

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) ON YOUNG EMPLOYEES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

In the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries witnessed lockdowns during the Spring of 2020 as the major preventive measure for reducing the spread of this novel virus. Many organizations shifted to operate remotely, and the employees started working from home. In this article, we document the effects of work from home (WFH) on young employees during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Pakistan. Our study of 204 young employees from the age group of 18 to 35 years performing WFH during the lockdown substantiates, quality family-time and work productivity have increased. However, the increase in screen time of employees, and stress of WFH led to physical symptoms, such as muscle and eye strains, changes in sleep pattern and duration, and diet patterns. The study found that family disturbance during work time is the major challenge along with data insecurity while working remotely.

Keywords: Work from home (WFH), COVID-19 lockdown, work productivity, young employees, lifestyle.

Introduction

At the end of 2019, the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) was witnessed globally. The first case of this novel virus was reported on 31 December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China (Kim et al., 2020) from where it spread rapidly throughout the world. On 11 March 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Iran and China confirmed the highest reported cases and deaths from the spread of this virus. Pakistan due to shared borders with China and Iran remained a soft target of this virus. In addition, in early March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in Pakistan. Whereas the Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan confirmed its first two cases of COVID-19 on the 26th of February 2020 in Karachi and Islamabad. Correspondingly, it was discovered that both patients had travelled to Iran (Badshah et al., 2020). Among which one case was confirmed at Karachi, Sindh province while the other case was from the federal territory (Islamabad) of the country (Waris et al., 2020). Pakistan had its first death from COVID-19 on the 18th of March 2020 (Ahmad, 2020a).

In the beginning, the spread of coronavirus was slow, on 7 March only seven cases were reported but soon with the increase in the inflow of people returning to Pakistan from Iran and other neighbouring countries there was a spike in numbers in terms of its spread in the country. In the absence of a vaccine, social distancing and lockdown appeared to be the main preventive measures for controlling the spread of this virus (Sethi et al., 2020). Pakistan with a population of 207 million people and a weak health care infrastructure made it vulnerable in managing the caseload of COVID-19 patients. World Health Organization (WHO) also showed its concern regarding the worrisome situation of Pakistan and warned if the country is not able to take serious measures to mitigate the spread of the virus, it might become the next epicentre (Khan et al., 2020). Thus, in the third week of March, the government of Pakistan imposed a lockdown in various parts of the country. The province of Sindh implemented the lockdown at first and subsequently, other

provinces followed too. The Federal Government continued the lockdown until the end of April to control the rise of positive corona cases (Latif, 2020). Provincial governments imposed strict lockdown and barred people from coming out except for basic groceries and medication. All social events and gatherings including religious ones were also banned. According to the Coronavirus Resource Centre of John Hopkins University, Pakistan confirmed about 285,000 cases of COVID-19 and 6,100 deaths in August 2020, ranked fourteen in the world and fourth in Asia.

After the implementation of strict lockdowns, people were confined to their homes and many employees shifted to distance working or referred to as ‘work from home’ (WFH). Although it mitigates the spread of Covid 19 simultaneously effected peoples lifestyle, physical activities and mental health, and well-being of people engaged in WFH. In this study, we document the impact of WFH on young employees during the pandemic lockdown in Pakistan. Although WFH is not a new or unique phenomenon, as it was introduced as telecommuting during the 1970s (Narayanan et al., 2017). Historically it was a popular topic for public debate in February 2013, when the CEO of Yahoo, Marissa Mayer, banned the company’s employees from working from home (Allen, Golden, and Shockley, 2015). In the literature, telecommuting has been referred to as remote work (Elling, 1985), telework (Morganson et al., 2010), distributed work (Bosch-Sijtsema and Sivunen, 2013), virtual work (Clark, Karau, and Michalisin, 2012), working at home (Hamilton, 1987) and many other labels. Whereas in the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown the term ‘work from home’ is extensively used for describing this phenomenon. Nilles (1988) defined telecommuting as the use of telecommunications technology to partially or completely replace the commute to and from work. In doing WFH the employees do not commute to the workplace (such as office, warehouse, or store, etc.).

