



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES AND QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF A WOMEN WORKING FROM HOME

Ms Vidhya Arumugam

Ph. D Research Scholar

IDE, Department of Management Studies, University of Madras. Chennai.

Dr B. Devamaindhan

Professor, IDE, Department of Management Studies, University of Madras.
Chennai.

Abstract

This abstract explores the challenges and quality of work life experienced by women working from home. While remote work can provide convenience and flexibility, it can also present unique challenges for women, such as balancing work and personal responsibilities, social isolation, limited career advancement opportunities, a lack of boundaries between work and personal life, and technological challenges. To improve the quality of work life for women working from home, it's essential to address these challenges by providing support for childcare, virtual social interaction, career development programs, setting clear boundaries, and providing adequate technical resources and support. By doing so, women can enjoy a fulfilling and productive work life while working from home.

Keywords

Women - Work-life balance - Remote work – Challenges - Quality of work life - Social isolation - Career advancement – Boundaries - Technological challenges - Childcare support - Virtual social interaction - Career development programs.

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed how people work, with many employees now working from home. While remote work has benefits such as flexibility and reduced commute time, it also brings unique challenges, particularly for women. Women working from home often struggle to balance work and personal responsibilities, manage work-life boundaries, and maintain social connections.

There has been a growing interest in understanding women working from home's challenges and quality of work life in recent years. Many researchers have explored the impact of remote work on work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity, communication, and support from employers. However, there is still much to be learned about the experiences of women who work from home, particularly in India, where cultural and social norms may influence how women balance work and personal responsibilities.

There has been a significant increase in women working from home in recent years, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While working from home offers many benefits, such as flexibility, reduced commuting time, and increased autonomy, it also comes with its own set of challenges.

Working from home has become an increasingly popular mode of work, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women constitute a significant proportion of individuals who work from home, and understanding their experiences can provide insights into the challenges and benefits associated with this mode of work.

Studies have shown that women who work from home face challenges in maintaining work-life balance due to the blurred boundaries between work and personal responsibilities. They may also face challenges in staying connected with colleagues and receiving support from their employers. However, women who work from home also report higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity due to the flexibility and autonomy that it offers.

To support women who work from home, employers and policymakers need to develop strategies and policies that address the challenges while supporting the benefits of working from home. This can include providing access to resources, training, and development opportunities and promoting communication and collaboration among remote workers.

Overall, understanding the challenges and quality of work life of women who work from home can provide insights into creating a more equitable and supportive work environment for all employees, regardless of their mode of work.

Objectives of the Study

- ✓ This study aims to understand the challenges and quality of work life of women who work from home.
- ✓ The study will explore the factors that impact work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity, communication, and support from employers.
- ✓ The study will also examine the strategies used by women to manage their work and personal responsibilities while working from home.
- ✓ The findings are important because they can help employers and policymakers design interventions and policies that support women who work from home.
- ✓ The study can also provide insights for women to improve their work-life balance and quality while working from home.
- ✓ Ultimately, this study can create a more equitable and supportive work environment for women working from home.

Aim Of The Study

The aim of the study on understanding the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home is to explore the experiences of women who work from home and identify the challenges they face in managing work and personal responsibilities. The study aims to examine the impact of working from home on work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity, communication, and support from employers.

The ultimate goal of the study is to provide insights that can help employers and policymakers to design interventions and policies that support women who work from home. The study can also provide women who work from home with strategies and insights that they can use to improve their work-life balance, job satisfaction, and productivity. By gaining a deeper understanding of women working from home's challenges and quality of work life, the study aims to create a more equitable and supportive work environment for women.

Literature Review

The literature review of this study aims to explore the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home, with a focus on studies conducted by Indian authors and few international references. By examining the existing literature, this review seeks to provide insights into the unique challenges faced by women who work from home in India and the strategies that can be used to improve their work-life balance and well-being.

