



Burnout, job satisfaction and work-life balance among corporate telecommuters: Differences in age and gender

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Abstract

The global spread of COVID-19 compelled companies to redesign their conventional methods of working. The unexpected demand for work-from-home propelled a fast-paced digital transformation in the work environment, and brought in its wake, numerous challenges. Specifically, with distinctions between 'work' and 'home' severely lacking, this transition has challenged traditional gender roles within households. It has also necessitated a rapid adaptability across age groups. This research study aims to assess the influence of gender and age differences in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance among corporate telecommuters. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale, and the Work-Life Balance Scale are administered to a sample of 30 male and 30 female Indian corporate telecommuters, with 30 telecommuters under the age of 40 and 30 telecommuters over the age of 40. Descriptive statistical methods and independent measures t-test are utilized for the purpose of data analysis. Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 report higher burnout, lower job satisfaction and higher work/personal life enhancement than their counterparts below the age of 40, while no significant gender-based differences are observed. This suggests the imminent need for age-based accommodations in a remote working setting as well as a possible erosion of gender-normative views on domestic roles while telecommuting.

Keywords: Telecommuters, work-life balance, job satisfaction, burnout, gender.

Introduction

Globally, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak has led to concern and anxiety. Due to the devastating pandemic, which resulted in several lockdowns and disruptions in many industries, it became critical to implement telecommuting methods in the corporate sector. White-collar workers were compelled to engage in work within the confines of their homes as their organizations had to obey government regulations to restrict any activity involving a massive number of people having to gather at the same place¹. However, the efficiency of this resulting telecommuting model has been widely debated. Blurred boundaries between 'work' and 'home'⁵⁹ and the virtual diminishing of the 9-to-5 model (with employees being expected to be available round the clock) can lead to severe employee burnout. Conflicting research exists regarding employee job satisfaction among telecommuters. The impact of telecommuting with regard to its accommodative nature and work-family conflict is also a hot topic in academia as well as among policy making bodies². The age and gender of telecommuters are also likely to play a role in their remote-working experience. While the global pandemic prompted an unprecedented shift to remote work, with technological advances and more importantly, a still prevalent pandemic situation, telecommuting will most certainly continue in some form in the future. Thus, it is vital to study in detail the impact of telecommuting on employees. In this regard, this study aims to identify the age and gender-based differences in burnout, job

satisfaction, and work-life balance among corporate telecommuters.

Telecommuting is defined as "a work practice that involves members of an organization substituting a portion of their typical work hours to work away from a central workplace—typically, principally from home—using technology to interact with others as needed to conduct work tasks"³. "Telework", "work from home", "e-work", "virtual work", "and remote work", "distance working", "distributed work", "work shifting", or "flexible working" are a few terms commonly used to refer to telecommuting. Remote work has both positive and negative aspects to it, affecting an individual's work experience. The advantages of telecommuting for employees are a decrease in time and stress of commuting in congested areas and an increase in flexibility in coping with family demands⁶⁰. However, disadvantages include lack of human interaction, no physical separation between work and⁶¹ home⁴, and a rapid diminution of boundaries between work and family, making the effort to separate time for work and time for family more difficult^{5,62}. People who work from home also tend to work longer and more continuous hours^{6,63}.

'Corporate telecommuter' refers to a remote-working employee working for a corporation. A corporation is an organization (usually a group of people, or a company) that is legally recognized and permitted to operate as a single entity⁷. Corporates comprise industries as varied as Information

Technology (IT), Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES), Fast-moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Banking and Financial Services⁶⁴, Manufacturing, Aviation, Service Industries, Telecommunication, and Pharmaceuticals, among others. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, 16% of workers reported working sometimes from home on an average day and a third of all workers reported the option to telecommute part of the day^{2,8}. However, during the pandemic-imposed lockdown, over 50% of employees belonging to highly digitalized industries such as IT and communication services, professional, and financial services, etc, reported higher rates of telecommuting, as opposed to other industries⁹.