COVID -19 pandemic lockdown has led many employees to an unprecedented shift to remote work. Many workplaces have adopted WFH options for the first time all around the world. WFH is changing the work sites allowing the employees to work anywhere and anytime. Nonetheless, it is still challenging for some people to make this shift. Galasso and Foucault (2020) state that high income, white-collar, and college-educated people were more likely to be able to do WFH as compared to those with lower levels of education, blue-collar workers, and people with lower levels of income. The nature of jobs, access to digital devices, access to the internet, exposure to technology, and requisite training provision are important determinants of WFH.

Pakistan is likely to suffer heavily due to lockdowns, as WFH is a luxury not all can afford. Workers who work without a formal contract, are the most vulnerable group while managers, professionals, and technicians, and associate professionals can perform WFH during the lockdown in all provinces of Pakistan. A study carried out by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) found that only 18 percent of the total workforce of Pakistan could do WFH (Sarah and Waheed, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan has transformed into a labour market crisis more than the health emergency in Pakistan.

This article contributes to the growing literature that examines the impacts of COVID-19 on WFH and further analyses its impact on young employees in developing countries. The existing literature in this context has focused on the occupational status (Kramer and Kramer, 2020) and WFH in developed countries (Baker, 2020; Bick, Blandin and Mertens, 2020; Dingel and Neiman, 2020; Farre et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2020). Also, some studies explain the impact of COVID-19 on the health, well-being, and lifestyle of people from different parts of the world (Torales et al., 2020;

Wen et al., 2021; Maugeri et al., 2020; Van Rheenen et al., 2020; Lesser and Nienhuis, 2020; Carriedo et al., 2020; Haider, Tiwana and Tahir, 2020).

Methods and Material

This quantitative study is an observational and statistical approach to examine the discrete and qualitative factors such as challenges to employees in doing WFH, changes in the lifestyle and health associated with WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, work productivity related to WFH, and benefits of WFH.

The data for this study is collected directly from primary sources. The sample selected for this study is based on 204 young employees residing and working in any employment sector of Pakistan which has shifted to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. As the focus of this study is to understand the challenges faced by young employees, hence employees age 18-35 years were included in the sample to obtain a homogenous sample. One of the inclusion criteria for sample selection was that the respondents of this study must be engaged in WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The study used an anonymous online survey method that was developed by the authors of this study using Google forms. The online survey form was circulated among the social circle of authors using emails, and social media networks (WhatsApp and Facebook). Data for this study were collected from the 12th to the 21st of June 2020. In total, 204 respondents completed the survey. Respondents of the study were requested to fill the survey form voluntarily and forward it to their social circle hence, following the snowball technique.

The first part of the survey form consists of demographic variables (age, gender, education, marital status) and three other sections. These sections have 52 questions in a 5-point Likert scale format. The outreach of the survey was limited to the people understanding English, using any of the platforms used for spreading the survey form and having access to the internet connection. For the analysis of data, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used. Data cleaning and visualization of results were done using statistical software (IBM SPSS) and Microsoft Excel 2016.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic characteristics of the population of the study

This section discusses the demographic characteristics of the sample. Through an online survey, a total of 204 responses were recorded for this study. The summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample is summarized in Table 1. Among the 204 respondents, 123 (about 60 percent) were males and 81 (about 40 percent) were females. Most of the respondents were between 28 to 32 years of age, while less than 5 percent were of age between 18-24 years. However, the proportion of married and unmarried respondents was almost equal, 48.5 and 49 percent, respectively.

Most of the respondents were university graduates. As shown in Table 1, about 66 percent of the respondents had completed their postgraduate education, among which 56 percent had master's degrees while 10 percent had completed their doctoral education. Whereas less than 2 percent had professional degrees (vocational training and courses, language, and skills courses). It shows that people with higher education are more engaged in WFH. Employment status

classification depicts that more than 80 percent of the respondents were doing full-time jobs while about 14 percent were doing part-time jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

