

An Empirical Study on the Impact of Work-from-Home on Work-Life Balance and Parenthood: Gendered Perspectives from the Indian Corporate Sector

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KEYWORDS

Satisfaction level, cooperation, work-life balance, working from home, continuity of working from home and work hours.

ABSTRACT

The study compares the satisfaction levels of men and women who work from home and the impact of this transition from the working office culture to an entirely new WFH culture. It also shows satisfaction level, connectivity level, cooperation with colleagues, stress level, and effect on parenthood in parents who worked from home during the pandemic. Ultimately, it also concludes whether people would like to continue WFH culture post covid, especially women. Quantitative research and data analysis were conducted on the sample population of size 118 people from PAN India working in the corporate field for the study. Of 118 people, 41 were women (35%), and 77 were men (65%). Based on the analysis, it could be concluded that most people in the sampling frame were satisfied with working from home. It could also be inferred that working from home had a Neutral to High impact on employees' Work-Life balance due to uneven working hours and longer shifts. Also, the study shows that there is quite a considerable impact of WFH on parenthood in aspects of caregiving to their children and change in behaviour of the working parents towards their children due to frustration from work and uneven working hours. An analysis was done to find out if and how many women working from home would like to continue the same culture post covid, and it concluded that most of them were either willing to continue working from home (40%) or were not sure about it/maybe (34%).

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus has brought a transition in Work-from-home arrangements. With the shutdown, almost all the organisations have had their employees working from home, though in different numbers. As the situation gradually returns to normal, the biggest question is what the Work from Home scenario would be post-COVID. The transition is expected to stay, but it is intriguing to see to what extent. During the extreme stage of the pandemic, most of the organisation's employees worked from home. Many found it convenient not to step out of the home and work, while many saw a conflict in Work-Life balance. Parents who always wished to stay with their kids at home did get that, but not as a holiday. Managing the home and the organisation simultaneously is a herculean task. The preference for Working from home is affected by many factors, among which gender is common. Some studies found that Women might also opt to work from home post covid, while others had contrasting conclusions.



This paper aims to give a clearer picture of the effect of gender on WFH post-COVID preference and how willing the parents are to continue WFM. The results could be different in normal circumstances as the pandemic influences opinions and preferences. It would also depend on how organisations manage WFH post covid as well. Only time will tell what the future has to offer; what we have in front of us now is the willingness and reluctance of some to continue working from home.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:-