Work Burnout is a state of prolonged physical and psychological exhaustion, which is perceived as related to the person's work¹⁰. Maslach and Leiter¹¹ conceptualized job burnout as "a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job". Conflicts between work and family domains result in 'Work-to-Family Interference' and 'Family-to-Work Interference'⁶⁶ which ultimately causes burnout¹². Challenges in the realm of organizational psychology, particularly those related to symptoms of depression or burnout, have become a critical concern¹³. A largely increasing number of qualified, energetic, and productive employees are now becoming victims of burnout. Recurrent research studies have linked work burnout with several organizational stressors, including a lack of job autonomy¹⁴, substantially stressful psychological demands^{15,67}, and low social support¹⁶. However, studies assessing associations with employee characteristics (particularly age and gender) are limited. Pre-pandemic research repeatedly found that women had higher levels of stress and burnout as a result of role overload^{17,18}, lack of support from work and spouses/partners^{12,68}, and more work-family conflicts¹⁹. A study done in early April 2020 by LeanIn.org and Survey Monkey discovered that amidst pandemic-imposed restrictions, women appeared to be disproportionately impacted in work and family domains²⁰. With regard to age, studies have revealed both inverse correlations²¹ as well as bimodal relationships²², with burnout (i.e., elevated levels in both younger and older employees). Conversely, some studies have identified elevated burnout in older workers²³. On the whole, previous research showed contradictory evidence on the correlation of burnout with age^{13,67}.

Job satisfaction refers to a global feeling about one's job i.e.; the extent to which an employee experiences like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) pertaining to their job. It is generally assessed as an attitudinal variable²⁴. Although job satisfaction is among the most commonly reported outcomes of telework^{25,69}, conflicting literature exists regarding the nature of the relationship between the two. Some studies have negatively associated the reduced interaction with co-workers, and feelings of isolation in a telecommuting environment with job satisfaction²⁶ as collocated working environments facilitate psychological closeness and social presence²⁷. In contrast, the

flexibility and autonomy of telework are said to positively impact job satisfaction²⁸. A meta-analytical study revealed a positive link between telecommuting and job satisfaction²⁹. In an attempt to reconcile contradictory findings, Golden and Veiga³⁰ described a curvilinear relationship, indicating that beyond a 'crucial threshold' in the extent of telecommuting, gains in increased job satisfaction are limited. However, the study was limited by its correlational constraints, necessitating a broader research scope. Findings relating gender with job satisfaction are also inconsistent³¹. Some studies state that women are more satisfied at work than men³², however other studies have found no differences in job satisfaction between men and women³³. Many researchers have identified a positive linear relationship between job satisfaction and age. Clark et al.³⁴ described a U-shaped relationship between job satisfaction and age, implying that job satisfaction declines on average till age 31 and rises thereafter.

Work-life balance is defined as "both the positive spill over (enrichment of either life or work via the other) and the negative spill over (interference or conflict of either life or work via the other)"³⁵. Work-life balance may be impacted by contextual factors (both organizational and household expectations and culture), as well as by personal determinants (such as age, gender, personal coping strategies, self-control, the stage of one's life and career, etc.)³⁶. Evidence shows that telecommuting intensity is negatively correlated with an employee's work-life balance, i.e., the greater the time expended on telecommuting and related activities, the more their work-life balance is impaired. This appears to be in tandem with prior research which purported that prolonged durations of telework could amount to blurred work-family roles resulting in conflict³⁷. A study on gender differences concerning work-family conflict revealed that women report more work interference in the family than men, with spill overs of unpleasant moods in both work and family settings³⁸. Additionally, flexible working tends to traditionalize gender-based roles at work and at home. Men are expected to employ flexible working to improve work performance and intensity, for which they are compensated, leading to further expansion of work³⁹, and ultimately a disrupted work-life balance prompted by the work domain. Women, on the other hand, are expected to use flexible working to increase household responsibilities and meet family obligations⁴⁰, but are not rewarded like men owing to differing expectations⁴¹. This leads to work-life conflict prompted by the home domain. However, few studies did not find any gender differences, suggesting that the dynamics of work and family boundaries may operate similarly among men and women⁴². According to Guest³⁶, with the maturity one gains with age, one may either gain a better understanding of his or her environment thereby facilitating a balance between the domains, or may be plagued by a degree of exhaustion that hinders their ability to cope with conflicting demands of different spheres of life, thus leading to a 'tilted balance'. Contradictorily, no significant correlations were determined

