
MENTAL WELL-BEING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

During Covid-19 pandemic, safety and healthy working conditions are essential for a seamless work-life and lifestyle. The safety of an individual employee's life, as well as his or her job security and favourable economic conditions, should go hand in hand. The importance of motivation and collaboration across management verticals and functional areas cannot be overstated.

People who work from home face unique psychological hazards, such as isolation, confused work-family boundaries, and an increased risk of domestic violence, to name a few. Many people are concerned about their future because of the risk of losing their jobs, pay cuts, layoffs and diminished benefits. Unemployment, job insecurity and economic loss can all have a negative influence on mental health

Psychosocial risks can increase stress levels and lead to physical and mental health issues if they are not properly identified and addressed. Low mood, low motivation, tiredness, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts are all possible psychological responses. To deal with the current pandemic crisis, employees must be coached, informed, and mentally prepared.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Work-Life, Mental Health, Job Insecurity, Anxiety, Depression

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction and general quality of life improve with a good balance of psychological mental health, joyful personal life and professional life. Employee's psychological well-being is critical to their ability to perform well at work. The two most important things of life are work and family. Family contentment, work satisfaction, and psychological fulfilment are all indicators of happiness.

COVID-19 pandemic is often regarded as one of the most significant health disasters of the twentieth century. This has made balancing work-life, psychological well-being and personal life the most difficult task for everyone. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy, generating price increases, job losses and labour migration from metropolitan areas. This dire scenario has resulted in a pessimistic outlook and a severe impact on mental health. Work-life balance is a jumble of relationships between many aspects of one's life.

During COVID-19, Employees' well-being and work lives have suffered. It has also had an impact on the employees' psychological well-being. At the same time, it has created an unbalance in their professional lives. The pandemic has caused stress and mental sickness in the minds of employees, necessitating the company's provision of mental health support. Work and life have become disjointed as a result of this. Work and family are both vital, and they should not be mixed to cause disruption in one's life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the work life balance of individuals.
2. To study the psychological wellbeing during the pandemic.
3. To evaluate the relationship between work life & Psychological well-being.
4. To maintain cordial balance between professional and personal life during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Statement of the Problem

Recent economic downturn due to pandemic has put pressure on organization as well as psychological wellbeing of an individual This study analyses the work life balance & psychological wellbeing of individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research is undertaken estimating the percentage of respondents in a particular group exhibiting the same kind of behavior. Perception of each individual is recorded relating to the present COVID-19 Pandemic situation to predict the pattern of behavioral characteristics.

Sources of Data

Primary data is collected from the respondents working in different industrial sectors to assess their behavior and mental health, Work-life balance and Psychological well-being during the Pandemic. Most of the respondents are academicians, IT employees, health consultants, entrepreneurs, Directors from the fitness industry, professionals like chartered accountants and lawyers around Bangalore City.

Sampling Plan

Simple random sampling was considered under the probability sampling method. The Sample size is 67 respondents.

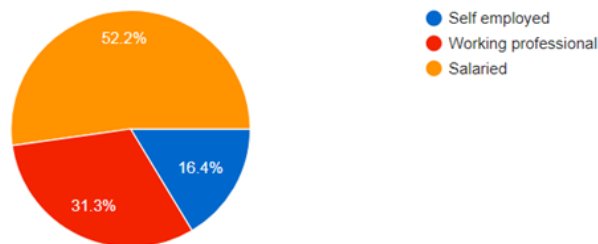
Data Collection instrument - direct telephonic interview and structured questionnaire was mailed to the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Occupation

Table Showing the occupation of the respondents:

Self employed	11
Working professional	21
Salaried	35



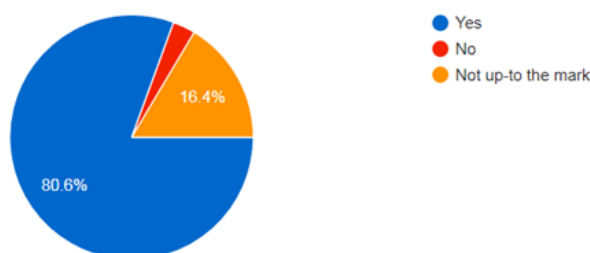
Analysis: The above table shows that 11 respondents are self-employed, 21 are working professionals & 35 are salaried.

