

IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKING ON MENTAL HEALTH: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has revolutionized the traditional workplace culture, accelerating the shift to remote working systems such as telecommuting and Work from Home (WFH). This transition is essential for the optimization of the business operations that is brought with it a complex interplay of psychological impacts— both positive and negative — on employees worldwide. This systematic literature review paper is documented to examine eight peer-reviewed research articles published between 2020 and 2025, focusing on the mental health or psychological implications of remote work or work from home (WFH). The selected research articles, retrieved from the Springer database, span diverse geographical contexts including India, Malaysia, the UK, Syria, Bangladesh, and New Zealand. Key findings reveal that remote working has fostered improved work-life balance, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced employee motivation in certain sectors. However, the negative impacts like technostress, job insecurity, social isolation, and psychological fatigue are equally prominent. On the other hand, supportive leadership, compassion, and organizational empathy have emerged as crucial mediators in maintaining employee psychological well-being. The study highlights the importance of adaptive management practices and policy-driven frameworks to mitigate mental health challenges in remote work or WFH environments. Since the remote working system becomes a lasting fixture in the post-pandemic world, this review underscores the need for mental health support system and sustainable functional models for ensuring psychological resilience among employees.

Keywords: Remote Working, Work from Home, WFH, Mental Health, Psychological Factors, Stress.

Introduction

The concept of remote working has become one of the most crucial topics during the devastating COVID 19 pandemic. The transformational impact of the pandemic led to the emergence of virtual working system that does not need any physical office space, rather the employees and employers were able to work flexibly from his place of comfort. (Wells et al., 2023). Remote working system includes what is known as work from home (WFH) and telework. In telework, the performance of work is done using information technology in various important contexts like employment contract or employee-employer relationship, in either employer's premises or the same can be carried out away from the employer's premises on a routine basis (Gabaglio et al., 2002). On the other hand, work from home is a

situation where the employee works mainly from own geographical location and communicates with the co-workers and employers through digital networking system (e.g., video conferencing, email, conference call, and telecommunication).

At present employees are becoming focused on the work life balance, that is focusing on creating an interface of the quality of work life with the quality of personal life and on this backdrop, the acceleration of the WFH is predicted in the upcoming years (Philips, 2020). During the COVID 19 pandemic period, the practice of WFH has been adopted by many organizations worldwide. Almost all the industries have adopted the WFH policy as an important measure for the maximization of organizational value in the marketplace and for ensuring uninterrupted value creation for the consumers during pandemic situation. On the other hand, governments took measures for the prevention of the spread of virus. The quarantine and lockdown measures can be identified as the beginning of the unique set of challenges for the workers in the organization. Stress and anxiety are foremost of them, along with other dilemmas related to general public health issues. It is evident that, COVID 19 pandemic has put the emotional and psychological health of general population at a critical condition by triggering apprehension and anxiety (Mukhtar, 2020). A large number of population in the low and middle income countries suffered from neural, psychological and emotional disorders and these findings are supported by World Health Organisation ("Director General's Opening Remarks at media bringing on COVID", 2020). There are many studies highlighting the health issues, especially psychological aspects of the workers, can be identified in the academic literature during pandemic and post pandemic period. Therefore, it is essential to explore the factors that affect the mental or psychological health of the workers, who are working remotely with the help of telecommunication and networking facilities. In this paper, an attempt has been made to conduct a systematic literature review on the impact of remote working on the mental health, published between 2020 and 2025 on the Springer database that would help to identify the pattern of publication on the specified area of study, analyze the research outcomes and to have an idea of the future scope of research.

Research Methodology

Scope of the Study

As a result of the emergence of devastating COVID 19 pandemic, remote working system have been adopted by almost all the organizations throughout the world. Though many research works have been done on the organizational structure, effectiveness of employees and also the psychological impact of work pressure, little study is found in on the impact of remote working on the mental health or psychological aspects of the employees. Maximum research works have been identified during the pandemic and post pandemic period. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to have a look on the existing literatures on the impact of remote working or WFH on the employee mental health or psychological wellbeing.