between age and work-life balance, or any of its individual dimensions⁴³.

In conclusion, this research study aims to evaluate the pandemic imposed telecommuting setting and its impact on corporate telecommuters. The objective of this study is to identify the age and gender-based differences in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between corporate telecommuters.

Methodology

Research questions: i. Is there any difference in the levels of burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between telecommuters below and above the age of 40? ii. Is there any difference in the levels of burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between male and female telecommuters?

Objectives: i. To determine differences in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between telecommuters below and above the age of 40. ii. To determine differences in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between male and female telecommuters.

Hypotheses: i. There will be no significant difference in burnout between telecommuters below and above the age of 40. ii. There will be no significant difference in job satisfaction between telecommuters below and above the age of 40. iii. There will be no significant difference in work-life balance between telecommuters below and above the age of 40. iv. There will be no significant difference in burnout between male and female telecommuters. v. There will be no significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female telecommuters. vi. There will be no significant difference in work-life balance between male and female telecommuters.

Design of Research Study: This study was designed based on an ex post facto research model to efficiently evaluate the variables under study.

Independent Variables: i. Age (telecommuters under the age of 40 and telecommuters over the age of 40), ii. Gender (male and female telecommuters).

Dependent Variables: i. Burnout, ii. Job satisfaction, iii. Work-life balance.

Sample: The sample size of the study is 60. The sample group included 30 male and 30 female Indian corporate telecommuters, with 30 telecommuters under the age of 40 and 30 telecommuters over the age of 40. The sampling technique utilised can be regarded as purposive as it was employed to determine male and female telecommuters as well as telecommuters who matched the above-mentioned age criteria.

Inclusion Criteria: Male and female telecommuters in the corporate sector, below and above the age of 40 who worked from home during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Exclusion Criteria: i. Corporate employees who didn't work from home, ii. Non- corporate employees.

Description of Tools: The questionnaire used in this research study comprised of the following scales: i. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory¹⁰: The second part of this questionnaire was used to measure the work burnout dimension. This 7-item subscale is scored on five-point Likert scales: Items 1-3 (To a very high degree=100, To a high degree=75, Somewhat=50, To a low degree=25, To a very low degree=0), and items 4-7 (Always=100, Often=75, Sometimes=50, Seldom= 25, Never/almost never=0). The scores are summed and the average is determined as the total score. The Cronbach's alpha (.87) was acceptable. Construct validity was established. ii. The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale⁴⁴ is a 10-item questionnaire to measure job satisfaction. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale (where, Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Don't Know=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5). The scores for each item are summed and the degree of job satisfaction is interpreted as follows: 42-50 (very high), 39-41 (high), 32-38 (average), 27-31 (low), 10-26 (very low). The Cronbach's alpha reliability for this scale ($\alpha=.77$) was acceptable. Construct validity was established. iii. Work-Life Balance Scale⁴⁵ is a 15-item questionnaire to evaluate the 3 dimensions of work-life balance; Items 1-7 measure work interference with personal life, items 8-11 measure personal life interference with work, and items 12-15 measure work/personal life enhancement. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale (where, strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neither Agree nor Disagree=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5). The scale is reported to have a satisfactory degree of internal consistency (as reflected by a Cronbach $\alpha =0.70$). The construct reliability for this scale in this study was 0.121.

