

WORK FROM HOME (WFH): A STUDY ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF THE NEW NORMAL WORK SCENARIO IN THE PANDEMIC CONTEXT FOR INDIAN IT SECTOR

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Abstract

As far as India is concerned, for the first three months i.e. from march 2020 to May 2020, government lodged complete lockdown and asked people to wear mask and use adequate hand sanitizer. In this period all the government and private organization have stopped their operations and even all types of businesses were seized for a time being. All this has stopped the normal circulation of money and gradually people started to felt the need to work and earn money but the lockdown situation was barring them to go outside and work. At the same time private sector suggested the theme of work from home, initially people were having a number of questions and doubts for the same but gradually they understood that in the present times this was the only way to earn living hood. Google was the first company to start the culture of work from home in 2005, gradually most of the IT and ITES based companies adopted this culture. In India this concept was initiated after 2010 and that too in crucial conditions like ill health of employees, pregnancy of female employees, double shift, etc. this scenario was successful in IT sector because in most of the cases the main of task of employees is to cater the national and international customers in the form of technical support or the development of desired software and this can be done from the ease of one's home as well. This present study will try to evaluate the situation in detail and also throw some light on the job related pressure on IT employees in the process of work from home. The researcher has conducted this study in Hyderabad and tried to contact more than 200 respondents to collect data. This study is based on random sampling and results are analyzed using SPSS Ver. 22.0.

Keywords: COVID-19, IT and ITES employees, Work from home, Behavioral aspects.

Introduction

In the year 1350 the Pneumonic Plague 'Black Death' has engulfed around 200 million people in the regions like Europe, Asia, North Africa, etc. and today after 650 years again the world is suffering from the pandemic of same stature in the form of Covid-19 scientifically known as SARS-Cov-19 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). The outbreak started from a research lab in China in late 2019 and at present about 95% of the world population is affected by the same.

The spread was so fast and furious that within two months of outbreak i.e. December 2019, WHO declared it as a international health emergency in January, 2020 and again the most

affected regions were Asia, Europe, America, etc. The widespread effects of infection has kept people in their homes for a long period of time this is because of reason that the status of Corona virus is contagious and any one can get easily infected and if not taken care in time then the end result is death. Medical research laboratories all over the world are trying to discover a vaccine that can prevent people from infection and develop immunity in human body to fight with the virus.

As far as India is concerned, for the first three months i.e. from march 2020 to May 2020, government lodged complete lockdown and asked people to wear mask and use adequate hand sanitizer. In this period all the government and private organization have stopped their operations and even all types of businesses were seized for a time being. All this has stopped the normal circulation of money and gradually people started to felt the need to work and earn money but the lockdown situation was barring them to go outside and work. At the same time private sector suggested the theme of work from home, initially people were having a number of questions and doubts for the same but gradually they understood that in the present times this was the only way to earn living hood. Education sector was the first to adopt the system of online teaching and at the next level every second workman started to work online on different platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook Whatsapp, etc. with the mixed blend of social media, people started to enjoy the working system.

With the gradual passage of the time people started to get more and more infected by the virus and the gravity was more than who are really getting infected, confiscated in their homes the behavior of people changed to unbearable limits. As discussed above the mental state of people have shifted from their normal equilibrium.

IT sector and work from home

Google was the first company to start the culture of work from home in 2005, gradually most of the IT and ITES based companies adopted this culture. In India this concept was initiated after 2010 and that too in crucial conditions like ill health of employees, pregnancy of female employees, double shift, etc. this scenario was successful in IT sector because in most of the cases the main of task of employees is to cater the national and international customers in the form of technical support or the development of desired software and this can be done from the ease of one's home as well. Then on the other hand it was also found that employees are more comfortable in the social setting of their homes and even the productivity is heightened.

It is not so that all the IT employees are working from home or they are having the experience of same. In the duration of pandemic IT sector was one of the most affected avenue and many of the employees have lost their jobs in the process. Initially it was not easy for them to revive but gradually they were compelled to stay at home and also to work from home. As stated above this is general human nature that a given individual can do a particular work at his free will but if there is a condition of compulsion then he or she tries to avoid it and a mental stigma prevents the person from giving 100% to the job.

This present study will try to evaluate the situation in detail and also throw some light on the job related pressure on IT employees in the process of work from home. The researcher has conducted this study in Hyderabad and tried to contact more than 200 respondents to collect data. This study is based on random sampling and results are analyzed using SPSS Ver. 22.0.