A review paper [1] found that Clear and frequent communication of information and small group collaboration is necessary to consider the WFM post covid. However, it remains to be seen how the employees and employers react to WFM once the pandemic is over. A study [2] found that Work-life conflict is influenced by the interference of work in personal life and family and personal life in work time. Realising the fulfilment of the need for competence in employees might lead them to opt for WFM even after the pandemic. [3] A study to estimate the percentage of jobs in Norway that could be done from home showed that 38% of Norwegian jobs could be done from home. The study also concluded that those already disadvantaged are less likely to have a job that could be done from home. A sample survey conducted by [4] on 436 individuals from Lithuania concluded that there was not enough evidence to believe that employee's productivity has decreased while working from home via telecommunication. And Productivity was almost the same as before. Telecommuting intensity has a negative relationship with one's work-life balance. Also, a study [5] conducted on 504 Nigerian individuals to examine how employees feel about WFH in the aspects of family values, an increase in performance, isolation and disrupts the work-life balance and how workers cope with WFH found that connection with teammates affects the work for most of the employees, i.e. 91% out of the total 504 examined individuals. The employees strongly believed they could adjust schedules to accommodate their children and that WFH made them more flexible under life adaptability to different situations. A study by [6] discussed how home offices will undoubtedly become a mainstay for a large portion of the population in the future, both in the short and long term. In the short term, companies will cut costs, and home offices will most likely remain in place. A risk of COVID-19 infection spreading throughout the workplace. As a result, millions of workers will require safe working conditions. Offices in the Home In the long term, businesses have understood that work can be done at home, which will most likely lead to increased productivity. Work is done at home regularly. Offices in the home are enticing workers with shorter commutes and better work. Being in the comforts of home gives them a better sense of balance and less stress. Sound ergonomics will be required in home offices. [7] Studied the elements of WFH quality under the COVID-19 pandemic utilising one-of-a-kind information recovered from our underlying overview, which was done as a team with four assembling endeavours in Japan. The study checked out the results of WFH on worker efficiency and emotional well-being both inside the firm and inside the occupation. We were additionally ready to dispose of differences in efficiency between organisations by zeroing in on individual undertakings. We give four discoveries in this paper. First, we stated that continuous WFH is connected to bringing down the yield. As indicated by our judgment, most specialists doubtlessly saw a drop in efficiency because of their absence of groundwork for WFH during the pandemic's unexpected shock. Research [8] aimed to investigate the role of information technology in performing supplemental work from home. The goal was to understand supplemental labour in general and distributed work better. The study was motivated by its wide-ranging consequences for businesses, management, and individuals who use this work arrangement. [9] Presented the most point-by-point examination of WFH efficiency changes for information labourers accessible to date. We concentrate on an occupation that is supposed to be manageable to WEH; however, it includes critical mental, cooperative, and development assignments. We prove how WEH efficiency fluctuates with worker attributes, the presence of kids at home, and WFO drive time. The information shows a quick and constant leap in work examples and efficiency at the shift to working from home. Indirect associations with the manager or close partners enjoyed less time. Employees also interacted with fewer people and business units inside and outside the firm. Collectively, these indicate that costs of communication, collaboration and coordination are higher when done virtually. [10] an audit paper observed that The discoveries from the current review prompted two fundamental results. The first result relates WFH work commitment with bliss. The second result is significant according to an association's point of view, as it manages their psychosocial prosperity. The two results, whenever seen in their entirety, demonstrate that the post-COVID WFH mode, whenever dealt with appropriately, may help associations and workers. Working from home is believed to be one of the best strategies to maintain the health and safety of society and the viability of the economy and businesses during the pandemic. Still, it is also a long-term industry trend to promote work-life balance. [11] Study the brawl between partners working from home during COVID-19 and the segregation of personal and public workspace used an inductive approach to study 15 married couples. The findings show that couples will always be conflicted regarding who shall occupy the professional space in private space. [12] discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on management-level hotel employees, showing whether the outcomes of working from home were positive or negative. It shows that working from home suppresses productivity's positive outcome and amplifies burnout's negative effect on turnover intentions. In this, the major method used as three dimensions of engagement, namely vigour, dedication, and absorption, were measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement. Three items were used to measure each dimension, and a questionnaire for each was collected; the sample was collected, and the data was analysed. The viability of the economy and businesses was checked during this pandemic, but also a long-term industry trend to promote work-life balance. Focusing on employees' behavioural responses. Furthermore, this study examines the impacts of working from home on hotel managers. The study's results may or may not be generalised to other ranks/titles employees. Lastly, this study assumes that working from home involves higher autonomy and work-home interference. Since the impacts of working from home may