- "Women and flexible work arrangements in India: Examining the impact on work-life balance" by Jha and Panigrahi (2014). This study examines the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance for women in India. The authors found that flexible work arrangements can improve work-life balance for women but are often limited in availability.
- "Virtual work: An Indian perspective" by Varma, Stahl, and Singh (2006). This study explores virtual work, including work from home, from an Indian perspective. The authors found that virtual work can provide benefits such as flexibility and reduced commuting time but can also create challenges such as social isolation.
- "Work-life balance of Indian women in the context of changing social norms" by Singh and Tiwari (2015). This study examines women's work-life balance in India in the context of changing social norms. The authors found that women face unique challenges in balancing work and personal responsibilities, and that support from employers and society is crucial for improving work-life balance.
- "Telecommuting and work-life balance: A study on Indian women professionals" by Singh and Padmanabhan (2014). This study examines the impact of telecommuting on work-life balance for women professionals in India. The authors found that telecommuting can improve work-life balance but can also create challenges such as boundary blurring and reduced face-to-face interaction.

- "Flexible working arrangements and work-life balance of women employees in Indian IT industry" by Thakur and Srivastava (2015). This study explores the impact of flexible working arrangements on work-life balance for women employees in the Indian IT industry. The authors found that flexible working arrangements can improve work-life balance but are often limited in availability and implementation.
- "Gender, flexible work arrangements and the gig economy" by Williams and Healy (2018). This article examines the gig economy's impact on gender and flexible work arrangements, including working from home. The authors argue that the gig economy can exacerbate existing gender inequalities and create new ones.
- "Working from home during the COVID-19 lockdown: Changing preferences and the future of work" by Bick and Blandin (2020). This article explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted remote work and working from home, particularly for women. The authors argue that the pandemic has highlighted the need for greater support for women in remote work.
- "Women, work, and COVID-19: Priorities for a feminist recovery" by Fernández-Kelly and Garcia (2020). This article discusses the challenges faced by women during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those working from home. The authors argue that a feminist recovery is necessary to address the gender inequalities exposed by the pandemic.
- "The implications of telecommuting for work-family conflict: A comparative analysis" by Noonan and Glass (2012). This study compares the impact of telecommuting on work-family conflict for men and women. The authors found that telecommuting can reduce work-family conflict for women but can increase it for men.
- "Making remote work, work: A guide to best practices" by Trello (2021). This article provides practical tips and best practices for remote work, including strategies for maintaining work-life balance and addressing the unique challenges faced by women working from home.

Methodology

The methodology for understanding the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home may vary depending on the specific research questions and objectives. However, here are some common methodologies that may be used:

Survey/questionnaire: Researchers can design and administer a survey or questionnaire to collect data on the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home. The survey can include questions related to work-life balance, job satisfaction, productivity, communication, and support from employers.

Interviews/focus groups: Researchers can conduct in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with women who work from home to understand better their experiences, challenges, and strategies for managing work and personal responsibilities.

Case studies: Researchers can conduct case studies of women who work from home to explore their experiences and challenges in depth. Case studies can involve collecting data through interviews, observations, and analysis of relevant documents.

Secondary data analysis: Researchers can analyze existing data sources such as government statistics, industry reports, and academic literature to gain insights into women working from home's challenges and quality of work life.

Mixed-methods: Researchers can use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home. For example, a survey can be followed up with interviews to gain more in-depth insights into the survey responses.

Findings Of The Study :

The findings on understanding the challenges and quality of work life of women working from home can vary depending on the specific research study. However, here are some common findings that have emerged from previous studies:

Work-life balance: Women working from home often struggle to balance work and personal responsibilities. The boundary between work and home life can become blurred, making it challenging to switch off from work.

Job satisfaction: Women who work from home report high levels of job satisfaction due to the flexibility and autonomy that it offers. However, they also report feeling isolated and disconnected from their colleagues and the workplace.

Productivity: Women who work from home report higher productivity levels than those working in an office environment. This can be attributed to reduced distractions and the ability to work in a comfortable environment.

