

A Study to Assess the Work Life Balance of IT Professionals Working from Home during COVID-19 Pandemic in Selected IT Departments in India

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Abstract: In a rapid response to tackle the severely spreading COVID-19 disease, several public measures were enforced by the governments including immediate closure of workplaces. Due to this, all the small, medium and large-scale IT firms in India had to undergo sudden adoption of work from home model without any prior planning or preparation. Every employee has seen a sudden departure from office environment to work from home environment which has brought many changes in their lives both psychologically and physically. This study focusses on assessing the work life balance of IT employees in work from home model during the COVID-19 pandemic. A descriptive research approach was adopted where 60 IT employees were selected using non probability convenient sampling. A self-structured tool to assess the working status and living status of IT employees working from home during COVID-19 is prepared. Quantitative data was collected using the online survey form and the responses were recorded. Collected data was analyzed using inferential and descriptive analysis. Results indicate a moderately positive correlation between the working status and living status of IT employees working from home. Mean score analysis show that employees' self-analyzed work satisfaction is higher than the life satisfaction in work from home model. Employees' type of staying has a significant association with their working status, while the living status is not statistically associated with selected socio-demographic variables.

Keywords: Work from home, work-life balance, working satisfaction, life satisfaction.

1. Introduction

During the end of 2019, a highly infectious respiratory illness started in China, with a high mortality rate. Before the health authorities could recognize, it spread to different countries all over the world. This virus was identified as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) or COVID-19. Due to highly contagious nature of the disease, it had claimed lives of more than 5 lakh people till June 30, 2020 worldwide. World health organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 declared COVID-19 as a pandemic disease, as it had the ability to affect a huge population in the world.

WHO also released a set of guidelines for taking precautionary measures in order to restrict the further spread of the virus [1].

In another annexure by WHO on May 10, 2020, special focus was devoted to practicing social measures at the workplace. As a measure to contain the virus, many countries imposed an immediate closure of workplaces, transport, travel and avoidance of social gatherings. Closure of workplaces lead many industries, especially the Information Technology (IT) sector to adopt for work from home scheme, where the professionals are allowed to work from home using the computer and internet.

Indian information Technology industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the country. The IT industry has built very valuable brand equity for itself in the global markets. The industry currently employs around 1 million people and provides indirect employment to around 2.5 million people. It is expected that despite pandemic, the IT spending is expected to grow by 10.0% in the year 2021 according to NASSCOM. [2].

For a large sector like IT as hit by pandemic and immediately moved to remote working without any proper plan, every employee has seen a sudden departure from office environment of work to home environment which has led to bring many changes in their lives. Several studies have highlighted this in relation to workers undergoing significant shift in work arrangement and their coping mechanism in work from home model during pandemic [3,4], however very few studies are inclined towards IT employees. From arranging a workplace at home to maintaining the dignity of work, and managing the family amidst the pandemic has become an overall new challenge to everyone undergoing this transition. These factors, as can be understood, may lead to impact the overall work-life balance and quality of life of IT professional significantly.

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2. Need of Study

As in the COVID-19 pandemic, Work style has changed dramatically with introduction of work from home. Home turns to be an office as well, combining working hours with daily routines and family commitments. There are many challenges and negative aspects like unbalanced work load and pressure to perform timely which could affect health and well-being. From so long, there exist disagreement in performance of work from home models. Some argue that working from home allows employees to be more productive, while others argue that working from home is not the best environment because it allows for more home distractions [3].

Therefore, a systematic study on assessing the important professional, behavioral, personal and psychological changes among the IT employees, and relating them to the various sociodemographic variables is needed to ensure the effectiveness of work from home policies and overall work-life balance of the employees. The employees' response in terms of work satisfaction, deadlines, possible issues due to work from home, work completions, anxiety, working pattern changes, behavioral changes, family health and well-being etc., are important to study to ensure the effectiveness of work from home policies and to understand overall work-life balance of the employees.

3. Objectives

The major objectives of the current study are listed as follows:

1. To assess the work life balance of IT professionals working from home.
2. To find association between working status with selected sociodemographic variables among IT professionals working from home.
3. To find association between living status with selected sociodemographic variables among IT professionals working from home.
4. To find out correlation between working status and living status of IT professionals.

4. Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant association between working status and selected socio demographic variables among IT professionals.

H2: There is significant association between living status and selected socio-demographic variables among IT professionals.