Paper Selection Method

Systematic Literature Review is a scientific process of providing and synthesizing collective insights into the existing literature on a specific domain of knowledge (Tranfield *et al.*; 2003). The review process consists of three stages: (1) designing the review, (2) executing the review process and (3) disseminating the review findings (Tranfield *et al.*; 2003). Review of the recent research works indicates that the status of Work from Home is significantly correlated with both positive and negative lifestyle and mental health issues (Scoditti *et al.*; 2024). There are a number of negative impact of work from home or remote working on mental health like the level of household responsibilities and the amount of available social support (Graham *et al.*; 2023). The main objective of this paper is to conduct a systematic literature review of research articles that explore the impact of remote working or work from home on the mental health of the employees. To meet this objective, research articles have been retrieved from Springer database (<https://link.springer.com>). This paper is focused exclusively on relevant research articles published between 2020 and 2025 (inclusive) in English language. Data retrieval process consists of keyword search utilizing the terms like "mental health", "remote working" and "work from home" to refine the search. For the retrieval of relevant papers, Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" were used to optimize the search. The search string used was as the following:

"Mental Health" AND ("Remote working" OR "Work from Home")

The final paper selection process is illustrated in the Table 1 as follows:

Research Article Selection Process (Table 1)

Criteria	Description	Total Number of Papers Remaining
Initial search	Research works must contain the keywords searched	3109
Limited to research articles	Only peer reviewed research articles are included.	1479
Limited to English articles	Selection of research articles written only in English language	1478
Discipline exclusion	Selected research papers are from Business and Management discipline only	44
Abstract reading exclusion	Only relevant papers based on the objective of this research paper has been filtered out	11
Non- accessibility exclusion	Only full papers that are available are considered for analysis	8
Selection of Final paper		8

The period of research article selection is 5th July, 2025 to 8th July, 2025. Finally 8 research articles have been finally selected that fulfills the final selection criteria.

- **Documentation process:** This review article has been documented in Microsoft Word, 2010 and for the purpose of formatting table contents, Microsoft Excel 2010 has been utilized. Number of publications per journal (Figure 1) and the initial structure of the content analysis of the selected research articles (Table 3) have been generated using ChatGPT following the WAME recommendations on Chatbots and Generative Artificial Intelligence in Relation to Scholarly Publications, 2023 (<https://wame.org>). Table 3 has been modified and compiled by the authors by incorporating further points of consideration and remodeling the table 3.

Analysis of Literature Review

- **Descriptive Analysis**

The purpose of this section is to have an understanding of the trend of publication on the impact or influences of remote working in the forms of teleworking or Work from Home (WFH) Springer database between 2020 and 2025. A total number of 8 research articles complied with the final paper selection criterions. Hence, there were many other research articles on the impact of remote working or WFH, but those are not directly on the assessment of the impacts on mental health. The selected research articles have been presented in this section according to the year of publication and number of articles published in a journal listed on springer database.

In the following section, the classification has been made to show year wise number of publication of the research articles. Table 2 highlights that, in the year 2021, three research articles have been published on the theme of the impact of remote working on mental health. The number of publication is two in the year 2024. In 2022, 2023 and 2025, only one paper was published respectively on the selected theme. A significant growth of research on the impact of remote working system on the employee mental health during the second phase of pandemic during 2021 that basically highlights the psychological impact of the remote working system on employees.

Year wise number of publication of the research articles with journal name (Table 2)

Year	Title	Journal Name
2021	Identifying and ranking techno-stressors among IT employees due to work from home arrangement during Covid-19 pandemic	Decision
	The effect of COVID fatigue on mental health in the public sector organizations: exploring compassion as a mediator	Decision
	Social Sustainability Challenges Towards Flexible Supply Chain Management: Post-COVID-19 Perspective	Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management