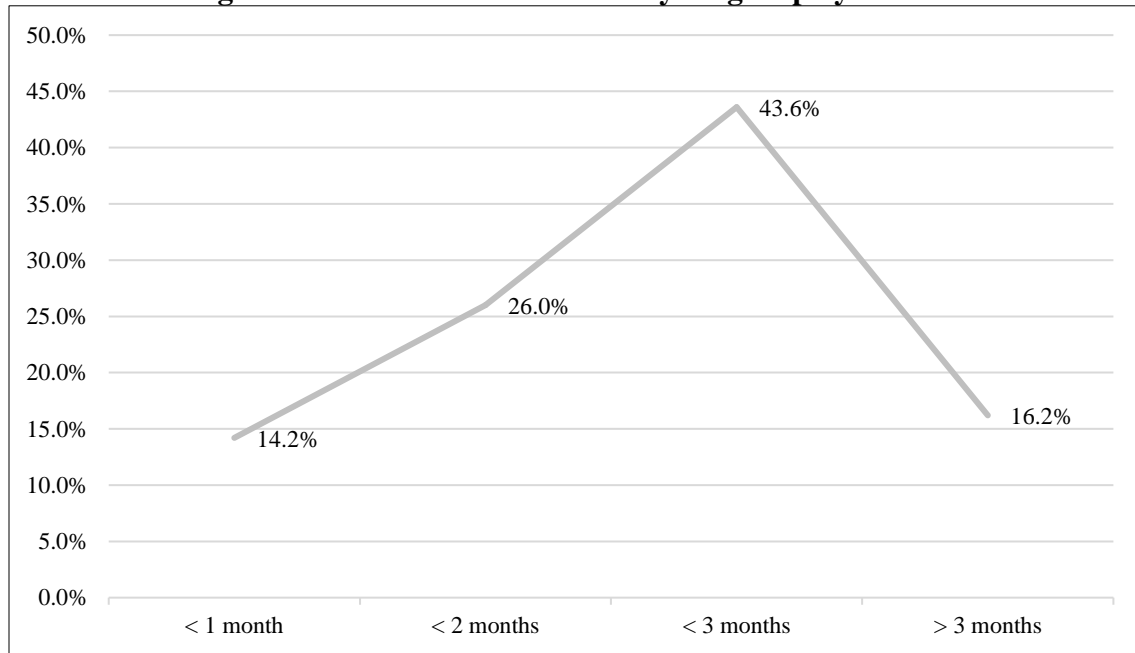
Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample in the study

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	123	60.3
Female	81	39.7
Age in years		
18-24	8	3.9
23-27	53	26
28-32	81	39.7
33-35	62	30.4
Marital Status		
Single	100	49
Married	99	48.5
Divorced	3	1.5
Separated	2	1
Education		
Bachelors	65	31.9
Master	115	56.4
Doctorate	21	10.3
Professional degree	3	1.4
Employment Status		
Full time	175	85.5
Part-time	29	14.5

Source: Online Survey

Work productivity of young employees during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

