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## Work from home experiences during COVID -19 pandemic among IT employees

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**Abstract:** COVID-19 pandemic has enforced the concept Work from Home (WFH) into an officially mandated, strictly enforced rule. Now, the WFH concept is emerging from all sectors, from IT sectors to teaching sectors. WFH concept is new to the majority of the employees, as the COVID 19 has forced almost all the employees of all the sectors. As the employees are experiencing a new environment, this paper attempts to find out the experience of the employees in working from home during this pandemic. The study found that willingness to work from home is entirely influenced by their dependents at home like parents/partner/children, comfortable space at home, suitable environment at home and good internet connectivity..

**Keywords:** Work from home, Pandemic experience, Proper break, Managing time, Innovation, Work life balance, Satisfaction.

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### INTRODUCTION

The spread of COVID-19 has thrown work and life into terribly uncertain waters, with the nation recently going into lockdown in an effort to flatten the curve firmly. It says a lot about the gravity of the situation when we need to take such drastic measures to keep everyone safe. With all non-essential services shut many companies are now officially on work-from-home mode. While remote working is a well-established aspect of corporate work policies, it has never been attempted at such an unprecedented scale until now. Perhaps the silver lining in all this is that we live in a highly connected digital world, with plenty of apps, tools, and platforms to help us invariably navigate such challenges.

When the line between work and home life is essentially non-existent, how does one manage to meet deadlines and targets while also devoting time to the children at home, and managing family chores. Work from home is a completely different approach as the work and life are at the same place to deal with. Most employees found it interesting in the beginning and then found it monotonous as they were not able to differentiate their personal life and work to a great extent. It was struggling to manage to have a proper internet connection in the beginning times as all unessential services were shut down, and employees had to manage with what they had in the very initial days. Later the picture changed when they found an alternative and proper internet connection to work. situations became so worse when the entire family was at home, and the environment was not much supportive similar to the office especially for those dealing with clients from different parts of the world.

Work life balance became so complicated for those employees both partners were working from home, and they had to manage to get some kinds of short breaks to deal with household works and take care of their dependents. More than that, getting effective communication from different departments and co-workers was challenging. Periodical meetings, evaluations, and scheduling discussed through video conferencing. It was a kind of stressful situation for everyone, to be away from distractions. Virtual interactions helped quite a lot to manage works to an extent. Our research idea is based on the rich knowledge acquired by our peer teams across the university.(A.C.Gomathi, S.R.Xavier Rajarathinam, A.Mohammed Sadiq, Rajeshkumar, 2020; Danda et al., 2009; Danda and Ravi, 2011; Dua et al., 2019; Ezhilarasan et al., 2019; Krishnan and Chary, 2015; Manivannan, I., Ranganathan, S., Gopalakannan, S. et al., 2018; Narayanan et al., 2012, 2009; Neelakantan et al., 2013, 2011; Neelakantan and Sharma, 2015; Panchal et al., 2019; Prasanna et al., 2011; Priya S et al., 2009; Rajeshkumar et al., 2019; Ramadurai et al., 2019; Ramakrishnan et al., 2019; Ramesh et al., 2016; Venugopalan et al., 2014). Right now we are working on work from home experiences and challenges among IT employees. This pandemic has already altered the landscape of the global workspace beyond recognition. However, this change gives an unique opportunity to discover new ways of working and utilising technology, which could have a positive impact long after we overcome the current crisis. This study aims to find out the major experiences that the IT employees faced while working from home during COVID-19 pandemic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Geurts et al., The purpose of the present longitudinal study was to examine the role of negative work home interference (WHI) in the classical stressor strain sequence. First, the predominant time-lagged path between WHO and job stressors was investigated. Furthermore, the direct and indirect process of WHI, job stressors, and employee health was examined (Geurts et al., 1999) Hogarth described in Spring 2000 the UK Government launched its Work-Life Balance Campaign. The Campaign aims to raise employers' awareness of the business benefits of introducing policies and practices which help employees obtain a better balance between work and the rest of their lives (Hogarth, 2001).

