

Research Article



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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FACTORS INDUCED BY COVID-19 ON THE EMPLOYEES FOLLOWING WORK FROM HOME CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Background: The widespread infection spread and high mortality rate in COVID-19 has led the government to impose lockdown worldwide which extensively affected the various private and government businesses. There was a shift in the work culture from office to work from home posing more challenges in motivation and productivity.

Methodology: 998 professional subjects who were working from home were included in the study. The subjects were given an online survey questionnaire concerning their worries during COVID-19 lockdown and had 6 components including distress, job performance, occupational discomfort, family distraction, lifestyle choices, and job role overload. The collected data were subjected to statistical evaluation and the results were formulated.

Results: The study subjects were assessed for biggest worries during COVID-19 lockdown and it was seen that the biggest fear in the lockdown was death due to COVID-19 and encountering COVID-19 infection. The effect of work from the home environment on study subjects was also assessed.

Conclusion: The present study concludes that an increased workload caused distress in employees and the quality of work was disrupted owing to family distraction. Distress reduced job performance significantly, whereas, better job performance caused life satisfaction. More studies are needed to assess the impact of pandemics and lockdown on work from home culture.

Keywords: COVID-19 infection, job satisfaction motivation, pandemic, productivity, work from home

INTRODUCTION

Job stress or occupational stress is the pressure on professional employees caused by employment-related factors. Job stress is felt when demands or expectations on the employee do not get matched to the resources available including abilities, skills, and knowledge. Also, work-life balance is disturbed and lifestyle is affected adversely of the employees by the environment, culture, and changes in the society due to work from home culture.¹

Literature data have shown numerous side-effects of stress caused by work including musculoskeletal diseases, asthma, insomnia, diabetes, and/or hypertension.² The side-effects of occupational stress are seen worldwide in all the professions, on the employees of all the categories, societies, and families. The occupational ill-effects are increased with the COVID-19 infection.³

High infection risk and very high mortality rates of COVID-19 infection have forced various organizations to adopt work from the home culture in a lockdown situation. These organizations include government and private sectors like business, corporate offices, schools, and/or educational institutes.⁴ The present study was aimed to assess the effect of work from the home culture in the COVID-19 situation on Indian employees.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was aimed to assess the effect of work from the home culture in the COVID-19 situation on Indian employees. The study assessed the COVID-19 effect on changes in life satisfaction, distress, job performance among working professionals concerning discomfort, overlapping responsibilities, work situation, and lifestyle changes. The study was carried out after obtaining Ethical clearance and informed consent from included study subjects. The study sample was comprised of working professionals either from the government or public sector residing in India.

To reach the desired sample, the Snowball sampling technique was used in the present study. A semi-structured questionnaire was formed by experts in the field in the picture of Google forms. These google forms were shared with the study subjects through an online link which was shared through the social media platforms like WhatsApp, e-mails, Facebook, or LinkedIn. The link to the questionnaire was also shared with various organized groups to reach maximum subjects.

A total of 998 working professionals participated in the online survey from both genders males and females. For all the included subjects, detailed history and demographics were recorded via questions in the survey. The data collection was done for 1 week as 7 days were given to the study subjects to respond to the questionnaire.

To analyze the collected data, descriptive analysis was used and the results were formulated.

RESULTS

The present study was aimed to assess the effect of work from the home culture in the COVID-19 situation on Indian employees. A total of 998 working professionals participated in the online survey from both genders males and females. For all the included subjects, detailed history and demographics were recorded via questions in the survey. The study included 39.97% (n=399) females and 60.02% (n=599) males with a mean age of 35.02 ± 1.48 years.

The results of the present study have shown that distress was experienced by 40.98% (n=409) males and 47.99% (n=479) females in the present study. Also, there were 13.02% (n=130) subjects from government sector and 86.97% (n=868) study subjects from private sector. Among 13.02% (n=130) study subjects from government sector, 90% (n=117) subjects had experienced mild distress in work from home culture. Among 86.97% (n=868) study subjects from private sector, and 43.98% (n=439) were private employees. Out of 42.98% (n=429) teachers, 72.96% (n=313) were had mild distress and among 43.98% (n=439) private employees, 61.95% (n=272) Corporate employees had mild distress. Moderate and severe distress was experienced by 9.09% (n=39) teachers and 30.97% (n=136) of private employees respectively.

On assessing the biggest fear during COVID-19 lockdown, the biggest fear was encountering COVID-19 infection and the fear of Death. Working professionals were also asked if they were affected by work from home culture during COVID-19 lockdown. The subjects were given an online survey questionnaire concerning their worries during COVID-19 lockdown and had 6 components including distress, job performance, occupational discomfort, family distraction, lifestyle choices, and job role overload

DISCUSSION

During COVID-19 global spread and declaration as a pandemic by WHO, there was a big shift of office culture to work from home environment between working professionals. This major and drastic change with the pandemic spread globally affects job performance, increases work load, and induced stress among working professionals.⁵ This was in agreement with the recent survey study conducted in the UK in 2020 on healthcare workers, and the results of this survey showed that more job pressure and distress was seen in females during the coronavirus pandemic.⁶

This extensive change in the working culture from office to work from home can be studied with the help of various tools focusing on distress, job performance, occupational discomfort, family distraction, lifestyle choices, and job role overload. The balance between professional and personal lives of the study subjects was hampered when the shift occurred during pandemic from office to work from home culture owing to no help of housemaids, closure of schools, and day-care facilities inducing distress in the working professionals as suggested by the study of Prasad K et al⁷ in 2018. These were also in agreement with the study by Banerjee D⁸ in 2020 where work pressure and expectations increased in work from home culture resulting in stress, frustration, and anger.

During lockdown imposed globally, distress levels were measured, and it was seen that many study subjects were feeling nervous some of the times during lockdown and most study subjects were nervous all the time. This can be attributed to the discomfort that subjects faced during work from home culture pressure with additional fulfillment of domestic duties.⁹ Nearly 70% of the study subjects expect complete covid safety procedures once working from office culture resume. The subjects also agreed to follow covid appropriate protocols including mask-wearing and hand washing all the time.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Within its limitations, the present study concludes that there was an increase in work-related commitments leading to distress in working professionals with compromised work quality due to distraction from family. Satisfaction in life leads to good job performance, and job performance is decreased significantly with job distress. These results call for more longitudinal studies to be conducted on work from home culture and balance in life and work till the COVID-19 pandemic is prevalent. However, the present study had a few limitations including small sample size, cross-section nature, and geographical area biases. Hence, more longitudinal studies with larger sample size and longer monitoring period will help reach a definitive conclusion.

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TABLES

Gender	Females % [n]	Males % [n]	Total % [n]
Mean	39.97% [n=399]	60.02% [n=599]	100% [998]
Age [years] SD	35.02±1.48	38.05±1.80	

Table 1: Demographic Data

Government employee	13.02% (n=130)
Private employees	86.97% (n=868)

Table 2: Employment

Gender distribution	Females	Males
Distress	47.99% (n=479)	40.98% (n=409)
Type of distress		
Mild distress	Teachers	42.98% (n=429)
	Corporate employees	61.95% (n=272)
	Shop owners	43.98% (n=439)
Moderate distress	Teachers	9.09% (n=39)
Severe distress	Corporate employees	30.97% (n=136)

Table 3: Type of Distress