

ISSN 2063-5346



A STUDY ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG IT EMPLOYEES WITH REFERENCE TO WORK-FROM-HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

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Article History: Received: 01.02.2023

Revised: 07.03.2023

Accepted: 10.04.2023

Abstract

The COVID-19 Pandemic has made a huge impact throughout the world. It had changed how we work. To stop the virus from spreading, people are forced to isolate themselves from others and practice self-quarantine. As a result, many businesses and organizations have had to change how they work to accommodate remote employees.

OBJECTIVE: The study aims to identify the sources and consequences of stress faced by employees who have work-from-home responsibilities. It also helps to study the organizational approach toward the stress faced by employees.

METHODOLOGY: A Descriptive research methodology was adopted in this study. Responses were collected using convenient sampling from 155 IT employees and analyzed using SPSS.

FINDINGS: The findings of the study reflect that although some of the employees have adjusted to prolonged work-from-home responsibilities but still many employees indeed faced the stress from remote work.

IMPLICATION: As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, our work has been significantly impacted. Businesses and organizations have had to adjust their operations to allow for remote working as people are encouraged to practice social distancing and self-quarantine and organizations have to come up with something that could help the personnel.

Keywords: Stress management, IT Sector, Work-life balance, Personal wellbeing.

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DOI:10.31838/ecb/2023.12.s1-B.352

INTRODUCTION

The term "stress" refers to the physiological and emotional response to a demand or pressure that is greater than one's capacity for coping. Stress is a natural part of life, and to some extent, it may even serve as motivation to individuals to achieve their objectives. The person's mental and physical health, as well as their relationships and performance, may all be impacted when stress becomes severe or persistent. Stress is an aspect of life, no matter where you are or what you are doing. Stress cannot be avoided, but it can be managed so that it does not control you. In our daily lives, we hear about work stress from our coworkers, instructors, and physicians. Even the word stress may be found in the news, publications, and other forms of social media these days. But exactly what is stress?? In layman's language stress is 'frustration or anxiety or nervousness or change in regular function of mind or body due to negative or positive influences around s'. So, the definitions of stress by different experts are as follows- Hans Selye in 1936 defined stress as, —"a syndrome produced by diverse nocuous agents". He defined stress as the body's non-specific response to "noxious stimuli." According to Arnold (1960), "stress is a condition that interferes with normal functioning." According to Selye (1974), "stress is an universal reaction of the body to any demand. "According to Malta (2004), stress is "any discomfort experienced or perceived on a personal level and generated by situations, events, or situations that are sufficient or frequent in nature to exceed a person's coping mechanisms and capacity to handle them effectively."

COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, many workers have switched to working from home to reduce the virus's spread. Although this arrangement is flexible and convenient, it might also make some people feel more

stressed. Working from home may make it harder to maintain a healthy work-life balance since the borders between work and personal life can get muddled. Remote workers may also feel lonely and have less social support, which might make them more stressed and anxious. The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) study found that the most isolated group—those working from home and living alone—experienced the biggest increases in mental distress and loneliness during the pandemic. Ministers are still debating how to manage the return to workplaces in the wake of Covid restrictions. Researchers were astonished to see that those who live with others while working from home also suffered a considerable increase in loneliness. This was not the case for persons who worked outside the home. Effective stress management is critical for remote employees to keep their mental and physical health, as well as their job performance, in check. Employees who work from home can use a variety of stress-management measures, such as establishing clear boundaries between work and personal time, having a designated workspace, taking frequent breaks, and indulging in physical exercise or relaxation techniques. Another important part of stress management for remote employees is communication. Check-ins with supervisors and coworkers regularly can assist to create a sense of social connection and support. Maintaining relationships with family and friends outside of work can also be beneficial for emotional support. Finally, maintaining physical health is essential for stress management. This involves getting enough sleep, eating healthily, and exercising frequently. Work-from-home workers may succeed in their jobs while preserving their emotional and physical well-being by prioritizing self-care and using practical stress management practices

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Wolor et al., 2020) Employees all across the world are now required to work remotely or follow safety regulations due to COVID-19. Stress might result from this, particularly for individuals who have families. Communication, timing, safety, health, governmental laws, and limiting exposure to pandemic news are six strategies recommended by research for managing stress. (Darouei & Pluut, 2021) The article investigated the effects of working from home on perform-home interface and well-being using a resource perspective. The findings imply that on WFH days, there is lesser pressure and less work-family conflict. Engagement and affective states in the morning were predicted by work-family conflict. Employer well-being should be protected by organizations using a WFH protocol. (Galanti et al., 2021) This study examines how the pandemic affected WFH productivity, engagement, and stress by examining the effects of conflict between family and work, social isolation, job autonomy, and self-leadership. The findings show that while social isolation and family-work conflict hurt well-being, autonomy, and self-leadership have a good impact. (Song & Gao, 2020) Having fast internet has made working from home increasingly common. Working from home during the week results in fewer joys and more stress, according to this study utilizing data from the American Time Use Survey. Effects differ according to parental status and gender. The advantages of telework should be reevaluated by policymakers and employers.