Crosbie and Moore concluded that work from home was not a panacea for modern working life. Careful consideration should be given to aspirations and personality skills of those who are thinking of working from home. Those who have a tendency to work long hours outside the home might find that home life is even further marginalized by work life (Crosbie and Moore, 2004)

Ammons and Markhama comprehensive literature review and detailed semi structured interviews with skilled workers who work at home. In this article explores six research areas they are reasons for working at home, the creation and maintenance of home/work boundaries, problems of isolation, distractions and temptations facing at-home workers, and gender differences. Problems of creating and maintaining home/work boundaries, isolation, distractions and temptations at home, and workaholism do exist, but there was evidence that they may have been exaggerated in previous writing about at home work (Ammons and Markham, 2004)

Gajendran and Harrison described the beneficial effects on more distal outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, turnover intent, and role stress. These beneficial consequences appeared to be at least partially mediated by perceived autonomy. And also be effects on work family conflict but harming relationships with co-workers (Gajendran and Harrison, 2007)

Amabile and Kramer found that work from home is helping the employees to balance and differentiate their office work with their routine work. The study also added that work from home saves time, increases the productivity, finishes the targets on time and also helps the employees to give time for their personal life (Amabile and Kramer, 2013)

Beauregard et al., found in their study that mobile workers and partial home workers performance is higher to a some extent and they are highly satisfied and engaged with their jobs than any of other workers. Their study also revealed that workers perform best when they achieve good work life balance and are less stressed. It was reported in the study that Mobile workers and home workers miss informal interaction and emotional support from their co-workers more frequently than partial home workers (Beauregard et al., 2013).

Bloom et al., described that work from home refers to a positive effect of management on firm performance, a positive relationship between product market competition and average management quality and a rise in the level of management with firm age (Bloom et al., 2018).

Gervais et al., stated the focus on major failures and the dark side of work from home, the cultural differences faced during webinars by the employees. Work from home creates a big gap in communication between superior and the subordinates (Gervais et al., 2016).

Richardson opined that work from home is the result of modern technology, which resulted in the increased credibility i.e. increased usage of the internet for web conferencing, voice mail, fax which makes work easier and simpler. The positive side of work from home is that the employees according to their convenience can start their work. Further they added that the negative impact such as delay in work and no submission of work on time will be there (Richardson, 2017).

Lorincová et al., the paper is to define and quantify the differences in employee motivation depending upon the selected regions and the age of employees. Differences in the level of motivation, i.e. motivation factors especially in relation to the age were observed in the analysed regions. Incentive plans for intercultural teams in order to enable employers to choose motivation factors effectively were designed (Lorincová et al., 2019).

Alon et al., The lockdowns triggered by COVID-19 are taking a disproportionate toll on women in the labour market, as the sectors with high rates of female employment are experiencing heavier job losses while increased childcare needs during school closures exert an outsized impact on working mothers (Alon et al., 2020).

Pennington and Stanford In this paper the researcher says the workplace has been shut down due to a pandemic situation. Many people have been working and earning good income but there are also many challenges and risks faced by them. This briefing paper surveys the scope of work from home, considers its impacts on economic and gender inequality, and proposes several policies to make home work safer and fairer (Pennington and Stanford, 2020).

Bouziri et al., In response to the covid-19 pandemic, many countries have adopted a broad spectrum of containment measures, from recommendations to stay at home to quarantines of large geographic regions. As part of this response, corporations and governments alike have strongly encouraged workers to telecommute where possible (Bouziri et al., 2020)

Brynjolfsson et al., The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has confined large numbers of people to their homes via quarantines and shelter-in-place orders. Large numbers of businesses are closed and many people are not working remotely There have already been enormous and unprecedented increases in workers filing unemployment insurance claims (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020b).

