



Telecommuting; Investigation on the Stress Level of Teleworkers

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse the impact of telecommuting on the mental health of teleworkers. Most of the companies in IT sector asked their workforce to work from home even after covid pandemic. As a result employees accepted the new normal. Sadly, this regulation has badly influenced the mental health, performance, work life balance of employees which gradually induced in mental stress. This study aims to measure employee stress levels throughout the period of remote work and categorise that stress according to stress scores. The study's findings show that working remotely has increased employee stress levels while also causing low amounts of stress in those workers who would not have otherwise been stressed.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of telecommuting is emerging importance as a new normal form of work culture. It is a process through which the work force are provided with the liberty to work from anywhere without any geographical barrier, that means the employees are given the flexibility to work from any location without physically present in office. The process of teleworking has made into practice by most of the sectors due to the impact of covid pandemic but most of the companies in IT sectors has made it as a routine practice to continue the system in long run. As far as IT sector is concerned, they are finding new ways and means to figure out the possibilities of remote working. While moving on through the possibilities of teleworking, the factors that contribute towards teleworking has also to be considered which will impart the success of telework. Initially, everyone was relaxed while working from home but gradually people started to get tired of the daily routine. The changed routine started affecting their life drastically. This

work style can lead to higher levels of stress. Stress is characterized as a psychological, bodily or emotional strain.

The employees can notice a number of symptoms indicating high level stress among them. However if these symptoms are not noticed in early Stage, they can cause serious health problems among employees such as depression, heart problems, diabetes etc. The purpose of this study is to provide a response to queries like, "Is working from home a good idea for employees or not?" and "What effect does working from home have on employees' overall stress levels?"

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Christoph Weinert, Christian Maier, Sven Laumer (2015) based on analysis of 310 teleworkers showed that telework characteristics influence telework-enabled stressors and accordingly increase the extent of telework exhaustion and decrease the intention to continue teleworking.

Rachel Mosher Henke, Richele Benevent, Patricia Schulte, Christine Rinehart, Andrew Crighton, Maureen Corcoran, B (2015) shared their view that Telecommuting health risks varied by telecommuting intensity. Non-telecommuters were at greater risk for obesity, alcohol abuse, physical inactivity, and tobacco use, and were at greater overall risk than at least one of the telecommuting groups. Employees who telecommuted 8 hours per month were significantly less likely than non-telecommuters to experience depression. There was no association between telecommuting and stress or nutrition.

A study by Scott (2020) has found that 41% of highly mobile employees consider themselves highly stressed. Social isolation is a big issue for them.



Due to excessive use of smartphones and laptops there has been a constant increase in the health-related issues like insomnia, backache, neck-pain, obesity, fatigue, eye-related issues, etc. (Tellis, 2020). Cases of severe body ache have increased due to working on a laptop. Continuous working in one posture without using support while working from home causes back pain.

Manohar (2020) has mentioned that working from home in the present situation has been a huge contributor of fatigue. It also sets in because of lack of movement. The same view has been put forth by Atthar (2020) in her article.

Sandi Mann and Lynn Holdsworth(2020) examines the psychological impact of teleworking compared to office-based work. Results suggest a negative emotional impact of teleworking, particularly in terms of such emotions as loneliness, irritability, worry and guilt, and that teleworkers experience significantly more mental health symptoms of stress than office-workers and slightly more physical health symptoms.

Objectives: The objective of this study were as follows:

- To study the stress level among the remote workers.
- To classify the stress levels with respect to the stress scores.
- To study the statistical relation between the demographic variables and the stress scores and stress level.

The paper examines the psychological impact of teleworking compared to office-based work. Results suggest a negative emotional impact of teleworking, particularly in terms of such emotions as loneliness, irritability, worry and guilt, and that teleworkers experience significantly more mental health

symptoms of stress than office-workers and slightly more physical health sympt examines the psychological impact of teleworking compared to office-based work. Results suggest a negative emotional impact of teleworking, particularly in terms of such emotions as loneliness, irritability, worry and guilt, and that teleworkers experience significantly more mental health symptoms of stress than office-workers and slightly more physical health symptoms

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III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design was descriptive in nature. The data was collected through a questionnaire designed in Google Forms, which was circulated through email. The questionnaire had 22 items measured on five-point Likert scale. It was divided into two parts, i.e., socio-demographic information and stress level measurement. The data was analyzed and was validated using Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 1: Reliability Test

No.	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
1	.818	.816	22

compared to office-based work. Results suggest a negative emotional impact of teleworking, particularly in terms of such emotions as loneliness, irritability, worry and guilt, and that teleworkers experience significantly more mental health symptoms of stress than office-workers and slightly more physical health symptom This study was carried out on professionals from IT sector. The respondents were mainly software professionals which include software developers,team leads, and

software analyst. Simple random sampling was used for this research. About 500 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 252 duly filled forms were received. After careful examination of the responses, only 146 were found to be usable for the purpose of study.



IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

SPSS version 21.0 (IBM SPSS Statistics trial version) was used for the analysis of the collected data.

The study comprises of 53.4% males and 46.6% females. 22.6% of respondents were in the agegroup of 20-30 years, 30.8% between 31- 40 years, 29.5% belonged to the age group of 41-50

years and 17.1% were from age group of 51 and above. The marital status shows 59.6% as married while 28.1% as unmarried and others comprises 12.3%. 34.9% respondents belonged to joint family and 65.1% were from nuclear family .Most of the respondents i.e.54.1% were from software developers, while 30.1% were from team leads, 15.8% belonged to software analysts.

Table 2: Classification of stress level with respect to the stress scores

No.	Stress level*	Stress score
1	No stress	0-58
2	Mild	58-65
3	Moderate	65-72
4	Severe	72-96

*Source: Derivation of the quartiles from an individual stress score.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents with respect to their stress level

No.	Level of stress	n	%
1	No stress	36	24.65
2	Mild	43	29.45
3	Moderate	31	21.23
4	Severe	36	24.65

*Source=Statistical analysis of original data

On the basis of the quartile scores (table 2), stress levels were created. The individual stress score between 0-58 was classified as “no stress”, 58 to 65 denoted “mild stress”, 65-72 was referred to as “moderate stress” and 72-96was considered as “severe stress”.

Table 3 mention the stress level of the employees during remote work. The majority of respondents (29.45%) admitted that they have suffered from the mild level of stress, 21.23% & 24.65% respondents were found to have moderate and severe level of stress respectively.

Table 4: Pearson’s Chi-Square Statistics (Demographic Variables Vs Stress Level)

Demographic variables	Pearson’s chi-square value	p-value
Type of family	0.691	0.875
Marital status	10.606	0.101
Gender	4.247	0.236
Age	16.548	*0.05
Service	16.678	0.338

*Source: Statistical analysis of original data

Since the p-value is greater than.05 for all demographic factors, with the exception of "age," in the Pearson's Chi-square test, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the demographic variables and stress level. In the case of age, it is discovered that there are differences in

the stress levels of respondents in various age groups. We reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in people's stress levels across different age groups in this situation since the value of p is less than.05. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected in any other circumstance.



Table 5: Mean Comparison Test between Demographic Variables and Stress Scores

No.	Mean comparison test	Demographic variables	f-value	p-value	Result
1	Independent t-test	Type of family	0.691	0.875	There is no statistical association between demographic variable & the stress score.
		Gender	4.247	0.236	
2	ANOVA	Marital status	0.591	0.555	There is no statistical association between demographic variable of age of the employee and the stress level
		Age	0.887	0.450	
		service	0.591	0.707	

*Source: Statistical analysis of original data.

According to the information given in table 5 above, there are no appreciable differences in the respondents' stress levels based on different demographic factors. The p-value is always larger than .05, indicating that neither the t-test nor the ANOVA test findings are statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis cannot be disproved.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned study and findings, it can be concluded that demographic factors, with the exception of age, have little impact on individuals' stress levels while telecommuting. People of varying ages may experience varying amounts of stress. The results of the study of stress scores show that demographic factors do not affect people's stress levels, i.e., demographics do not contribute to a rise or decrease in stress levels. Table 4 gives us insight into how stressed out the employees are when working remotely. 29.45% of respondents, or the majority, acknowledged having mild stress during this time. In the end, it can be said that although persons had higher levels of stress when working remotely, their stress could not be related to demographic factors. Other factors could have contributed to the rise in stress-related disorders. It is possible to do further study using other factors as independent variables other than demographic data.

IMPLICATIONS:

Even if the results are statistically not very significant, additional investigation revealed that the respondents had undoubtedly experienced stress as a

result of remote working. They had greater feelings of isolation, had to balance personal and professional obligations, and were under more pressure to succeed on top of that. These times clearly illustrated the necessity for businesses to pay close attention to both the physical and psychological health of their workforce.

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