Data Collection: The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory¹⁰, The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale⁴⁴, and the Work-Life Balance Scale⁴⁵ were collated and digitized using Google Forms to facilitate ease of collection of data from the sample group. The snowball sampling method was employed to enable a chain-like approach to identifying corporate telecommuters, who could further aid in determining suitable participants for the required sample.

Statistical Analysis: IBM SPSS v28.0 was utilized for data analysis. In order to establish a sound statistical backing for the proposed hypotheses, the following descriptive were determined for each group: mean, and standard deviation. Additionally, to aid in a comparison of these means, independent measures t-test, an inferential statistical approach, was implemented.

Ethics: The authors affirm that every effort was taken during the course of this study to abide by all recognized research-oriented ethical regulations. Through the Google Form, participants were adequately informed about the nature and purpose of the study, without compromising the study's integrity. Following this, their voluntary participation and informed consent were sought while notifying them of their

right to withdraw their participation at any point during the course of the study. Most importantly, their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses were guaranteed.

Results and discussion

Table-1: Represents the results of the independent measures t-test to evaluate mean differences in burnout between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40.

	Corporate Telecommuters Below 40 Years		Corporate Telecommuters Above 40 Years		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Burnout	345.833	130.166	280.833	116.094	2.041*	0.046

* $p < 0.05$, significant at the 0.05 level, two-tailed.

From Table-1, it can be inferred that there is a significant mean difference ($p < 0.05$) in burnout between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40. The mean score of burnout in corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 ($M=345.833$) is significantly higher than the mean score of burnout in corporate telecommuters above the age of 40 ($M=280.833$). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in burnout between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40, is rejected.

Table-2: Represents the results of the independent measures t-test to evaluate mean differences in burnout between male and female corporate telecommuters.

	Male Corporate Telecommuters		Female Corporate Telecommuters		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Burnout	330.000	123.071	280.000	117.884	1.607 ^{NS}	0.113

^{NS} - not significant.

From Table-2, the mean score of Burnout in male corporate telecommuters is $M=330$ and the mean score of Burnout in female corporate telecommuters is $M=280$. Although a mean difference is present in burnout between male and female corporate telecommuters, the results of the t statistic were not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there

Table-3: Represents the results of the independent measures t-test to evaluate mean differences in job satisfaction between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40.

	Corporate Telecommuters Below 40 Years		Corporate Telecommuters Above 40 Years		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job Satisfaction	34.633	8.122	39.400	8.173	-2.266*	0.027

* $p < 0.05$, significant at the 0.05 level, two-tailed.

From Table-3, it can be inferred that there is a significant mean difference ($p < 0.05$) in job satisfaction between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40. The mean score of job satisfaction in corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 ($M=34.633$) is significantly lower than the mean score of job satisfaction in corporate telecommuters above the age of 40 ($M=39.400$). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in job satisfaction between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40, is rejected.

Table-4: Represents the results the independent measures t-test to evaluate mean differences in job satisfaction between male and female corporate telecommuters.

	Male Corporate Telecommuters		Female Corporate Telecommuters		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Job Satisfaction	35.367	7.294	39.400	9.171	-1.885 ^{NS}	0.064

^{NS} - not significant.

From Table-4, the mean score of job satisfaction in male corporate telecommuters is $M=35.367$ and the mean score of job satisfaction in female corporate telecommuters is $M=39.400$. Although a mean difference is present in job satisfaction between male and female corporate telecommuters, the results of the t statistic were not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female corporate telecommuters, fails to be rejected.

Table-5: Represents the results of the independent measures t-test to evaluate mean differences in three aspects of work-life balance between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40.