Brynjolfsson et al., described there is a strong negative relationship between the fraction in a state still commuting to work and the fraction working from home. They found that the share of people switching to remote work can be predicted by the incidence of COVID-19 and that younger people were more likely to switch to remote work. Furthermore, states with a higher share of employment in information work including management, professional and related occupations were more likely to shift toward working from home and had fewer people laid off or furloughed (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020a).

Gould and Shierholz said that the doors are closed, lights are off, and normally busy rooms are silent in businesses around the world as individuals stay home and workplaces shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Economic activity has declined significantly and as a result, commercial and industrial demand for electricity has also declined (Gould and Shierholz, 2020).

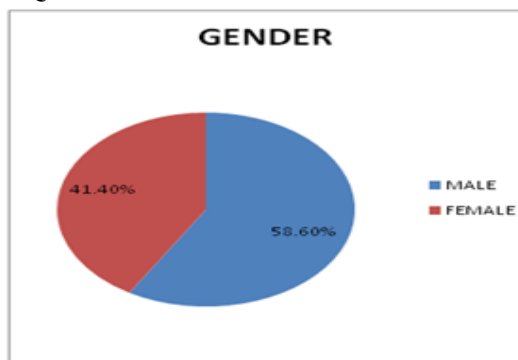
Nicola et al., It was the first time to investigate the prevalence and risk factors of psychological disturbances, including depression, anxiety, somatisation symptoms, insomnia and suicide, among frontline medical staff, who were working with the COVID-19 infected patients directly (Nicola et al., 2020).

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

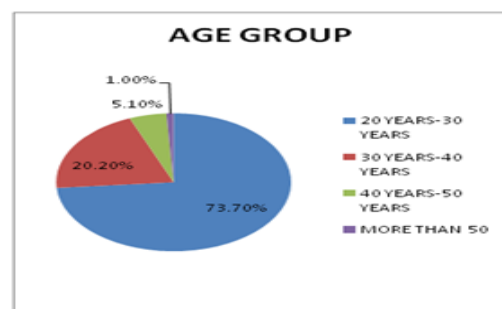
Descriptive research type is applied for this study and convenience sampling used to determine the respondents. collected 99 responses through a well structured questionnaire and the data were collected through online. The questionnaire is divided into various sections like demographic variables, independent variables including Proper break, Managing time, Managing work, and work life balance and dependent variables includes satisfaction Work from home in pandemic for IT employees. SPSS used to analyse the data and the various tools like frequency, Mean and ANOVA were used.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

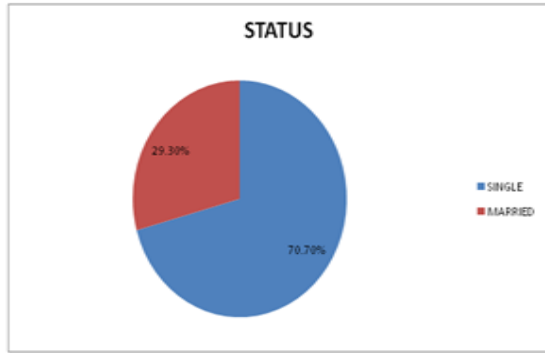
#### FREQUENCY ANALYSIS



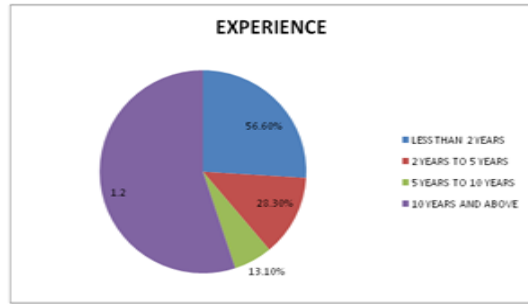
**Figure:1** The pie chart depicts the percentage of gender. 58.60% of the samples are Male and 41.40% are Female employees