differ across different jobs. [13] Analysed job performance and work-life balance by studying BPO and telecommuting industries to measure their job performance and work from home. They perform an analysis with different random and stratified samples with different factors of T-test, and confirmatory factors are also included in this. These studies also help design a new program emphasising supporting factors contributing to employees' work-life balance. It can be concluded that the instruments used effectively explain employees' job performance and work-life balance during the COVID-19 crisis. [14] Discussed the impact of society's main focus on working women who face overload in the COVID-19 situation. This data was sustained with qualitative analysis. In this woman's working experience and economic condition. Along with a gendered view, the nature of exploitation and marginalisation of domestic workers needs to be probed through the lens of intersectionality. In this analysis, they show the result of the pandemic in the emergence of new forms of rights violations and situations of social injustice among the informal workforce, characterised by the termination of jobs/non-payment of wages/salaries, workload, health risks, indebtedness, All these factors were focused on and concluded that working women had to handle more workload as well as compared to office hours they tend to more work according to analysis. [15] conducted an analysis of middle-class family about their job loss during COVID-19 and reforming their work into working from home. Analysis of the report showed that the direct effect of employment status on family relationships and the direct effect of the family relationship on the child will affect socioeconomic conditions. They used different American samples of black and white, Asian American, and Native American samples for over 15 days. All these analyses were done on the mass level of the population, which concluded negative effects on the relationship of children with parents and also gave results on the status of low-level families that experience job loss. All these analyses move toward negative mental health and negative economic growth of families. [16] discussed the changes we need to accept during COVID-19 in working life, personal life, and health, all of which required major changes that made the organisation insecure. To obtain these changes, they use a different methodology. The ubiquity of communication technologies and the rise of virtual working methods add to the pressure for change, creating a climate of anxiety. Organisational power can no longer be framed by the measures once taken for granted. All these changes were observed in this research. They implicated the following things: The effects of lockdown measures, particularly working from home, on cardiovascular risk factors, including sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy diet pattern, psychological distress, smoking, and alcohol misuse. Governments, companies, and health care services should cooperate and promote policies to educate workers and advocate healthy lifestyles in the working-from-home setting [17]. [18] discussed how triggers of stress, Organizational support, Coping strategies & resources, Blurred boundaries during WFH and Positivity in this crisis, fear of the unknown, ineffective communication at work, lack of clarity and direction, and interruptions during WFH resulted in loss of resources like time and energy. This might disturb an employee's mental health, leading to prolonged stress or even psychosomatic diseases. Therefore, it is an important issue that needs to be given priority in all organisations. There is a dire need for psycho-social support, community support, and an effective system of organisational support to sustain employees' emotional and mental well-being. [19] Stated that the term work-family conflict refers to work interfering with family. As employees' sleep quality and the prospect of working from home versus at the office (the next day) might influence their psychological states in the early morning, we controlled for sleep quality and workplace on the cross-day relationships between work-family conflict in the evening and psychological states the next morning. Results are robust. [20] Discussed the influence of working from home on the productivity of the employees. Factors that influence this are the employees' characteristics, attitudes, and circumstances. Suppose there is a suitable workspace at home. In that case, employees work more productively when they can focus on their work and finish their tasks without being interrupted and distracted by their colleagues in the office. lacking face-to-face communication with colleagues may hurt the productivity of the employees. It becomes more difficult to access people for help and cooperation without a team environment, which may lead to delays in receiving critical information. It complicates the situation even further if there is a high level of task interdependence and colleagues work with sequential tasks and must wait for each other to complete their tasks. Being in the same home environment for a relatively long time causes feelings of social and professional isolation and disconnectedness, negatively affecting productivity. [21] explored in a study of the radical changes in work practices and culture, Line managers have generally been supportive of home-working; this experience of home-working has influenced preferences for flexible working in the future; there were also some negative experiences of home working during the lockdown, Parents, especially mothers, struggled to find the space and time to carry out work during the lockdown, Mothers have struggled to find the time/space to work during the lockdown, Fathers have increased their childcare roles and have cited spending time with children and partner as some of the key positive aspect of working from home, Fathers' involvement in childcare and unpaid work in home has also increased during lockdown, Worrying trends around mental health and well-being for parents, especially for mothers. [22] Studied the impact of Enforced Working from Home on Employee Job Satisfaction during COVID-19: An Event System Perspective. The findings reveal that three configurations promote employee job satisfaction and that a suitable home workspace is a core condition. Long-term WFH undermined job satisfaction without a suitable workspace, digital social support, and an appropriate monitoring mechanism. An online survey to capture the WFH experiences of 256 workers from 66 Chinese enterprises during the pandemic. The study examined how satisfaction was affected by five job characteristics when working from home. Sample and Procedure, Measurement, Control Variables methodology used in this report. Employees face difficulties like lack of internet, privacy, and disturbance. [23] investigate whether WFH will stick and why. The data collected said that 20 per cent of full workdays would be supplied from home after the pandemic ends, compared with just 5 per cent before. 30,000 Americans were surveyed over multiple waves. The industry includes many organisations like Netflix and Apple. Data was collected from many private



organisations, and online surveys and sampling methods were used. Much of the COVID-induced shift to WFH will stick long after the pandemic ends. Using data from the ongoing Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes, American workers are projected to supply about 20 per cent of full workdays from home in the post-pandemic economy, four times the pre-COVID level. Desires to work from home part of the week are pervasive across groups defined by age, education, gender, earnings, and family circumstances. Indeed, most workers are willing to accept sizable pay cuts in return for the option to work from home two or three days a week. In this respect, a large shift to WFH is a welcome development.

Research Gaps:-

1. Some research reports concluded that women would prefer to work from home post-COVID covid, whereas some concluded the other way around.
2. We found no extensive research on employees who are parents of school-going kids—especially women.