	Corporate Telecommuters Below 40 Years		Corporate Telecommuters Above 40 Years		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Work-Life Balance						
Work Interference with Personal Life	21.033	5.592	19.700	5.664	0.918 ^{NS}	0.363
Personal Life Interference with Work	8.967	2.484	8.600	2.673	0.55 ^{NS}	0.584
Work/Personal Life Enhancement	19.433	7.214	14.067	2.935	3.774*	<.001

^{NS} - not significant. * $p < 0.05$, significant at the 0.05 level, two-tailed

Table-6: Represents the results of the independent measures t-test to evaluate the mean differences in three aspects of work-life balance between male and female corporate telecommuters.

	Male Corporate Telecommuters		Female Corporate Telecommuters		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Work-Life Balance						
Work Interference with Personal Life	20.3	6.007	20.767	5.276	-0.32 ^{NS}	0.75
Personal Life Interference with Work	9.033	2.619	8.933	2.888	0.14 ^{NS}	0.889
Work/Personal Life Enhancement	13.067	3.172	13.8	3.101	-0.905 ^{NS}	0.369

^{NS} - not significant

From Table-5, it can be inferred that there is no significant mean difference in work interference with personal life between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40. The mean score of work interference with personal life in corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 (M=21.033) is close to the mean score of work interference with personal life in corporate telecommuters above the age of 40 (M=19.7). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in work interference with personal life between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40, fails to be rejected.

From Table-5, it can also be inferred that there is no significant mean difference in personal life interference with work between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40. The mean score of personal life interference with work in corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 (M=8.967) is close to the mean score of personal life interference with work in corporate telecommuters above the age of 40 (M=8.6). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in personal life interference with work between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40, fails to be rejected.

From Table-5, it can also be inferred that there is a significant mean difference in (p < 0.05) work/personal life enhancement between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40. The mean score of work/personal life enhancement in corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 (M=19.433) is significantly higher than the mean score of work/personal life enhancement in corporate telecommuters above the age of 40 (M=14.067). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in work/personal life enhancement between corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40, is rejected.

From Table-6, it can be inferred that there is no significant mean difference in work interference with personal life between male and female corporate telecommuters. The mean score of work interference with personal life in male corporate telecommuters (M=20.3) is close to the mean score of work interference with

personal life in female corporate telecommuters (M=20.767). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in work interference with personal life between male and female corporate telecommuters, fails to be rejected.

From Table-6, it can also be inferred that there is no significant mean difference in personal life interference with work between male and female corporate telecommuters. The mean score of personal life interference with work in male corporate telecommuters (M=9.033) is the same as the mean score of personal life interference with work in female corporate telecommuters (M=8.933). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in personal life interference with work between male and female corporate telecommuters, fails to be rejected.

From Table-6, it can also be inferred that there is no significant mean difference in work/personal life enhancement between male and female corporate telecommuters. The mean score of work/personal life enhancement in male corporate telecommuters (M=13.067) is close to the mean score of work/personal life enhancement in female corporate telecommuters (M=13.8). Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there will be no significant difference in work/personal life enhancement with work between male and female corporate telecommuters, fails to be rejected.

Discussion: With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions, several corporate firms rapidly transformed their mode of functioning to digital workspaces, in the form of telecommuting. This study explored age and gender-based distinctions in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance among corporate telecommuters.

Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have reported higher levels of burnout than those above the age of 40. This difference may have occurred due to a multitude of reasons. It's conceivable that younger employees are still learning how to fit in at work, or that older workers are more resilient in adapting to a changing work environment⁴⁶.

Resilience has been proposed as a key aspect in minimizing work burnout^{47,70}. This disparity can also be explained by the possibility that younger employees may endure tougher working circumstances and factors that cause work stress, whilst older people have greater autonomy in their jobs⁴⁸. Research has associated aging with increased expertise, decision-making authority, and organizational social support, reduced psycho-physical stress, job insecurity, and erratic work schedules^{21,67}, all of which can help alleviate and reduce work burnout.