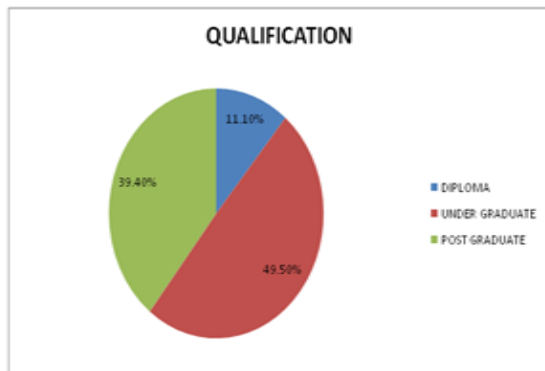
**Figure:2** The pie chart depicts the percentage of age group in the sample. 73.70% are belong to 20years-30years, 20.20% are 30years-40 years, 5.10% are 40years-50years and 1.00 % were more than 50 employees



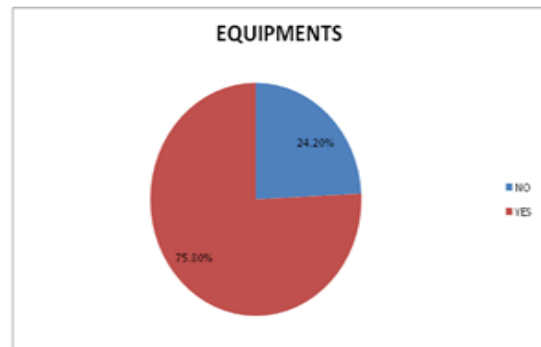
**Figure:3** The pie chart depicts the percentage of Marital status of respondents.70.70% are unmarried and 29.3% are married employees.



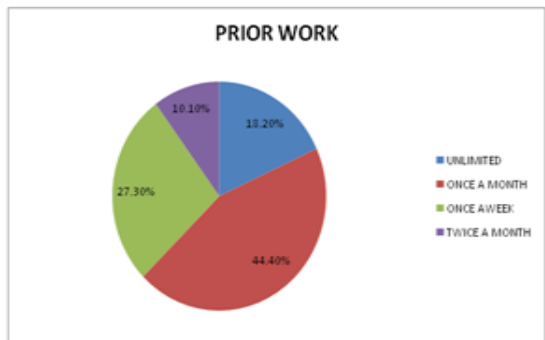
**Figure:4** The pie chart depicts the percentage of years of experience of respondents. 56.60% was less than 2 years, 56.60% was 2 years-5 years, 28.30% was 5years-10years and 13.10% were 10 years and above.



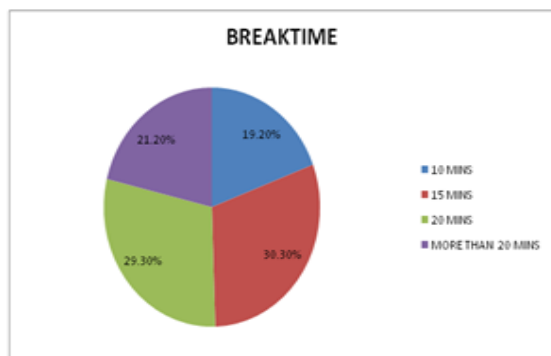
**Figure:5** The pie chart depicts the percentage of qualification. 49.50% of the respondents are undergraduate, 39.40% are postgraduate and 11.10% are with diploma.



**Figure:6** The pie chart depicts the work equipment available 75.80% of the respondents are with proper work equipment and 24.20% were not.



**Figure:7** The pie chart depicts the percentage of work from home during pre-covid. 44.40% worked once a month, 27.30% worked once a week, 18.20% worked unlimited and 10.10% of the sample were twice a month.



**Figure:8** The pie chart depicts the percentage of Break time taken by respondents. 30.30% of take 15mins, 29.30% take 20mins, 21.20% take more than 20mins and 19.20% take 10mins.