Objectives of the study:-

1. To compare the satisfaction level of women and men working from home.
2. To analyse the effect of working from home on parents.
3. To study the preference of women working from home post covid.

Hypothesis:-

1. H0 - No significant difference exists between men and women working from home.
2. H1 - A significant difference exists between men and women working from home.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

Research Design:-

The focus of this study is to separate the various parts of work from home connected with positive and negative efficiency, the balance between serious and fun activities, psychological well-being, working women during a pandemic, and the impact of the relationship on guardians and youngsters. Additionally, it impacts numerous areas like friendliness, the travel industry, corporations, and the media transmission area, which assumes a significant part of the pandemic and helps numerous associations fill the role. This telecommunication additionally gets positive and negative reactions from their administration at an equivalent time because of a few factors: awful network and assets accessibility.

Data Collection Method:-

Data were collected using the snowball sampling method, further representing these studies. The Snowball technique is an enlistment method where other recruiters approach research members to identify the problem, collect the various samples according to data, and get different sampling tests done. In this, we go through various corporate areas to ask about their efficiency during telecommuting, the balance between fun and serious activities and the relations in private life. Likewise, we consider understudies during telecommuting by interfacing them with individual verbal correspondence, google forums, overviews, and different references. The anthropometric measurement of each selected respondent was taken per the standard procedure.

Sampling Design Process:-

- **Target Population:-**

This target population consists of corporate society segregating based on their gender, marital status and whether they have any child or not.

- **Element:-**

Motivational, satisfaction level, work-life conflict and work-from-home

- **Sampling Frame:-**

We are framing the selective region for this study, Delhi NCR, where we target major and minor corporate sectors, including urban and rural workers and working females.

- **Sample Size:** - 118 respondents.
- **Sampling Technique:** - Combination of Snowball and convenience technique.

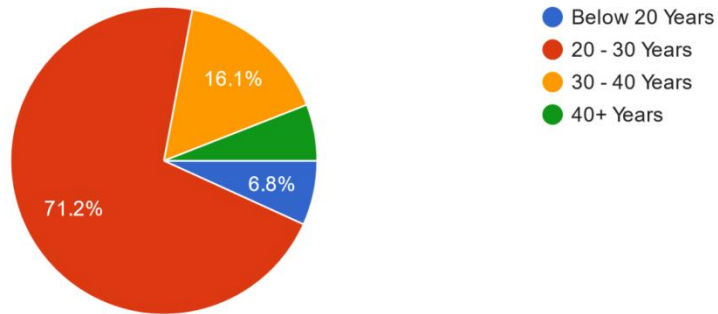
Data Analysis and Interpretation:-

Age and Gender distribution among the respondents:-



Age

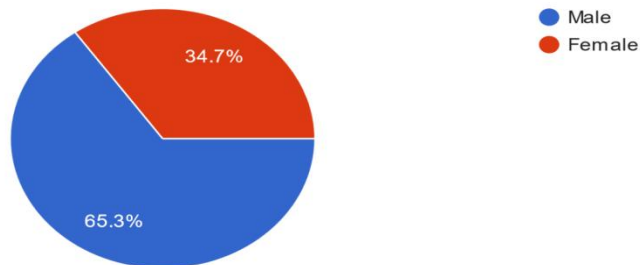
118 responses



The majority of respondents were of the young age group.

