



The psychological Impact of teleworking: Exploring the effects of Remote work on Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

The rapid shift to remote work has transformed the modern workplace, but its psychological consequences on mental health remain poorly understood. This study investigates the complex relationship between telework social isolation, work life balance and mental health outcomes. This was a quantitative study using descriptive statistics . The research samples consisted of 50 remote workers from various organisation and industries. Result reveals significant correlation between telework characteristics and increased anxiety, depression and stress. Teleworkers experience significantly more mental health symptoms of stress than office workers and more physical health symptoms.

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INTRODUCTION

Teleworking is a model where employees work remotely while communicating with their colleagues through telephone, email or video conferencing. Working remotely involves employees performing their daily tasks from a location other than a traditional office. The modern workplace has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of teleworking also known as remote work. This shift has enabled millions of employees to work from anywhere at any time, offering unparalleled flexibility and convenience. However, as the boundaries between work and personal life become increasingly blurred. With the COVID-19 Pandemic accelerating the adoption of remote work, the number of teleworkers has grown exponentially, with over 50% of the global workforce now working remotely at least part time.



According to recent statistical data from International Labor Organization in the European Union, an average of 3 out of 10 employees work remotely and assume autonomously, their professional activity, managing time and execution of tasks. While teleworking offers numerous benefits, including reduced commuting time and increased productivity. In recent year's, teleworking has gained prominence in all sectors, driven by the pandemic crises, and according to Thevenon, a gradual growth of this labor phenomenon is expected. However, working remotely poses unique challenges that has affect physical and mental health of professionals. The present paper aims to analyse the impact of teleworking on mental health, examining the effects of remote work on work life balance and overall wellbeing with a focus on identifying effective coping mechanisms and organisational strategies to support the mental health of remote workers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Joseph Crawford (2023) examines the relationship between working from Home, Telework and psychological wellbeing : A systematic Review. The shift to telework, remote work and working from home has accelerated during the pandemic era. While offering flexibility and convenience, the effects of telework on employee wellbeing remain unclear. This systematic review aims to synthesize existing literature on the wellbeing outcome and effects of telework. This study employed a systematic literature review using PRISMA approach covering studies from 2000 to 2022. Thematic analysis was guided by the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

Peter Standen, Kevin Daniels, and David Lamond (1999) investigate work-family contact and psychological well-being in telecommuting, as well as the integration of the house as a workspace. A developing trend that has the potential to significantly impact workers' psychological well-being is home-based telework. The conceptual framework upon which the study is based characterizes telework as a multifaceted phenomena and distinguishes between the impacts of distance from the company as well as the home environment. The work-family literature, previous telework research, and P. Warrs's concept of the environmental antecedents of wellbeing are the sources of the hypotheses of work-family interaction.

Research on Telework and its impact on mental health during the COVID-19 lockdown was conducted by S. De. Sio, F. Cedrone, H. A. Nieto, and E. Lapteva in 2021. In order to lessen the economic impact of the current health crisis and encourage social separation, several governments encouraged the adoption and growth of telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. This web-based cross-sectional study



set out to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on job organization by investigating how lockdown measures affected the psychological discomfort and perceived well-being of employees who were working remotely. Between April 1 and April 30, 2020, the participants responded to the questionnaire. One of the three sections of the questionnaire examined demographic and occupational factors. 2. Aspects of habits and lifestyle 3. Well-being perception and psychological discomfort. The 5-item World Health Organization well-being index has been used to investigate subjective wellbeing, and the General Health Questionnaire has been used to assess psychological discomfort. As a result, psychological distress is linked to behaviors, educational attainment, and reporting low well-being. Poor wellbeing is linked to lifestyle, psychological suffering, and increased employment pressure during pandemics.