**PROBLEMS FACED FROM WORK FROM HOME**

**Table 1: table showing mean analysis of problems faced during work from home**

| S.NO | Description   | Mean | Rank |
|------|---------------|------|------|
| 1    | Proper Break  | 3.5  | 3    |
| 2    | Manage Timing | 3.5  | 3    |

|   |                   |     |   |
|---|-------------------|-----|---|
| 3 | Manage Job        | 3.7 | 1 |
| 4 | Work Life Balance | 3.1 | 4 |
| 5 | Satisfaction      | 3.6 | 2 |

The mean score and rank are displayed in table 1. It shows the problems faced by employees during work from home. It is clear from the table that the highest mean score belongs to Manage job (3.7), this means that they had high issues in managing job while working from home. Satisfaction scores second (3.6) followed by managing time and taking proper breaks at 3rd level. Work life balance was the next problem they have faced.

#### **ANOVA ANALYSIS OF GENDER WITH PROPER BREAK, MANAGE TIME, MANAGE JOB, WORK LIFE BALANCE , SATISFACTION.**

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference among the Gender with respect to proper break, Managetime, Manage Job, Work life balance, satisfaction; There is significant difference among the Gender with respect to proper break, Managetime, Manage Job, Work life balance, satisfaction.

**Table 2: shows the Anova Analysis of gender with proper break, manage time, manage job, work life balance, satisfaction.**

| S.No | FACTORS           | F- VALUE | SIGNIFICANCE |
|------|-------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1    | PROPER BREAK      | 3.703    | 0.057        |
| 2    | MANAGING TIME     | 7.182    | 0.009        |
| 3    | MANAGING WORK     | 5.295    | 0.024        |
| 4    | WORK LIFE BALANCE | 1.343    | 0.249        |
| 5    | SATISFACTION      | 9.597    | 0.003        |

Table 2 shows the one-way anova analysis of gender with proper break, Managingtime, Manage job, work life balance, satisfaction. From the analysis it is clear that the 'p' values of Proper break (0.057) and work life balance(0.249) are greater than 0.05 and 'p' values of Satisfaction(0.003) and Managing time(0.009) and Managing work (0.024) are lesser than 0.05. It is interpreted that there is a significant difference among the Gender with respect to proper break, Managetime, Manage Job, Work life balance, satisfaction.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The results of mean score on problems faced by employees on work-from-home was managing job, satisfaction, managing time, taking proper breaks and work life balance. Here majority of respondents said that managing their job was one among the most challenges they had faced during work from home. Lestiyawati concluded from their study on online teaching problems that Indonesian teachers were facing more problems in accessing technology, supporting e-learning systems, limitations of students to access the internet, disadvantaged family backgrounds etc (Lestiyawati, 2020), the same way IT employees also faced issues like accessing technology, supporting systems, and suitable background etc. ANOVA result shows that ble 2 shows there is a significant difference among the Gender with respect to proper break, Managetime, Manage Job, Work life balance, satisfaction one-way anova analysis of gender with proper break, Managingtime, Manage job, work life balance, satisfaction. This means that Male and females have their own problems managing their work in various ways. Evans and Steptoe conducted a study on male and female nurses and also male and female accountants; found that gender in both categories are facing job related hassles and nurses reported high job strain. They also noticed that female workers are having more job hassles due to their psychological characteristics (Evans and Steptoe, 2002).

#### **CONCLUSION**

Work-from-home is the new normal and this reduces the operational cost of many companies as they need not have to pay for electricity and other daily expenses like before. This study reveals the problems of work from home of IT employees during a pandemic situation. Based on this study a few major problems faced by IT employees are managing jobs, getting proper breaks, work life balance etc. Work-from-home may not be a new concept for IT employees as they have such provisions already; but having it for almost a year continuously was something new to everyone. The researcher had chosen only IT employees for this study and similar kinds of studies shall be conducted in various sectors to know the problems and issues, which shall be a scope for further research.

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