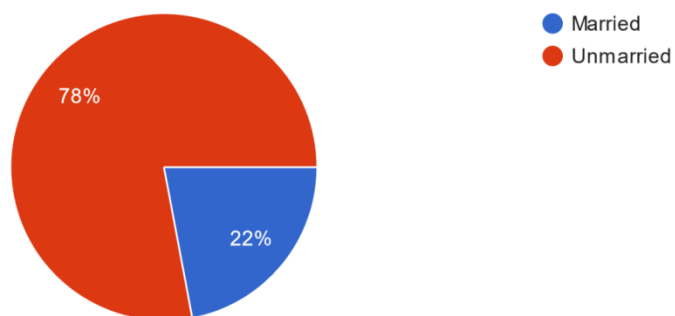
Gender

118 responses

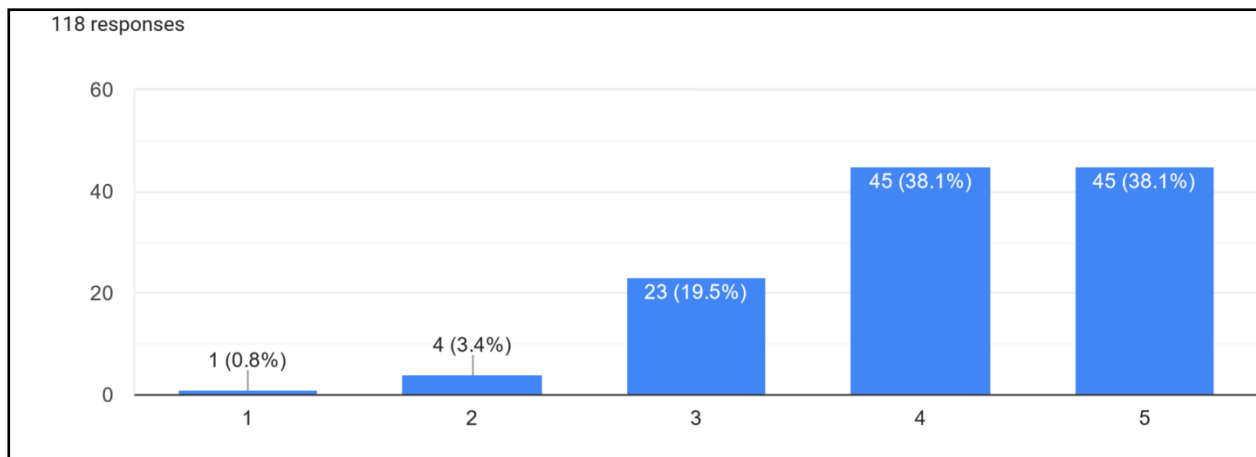


What is your marital status?