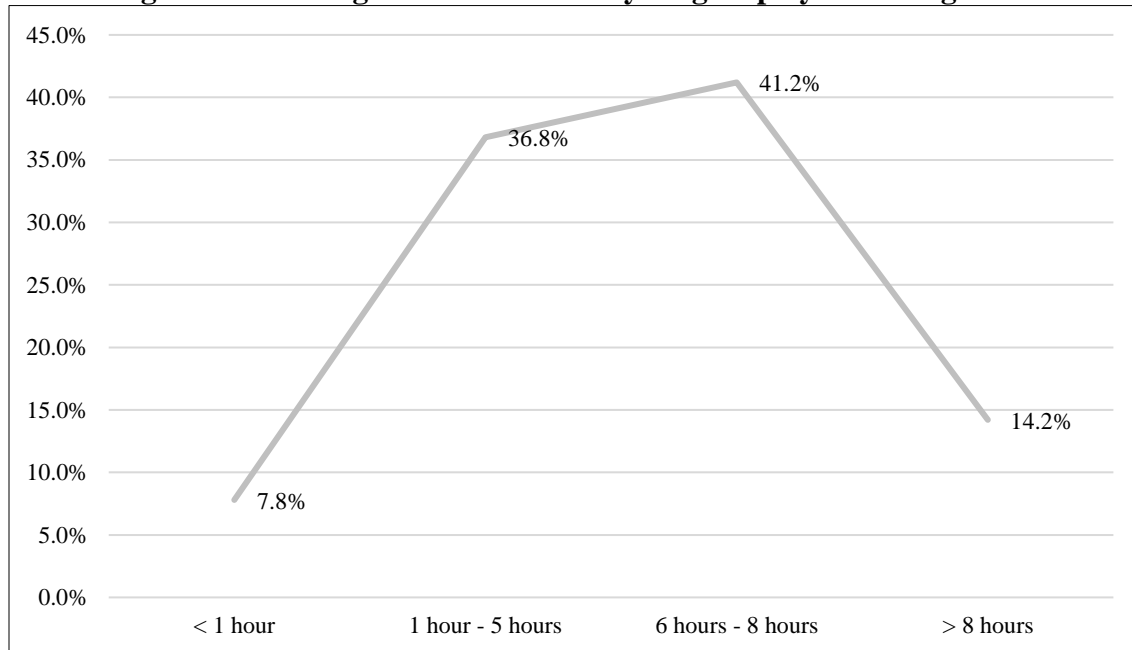
This section discusses the impact of WFH during the lockdown on work productivity of the respondents. Before COVID-19, WFH was an acceptable business practice only in the field of information technology, business, and finance. But it is now adopted by most of the service sector to overcome the economic crisis and for the growth economy. Our findings show that many workplaces already had systems to enable WFH, as the majority (43 percent) of the workers were doing WFH, for the last three months, as shown in Figure 1. It also illustrates that WFH was initiated immediately after the lockdown was imposed in Pakistan.

Figure 1: Duration of WFH of the young employees in Pakistan

Source: Online Survey

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only shifted the employees to WFH, but it also has a visible impact on the working hours of the employees. But in this study, most of the respondents (total 86 percent) reported that they were working for 8 or less than 8 hours per day. Among which 41 percent were working for 5 to 8 hours a day, and less than 8 percent were working for less than an hour per day, shown in Figure 2. More interestingly in this study, there were respondents (14 percent) who were working more than 8 hours a day. In particular, the working hours per day have changed slightly. For more than half of the respondents (51 percent) the working hours per day have increased, and 33 percent reported that there has been a decrease in their working hours per day. A study conducted in Malaysia on WFH during lockdown found that working hours have been reduced for 16 percent of their participants (Tumin, 2020). Whereas approximately 45 percent of the respondents in this study declared no change in their working hours. According to Jaiswal and Arun (2020), it depends on the role of employees, as working hours have reduced for those employees who are involved in the operation, supply chain, and finance section. However, for those involved in technical, human resource and sales, their working hours have increased.

Figure 2: Working hours duration of young employees during WFH



Source: Online Survey

Since the COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting need for lockdown, many organizations have imposed work at home (Adalja, Toner, and Inglesby, 2020). Approximately three quarters (75 percent) of the respondents of this study mentioned that they were new to the concept of WFH. And 25 percent of the respondents had significant experience of working from home. For some employees, this shift of work from the office to home was preferred, while those who did not prefer it, experienced it as forceful change. Zhang et al. (2020) in their study conducted on Chinese citizens reported that less than 30 percent of the labour force continued working at the office, while 38 percent shifted to WFH and 25 percent stopped working.

Besides, WFH is not suitable for all sectors of employment. In this study, we found that approximately less than half (47 percent) of the respondents indicated that WFH suits their nature of job, and 27 percent declared that their job nature is not suitable and feasible to be done from home, shown in Table 2. This condition is likely more common for those whose work does require the equipment and instruments available at the office that cannot be installed at home setup. Likewise, a study conducted on citizens of developed countries during the COVID-19 lockdown concluded that it depends on the nature of occupation to be performed from home or not, widely higher-wage occupations tend to be more able to WFH rather the lesser waged occupations (Galasso and Foucault, 2020).

