

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF IT EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME

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Abstract:

The impact of SARS COV 2 had a severe impact on the whole world. The IT industry was not untouched by the effect of this deadly virus and had to welcome a very big change in the industry which was allowing all its employees to work from home. This new culture was comfortable for the employees but brought with it various difficult challenges such as reduced physical movements and detachment from the outside world which resulted in poor physical and mental states for the employees.

We have carried out this survey to study the impact that working from home has left on the minds and bodies of the employees and the aim is to find out measures to ideas to improve their lifestyle and boost their mental health. The initiative toward the promotion of employees' Health while they are working from home (WFH), needs to be based on the best available evidence we have tried to provide with this survey.

Key words: WFH, Coronavirus, Isolation, Lockdowns, Psychological issues, MNCs

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INTRODUCTION

The recent rapid worldwide spread of Novel coronavirus in the last two years has imposed a devastating disruption on the social and economic state of a major fraction of the world. It turned the world of millions of people upside-down overnight when sudden lockdowns were being imposed throughout the world and people had no idea of what was going on and what to do next. That was the time when new terms like quarantine and Social Distancing were introduced to the public.

The IT industry was also broadly affected by the sudden curfews and restrictions. Though working from home was not a new concept for the IT employees but they were bummed by the sudden imposition of it permanently. It changed the operating style of the digital and IT world. With the emergence of new technologies, employees are now able to perform the very same tasks from home that they were doing from their workstations. Leaving behind the concern of transportation, employees now continue their work in the comfort of home. Since working from home has brought out a big change in their daily life and routine, we have surveyed them to analyze the impact that they have received on their minds and body after adapting to this new lifestyle. Their

new comfort zone is sometimes leaving a negative effect on their body and mind which needs to be considered critical and we have tried to study the level of its severity through the questions we have provided in the questionnaire for employees to answer.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

Life in isolation can be difficult and it takes a lot of effort to adapt to this lifestyle. Working from home in quarantine has been rough on IT employees. While some utilized their extra time in improving their routine, some people were not fortunate enough to be benefitted from working from home and fell prey to an undisciplined routine and anxiety and seem to be struggling with that difficult life. This research has an important and special aim to provide helping hands to such people and get to know about their daily life struggle to get their mind and body together.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

This research aims to get into the minds of people and understand what they are going through and up to what extent. To help them we need to come up with questions that they can relate to and do not hesitate to answer honestly. This survey contained multiple-choice questions where the reader can go through the situation explained in the question and respond in Yes or No and need to not explain their situation in detail, so they are not stressed and opt-out answering carelessly or untruthfully.

OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

This survey can help employers to pick out the difficulties that employees are facing while committing to their work from home, regarding psychological health issues and Physical problems, and come up with events and fitness initiatives for the betterment of their employees. They can also measure the workload that their employees are capable of and try to work on it positively. This review aims to find out the impact of WFH on individual employees and to consider any gender difference if it could recommend to employers of ways towards optimization of their employees' health conditions.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH

We prepared a questionnaire with various situations related to real life and reached out to various employees working with different reputed MNC's. The scope covered people from the IT sector who are working under similar conditions. Some are working various shifts while others are working general shifts but they have one thing in common, they were all working from their homes. Their living conditions are virtually the same so they can provide adequate information about the stress they are facing on their physical health and mind.

LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

Since this survey had closed-ended questions, responders could only answer Yes or No. This approach gave us quick information but is not descriptive enough to explore deep into the issues of the employees. Also, people working in various shifts could get mental and physical strain due to frequent changes in their shift timings and that has less connectivity to working from home. But they could not get an option to explain this in a detailed manner. Limitations like this can be sensed in this research.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

We went through various articles related to our research and found out that the concept of telework was there even in the 1970s but had limited scope to today's era. The extensive availability has given the employees the power of flexibility of location and time. It has shown results in a decrease in fatigue and increased productivity, better integration of work and family time. However, it has also blurred the boundary between physical and organizational life and imposed some negative effects on employees' minds and bodies, and has created a lot of chaos due to extended working hours, inability to coordinate with work life and family, and limited resources provided by the organizations.