Interpretation: The above chart indicates that most of the respondents are salaried i.e., around 52.2%, 16.4% are self-employed & 31.3% are working professionals. This shows that those respondents are from different functional areas. Most of the respondents are academicians, IT employees, Software engineers, Data analyst, process leads, health consultants, entrepreneurs, Directors from the fitness industry, professionals like chartered accountants and lawyers around Bangalore City.

2. Are you provided with safe and secured working conditions?

Table Showing the safe and secured working conditions of the respondents

Yes	54
No	2
Not up-to the mark	11



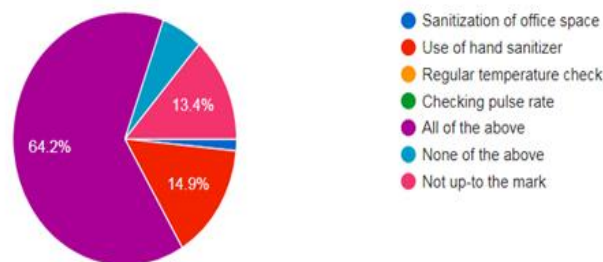
Analysis: The above table indicates that around 54 respondents have safe & secured working conditions & some respondents feel that it is not up to the mark and only two respondents are not satisfied.

Interpretation: Most of the respondents have secured working conditions i.e., of 80.6%, 16.4% are not up to the mark & only 3% of respondents feel that they don't have safe & secured working conditions. It is a good sign that the majority of respondents have given positive feedback that they have safe and secured working conditions but we should also keep in mind that 16.4% respondents feel that safety measures taken are not up to the mark. We should constantly check and upgrade safety measures up to prescribed standards to safeguard the health of employees.

3. Are following checks done at your workplace?

Table Showing the checks done at your workplace of the respondents

Sanitization of office space	1
Use of hand sanitizer	10
Regular temperature check	0
Checking pulse rate	0
All of the above	43
None of the above	4
Not up-to the mark	9



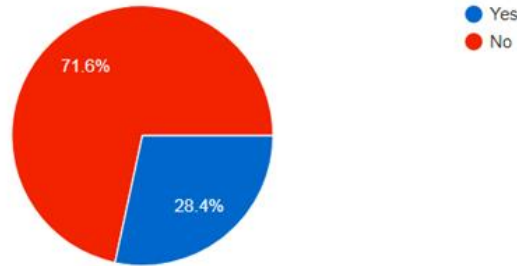
Analysis: The above table shows that all the checks are done at the workplace & only 9 of the respondents feel that checks are not up to the mark, 4 of the respondents does not have any checks done at the workplace.

Interpretation: Most of the respondents have all the checks done at the workplace. Some feel that their organization is not checking up to mark i.e. 14.9%. The other respondent feels that none of the above checks are done. It is a positive sign to be noted that 64.2% feel that all the safety checks are undertaken at the workplace even though 13.4% feel that it is not up to the mark cannot be neglected as we have to be very cautious in safety checks because there is rapid spread of viral infection and it is not yet under control.

4. Are you facing any kind of job insecurity?

Table Showing the respondents job insecurity

Yes	19
No	48



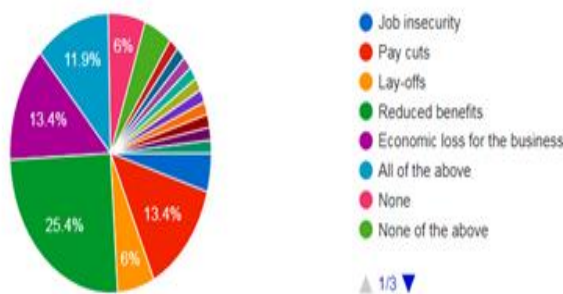
Analysis: The above table shows that most of the employees are not having job insecurity, 19 of the respondents are facing some kind of job insecurity.

Interpretation: The above charts show that 71.6% of the respondents are not facing job insecurity & 28.4% are facing job insecurity as it depends on the nature of work during the pandemic. Overall it's a good sign that the majority of them are not facing job insecurity.