Male and female corporate telecommuters have reported moderate levels of burnout that are not significantly different. This result may have occurred due to a shift in the conventional and traditional division of gender roles, as well as how they are experienced on a personal level. Beyond the ongoing crisis, some studies⁴⁹ have recognized trends that may inevitably benefit women and facilitate gender equality in the job market: companies are actively adopting flexible working practices (e.g., remote work), which may continue to occur in the future; many fathers have also now started to take primary responsibility for child care, which can help dissolve archaic social norms that cause a disproportionate division of labour in domestic chores as well as in childcare⁵⁰.

Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have reported lower levels of job satisfaction than those above the age of 40. The benefits of having a lengthy tenure, such as gaining more experience in the job market and securing better, higher-paying positions, better benefits, success, and respect in the workplace, may account for the increased job satisfaction among older telecommuters. Telecommuters, distant from the office environment, are isolated from their co-workers. Increased separation and decreased social interactions with colleagues negatively impact relationships with supervisors and co-workers, and in turn may negatively impact job satisfaction⁵¹. As young telecommuters navigate their way around a relatively new job, this lack of social interaction is likely to impact them more, as opposed to older employees who are familiar with job demands and colleagues. As telecommuters, there is negligible opportunity to engage in informal, face-to-face interactions in the workplace, or receive honest constructive criticism, unlike during offline avenues for informal guidance or proactive job-related feedback sessions²⁶.

Male and female corporate telecommuters have reported moderate levels of job satisfaction that are not significantly different. As both groups are found to have moderate scores, we can state that male and female corporate telecommuters are equally satisfied with their jobs. This is against the findings of Feng and Savani⁵², which states that women were less productive and less satisfied with jobs than men after the COVID 19 outbreak. Reasons as to why the findings are against literature may be due to the new wave of balancing the household responsibilities between partners, the advancement of technology, open-mindedness, and the support provided by their families which may lead to greater satisfaction with their work.

Corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40 have reported similar levels of work interference with personal life. With the pandemic negatively impacting the economy, and layoffs across corporates, this finding could be attributed to an increased need for financial security among both age groups. The pre-pandemic trend of only young employees striving for financial stability in the early years of their work-life has transformed into a telecommuting setting as telecommuters across age groups place more importance on their work-life, out of necessity. This is likely to impact a telecommuter's personal life.

Corporate telecommuters below and above the age of 40 have reported similar levels of personal life interference with work. Moderate scores for both groups could indicate that both age groups struggle to shape their private lives around work demands, in accordance with the fast-changing world⁵³. Younger telecommuters may try to balance family and work as they freshly start their career and this could result in a hassle when they are the sole breadwinners of the family. On the other hand, older telecommuters might pay attention to the well-being of the self as they near retirement, while also attempting to work hard, which could result in an imbalance between personal and workspace. Both age groups were also forced to take on increased domestic responsibilities in addition to their work commitments, which could lead to a hindrance in their work-life.

Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have reported higher levels of work/personal life enhancement than those above the age of 40. This could be attributed to the fact that employees below the age of 40 most likely saw their parents experiencing unpleasant working conditions such as long hours, layoffs, etc⁵³. Hence, younger employees may view telecommuting as a work setting that encourages flexibility and time for non-work domains whilst promoting growth in both work and personal life. This finding is encouraging for the younger generation as the happiness of employees is said to increase when they are driven both in their work and life domains⁵⁴.

Male and female corporate telecommuters have reported similar levels of work interference with personal life. This is against Walia's⁴³ finding that women report higher interference of work from personal life than men. Both groups are found to have moderate scores, suggesting that a digital workspace is likely to disrupt home-life, regardless of gender. This could be attributed to a lack of fixed working hours, resulting in limited flexibility to devote adequate time to one's family. Additionally, unlike a physical workplace that enables compartmentalization (specifically, the ability to leave work-related conflict at work), a telecommuting setting tends to foster a spill over of conflict into the home domain, leading to tensions in one's personal life. Both genders are said to display a similar negative spill over from work to family⁵⁵.