2022	Centrality of psychological well-being of IT employees during COVID-19 and beyond	Decision
2023	Sociomateriality in Action: Theorizing Change in Sociomaterial Practices of Working from Home	Business & Information Systems Engineering
2024	Effective leadership practice among senior leaders working from home and in the hybrid workplace across COVID-19	SN Business & Economics
	The remote revolution: assessing the impact of working from home on finance professionals	Future Business Journal
2025	The sustainable lifestyle and social values of Knowledge Nomad in Malaysia: post-COVID-19 revivification	Future Business Journal

Figure 1 shows the pattern of distribution of the selected papers by journal type on Springer database. In terms of the number of research article publication per source, the **Decision** with 3 research articles that consists of 38% of the total number of publications on the impact of remote working system or WFH on the employee psychology, implying most repeated publication source. On the other hand, the numbers of research articles publish **on Future Business Journal** are 2, having the total share of 25% of the total number of publication. These two journals are followed by 3 journals having a strong significance in the field of business management & information system.

Number of Publications Per Journal (Figure 1)



(Generated by ChatGPT)

In all 8 selected papers, for the purpose of analyzing the impact of remote working system on the mental health, primary data have been collected by the researchers. The research papers cover various countries including, India, United Kingdom, Syria, Malaysia, New Zealand and Bangladesh. Out of the 8 research articles, 3 research articles are articulated in Indian context. Other 5 research articles are focused on the context of those countries, having 1 paper each country context.

• Content Analysis

The purpose of this section is to analyze and understand the contexts, objectives, research methodologies and key findings of the finally selected 8 research articles. In the following table, the contents of the selected 8 research papers have been presented.

Content analysis of the selected research articles (Table 3)

Year	Authors	Title	Context	Objective	Research Methodology	Key Findings	Keywords
2025	Jasmany et al.	The sustainable lifestyle and social values of Knowledge Nomad in Malaysia:	Malaysia (urban and suburban)	For the evaluation of Knowledge Nomad for understanding Sustainable Lifestyle(SL)	1. Qualitative study was carried out with a group of 15 self-voluntary participants of KN from sub-urban and urban areas	The study suggests that the "life skills management" habits of Knowledge Nomad have the	Sustainable lifestyle, Knowledge Nomads, Work-life balance, social

		post COVID-19 revivification		during post-COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. The paper also aims to investigate the Knowledge Nomad habits of life skills management on the social values impacts during post-COVID-19 in Malaysia.	in Malaysia using online questionnaire. 2. Purposive sampling adopted for data collection. 3. The online responses were analyzed by using Thematic Analysis and Photo Elicitation methods. 4. The online auto-photography pictures were analyzed using visual and content analysis.	substantial capability to positively impact social values in Malaysia through the adoption of sustainable practices and redefining the work-life balance.	values, future skills, resilient.
2024	Barnes et al.	Effective leadership practice among senior leaders working from home and in the hybrid workplace across COVID-19	Marketing leaders (UK context)	To investigate evolving leadership practices in WFH / hybrid work environments	Qualitative, thematic analysis done on 13 individuals in senior leadership positions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. Study duration: 6 months (Jan-Jun 2021)	The study identifies five themes: adaptive leadership, introspection, time management, soft skills, hybrid uncertainty. The findings of the research indicates that the leaders who have sustained and continued to show effectively a more adaptive mindset, that would evolve leadership and practices to suit the needs of remote working system or WFH leadership.	Leadership , introspection, WFH, hybrid workplace, humanistic, COVID-19
	Al Mohamed et al.	The remote revolution: assessing the impact of WFH on finance professionals	Syrian finance professionals	To assess WFH's impact on job performance through mediators like work-life balance, employee productivity, work environment.	Online survey via mail was done using Likert Scale to 2650 employees out of which only 300 respondents took part. To address the research questions, Structural Equation Modeling was used in this study.	The results indicated that WFH played a significant role in increasing job satisfaction and job involvement. WFH positively affects motivation and performance via work-life balance.	WFH, employee productivity , job performance, work-life balance, work-life balance
2023	Gupta et al.	Centrality of psychological well-being of IT employees during COVID-19 and beyond	Indian IT sector	To explore the role of organizational and supervisory support in promoting employee psychological well-being by providing well-proportioned WFH experience to IT	Empirical study was conducted with 282 IT professionals who were forced to do WFH (fully and partially) throughout first three waves of COVID-19. Their responses were analyzed using descriptive	The supervisory support demonstrated a remarkable positive impact on employee psychological well-being when compared to the organizational support practices which is crucial for a successful	Psychological well-being, WFH, IT professionals, organizational support, supervisory /managerial support