5. Have you come across any of the following attributes at your organization?

Table Showing the attributes at your organization

Job insecurity	3
Pay cuts	9
Lay-offs	4
Reduced benefits	17
Economic loss for the business	9
All of the above	8
None	4
None of the above	3



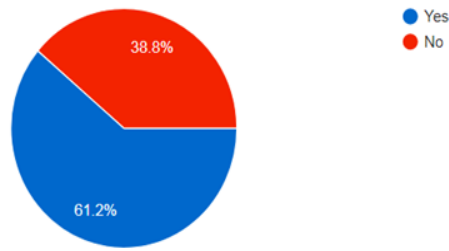
Analysis: From the above table we can analyze that most of the respondents feel that they have reduced benefits and pay cuts in the organization.

Interpretation: The above charts indicates that 25.4% of the respondents feel that they have not come across reduced benefits, pay cuts, layoff & economic loss due to the pandemic. The above chart indicates that majority of respondents have faced reduced benefits and pay cuts due to pandemic.

7. Are you working from Home?

Table showing the respondents working from home.

Yes	24
No	19



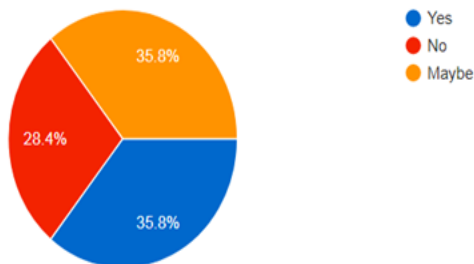
Analysis: The above table shows that 24 respondents are working from home and 19 respondents are not working from home.

Interpretation: The majority of the respondents i.e., 61.2% feel that working from home is safe during the pandemic and around 38.8% of the respondents are not working from home and undertaking risk.

7. Are you satisfied by working from home?

Table showing contented by working from home

Yes	24
No	19
Maybe	24



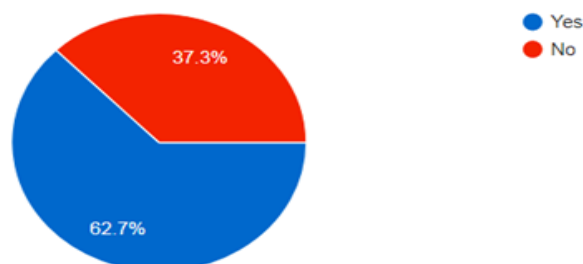
Analysis: The above table shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied by working from home and 19 of the respondents are not satisfied by working from home.

Interpretation: The above chart analysis shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied by working from home only 28.4% are not satisfied.

8. Has work from home option increased your working hours round the clock?

Table showing the working hours of the respondents

Yes	42
No	25



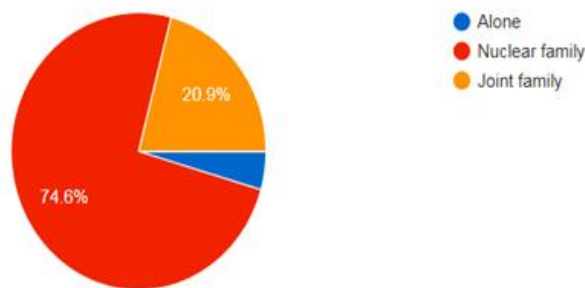
Analysis: The table indicates that 42 respondents feel that working hours are round the clock. 29 respondents feel that they are fine with working hours.

Interpretation: Most of the respondents feel that their working hours have been increased round the clock due to the pandemic. Only 37.3% feel that they are not working around the clock. It depends on the nature of work in the organization.

9. Are you staying with your family?

Table showing the respondent stay with family

Alone	3
Nuclear family	50
Joint family	14



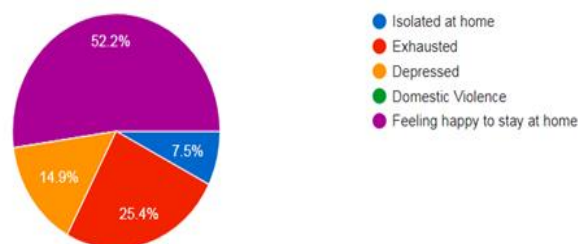
Analysis: The tables show that 50 respondents are having a nuclear family, 14 respondents stay with a joint family & 3 respondents are alone.

Interpretation: The above chart shows that the majority of the respondents are nuclear families i.e., 74.6% & 20.9% are staying with a joint family. This also affects the working conditions of individuals. Whereas you feel more isolated when you stay alone as individuals require a social life.