H3: There is significant relation between working status and living status of IT professionals working from home during COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Methodology

A descriptive research approach was adopted where 60 IT employees were selected from selected IT companies in India using non probability convenient sampling for the quantitative study. A self-structured tool to assess the socio demographic variables of IT employees and self-structured questionnaire was used to assess the working status and living status of IT

employees working from home during COVID-19. Quantitative data was collected using the online survey form and the responses were recorded. Collected data was analyzed using inferential and descriptive analysis.

6. Results

The subjects were first distributed according to selected socio demographic variables such as Age, Gender, Religion, Marital Status, Type of Residence (Metro or Non-Metro), Type of Staying, Income, Job Level, Work Hours, and Work Experience. The self-analyzed satisfaction is assessed for working and living status separately. The questionnaire had 15 questions on Working status divided in three areas i.e., Job Satisfaction, Work Productivity, and Work Load. The other 15 questions in living status questionnaire is divided into three areas that are Family Happiness, Healthy Lifestyle, and Family Support. The responses are rated based on a three-point rating scale (Always-3, Sometimes-2, Never-1), where the high rating indicate higher satisfaction in working and living status. The criteria for level of satisfaction in working and living status are divided as Highly satisfied (Range score: 31-45), Satisfied (Range score: 16-30), Not Satisfied (Range score: 1-15).

Figure 1 shows the overall analysis of working status of IT employees. Mean and standard deviation (SD) of Highly Satisfied employees is 39.13 ± 3.57 (Mean Score: 86.95%). Around 10% of employees were just satisfied in working status with Mean and SD of 27.83 ± 1.60 (Mean Score: 92.76%). 1.67% employees who were unsatisfied with their work status, has a Mean \pm SD of 15 ± 0.0 .

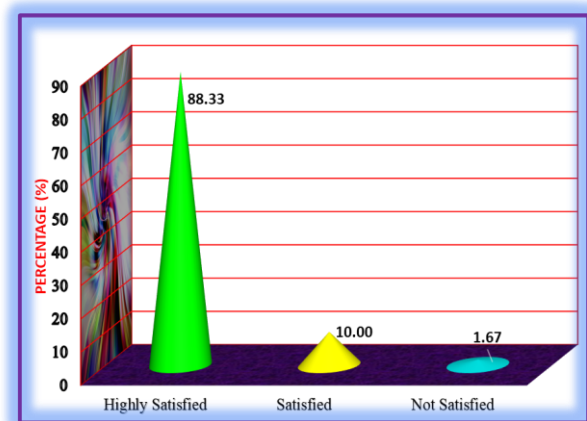


Fig. 1. Overall percentage analysis of working status of IT professionals during work from home

Table 1 depict area wise analysis of working status of employees in 3 domains- Job satisfaction, Work productivity and Work load. The mean score obtained in Job satisfaction, Work productivity and work load are (12.95 ± 2.18) , (12.56 ± 2.21) and (12.08 ± 2.33) respectively. With regard to job satisfaction and work productivity, mean percentage obtained was 86.33% and 83.78% respectively, which indicate that in both area, self-analyzed work satisfaction was comparatively higher than perceived work load as mean % score in that area was 80.55%.

Table 1

Area wise analysis on the level of working status by range score, mean, standard deviation, mean %, and coefficient of variation

| Areas of working status | Mean \pm SD | Mean score % | CV |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Job Satisfaction | 12.95 \pm 2.18 | 86.33 | 16.85 |
| Work Productivity | 12.56 \pm 2.21 | 83.78 | 17.60 |
| Work-Load | 12.08 \pm 2.33 | 80.55 | 19.29 |

Table 2

Area wise analysis on the level of living status by range score, mean, standard deviation, mean %, and coefficient of variation

| Areas of living status | Mean \pm SD | Mean score % | CV |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Family Happiness | 11.93 \pm 2.38 | 79.55 | 19.98 |
| Healthy Lifestyle | 11.15 \pm 2.23 | 74.33 | 20.07 |
| Family Support | 12.31 \pm 2.19 | 82.11 | 17.78 |

Table 3

Association between working status and sociodemographic variable (Type of staying) based on chi-square value

| Socio demographic variable | Chi-square value | Df | Value at p= 0.05 | Inference |
|----------------------------|------------------|----|------------------|-------------|
| Type of staying | 15.729 | 6 | 12.59 | Significant |

Table 4

Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation to assess the correlation between working status and living status of IT professionals working from home

| Study variables | Mean \pm SD | Mean% | "r" | Inference |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------|------|---------------------------------|
| Working status | 37.6 \pm 5.65 | 83.55 | 0.59 | Moderately positive correlation |
| Living status | 35.4 \pm 5.81 | 78.67 | | |