(Srivastava et al., 2015) WFH is being discussed as more organizations look into the idea. Analysis of the applicability, benefits, and drawbacks of WFH in the Indian workplace is based on a study of 50 IT workers in Pune. (Jaiswal & Arun, 2022) Lockdowns and WFH were caused by the unresolvable situation known as COVID-19. Increased working hours, decreased

productivity, and stress was discovered in this research of 24 Indian managers, but there were also glimmers of self-initiated creativity. WFH regulations require review. (Thomas, 2021) Due to extended isolation, stress, and unfavorable working conditions, COVID-19 induced WFH and has an impact on the mental health of women working in IT. Workload, job instability, a poor work environment, personal issues, and a lack of structure are the primary professional stress factors that have a detrimental effect on mental health, according to a study on Bangalore's metropolitan women IT professionals. (Satpathy et al., 2021) Covid-19 has established the home office as the standard. Collecting data from 334 full-time employees, this study highlights and ranks technological stressors that influence IT personnel. The most urgent issue was shown to be the worry of losing one's work owing to new ICT. (Chaudhary et al., 2022) This study looks into the factors that COVID-19-related remote work has on employee engagement. The findings indicate that having more children lowers participation whereas virtual technologies, leader contact, psychological screenings, and training increase it. Virtual teamwork, status in marriage, or entertainment tools had no discernible effect. Enhancing virtual tools, sustaining salary, and supporting mental health are among the recommendations.

(Olson & Primps, 1984) In this study, two groups of people—autonomous skilled professionals and individuals with few employment options—are used to examine telecommuting as a standard working arrangement. Discussions on gender issues, work-life balance, and other effects on employee-employer relationships lead to the suggestion that telecommuting as a flexible work alternative should be further investigated. (Pauline Ramos & Tri Prasetyo, 2020) In the Philippines, telecommuting is becoming more commonplace thanks to a recent regulation that encourages it. SEM was used in this

study to examine how working from home affects productivity. The results point to a good influence on productivity and job satisfaction, but a negative effect on job performance.(Kumar et al., 2022) Due to COVID, Indian employers embraced work from home (WFH) quickly, although productivity depends on the happiness of the employees. The effects of personal and work-related aspects on wellness for 301 Indian employees working for WFH are examined in this paper, and it is discovered that autonomy, job customization, technology, and supervisor support have favorable relationships.(Bharathi & Mala, 2016) The work-life balance of women in Indian IT organizations was examined in terms of many factors. The most significant effects were found to be from personal enhancers including exercise, hobbies, sound sleep, and working from home, while social media use had no discernible effects.(Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021) WFH for employees in Hong Kong as a result of COVID-19 prompted the investigation of workable WFH regulations. SWOT analysis suggests new policies and offers insight into current events. WFH might turn into a long-term agreement.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The data collected from respondents may be biased because not everyone was interested in filling out the questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents may not be completely honest in their responses, or they may not accurately remember their experiences with stress management. The findings of the study may not be representative of the entire population of work-from-home employees as it was collected only from Employees from the IT sector. The period of research was restricted to a limited days of days The study was only confined to 155 respondents. The dependability of self-reports determines the importance of the research findings.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the sources of stress of employees working from home
2. To identify the consequence of stress faced by employees.
3. To study the organizational approach to handling stress among employees.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant relationship between Age and the amount of work that is assigned is appropriate and realistic.

H2: There is a significant relationship between Gender and Negative physical or mental health symptoms as a result of working from home.

H3: There is a significant relationship between Education qualification and sources of stress.

H4: There is a significant relationship between Gender and the consequence of stress.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

For this examination, a study methodology was employed. To observe how the latter affects the former, independent variables will be subjected to and exposed to manipulation throughout the study. Researchers may be able to credibly infer a relationship between independent and dependent variables by monitoring and examining how each variable changes over time. Data from the 155 personnel in the Indian IT sector were gathered from primary sources using convenience sampling approaches through structured surveys and discussions. For a variety of reasons, secondary data were also collected in addition to primary data from websites,

newspapers, trade publications, and papers from a review of the literature. Using SPSS, the survey's data were examined.

DATA ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

CHI-SQUARE TESTS:

Researchers employ the chi-square test for independence, also known as Pearson's chi-

square test or the Chi-square test of association, to ascertain whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Age and the amount of work that is assigned is appropriate and realistic.

PEARSON'S CHI-SQUARED TEST BETWEEN AGE AND THE AMOUNT OF WORK THAT IS ASSIGNED TO ME IS APPROPRIATE AND REALISTIC

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	389.837 ^a	44	.003
Likelihood Ratio	346.359	44	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.350	1	.245
N of Valid Cases	155		

a. 50 cells (83.3%) have an expected count of less than 5.

The minimum expected count is .14.

INTERPRETATION:

Since the significant value is lesser than the P value of 0.05, The Null Hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between Age and the amount of work that is assigned is appropriate and realistic.

CHI-SQUARE TESTS:

H2: There is a significant relationship between Gender and Negative physical or mental health symptoms as a result of working from home.