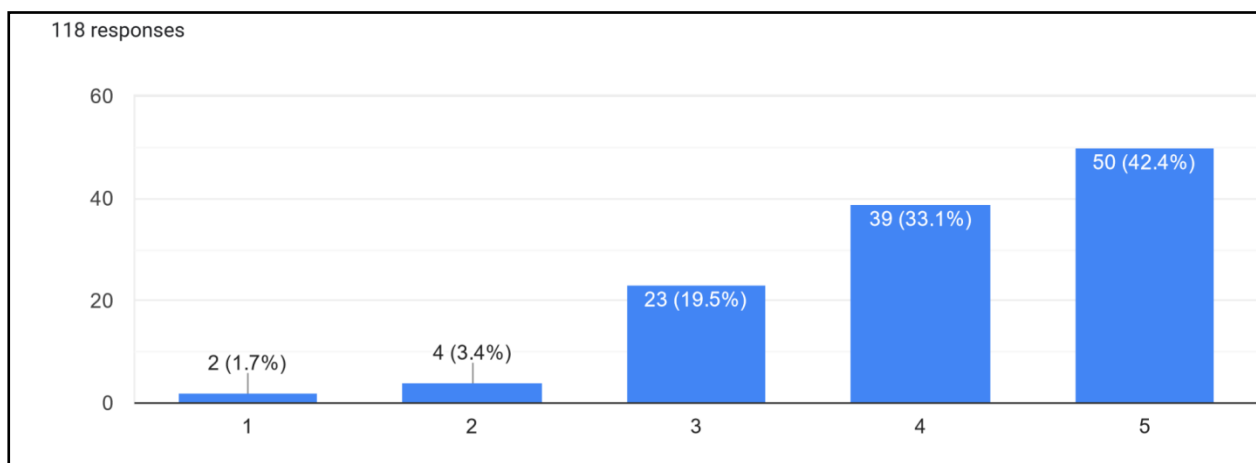
118 responses



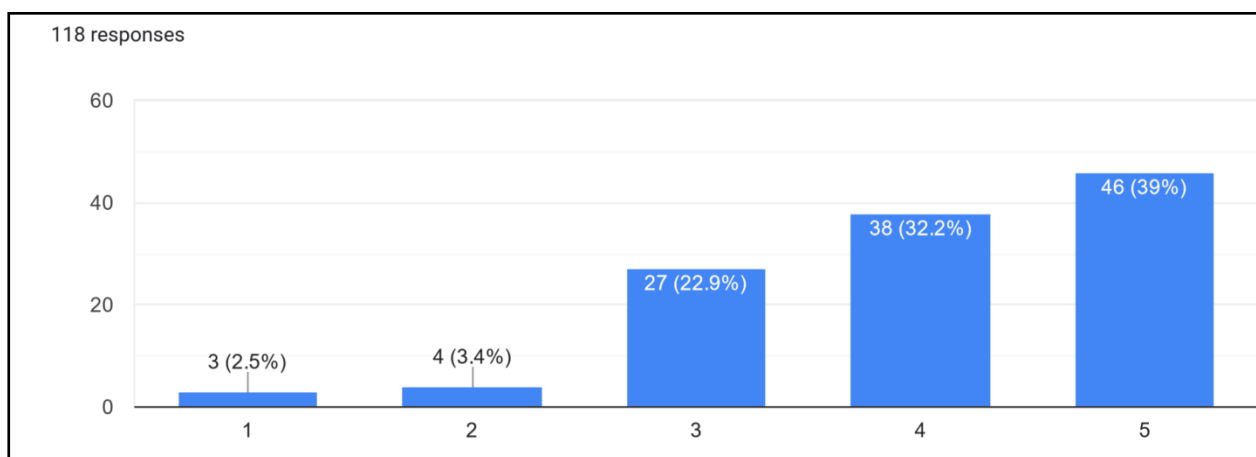
Satisfaction with the circulation, cooperation of colleagues, and transition of working culture from office premises to WFM.



The flow of information in the firm:-



Corporation from the colleagues:-



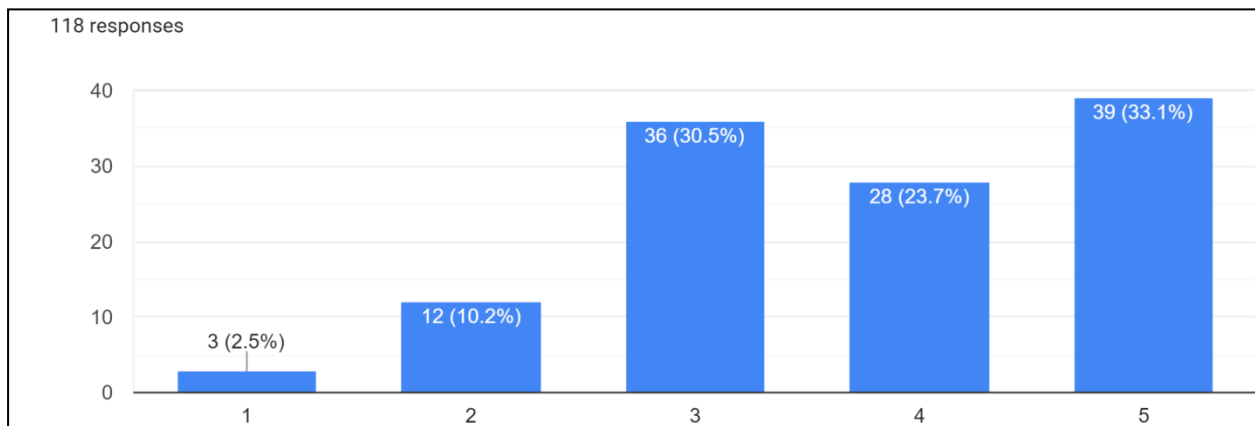
Transition from office premises to WFM:-

The data suggests that employees are satisfied with the efforts of the organisation, colleagues and supervisors to make the work-from-home culture flow smoothly and ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are not affected by the change in the work mode. The numbers show that for the six questions being asked regarding the satisfaction level in the context of the virtual work environment provided by the organisation and the continuous help and information, more than 90% of the respondents were either neutral or satisfied and very satisfied with the assistance and efforts from their organisation. Moreover, more than 80% of respondents felt that their supervisors understood the work-life balance and were involved in