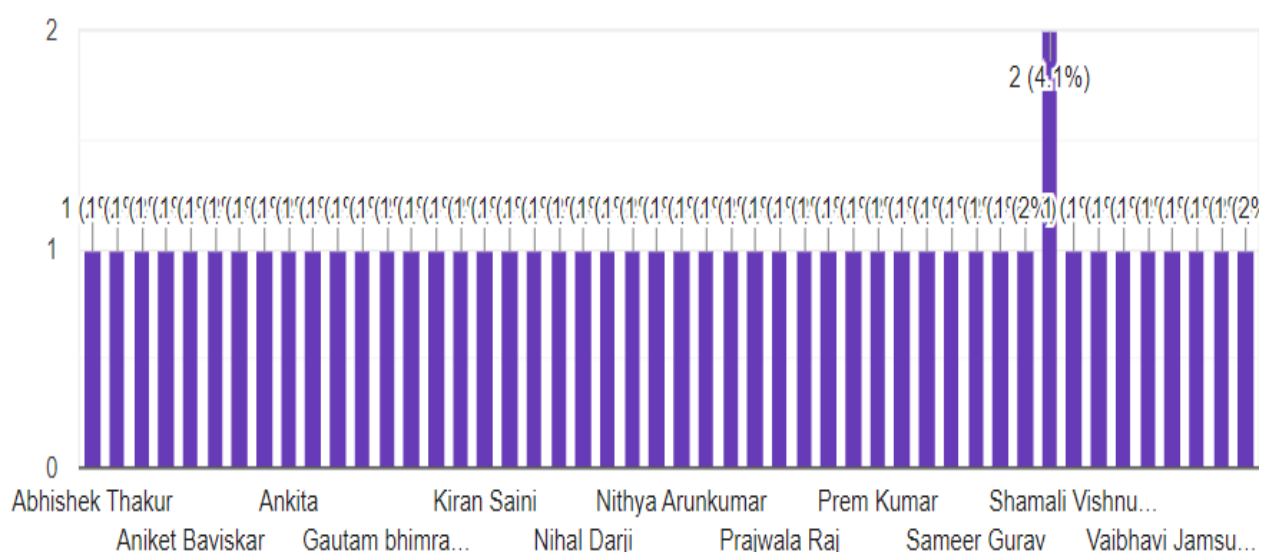
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A google form questionnaire with 10 questions briefing about the emotional, mental and physical impact that IT Employees are receiving while working from home, was completed by people working in MNC, s as TCS, Infosys, Accenture, Cisco, etc.(n=48). Google form is an effective tool that can be used to collect and perform basic data and its validation, use skip logic, and offers a wide range of options to be inserted to match the convenience of the audience which is in the scope. After collecting data, we can analyze it easily and segregate the responses accordingly as google forms display the responses in the form of pie charts and also helps us find out and avoid redundancy by showing the count of responses given by every individual in the summery. We used the names of the responders as the unique identifier and based on it every answer was analyzed and the survey was checked for redundancy. Out of the total 49 responses, one duplicate was removed and that changed the count to 48. (Fig.1)

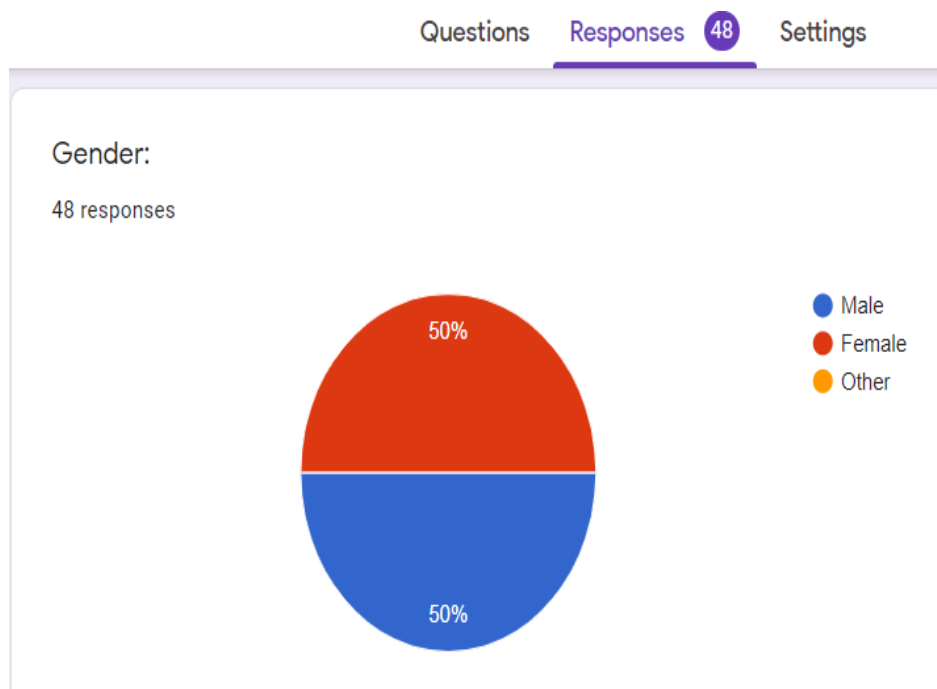
Full Name:



