contribution	Social interactions	Trusted for WFH	Employer Support	Equipment/ infrastructure
Strongly Agree	109	102	81	100	93	98
Agree	185	172	170	143	161	136
Not Sure (Neutral)	40	59	70	77	65	79
Disagree	7	8	19	18	11	21
Strongly Disagree	4	4	5	7	15	11

Table 2: Work-related satisfaction variables results

A. Employer support

66 female (19%) and 188 male (54.49%) participants agree or strongly agree that their employers are being supportive, whereas only 10 female (2.89%) and 16 male (4.63%) disagree or strongly disagree for the same.

B. Involvement in Meetings

61.73% of male and 23.47% of female participants felt that they can be involved in regular team meetings. This agreement for this variable is exceptionally low as no single female participant has said that they disagree with the same, only 3.18 % of males believed that they are not able to do so.

C. Contribution to the team meetings:

23.47% of female and 55.94% of male participants agreed that they can contribute to the team meetings and again the disagreement for this section was exceptionally low, whereas only 0.57 % female (two female) and 2.89 % of male participants disagreed with the same above.

D. Trust for WFH:

18.26% of females and 52.17% of males strongly agreed that they are feeling trusted for working from home. 4.63% of females and 2.60% of males felt otherwise. Another important result here is that 16% of male participants were not sure about that either.

E. Social interaction

21.73% of female and 51% of male participants felt that they can have social interactions even though working from home. Which was significantly higher than the counterpart of satisfaction level.

F. Infrastructure and equipment availability

18.84% of female and 48.98% of male participants agreed that they have the proper infrastructure and equipment availability while working from home where the disagreement was quite low significantly as shown in the table above.

8. Important personal life satisfaction results

	People in numbers					
	Work routine	**Regular breaks**	**Healthy work-life balance**	**Suitable workspace**	**Family & friends connected**	**Wellbeing check-up**
Strongly Agree	85	60	106	73	116	75
Agree	165	170	114	184	157	122
Not Sure (Neutral)	73	71	76	52	41	98
Disagree	18	38	35	34	27	34
Strongly Disagree	4	6	14	2	4	16

Table 3: Personal domain satisfaction variables with agreement scales

A. Establishing a good work routine

20.28% of female and 52.17 % of male participants agreed that they have established a good work routine. The significantly low section of people disagrees with the same as shown in the table above.

B. Taking regular breaks

19.71% of female and 46.95% of male participants agreed that they take regular breaks and the counterpart was exceptionally low.

C. Work-life balance

18.84 % of female and 4.92% of male participants agreed that they feel they're able to maintain a healthy work-life balance, whereas approximately 9% of male participants disagreed for the same.

Suitable workspace

21.44 % of female participants and 53.04% of male participants agreed that they have established a proper workplace.

D. Staying in touch with Family & friends

22.31 % of female participants and 56.81 % of male participants agreed that they can stay in touch with their family and friends

E. Wellbeing check-up

15.65% of female participants and 41.44% of male participants agreed that their manager keeps checking on their well-being

9. Distractions

49.56 % of people (171) feel distractions, of which the highest of age groups are 18 to 24 and 25 to 34. Highest responses of 'maybe' for also from the same age groups. 24.63 % (85) of people can maintain their focus while working from home.

10. Working on Holidays and Workload

33.62 % of people (116) believe that they do not get holidays as they should be, whereas 66.37 % of people (229) do not work on holidays. People who feel that their managers do not respect their work schedule and those who do are approximately equivalent as 131 and 134 (approximately 37- 38 %).

11. Saving status

62.31% (215) people believe that their savings have increased because of working from home, 13.91% of people (48) people believe otherwise as well as 23.76 (82) % of people believe that there has been no significant difference in their savings.