According to the findings of this study, there has been a change experienced by the young employees in work productivity during WFH. About 45 percent of the respondents reported an increase in their work productivity while working from home as compared to the workplace. Similar results were reported by Choudhury et al. (2019) in their study on call-centre employees, which shows that WFH increased work productivity by 13 percent. And they provided certain reasons for this increase, such as the decline in sick days, time for a social break, and a relaxed work environment at home. Similarly, previous studies (Bosua et. al, 2013; Bloom et. al, 2015;

Krasulja et. al, 2015) identified that work productivity along with the ability to manage the work-life balance of the employees has increased while working from home. In this study, we find that about 36 percent of the respondents showed a decline and 18 percent showed no change in their work productivity during WFH. Jaiswal and Arun (2020) also reported a decline in the productivity of most of the population of the study in their study. Whereas Bao et al. (2020) found that there is no impact on the productivity of employees working from home during the lockdown.

Table 2. Work productivity of young employees during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (in percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am new to WFH	31.9	43.1	10.3	10.3	4.4
WFH suits the nature of my job	10.3	36.3	26.0	16.2	11.3
My working hours have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown	19.6	31.9	18.1	27.5	2.9
My working hours have decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown	8.8	24.5	26.5	26.0	14.2
I am satisfied with my current working schedule	10.3	39.7	16.7	24.5	8.8
I am more productive at WFH setup compared to being at the office	13.7	30.9	18.6	26.0	10.8
I can complete my task in time	16.2	52.5	16.2	11.8	3.4
I am more innovative/efficient	13.7	45.1	16.2	19.1	5.9
I am satisfied with my current work productivity	11.8	48.0	14.7	19.6	5.9
My employer is satisfied with my work	19.6	49.0	19.1	10.3	2.0

Source: Online Survey

Noticeably in our study, more than half of the respondents (about 60 percent) were satisfied with their work productivity while doing WFH. As WFH allows flexible working hours to employees (Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity, 2009), approximately half of the participants reported that they are satisfied with their working schedule, while 33 percent reported dissatisfaction. Along with it, most of the respondents (69 percent) mentioned that WFH has enabled them to complete their assigned tasks timely and are more innovative and efficient (59 percent) while working from home. An increase in work productivity has increased the satisfaction of the employers as well, as 68 percent of the respondents in this study reported that their employers are satisfied with their work since doing WFH.

Challenges to work from home during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

As mentioned in the previous section, WFH is a new experience for most employees. Hence, they come across various challenges in this process. Table 3 has summarized the percentage of

challenges faced by the respondents of this study while doing WFH during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Table 3: Challenges to employees doing WFH during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (in percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have been worried about losing my job due to the COVID-19 lockdown	17.2	29.9	25.0	21.6	6.4
I face difficulty in doing WFH	13.7	42.2	23.5	15.2	5.4
I am good at working online	14.7	46.6	25.0	11.3	2.5
I am good at virtual communication	15.7	48.5	18.6	15.7	1.5
I am good at operating computer	30.4	53.9	7.8	6.9	1.0
I am good in technical work	20.1	43.1	20.6	14.7	1.5
I have been trained by my employer for WFH	10.3	28.9	23.0	23.0	14.7
I have been trained by my colleague for WFH	8.3	32.8	25.0	23.0	10.8
I have been trained by family/friend for WFH	6.4	25.5	27.9	26.0	14.2
I got training from online tutorials on the internet for WFH	18.6	28.9	19.1	17.2	16.2
I am comfortable with my WFH setup compared to being at the office	9.3	33.8	20.1	21.6	15.2
I have quality internet at home	17.6	40.2	12.3	19.6	10.3
I have a peaceful working place at home	13.7	32.8	15.7	25.5	12.3
I have comfortable working arrangements	12.7	36.8	13.2	25.5	11.8
I have the fear of data security while working online	13.7	32.8	24.0	21.6	7.8
I face family members interference while working	32.8	39.7	15.7	8.8	2.9

Source: Online Survey

The economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has resulted in downsizing and involuntary unemployment in every part of the world. Lockdown in Pakistan also shuttered businesses and mandated WFH for many employees. This sudden shift has threatened the job security of people across the various economic and business sectors in the world (Morath, Torry and Guilford, 2020). In this study, we also found similar behaviour among the respondents, as shown in Table 3, about 47 percent of the respondents were worried about losing their jobs during the lockdown. And less than 30 percent were not having this fear, they might be those who are in the administrative or higher positions at their workplace. Farre et al. (2020) discussed in their study that job loss was larger for less-educated workers, while workers from health services,

public administration, finance, and the real estate sector had the smallest chance of job loss because they were able to work remotely.