10. Are you facing any of the below-mentioned issues?

Table showing the issues faced by the respondents

Isolated at home	5
Exhausted	17
Depressed	10
Domestic Violence	0
Feeling happy to stay at home	35



Analysis: Tables show that the majority of the respondents feel happy staying at home, 17 of the respondents exhausted, 10 are depressed & 5 are isolated at home.

Interpretation: The above chart indicates that 52.2% of the respondents are feeling happy to spend time with their family, 25.4% are exhausted, 14.9% are depressed & 7.5% are isolated at home and none of the respondents had domestic violence.

11. Are you motivated by family members to work from home?

Table showing motivation by family members at working from home

No motivation	10
Low motivation	11
Highly motivated and cooperative	46



Analysis: The table indicates that 46 respondents are highly motivated & cooperative from their families. 11 respondents were low motivated and 10 respondents are not motivated.

Interpretation: The above chart shows that 68.7% of the respondents were highly motivated and cooperative, 16.4% had low motivation & 14.9% were not at all motivated.

12. Are you motivated by your organization and staff to work from home?

Tables showing motivation by the organization & staff to work from home

No motivation	15
Low motivation	22
Highly motivated and cooperative	30



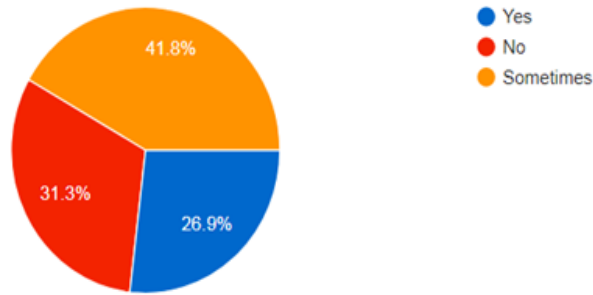
Analysis: The table indicates that 30 respondents are highly motivated & 22 respondents were low motivated and 15 respondents are not motivated by their peers and colleagues.

Interpretation: The above chart shows that 44.8% are of the respondents where highly motivated and cooperative, 32.8% had low motivation & 22.4% were not at all motivated by their peers and colleagues.

13. Do you get mood swings when you work from home?

Tables showing mood swings at work from home

Yes	18
No	21
Sometimes	28



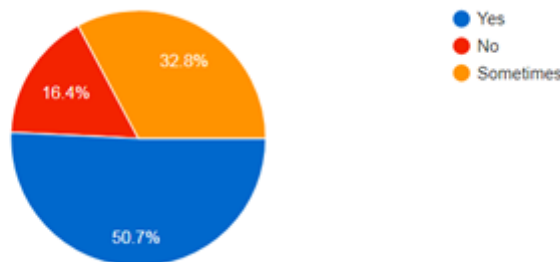
Analysis: The tables show that 28 respondents have mood swings sometimes at work from home , 21 respondents don't have mood swings & 18 of the respondents have mood swings.

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents sometimes have mood swings when they work at home, 31.3% of the respondents don't have any mood swings & 26.9% always have mood swings when they work at home.

Are you mentally prepared to work from home?

Tables shows mentally preparation of work from home

Yes	34
No	11
Sometimes	22



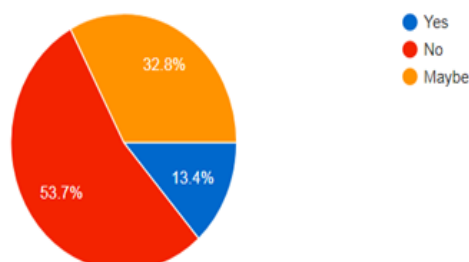
Analysis: The tables show that 34 respondents are mentally prepared to work from home, 22 respondents sometimes ready to work from home & 11 of the respondents are not mentally prepared to work from home.

Interpretation: The above chart indicates that 50.7% of the respondents are mentally prepared to work from home, 32.8% are not ready to work from home.