Literature Review

Chung et al (2020) this is a well-known fact that initially the outbreak of COVID-19 started from China and after this everyone was cursing China for the same, but the researchers have conducted a number of studies in China itself and commented on the social and mental condition of people in the process. This study was based on this theme only and the outcomes of study stated that as of now whole world is against China and people are having anti-China sentiments. But then again findings of the study stated that the first hit of COVID-19 was on China and it took longest time to recover as well. In this process most of the people were working from their homes and it exerted a lot of effect on the mental health of people, even at the time of survey the researchers can feel the depression and stated of being felt deprived.

Malta et al (2020) this study was conducted in the second most affected continent i.e. Europe, the main focus of the study was on the analysis of mental stated of people who were working from home. The researchers discovered that specially in IT sector most of the employees are working from home and till May and June, 2020 they were not allowed to go to their offices and perform work. In the process there was a drastic change in the behavior of people. In words of the respective family members they have shown a lot of change in their routine behavior in the form of depression, fatigue, irritation, etc. as a matter of fact this was not their normal behavior before the hit of pandemic.

Tsai et al (2020) this study was conducted to study the decreasing health potential of people in the pandemic time of COVID-19. Main focus of the study was on the people who are not

the American residents and due to threat of COVID-19 they were expelled from their rental homes. The findings of the study stated that such employees are basically homeless and they are not even able to go back to their respective countries, apart from this they have to work for earning their living hood. This was a difficult situation for them and in this process they lost their routine behavior and start to react absurdly on situations normal issues of life. It was also evident that due to this changed behavior there is a hike in crime rate as well.

Snoswell (2020) this study has evaluate the role of media on mental health of people in the times of pandemic. The findings of the study stated that the people who are working from home are dependent on different types of media for information and even entertainment. As a matter of fact they are working from home and staying inside for all the time, then on the other hand they are also watching television and accessing internet for news and entertainment. As a matter of fact, most of the times media was showing negative views for the outbreak of COVID-19 and gradually it became difficult for the people to stay in their sound mental health. In the process of coping with the scenario they started to show a negative change in their behavior.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the mental health of people during the pandemic period and main thrust of the study was on IT and ITES related employees.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Intrinsic components are having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period.

H₀: Intrinsic components are not having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Extrinsic components are having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period.

H₀: Extrinsic components are not having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period.

Research Methodology

Sampling

As in the present times of COVID-19, it was not possible to follow a structured sampling system so the researcher has followed Judgmental and purposive sampling.

Sample Size

The researcher has approached some of the eminent housing societies in the vicinity of Hyderabad and found that IT and ITES related employees are staying in these societies from all over the world (mostly are from Indian Origin). On the basis of random selection 276 such employees were chosen for the purpose of study and for the ease of calculation and analysis the researcher has confined the sample to 250 respondents.

Data Collection

As this study was based on primary data, so a detailed and structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Also to save time and maintain social distancing most of the questionnaires were mailed to the respondents after taking their consent on the same. This questionnaire includes questions based on a scale of 1 to 5, where '1' states Strongly Disagree and '5' states Strongly Agree.

Statistical Tools Used

As the responses are collected in categorical form and a scale was used to collect data, hence it was obvious to find the variance in responses for the test of respective hypothesis. So the researcher has used ANOVA (one way) to analyze the data and the internal and external parameters of behavior were considered.

Software Used

SPSS Ver. 22.0

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothesis 1

Results of ANOVA (*One Way*) Test

On the basis of Qualification	F	Sign
Family is supportive during work from home	3.629	2.910
Job related activities are monotonous	2.357	1.902
Job schedule has become more intense	4.364	4.076
Regular and lengthy meetings affect the flow of work	.236	.078
Salaries are compromised	.567	.364
Duty hours are not comfortable	2.154	1.866
Target and expectation of employers are raising	1.926	1.291
On the basis of Job Experience		
Family is supportive during work from home	2.137	2.654
Job related activities are monotonous	4.933	4.162
Job schedule has become more intense	.119	.321
Regular and lengthy meetings affect the flow of work	.241	.344
Salaries are compromised	.237	.455
Duty hours are not comfortable	2.973	4.175
Target and expectation of employers are raising	2.062	2.577
On the Basis of Age of Respondents		
Family is supportive during work from home	4.458	5.154
Job related activities are monotonous	1.125	1.586
Job schedule has become more intense	1.090	.505
Regular and lengthy meetings affect the flow of work	4.207	3.615
Salaries are compromised	2.030	1.674
Duty hours are not comfortable	2.141	1.108
Target and expectation of employers are raising	1.904	1.526
On the Basis of Marital status		
Family is supportive during work from home	1.106	.461
Job related activities are monotonous	.580	.105
Job schedule has become more intense	2.954	2.307
Regular and lengthy meetings affect the flow of work	1.198	0.512
Salaries are compromised	1.178	.864
Duty hours are not comfortable	.454	.566
Target and expectation of employers are raising	.326	.891