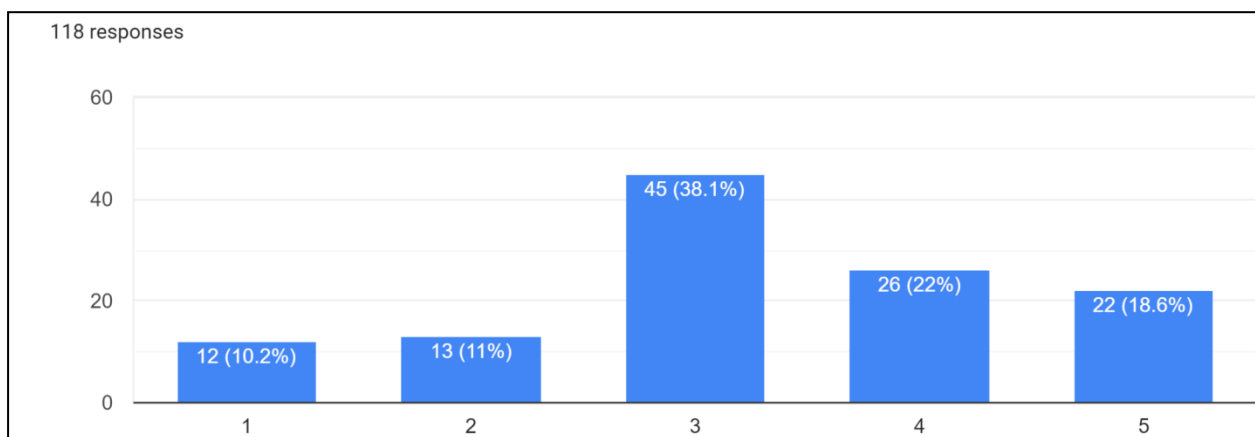


frequent meetings for special tasks.

Work-Life Balance:-



Effect of WFH on family time:-



Effect on office work and productivity:-

The thing to notice is that even after being satisfied with the organisation's support, the employees still feel that the WFH mode has affected their Work-Life balance. More than 55% of the respondents felt that their work-life balance and family time were significantly affected by WFH. The reason for this could be the timings that sometimes even become a 24hr job where one could receive an urgent call for urgent work and has to leave everything then and there only to do the same as they are supposed to be working from their home only.

The positives to be considered are that the employees believe flexible working hours have also helped them be more productive. And even after managing the unusual timing loads, 60% of the respondents said they are pretty motivated to work from home just when they wake up.

Comparing the satisfaction levels of men and women:-

Z test was used because the sample size was more significant than 30. Under this, we studied the z test for two samples, i.e. Men's and Women's satisfaction levels.

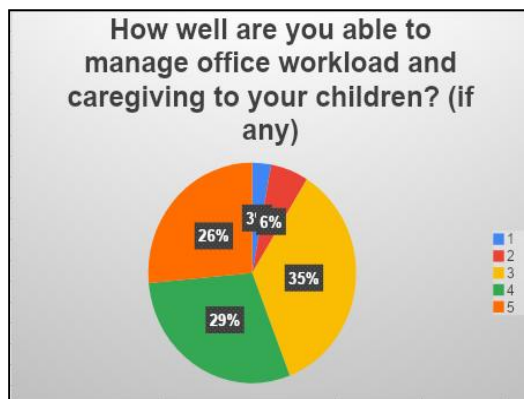


	Men satisfaction	Women satisfaction
Mean	4.020779221	4
Known Variance	0.685878332	0.446
Observations	77	41
Hypothesised Mean Difference	0.05	
Z	-0.2077388026	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0.4177164592	
z Critical one-tail	1.644853627	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.8354329184	
z Critical two-tail	1.959963985	

P value was hypothesised to be 0.05 and came to be 0.835, which is significantly greater than 0.05 and depicts that we would accept the H₀ (null set), which says there is no significant difference between the satisfaction level of men and women WFH.

Effect on parenthood:-

Showcased two different scenarios of WFH effect on parenthood through a pie chart