It is well known that the experience of WFH is new for employees other than information technology professionals, we found that more than half (60 percent) of respondents faced difficulty in shifting to WFH. Some organizations provided formal training to their employees for enabling them to do WFH. It is presented in Table 3 that 39 percent of the respondents were trained by their employers while 41 percent were trained by their colleagues at work. Besides these formal training, more than 30 percent of respondents mentioned that they were trained by people other than their colleagues and employers, such as friends and family members.

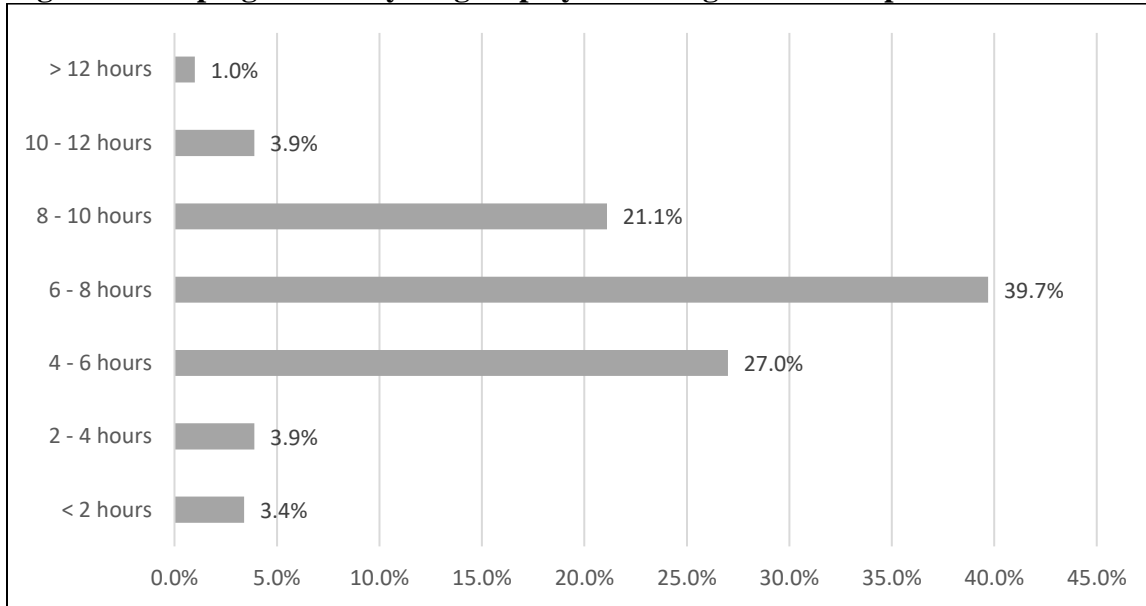
In doing WFH, the working environment plays an important role. It includes a comfortable working setup, availability of quality internet connection, a peaceful working place, and availability of working arrangements. We find in this study about 36 percent of respondents have uncomfortable WFH setup, about 30 percent have limited or no access to quality internet, and about 38 percent do not have a peaceful working place at their home. Along with these challenges, workers involve in WFH face difficulties in maintaining the lines between family and work roles (Capitano and Greenhaus, 2018). We found that a large number of the respondents (more than 70 percent) reported family interference during working time as a major challenge. There exists various reasons for this, such as the closure of schools and childcare services due to lockdown forced working parents to take care of their children. In addition, home-schooling children was also a challenge with their WFH arrangements (Restubog, Ocampo and Wang, 2020). It causes challenges in terms of maintaining family and work boundaries (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000) resulting in family-work interference, underperformance, emotional exhaustion, and disturbance (Sonntag, Kuttler and Fritz, 2010) in the work process. Our finding is in line with Kolte (2020) who also discussed the challenges faced by employees engaged in WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Kolte (2020) identified that family disturbance, internet connectivity, miscommunication with clients and co-workers, lack of technical abilities are major challenges to workers during WFH.