PEARSON'S CHI-SQUARED TEST BETWEEN GENDER AND NEGATIVE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS AS A RESULT OF WORKING FROM HOME

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	144.319 ^a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	157.082	8	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	32.078	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	155		

a. 4 cells (26.7%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.85.

INTERPRETATION:

Since the significant value is lesser than the P value of 0.05, The Null Hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant relationship between Gender and Negative physical or mental health symptoms as a result of working from home.

ANOVA is used to assess whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more independent (unrelated) groups. This strategy, however, is often used when there are at least three groups, not simply two.

H3: There is a significant relationship between Education qualification and sources of stress.

ONE WAY ANOVA:

ANALYSIS OF SOURCES OF STRESS BY EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS ANOVA

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you agree that analyzing the sources will influence stress management?	Between Groups	151.312	2	75.656	108.934	.000
	Within Groups	105.566	152	.695		
	Total	256.877	154			
Do you agree that you have a designated work area in your home that is separate from your personal space?	Between Groups	156.810	2	78.405	115.970	.000
	Within Groups	102.764	152	.676		
	Total	259.574	154			
Do you agree that you ever feel as though you are picked on or discriminated against in the workplace?	Between Groups	222.281	2	111.141	197.824	.000
	Within Groups	85.396	152	.562		
	Total	307.677	154			
The demands of my job affect my relationships and family life	Between Groups	164.727	2	82.364	113.100	.000
	Within Groups	110.692	152	.728		
	Total	275.419	154			

The amount of work that is assigned to me is appropriate and realistic	Between Groups	109.723	2	54.861	62.294	.000
	Within Groups	133.864	152	.881		
	Total	243.587	154			

INTERPRETATION:

We assume a significance threshold of 0.05. since less than 0.05 is the significance level in each collection. The Alternative hypothesis is accepted, but the Null hypothesis is disproved. It follows that there must be a connection between educational background and stress factors.

H4: There is a significant relationship between Gender and the consequence of stress.

ANALYSIS OF CONSEQUENCE OF STRESS BY GENDER OF RESPONDENTS ANOVA

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you agree that analyzing the consequences of stress will influence stress management?	Between Groups	93.215	2	46.608	44.787	.000
	Within Groups	158.178	152	1.041		
	Total	251.394	154			
Do you agree that you have any negative physical or mental health symptoms as a result of working from home?	Between Groups	119.182	2	59.591	77.555	.000
	Within Groups	116.792	152	.768		
	Total	235.974	154			
Do you feel more stressed out at work than usual?	Between Groups	93.320	2	46.660	42.993	.000
	Within Groups	164.964	152	1.085		
	Total	258.284	154			
Do you agree that behavioural changes are the result of stress?	Between Groups	135.111	2	67.555	94.324	.000
	Within Groups	108.863	152	.716		
	Total	243.974	154			
Do you agree that miscommunication among employees and employers are the outcome of stress?	Between Groups	73.795	2	36.898	24.030	.000
	Within Groups	233.392	152	1.535		
	Total	307.187	154			

INTERPRETATION:

We assume a significance threshold of 0.05. since less than 0.05 is the significance level in each collection. The Alternative hypothesis is accepted, but the Null hypothesis is disproved. As a result, it is clear that gender and stress consequence are strongly related.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Maintain a Routine: Encourage employees to establish a consistent habit by rising at the same time every day, taking regular breaks, and adhering to a timetable that balances work and personal life.
2. Set boundaries: Encourage employees to build boundaries between work and personal life by designating a dedicated workstation, turning off work-related notifications during non-working hours, and avoiding late-night work.
3. Encourage communication: Encourage employees to interact frequently with coworkers and management to avoid feelings of social isolation and to receive the required feedback and support.
4. Provide technical support: Ensure that staff have access to the technology and equipment they need to do their jobs well. Provide technical assistance in resolving any connectivity or equipment problems.
5. Promote self-care: To preserve good physical and mental health, encourage staff to prioritize self-care activities such as exercise, meditation, and healthy food.
6. Offer mental health resources: Give employees access to mental health resources such as employee support programs,

counseling services, or online stress management resources.

7. Establish clear expectations: To avoid ambiguity and guarantee that staff can focus on key tasks without feeling overwhelmed, establish clear expectations and objectives for them.

CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has compelled many organizations to adopt a remote work model, resulting in increasing stress among IT employees. According to the findings of many research, stress management is critical for individuals working from home, and organizations must take proactive actions to address this issue.

Organizations can implement various strategies to reduce stress levels among IT employees who work from home, such as maintaining a routine, setting boundaries, encouraging communication, providing technical support, promoting self-care, providing mental health resources, and establishing clear expectations.

It is important to understand that stress management while working from home is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Organizations must adjust their stress management solutions to fit the specific needs of their employees, who may have varied stresses.

Organizations may assist their employees' well-being while also improving productivity and overall job satisfaction by prioritizing stress management and applying effective techniques. To summaries, stress management is an essential component of a successful work-from-home model, and organizations must address this issue to protect the well-being of their IT personnel.

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