On the Basis of Years in Current job		
Family is supportive during work from home	1.108	.597
Job related activities are monotonous	1.936	1.178
Job schedule has become more intense	1.135	.795
Regular and lengthy meetings affect the flow of work	2.166	2.907
Salaries are compromised	1.231	1.751
Duty hours are not comfortable	.450	.108
Target and expectation of employers are raising	.344	.901

Interpretation

As can be seen in the above given table of analysis, in most of the cases the respondents are positive towards the point in question, according to the thumb rule of ANOVA i.e. if the difference between the 'F' ratio and 'Sign.' value is higher, the hypothesis can be rejected and vice versa. In the above analysis in most of the cases the difference between the above said values is within acceptable limits, except a few cases of job schedule, salaries and even job related targets in some of the cases.

Result

On the basis of above analysis and interpretation it can be said that the selected intrinsic components are exerting negative effect on the mental health of IT and ITES related employees. in lieu of the same null hypothesis '*Intrinsic components are having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period*' is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Results of ANOVA (*One Way*) Test

On the basis of Qualification	F	Sign
News and views from media are affecting work efficiency	2.899	2.210
Threat of getting infected is rising	2.957	2.402
Family health is one main issue	4.164	4.676
Depression is rising against the threat of COVID-19	.336	.117
Missing social gatherings	.578	.464
Friends and relatives are maintaining distance	2.154	2.466

	1.326	1.891
On the basis of Job Experience		
News and views from media are affecting work efficiency	1.459	1.104
Threat of getting infected is rising	2.237	2.654
Family health is one main issue	4.133	3.862
Depression is rising against the threat of COVID-19	.119	.221
Missing social gatherings	.341	.144
Friends and relatives are maintaining distance	.237	.055
On the Basis of Age of Respondents		
News and views from media are affecting work efficiency		
Threat of getting infected is rising	1.596	1.964
Family health is one main issue	3.583	5.542
Depression is rising against the threat of COVID-19	1.125	1.586
Missing social gatherings	.890	.205
Friends and relatives are maintaining distance	3.907	3.315
	2.130	1.830
On the Basis of Marital status		
News and views from media are affecting work efficiency		
Threat of getting infected is rising	1.104	.671
Family health is one main issue	1.230	.861
Depression is rising against the threat of COVID-19	.780	.205
Missing social gatherings	2.154	1.872
Friends and relatives are maintaining distance	0.898	0.101
	1.578	.564
On the Basis of Years in Current job		
News and views from media are affecting work efficiency		
Threat of getting infected is rising	1.108	.797
Family health is one main issue	1.236	.678
Depression is rising against the threat of COVID-19	1.135	.795
Missing social gatherings	1.366	2.107
Friends and relatives are maintaining distance	.931	2.051

Interpretation

As can be seen in the above given table of analysis, in most of the cases the respondents are positive towards the point in question, according to the thumb rule of ANOVA i.e. if the

difference between the 'F' ratio and 'Sign.' value is higher, the hypothesis can be rejected and vice versa. In the above analysis in most of the cases the difference between the above said values is within acceptable limits, except a few cases of job schedule, salaries and even job related targets in some of the cases.

Result

On the basis of above analysis and interpretation it can be said that the selected intrinsic components are exerting negative effect on the mental health of IT and ITES related employees. in lieu of the same null hypothesis '*Extrinsic components are having a significant effect on the mental and social health of IT and ITES related employees during pandemic period*' is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

At present i.e. in the starting of 21st century, the pandemic of COVID-19 has emerged as a holocaust of normal human being and effect is more of mental as compared to physical i.e. the threat of getting infected is more than actually getting infected. It will be appropriate to say that apart from medical preparedness, social and psychological preparedness is more important. Coming to the employees of IT and ITES employees, who are working from home, it is evident from the above analysis that in most of the cases people are feeling mental and psychological pressure and the same is evident from the routine behavior. As a matter of fact this kind of situation has to be handled by the individual himself or herself and even the respective employer is required to understand the need to putting its employees in a comfort zone so that maximum output can be taken.

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