12. Health status

Many people have reported an increase in health issues like physical pain, eyestrain mental stress, sense of well-being and feelings of isolation. Among all the issues of eye strain has increased which confirms the popular notion of working in front of electronic devices while working from home. Almost equivalent amounts of people believe in the sleep schedule disturbances increasing and decreasing. 43.19% of people (149) have increased physical pain, approximately 40% of people have equally shared that their mental stress has increased and almost is at a neutral stage. The results are the same for the feelings of isolation by the participants

13. Preference for long term

Only 11.88% of people (41) feel that they would be preparing to spend most of their time working from home in the long term whereas 55.65% of people (192) felt that they would like to split their time equally between their normal place of work and their home. 32.46% of people (112) would prefer to spend all of the time for most of it on their normal place of work.

9. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis Testing

For the following different hypothetical statistical analysis tests, the null hypothesis is denoted by H0, the alternative hypothesis is denoted by H1

A. Gender vs Productivity

Hypothesis

H0: there is no significant relationship between gender and feeling of productivity
H1: there is a significant relationship between gender and feeling of productivity
The level of significance is 0.05

VAR00001 * VAR00009 Crosstabulation

Count

		VAR00009			
		I am As Productive At Home as I would be in my normal place of work	I am Less Productive At Home than I would be in my normal place of work	I am more productive At Home than I would be in my normal place of work	Total
VAR00001	Female	47	27	24	98
	Male	105	71	71	247
Total		152	98	95	345

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.969[a]	2	.616
Likelihood Ratio	.973	2	.615
N of Valid Cases	345		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 26.99.

Figure14: results of statistical tests in SPSS

Hence the test result proves that P-value is greater than 0.05. we do not reject the null hypothesis. The feeling of productivity at different places is completely irrespective of gender.

B. Gender vs Distraction

Hypothesis
H0: there is no significant relationship between gender and occurrences of distraction
H1: there is a significant relationship between gender and occurrences of distraction
The level of significance is 0.05

VAR00001 * VAR00022 Crosstabulation

Count

		VAR00022			
		Maybe	No	Yes	Total
VAR00001	Female	18	24	56	98
	Male	71	61	115	247
Total		89	85	171	345

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.516[a]	2	.105
Likelihood Ratio	4.678	2	.096
N of Valid Cases	345		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 24.14.

Figure: results of statistical tests in SPSS
According to the result above, we do not reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the occurrences of distraction particularly related to gender.

C. Age group vs WFH arrangement preference

Hypothesis
H0: there is no significant relationship between particular age groups and work from home arrangement
H1: there is a significant relationship between particular age groups and work from home arrangement
The level of significance is 0.05

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.279	1	9.279	17.453	.000[b]
	Residual	182.362	343	.532		
	Total	191.641	344			

a. Dependent Variable: e
b. Predictors: (Constant), b

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.833	.080		35.397	.000	2.676	2.991
	b	-.171	.041	-.220	-4.178	.000	-.252	-.091

a. Dependent Variable: e

Figure: results of statistical tests in SPSS

We reject the null hypothesis as the P-value is less than 0.05 and there is a statistically strong relationship between age groups and their preference for a particular work from home arrangement. As we can see that particularly two age groups prefer the hybrid model of working from home.

10. CONCLUSION

The majority of the working from home population falls between the age groups of 18 to 24 and 25 to 34. It has been noted that the majority of the population wants a hybrid form of setup where they can work from the office as well as work from home and also the majority of that segment is the male gender. Almost half of the population

enjoys working from home, and a very small percentage of people don't. Also, they feel more productive at home rather than at their normal place of work. Madan half of the population has to pay for almost every expense related to work while working from home. This suggests there is a need for the company's to understand and contribute more to this problem. People have also reported an increase in health issues like physical pain, eyestrain, sleep schedule disturbance. All the people feel that their sense of well-being is almost affected. They believe that working from home has an impact on feelings of isolation and mental stress. Although the majority of people have said that they would like to split the time equally between their normal place of work and home in future, people do prefer to work from their normal place of work when the restrictions of the pandemic are lifted, more than those people who would like to work from home. It is significantly evident that receiving work out of the working hours critically impacts the overall sense of well being of an employee.

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