Along with it, the upward trend in cybercrime is another major threat to online workers doing WFH, more than 60 percent of the respondent experienced the fear of data security in online working. The higher use of virtual conferencing and collaboration tools could expose more vulnerabilities for hackers to exploit the data (Ahmad, 2020b). Purwanto et al. (2020) in their study on Indonesian teachers' performance due to WFH found that it can cause data security problems, as well as harm work motivation when one must bear electricity and internet costs.

Impact on lifestyle and health of young employees

It is well known that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has a serious impact on the health and lifestyle of individuals of all age groups all around the world. As reported in Figure 3, the sleeping hours has slightly changed for young employees while doing WFH during the lockdown. It is shown that approximately 40 percent of respondents were sleeping 6-8 hours a day and only 21 percent were sleeping for 8 to 10 hours a day. About 7 percent of the respondents were facing extreme sleep loss and were sleeping less than 4 hours a day. It has been mentioned in several other studies that the COVID-19 pandemic has a serious impact on the sleeping pattern of people around the world (Altena et al., 2020; Chandra et al., 2020; Di Renzo et al., 2020; Kochhar et al., 2020).

Figure 3: Sleeping hours of young employees during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown



Source: Online Survey

We also found that along with the sleeping hours, the sleeping pattern has also experienced changes for the respondents of this study. More than half of the respondents (about 60 percent) were sleeping less at night and more at daytime, shown in Table 4. Cellini et al. (2020) also found in their study on Italians, that sleep timing has changed dramatically among workers. They also observed that sleeping hours have increased along with a stronger effect on wake time and bedtime during the quarantine.

Along with changes in sleeping pattern, the daily routine habits of the respondents has also been changed leading to serious health consequences. The major change observed is in screen time consumption. It is observed by Kamble (2020) in his study on the lifestyle of Indians during the COVID-19 lockdown period, that screen time has increased, people are using smartphones for watching movies, videos, communication with friends and family. He also found that young people, who are doing WFH spend more time on online meetings, increasing their screen time. Our findings also suggest that the increase in screen time observed in 85 percent of the respondents of this study, could justify the perception of an increase in anxiety (64 percent), back strain (65 percent), neck and shoulder pain (62 percent), eye strain (66 percent), and muscle ache (60 percent) among the study sample. We also found that more than 40 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the increase in their screen time.

Table 4: Impact on health and lifestyle of young employees during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (in percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have anxiety	16.2	48.5	15.7	15.7	3.9
I have back strain	22.5	42.6	17.2	14.2	3.4
I have neck and shoulder strain	20.1	42.2	15.7	19.1	2.9
I have eye strain	25.5	40.7	15.2	15.2	3.4
I have muscle ache	19.6	37.3	20.6	18.6	3.9
I am sleeping more at night	8.3	19.6	32.8	30.9	8.3
I am sleeping less at night	18.1	42.6	14.7	21.1	3.4
I have gained weight	15.2	35.3	28.9	16.2	4.4
I do more physical activity/personal fitness	8.3	19.1	31.9	28.4	12.3
I am eating fresh homemade healthy food	35.3	49.0	11.3	3.4	1.0
I take more snacks and meals while working	17.2	39.7	19.1	17.2	6.9
I smoke more while working	5.9	17.6	27.9	20.1	28.4
I consume more tea/coffee while working	12.3	35.3	20.6	16.7	15.2
I give more time to my friends and family	13.7	52.9	16.2	11.3	5.9
I spend more time in front of the screen since the lockdown	34.3	50.5	9.8	3.9	1.5
I am satisfied with the change in screen time	6.9	24.0	27.5	27.5	14.2

Source: Online survey

As shown in the above Table 4, half of the population of the study has gained weight during COVID-19 lockdown, as they (41 percent) are not doing physical activity or personal fitness exercises. In line with the study conducted by Narayanan et al. (2020) in India, the habit of physical exercise declines due to lockdown restrictions. Similarly, a significant decline in the physical workout was observed in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (López-Bueno et al., 2020). Besides the decline in physical activity, it was observed in our study that there was an increase in snacks and meal consumption by more than half of the respondents, and about 48 percent were consuming more coffee/tea while working from home. One reason for this increase is the depression associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to people consuming sugary and high caloric diets to boost their mood due to stress and depression (Yılmaz and Gökmen, 2020). Simultaneously, 84 percent of the respondents reported that they are eating fresh and homemade healthy food. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Matsungu and Chopera (2020) in Zimbabwe, which shows that the pattern of food consumption has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also mentioned that there was an increase in the consumption of leafy vegetables but also an increase in screen time, anxiety, and body weight.