Male and female corporate telecommuters have reported similar levels of personal life interference with work. This is in accordance with the finding by Walia⁴³. Both groups are found to have moderate scores indicating that a telecommuter's personal life is likely to obstruct the sanctity of their professional workspace. Pandemic imposed constraints forced households that previously relied on outside aid for housekeeping, childcare, etc., to become self-sufficient. Telecommuters were expected to engage in domestic chores and keep-up familial obligations which could have interfered with their working capacity.

Male and female corporate telecommuters have reported similar levels of work/personal life enhancement. Moderate scores for both groups indicate positive benefits of work and personal life roles on each other⁵⁶. This contradicts Aryee et al.'s⁵⁷ finding that women report higher levels of enhancement than men. This could reflect telecommuters' optimistic outlook, in which a work-from-home environment allows them to combine their 'work' and 'home' duties in a mutually beneficial manner.

Overall, male and female corporate telecommuters are found to have similar levels of work-life balance under all three dimensions (work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement). This finding is encouraging as telecommuting, when viewed under the umbrella of flexible working, typically reinforces gender stereotypes⁴¹. This study, however, has observed no gender-based distinctions in work-life balance, in accordance with the finding by Hill et al.⁵⁸. This result is reassuring as, despite indistinct work-home boundaries and society's gender-normative views on domestic roles, both male and female telecommuters seem to be taking on equal responsibilities and balancing their work and home life.

A well-designed mental health plan would go a long way towards helping telecommuters maintain a healthy work-life balance, boosting their wellness, and keeping them engaged, ensuring job satisfaction. Offering distance-friendly wellness options, such as memberships to wellness apps and health regimens, as well as establishing employee wellness plans within the company can assist employees in navigating work pressure and stress. Workshops and training programs for younger workers can be arranged to help them adapt to the changing workplace environment. Flexible rules and policies tailored to ensure employee well-being and a healthy and enjoyable work experience can be implemented to create a mutually beneficial work culture for both the employee and the business. Organizations can encourage healthy interactions and relationships with colleagues by offering powerful and effective online meeting tools and technology that allows the employees to communicate smoothly virtually. Burnout awareness can be integrated with training programs to increase awareness and free counselling sessions can be provided to the employees in need. Employers can give greater assistance to telecommuters, such as childcare, elder care, paid vacations, and monetary

compensations, rewards, and benefits, in order to improve their work experience and establish a healthy work-life balance.

Conclusion

Key Findings: i. Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have a higher level of burnout when compared to corporate telecommuters above the age of 40. ii. Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have a lower level of job satisfaction when compared to corporate telecommuters above the age of 40. iii. Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have the same level of work interference with personal life, and personal life interference with work when compared to corporate telecommuters above the age of 40. iv. Corporate telecommuters below the age of 40 have a higher level of work/personal life enhancement when compared to corporate telecommuters above the age of 40. v. Male and female corporate telecommuters have the same level of burnout, job satisfaction and work-life balance (in terms of, work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement).

Implications: As the working world enters the third year of COVID-19 imposed restrictions, the need for research exploring the efficacy of the telecommuting model continues to grow. Having explored age and gender-based distinctions in burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, the results of this study can be leveraged by corporates to develop successful models of telecommuting to ensure employee well-being.

Limitations: This research study was cross-sectional; hence, a direct cause-effect relationship could not be established, and the experiences of telecommuters prior to the COVID-19 pandemic could not be studied. Additionally, respondent age was broadly classified with no distinct upper or lower limits making information regarding more specific, narrower age ranges unavailable. Furthermore, as corporates encompass a wide range of industries, the influence of specific job sectors could not be studied.

Future Directions: Future research could examine the impact of the COVID-19 imposed telecommuting setting on other job spheres and distinct age ranges. The effect of telecommuting on single and dual-income households can also be explored. Considering the global nature of the telecommuter network, the scope of study could also extend to telecommuters in other countries.

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