49 responses



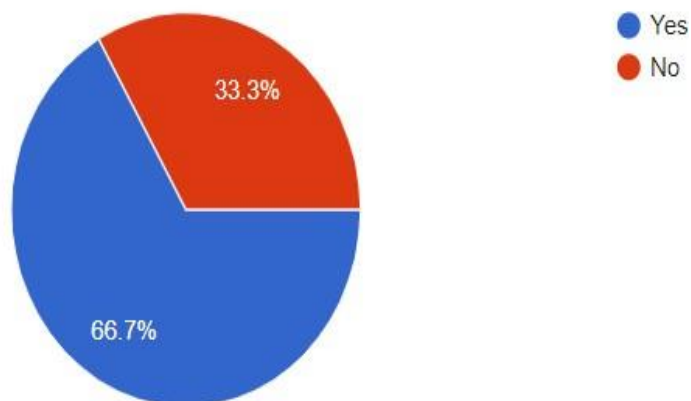
RESULTS

**Fig.2**

The results that were retrieved through the survey contained 24 females and 24 males, which proved to be important to understanding the details of the survey from the aspect of both genders equally. (**Fig.2**)

1. Are you able to take proper diet everyday?

48 responses

**Fig.3**

The survey revealed that 32 out of 48 responders can follow a proper diet every day (66.7%). While 33.3% are struggling to intake proper nutrition daily. (**Fig.3**)

2. Are you able to do adequate exercise everyday?

48 responses

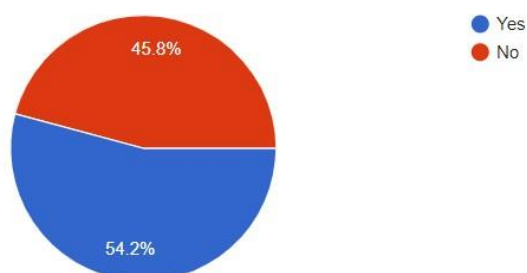


Fig.4

It further added 54.2% of the employees can do enough exercise and physical activities to keep their bodies fit but 45.8% of them might face issues emerging from lack of bodily activities. (**Fig.4**)

3. Are you able to focus on work fully?

48 responses

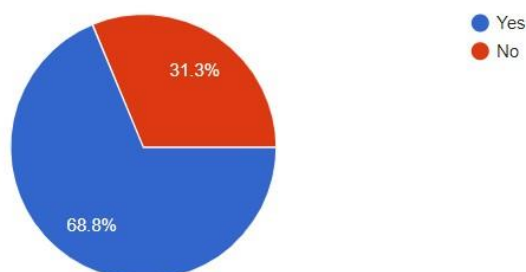


Fig.5

4. Are you constantly feeling low and demotivated?

48 responses

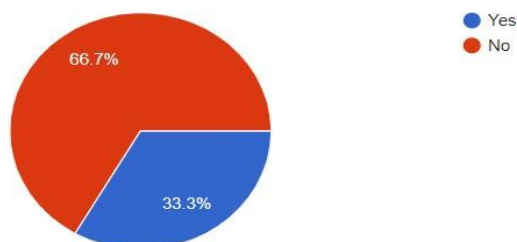


Fig.6

68.8% of the audience can focus on work fully without deviation leaving the rest 31.3% bit unfocused towards their work. (**Fig.5**) Also, the survey showed us that 33.3% of people constantly feel low and lack motivation in them as compared to the rest of 66.7% of people. (**Fig.6**)

5. Do you think you were more productive while working from workstation than in home?

48 responses

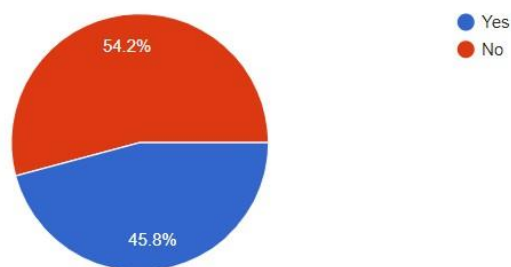


Fig.7

The survey further added that 45.8% of the people who responded to the questionnaire had a feeling that they were more productive when they were operating from a workstation while 54.2% of people are convinced of their enough productivity while WFH. (**Fig.7**)