Most interestingly, it was observed that nearly half (49 percent) of the respondents mentioned that they are smoking less while working from home. A similar finding was discussed by Di Renzo et al. (2020) in their study that some people have quit smoking habits during the lockdown. It can be justified by two reasons: firstly, most smokers keep their smoking habit secret from their families in Pakistan, secondly, people are more concerned about their respiratory health due to COVID-19 spread.

Benefits of work from home during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown

The study showed that along with the negative impacts of WFH during COVID-19 lockdown there exist some benefits as well. As shown in Table 5, about 44 percent of the respondents have mentioned that it was easy for them to communicate with their colleagues online, and while a very small number has mentioned it as a difficulty. Besides it, 78 percent of the population of the study think WFH has increased their savings. One reason for the increase in saving money is that there is no expenditure on transportation, fuel, and purchasing meals from outside (office canteen, hotel, etc.). As mentioned by the majority (78 percent) of respondents that WFH allows them to save commuting time. It has allowed them to spend that time with their family and loved ones. While a large number of respondents declared that WFH has increased their resting time and provides a flexible work schedule. It can be seen as the major advantage of doing WFH.

Table 5: Benefits of work from home during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (in percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is easy to communicate with colleagues online compared to being at the office	6.4	37.3	14.2	28.9	13.2
It allows me to save money	23.5	54.9	10.3	8.8	2.5
It allows me to take more rest	20.6	52.9	12.3	9.3	4.9
It saves my commuting time	27.0	53.9	11.8	3.4	3.9
It provides me flexible time schedule	21.6	55.4	9.8	8.3	4.9
It allows me to spend more time with loved ones	24.0	56.9	9.8	5.4	3.9
It increased the overall productivity of my organization	13.2	36.3	25.0	19.1	6.4
It provides an ease to balance social and professional life	15.7	46.1	18.1	14.2	5.9
I am interested in doing WFH in the future as well	15.2	37.3	19.1	13.7	14.7

Source: Online survey

About half of the respondents of this study agreed that WFH has increased the overall productivity of their organizations. It also provides an ease to balance social and professional lives. The most interesting finding of this study is that more than half (53 percent) of the respondents were in favour of doing WFH in the future as well. Our findings are in line with many studies which suggest that WFH has many advantages, it provides flexibility in completing work and work schedules, minimize the cost of transportation, fuel, and commuting, save time and money, and also improve productivity (Kolte, 2020; Blume, Schmidt and Cajochen, 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, our study showed that young employees in Pakistan reported an impact on their lifestyle and well-being along with challenges while working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In support of reducing the challenges faced while working from home, we found that along with a comfortable workplace, and access to digital devices, it is important to provide cybersecurity to employees doing WFH. They must be promptly trained and informed about their digital security. For WFH, technological advancement, and the ability to use technical and digital devices is highly demanded, those who lack it face serious consequences in the form of work productivity.

However, the workers living with family and children are more likely to face disturbance while doing WFH. But at the same time, WFH has enabled workers to keep a balance between their family and work-life by spending more quality time with them. Whereas the negative aspect of WFH is an increase in screen time causing health issues such as muscle, neck, shoulder and eye strain. It also causes anxiety in young employees pushing them to consume more unhealthy food. Our analysis shows that WFH is changing work conventions. It has dissolved organizational boundaries and allowed the employees to enhance accessibility, autonomy, and flexibility in work arrangements. That has further led to an increase in not only their work productivity but the productivity of the organization as well. It also helps in increasing the satisfaction of workers and employers.

Although WFH during COVID-19 has positive and negative outcomes for the young employees it is obvious that the purpose of shifting to WFH is to enable them to earn for their livelihood and to stay safe from the spread of this virus. Working from home is now not only the *need of time* but also a *need for survival* in the COVID-19 era.

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