15. Are you facing any physical or mental health problems due to the current scenario?

Table showing that physical or mental health problems due to the current scenario

Yes	9
No	36
Maybe	22



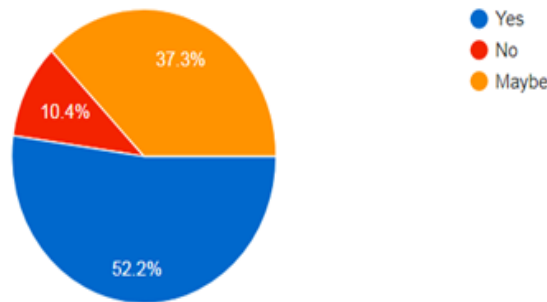
Analysis: The above table shows that 36 of the respondents are facing physical or mental health problems, 22 respondents sometimes feel that they are facing the same issue & 9 of the respondents are facing physical or mental health problems.

Interpretation: Most of the respondents are not feeling that they are not facing physical or mental health problems due to pandemic, around 32.8% are facing the issue & 13.4% of the respondents are facing physical or mental health problems.

16. Are you mentally prepared to face the pandemic prevailing currently?

Tables shows mentally preparation face the pandemic prevailing currently

Yes	35
No	7
Maybe	25



Analysis: The above tables show that 35 of the respondents are mental prepared to face the pandemic prevailing currently, 25 respondents sometimes feel that they are facing the same issue & 7 of the respondents are not mentally prepared to face the pandemic.

Interpretation: The above table shadows over all a good sign that overall 52.2% of respondents are mentally well prepared to face the pandemic while 37.3% are not completely prepared but in a confused state. Whereas 10.4% respondents are not prepared and need assistance and counselling.

Major Findings of the research

1. Data is gathered from various industrial sectors in and around Bangalore.
2. It is a positive sign that the majority of the respondents have given feedback that they are provided with safe and secure working conditions at workplace even though few are not satisfied their views cannot be neglected. We should constantly check and upgrade safety measures up to prescribed standards to safeguard the health of the employees.
3. Safety checks done at the work place like Sanitization of office space, Use of hand sanitizer, Regular temperature check, checking pulse rate etc. should be rigorously done without any flaw in order to ensure accurate safety measures.
4. Majority of respondents have faced reduced benefits and pay cuts due to the pandemic.
5. 61.2% of the respondents are working from home and feel that working from home is safe during the pandemic. The respondents working from home feel that their work has increased round the clock due to the pandemic.
6. Most of the respondents stay in nuclear families and a minority of them stay alone, this has a greater impact on working conditions. Whereas people staying at home feel isolated, few are depressed and exhausted as humans we require social life.

7. Most of the respondents are not motivated either by the peers and organization nor family members to work from home. In order the individuals get mood swings and not having a stable mind-set and some are in a confused situation which hampers productivity in them.

8. 10.4% of the respondents are not mentally prepared to face the prevailing pandemic situation and 37.3% of the respondents are in a confused state of mind. 13.4% of respondents are facing physical disorders and mentally weak due to the present situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to promote workers' health and psychosocial well-being and to avoid the adoption of unhealthy behaviors to cope with the increased stress related to the COVID-19 crisis, the following actions can be considered:

1. Revise working-time arrangements (including shifts, overtime and working hours) in consultation with workers and their representatives to improve sleep and rest and to reduce fatigue.
2. Inform and educate workers about adopting a routine for healthy sleeping and diet habits. Encourage workers to maintain healthy habits by taking regular breaks, not missing meals and making informed choices about healthy nutrition.
3. Encourage workers to exercise regularly and provide information on how to exercise at home, referring to various resources available online for all types and levels of exercise, including apps, videos and live-streamed classes from gyms and yoga and dance studios.
4. Make sure workers are informed about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and give practical support on how to take action.

In order to improve social support and create a positive working environment, the following actions can be considered:

1. Establish close management-worker relations so that workers and managers can support one another. Use supportive approaches for teams, for example by recognizing and normalizing emotions related to shared experiences.
2. Organize regular virtual huddles/meetings to enable workers to share their concerns and suggestions with managers/supervisors about the procedures and initiatives implemented to deal with the COVID-19 crisis and ensure that their opinions are duly considered.

Psychological supportive Actions

1. Create a buddy system to monitor stress and burnout and to provide psychological support.
2. Pay attention to workers with pre-existing mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities who may be less able to cope during this period and may need further support.
3. Make stress reduction and self-calming techniques available (such as, online relaxation and meditation classes, tutorials and apps).
4. Inform both managers and workers about how they can access mental health and psychosocial support services and counselling programs.

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