6. Are you falling sick frequently while working from home than working from office?

48 responses

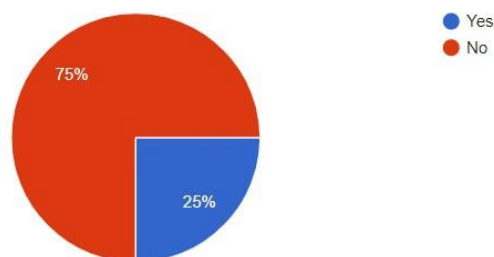


Fig.8

7. Do you feel the indiscipline in your routine is leading to compromisation of your physical health?

48 responses

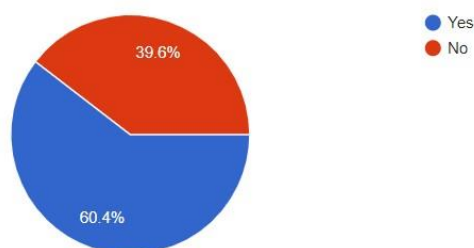


Fig.9

The pie graph obtained from the survey shows that 25% of the audience has fallen sick more frequently than the time when they were working from their offices. (*Fig.8*) this could have relation to the next question that reveals that 60.4% of people are feeling compromised with their physical health due to the indiscipline in their routine they acquired during WFH.

8. Do you feel staying close to your family is good for your mind or it leads to distractions and work pressure?

47 responses

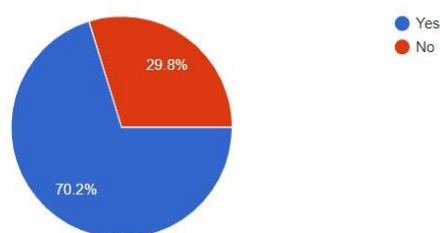


Fig.10

9. Are you getting enough leaves to have quality time for yourself?

47 responses

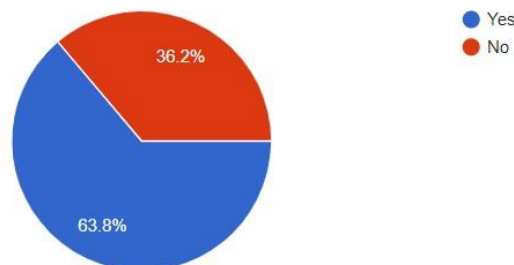


Fig.11

10. Have you felt a need to talk to a counsellor due to excessive work pressure, while working from home?

47 responses

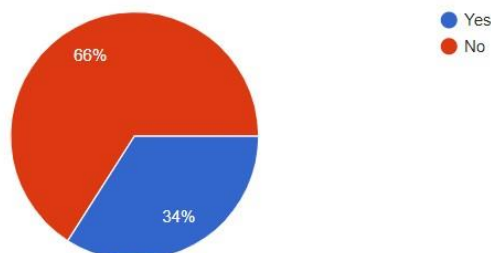


Fig.12

While 70.2% of responders state that staying close to their family is good for their mental and emotional well-being, 29.8% of them feel that this could cause them distractions and loss of focus on work, and an inability to cooperate with social and work life. (*Fig.10*) The survey reveals that 36.2% of concerned people feel that the leaves that they are getting are not enough to gain self-peace and improve mental health. (*Fig.11*) now the major issue we can see is that 34% of people have tried to contact counselors to get rid of the stress originating from the workload. This is a serious concern and could give an alarming trigger to employers to come up with initiatives that could help the employees with such psychological struggles. (*Fig.12*)

CONCLUSION

After going through the responses that we gained from the survey, we can conclude that majority of the people that are working from home can provide the necessary diet and nutrition to their bodies along with enough exercise. Most of them are mentally and emotionally healthy and are not being affected by workload while staying close to their family is providing them with emotional happiness and well-being. But we still have enough responders who are in immediate need to support and are struggling to keep their bodies and minds together. We have seen a rapid increase in depression, anxiety, and suicides in the IT sector in the last few years and isolation has a lot to do with this severe issue.

Organizations and Employers can keep the section of employees in their view accordingly and come out with fitness events and a team of counselors to help them come out of their bad routine and help them boost their minds to tackle workload and provide them with emotional support. Coming up with fitness events according to genders can also help address problems related to individuals as different issues require different solutions and can be better addressed when tackled according to the evidence provided in the research.

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