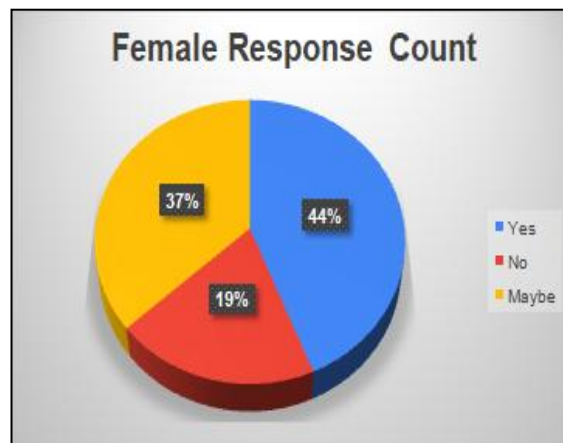
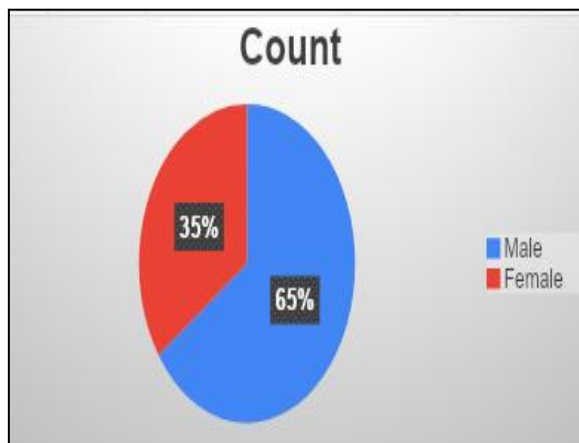


Of all the respondents, 118 about only 25 were a parent, and out of those 25, more than 90% of respondents were either neutral, satisfied or very satisfied with the workload management and the time they were getting for caregiving to their children during WFH.

On the other hand, the parents distinguished when it came to the change in behaviour towards their child/children. Around 25% thought their behaviour towards their children did not change; a significant proportion, i.e. 53% of the respondents, had different thoughts. 22% saw about a moderate change. The contrasting thoughts could be the home environment or the various workloads that led to behaviour changes.



4. FUTURE PREFERENCE OF WOMEN FOR WFH:-



About 35% of 118 respondents were females, i.e. 41 count. Among the women, only 19% (8 women) did not favour WFH in the future, whereas 15 were sceptical about the same. Eighteen women are keen to work from home, even post-COVID, which suggests they are happy and comfortable with the work-life balance. A big reason for this could be the flexible timings, which lets them manage the home and the office work without allowing any of the two to get impacted.

5. CONCLUSION:-

Though Men and Women differ in their takes towards the different aspects of work, the analysis found no significant difference in the satisfaction level of Men and Women for Working From Home. This could result from how the organisations managed the two genders quite well, considering the different support they needed and providing the appropriate assistance in making their task run smoothly. The other reason could also be that every individual has their way of tackling the unprecedented time and thus has found compatibility through their methods and approaches.

Unusual working hours made a dual-sided impact. Having to be available even at your time, if the work situation required, did affect the family and personal time of the employees, but the silver lining to this was/is the flexible working hours. You have a certain amount of work and a due date for it. Now, you can do it according to your preference, spread the work over different time slots, and have leisure time even when one was supposed to be sitting on his chair in the office.

Parents found their behaviour changed towards their children because of the work stress. Having to spend the work hours with the children around could lead to taking out the frustration of the work on the children themselves. When you work on the office premises and return home after spending hours away, you are delighted to see your kids waiting for you. In WFH, the case is different. You are always there, and nothing from the child's side uplifts the mood when you are too stressed with the work, and the disturbance only exacerbates the situation.

Women seem to favour working from home, even post-COVID, which could result from their time at home. In addition to that, the flexible working hours form a perfect fit for their work-life balance. They can care for the children and their work from the same room. Saving travel time also allows them to look after the other household work/personal time, which was overlooked in usual times. WFM could also increase the women's workforce as many opt out of working just because they don't want to leave their homes to have employment to take care of the home.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY:-

We could not reach all levels of employees, i.e., top, middle, and lower levels, in good proportions. The data for the current study were collected among employees who work in corporations regardless of their levels of work. Thus, no specific analysis was done on the effect of WFM on the employees concerning their designations.

The research did get respondents from all over India, but as the number of respondents was just above 100, not a significant amount of responses from each state was received. Thus, no conclusion could be made on the effect state-wise. Future studies could focus on multiple states to see if there is any impact of the work culture of the states on the choices and the satisfaction from WFM.

Single parents were not particularly targeted in the sample, and there is a big difference in managing the home stuff between two parents and a single parent.

The study data was collected with COVID still in effect, even if not in its extreme form. The environment is different from normal, and the actual preferences could differ in everyday scenarios. A thorough study only conducted after COVID-19 has vanished could conclude the preferences.



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