METHODOLOGY

The study aims to investigate the psychological impacts of telework on mental health, exploring the effects of remote work on anxiety, depression, stress and overall well-being. The study recruit 50 remote worker's from various organisations and industries. Inclusion criteria will include full time remote workers aged 18-50 with at least six months of remote work experience. Quantitative data is collected through an online survey distributed via online forums, social media. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics to examine relationships between remote work characteristics and mental health outcome. This study employed a probability sampling approach to select participants and stratified random sampling design was used to ensure representatives from various industries. Sampling frame consisted of remote workers from various online platforms, social media groups. The main factors influencing mental health outcomes are social isolation, work life balance presenteeism and lack of technical support. By providing the organizational strategies like establishing a remote work policy to prioritize mental health, encouraging self care and stress management, Foster a sense of community and connection, providing mental health resources and support services, online counselling services and regular video calls to monitor wellbeing. Implementing these strategies can promote a healthy and productive remote workforce. This study provides valuable insights into supporting remote workers mental health.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the presentation of the results of this study Quantitative data is used using descriptive statistics to ensure that the instrument is fit to determine the problem of this study.

MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOME

1. Anxiety – 62% of participants reported increased anxiety, with 40% experiencing mild anxiety and 22% experiencing moderate anxiety. The majority reported feeling isolated, which correlated with increased anxiety,
2. Depression – 48% reported symptoms of depression, with 30% experiencing mild depression and 18% experiencing moderate depression. Poor work life balance correlated with increased depression.
3. Stress – 72% reported increased stress, with 50% experiencing mild stress and 22% experiencing moderate stress. Presenteeism correlated with increased stress.
4. Burnout – 58% reported feeling of burnouts, with 40% experiencing mild burnout and 18% experiencing moderate burnout. Lack of technical support correlated with increased burnout.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Anxiety	31	62%
Depression	24	48%
Stress	36	72%
Burnout	29	58%

Anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
Mild anxiety	20	40%
Moderate anxiety	11	22%

Depression	Frequency	Percentage
Mild depression	15	30%
Moderate depression	9	18%

Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Mild stress	25	50%

Moderate stress	11	22%
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Burnout	Frequency	Percentage
Mild burnout	50	40%
Moderate burnout	9	18%

TELEWORK CHARACTERISTICS

1. Social Isolation – 80% of participants reported feeling isolated, highlighting the need for regular virtual social interactions.
2. Work-life balance – 60% reported difficulty separating work and personal life.
3. Presenteeism – 70% reported working while ill and experiencing personal issues.
4. Lack of technical support – 50% reported inadequate technical support.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Social Isolation	40	80%
Work life balance	30	60%
Presenteeism	35	70%
Lack of technical support	25	50%

The study's findings suggest that telework characteristics significantly impact mental health. Social isolation, presenteeism, and lack of technical support increase anxiety, depression, stress and burnout while poor work – life balance exacerbates depression.

CONCLUSION

The shift towards remote work has transformed the modern workplace, offering flexibility and convenience. However, the psychological impact of telework on mental health cannot be ignored. This study has investigated the effects of telework on mental health outcomes, revealing significant correlations between telework characteristics and increased anxiety, depression, stress, and burnout.



Social isolation, poor work-life balance, presenteeism, and lack of technical support have emerged as key contributors to mental health issues among teleworkers. The absence of face-to-face interactions and social connections can lead to feelings of loneliness and disconnection. Poor work-life balance blurs the lines between work and personal life, exacerbating depression and burnout. Presenteeism, or working while ill, perpetuates stress and anxiety. Inadequate technical support adds to frustration and burnout.

The findings of this study underscore the need for organizations to prioritize teleworkers' mental health. Implementing strategies to mitigate social isolation, promote work-life balance, and provide comprehensive technical support can alleviate mental health issues. Regular virtual social interactions, flexible work arrangements, and employee wellness programs can foster a healthy remote work environment. Moreover, telework's flexibility can also offer opportunities for improved mental health. Teleworkers can create personalized workspaces, manage workloads, and prioritize self-care. With proper support, telework can enhance work-life balance, reduce commuting stress, and increase job satisfaction.

To address the psychological impact of telework, organizations must:

1. Foster virtual social connections through regular team-building activities.
2. Establish clear work-life boundaries and flexible work arrangements.
3. Provide comprehensive technical support and training.
4. Encourage employee wellness programs and self-care practices.
5. Monitor and address mental health issues through regular check-ins.

By acknowledging the psychological impact of telework and implementing targeted strategies, organizations can promote a healthier, more productive, and sustainable remote work environment. As the modern workplace continues to evolve, prioritizing teleworkers' mental health is crucial for ensuring their well-being and success.



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