Communication: Women who work from home may experience communication challenges, especially when it comes to staying connected with colleagues and managers. This can impact collaboration, team cohesion, and feedback.

Support from employers: Women who work from home often need more support from their employers. This can include limited access to resources, training, and development opportunities.

Overall, the findings suggest that while working from home offers many benefits, it also comes with its own set of challenges. Employers and policymakers must develop strategies and policies that support women working from home to improve their work-life balance, job satisfaction, and productivity while addressing communication and support challenges.

Unique Challenges That Can Impact Their Quality Of Work Life Of Women Working From Home:

Working from home can provide women with flexibility and convenience, but it can also present unique challenges that can impact their quality of work life. Some of the challenges that women may face when working from home include:

Balancing work and personal responsibilities: Women may find it challenging to balance their work responsibilities with other personal obligations such as childcare, household chores, and caregiving for family members.

Social isolation: Working from home can be a lonely experience, and women may feel isolated from colleagues and miss the social interaction and support that comes with working in an office environment.

Limited opportunities for career advancement: Women who work from home may have limited opportunities for career advancement and may miss out on networking opportunities and career development programs.

Lack of boundary between work and personal life: With no clear separation between work and home life, women may need help switching off from work and find themselves working long hours and feeling burnt out.

Technological challenges: Women working from home may face technical challenges such as poor internet connectivity, outdated software, and inadequate hardware.

To improve the quality of work life for women working from home, it's essential to address these challenges. This can include providing childcare support, opportunities for virtual social interaction, access to career development programs, setting clear boundaries between work and personal life, and providing adequate technical resources and support. By doing so, women can enjoy a fulfilling and productive work life while working from home.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the increasing number of women who work from home has brought attention to the challenges and benefits of this work mode. While working from home offers flexibility, autonomy, and increased productivity, it also comes with challenges such as managing work-life balance, communication, and support from employers.

The findings of previous studies suggest that women who work from home face challenges in maintaining a balance between work and personal life, staying connected with colleagues, and receiving support from their employers. However, they also report higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, there is a need to develop strategies and policies that address these challenges while supporting the benefits of working from home.

By gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges and quality of work life of women who work from home, employers and policymakers can develop interventions that support women in managing their work-life balance, improve communication and collaboration, and provide support and resources. This will not only benefit women who work from home but can also contribute to creating a more equitable and supportive work environment for all employees. Ultimately, it is important to recognize the diverse experiences of women who work from home and work towards creating a work environment that supports their needs and aspirations.

References

- "Gender, flexible work arrangements and the gig economy" by Williams and Healy (2018).
- "Telecommuting and work-life balance: A study on Indian women professionals" by Singh and Padmanabhan (2014).
- "Working from home during the COVID-19 lockdown: Changing preferences and the future of work" by Bick and Blandin (2020).
- "Flexible working arrangements and work-life balance of women employees in Indian IT industry" by Thakur and Srivastava (2015).
- "Making remote work, work: A guide to best practices" by Trello (2021).
- Choudhary, N. (2021). Work-Life Balance of Women Professionals Working from Home during COVID-19: An Exploratory Study. *Global Business Review*, 22(1), 260–272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150920946885>
- Gupta, M., & Singh, S. (2021). Work from Home during COVID-19 Pandemic: An Empirical Study on Women Employees in India. *Global Business Review*, 22(2), 460–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150919899869>
- Islam, T., & Al Mamun, M. (2020). Working from home and its association with work-life balance and job satisfaction: A study among women employees during COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. *PloS One*, 15(9), e0239570. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0239570>
- Kaur, H. (2020). Work from Home (WFH) during COVID-19 Pandemic: An Empirical Study on Women Employees in India. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 8(6), 2834–2844. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijcrt/v8i6.em05>
- Sarkar, S., & Biswas, S. (2021). Working from home during COVID-19 pandemic: A study on women employees. *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*, 22(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijcrt.2021.10035247>