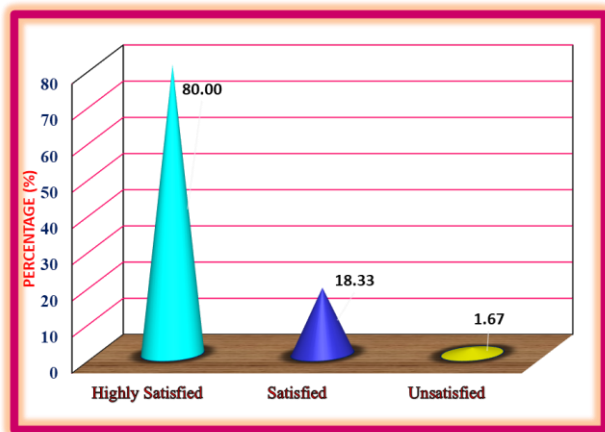


Fig. 2. Overall percentage analysis of living status of IT professionals during work from home

Figure 2 shows the overall analysis of living status of IT employees. 80% of employees show Highly Satisfied status with Mean and SD value of 37.54 \pm 3.74 (Mean Score: 80%). 18.33% of employees were just satisfied with a mean and SD value of 27.91 \pm 2.81 (Mean Score: 93.03%). 1.67% employees who were unsatisfied with their living status, has a Mean \pm SD of 15 \pm 0.0.

As shown in Table 2, living status of IT professionals are measured in terms of Family Happiness, Healthy Lifestyle and Family Support. Mean analysis indicates that scores in all the areas are almost at similar level with a slightly higher score for the family support they experienced (12.31 \pm 4.79). With regard to family happiness mean score percentage obtained is 79.5 (11.93 \pm 5.69) and for the healthy life style they could follow (74.33%).

Table 3 indicate the association between working status and selected socio demographic variables of IT employees working from home. It is found that the χ^2 value for the variable Type of staying (with responses as: Alone, With Family, With Friends, and With Colleague) has a $t = 15.729$, $p < 0.05$, and

therefore it is found to be statistically significant. This proves that H1 is accepted and inferred as there is significant association between working status and type of stay of IT professionals. With regard to other socio demographic variables and working and living status, no statistically significant association is identified, and hence H2 is rejected.

Table 4 shows the Karl-Pearson coefficient for identifying correlation between the working and living status. The correlation coefficient statistically calculated using inferential analysis and found a positive moderate correlation ($r=0.59$). It is therefore inferred that as working status increases, their living status also improve. Thus, H3 is accepted and inferred that there is a positive moderate co relationship between working status and living status of IT professional working from home.

7. Discussion

Present study reveals that although good balance between working status and living status is observed in work from home model, the satisfaction level in living status is less than the working status, since mean score in living status is less than the working status all the time. This indicates the need to educate the employees to take steps for better work-life balance even when working from home.

The average score of subjects in work-load is found to be lower than in job satisfaction and work productivity. Only 43.33% of employees responded that they always feel excited in attending the virtual meetings and presenting their progress. Also, only 41.67% employees think that the quality of output in work from home model is on par with work from office model. Thus, steps are needed to educate the employer to maintain better work coordination and enthusiasm in the employees working from home.

In terms of living status, healthy lifestyle has the less mean score (74.33%) than family happiness (79.55%) and family support (82.11%). This indicate that not many employees have a healthy lifestyle in work from home model. This is also

observed from question wise analysis where 33.33% employees said that they never find time for exercise in their routine. These results are of high concern and since physical and mental health are correlated, proper nursing intervention is necessary to counsel the employees on how take care of their health alongside of work.

The study finds out that the working status has significant association with type of staying. This indicate that the concerns of employees staying with friend, family, colleague or alone should be separately addressed and employee-employer coordination need to be established for better work-life balance.

8. Conclusion

The present study focused on assessment of working status and living status of IT employees working from home during COVID-19 pandemic. An experimental approach was undertaken where online survey was conducted on 60 IT employees working from home from selected IT companies in India. The study revealed that high satisfaction levels are reported by the candidates in both working and living status in work from home during the pandemic. A moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.59$) between the working status and living status of IT employees is observed. Mean score analysis show that employees' self-analyzed work satisfaction is higher than

the life satisfaction. Employees' type of staying during the pandemic has a significant association with their working status, while the association with living status is not found to be statistically significant with selected socio-demographic variables. Present study also suggest that though high satisfaction is seen in work and family life in work from home model, when asked as a preference, many employees (26.67%) would not select for a permanent work from home. This indicate that more effort and studies are needed in preparing future work policies and help of nursing professionals in giving inputs related to work life balance would be necessary in making decisions.

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