				employees.	statistics and regression analysis was done by implementing SPSS and AMOS.	WFH.	
	Waizenegger et al.	Sociomateriality in Action: Theorizing Change in Sociomaterial Practices of WFH	Knowledge workers in New Zealand	To understand sociomaterial changes in remote work practices due to the sudden shift to WFH.	Qualitative research approach was performed through qualitative semi-structured interview of 29 knowledge workers who have done WFH during the pandemic period. The interviews were conducted on April, 2020. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the interviews.	The study identified five disrupted sociomaterial practices which require reconfiguration and evolution of it's social and material elements. WFH have reconfigured practices such as meetings, workspace, etc.	Sociomaterial practices, COVID-19 pandemic, home office, sensemaking, WFH
2021	Satpathy et al.	Identifying and ranking technostressors among IT employees due to WFH arrangement during COVID-19 pandemic	Indian IT professionals	To identify the technostress factors affecting the IT professionals doing WFH. Use of analytical hierarchy process to determine the weightage or rank of each technostressors for quantifying their relative priority among IT professionals.	Survey of 334 IT sector full-time working professionals were conducted. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were done to analyze these interviews. Analytic Hierarchy Process was conducted to determine the weightage or rank of each technostressors for quantifying their relative priority among IT professionals.	"Fear of job loss due to new ICT" has been identified as the most critical stressor due to it's highest weightage. The least weightaged stressor has been identified as "work beyond office hours".	Technostress, WFH, COVID-19, IT, analytic hierarchy process
	Sarker et al.	Social Sustainability Challenges Towards Flexible Supply Chain Management: Post-COVID-19 Perspective	Bangladesh footwear supply chain	To identify critical social sustainability challenges in supply chains	Best-Worst Method (BWM), an MCDM tool was used to rank the SS challenges using 1-9 point rating scale. A panel of industrial experts was formed to identify the challenges. Focuses on footwear industry case.	The critical social sustainability challenges are presented as follows: high level of layoff, health protocol development, complexity in ensuring workplace safety, facing trouble in mental health, lack of government enforcement and regulations for social issues, unavailability of primary medical services, lack of training facility on health hygiene, and new normal	Social sustainability, flexibility, footwear supply chain, COVID-19, BWM, Sustainable development goals

						community needs, problem in socio-cultural patterns and practices.	
	Kalwani	The effect of COVID fatigue on mental health in the public sector organizations: Exploring compassion as a mediator	Indian public sector	1. The research article aims to assess impact of COVID fatigue on mental health. 2. The study attempts to understand the mediating role of compassion in the equation between COVID fatigue, corona anxiety, social support, and mental health.	Survey of 307 white-collared employees from public sector organizations in India. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis (307 responses) has been made. Quantitative analysis is done by linear regression (primary analysis) and hierarchical regression (secondary analysis). Study duration: 1 month (from 28th February, 2020 to 30th March, 2020).	The study aims to explore the mediating function of compassion between COVID fatigue, corona anxiety, social support, and mental health. According to the research article, 61.1% of participants were identified with psychologically fatigued though the long-term psychological consequences of this fatigue are not clearly established.	COVID fatigue, mental health, compassion, corona anxiety, social support, corona pandemic

The key findings across the studies collectively emphasize that remote work has significantly influenced both the psychological well-being and professional dynamics of employees. The review highlights both positive and negative psychological impacts of remote work on employees. On the positive side, improved work-life balance, supportive leadership, and increased job satisfaction enhanced mental well-being. However, many employees also faced psychological fatigue, technostress, and anxiety due to job insecurity and disrupted work practices. Compassion and supervisory support emerged as key buffers against mental health challenges. The remote working system or WFH necessitates a balanced organizational framework to sustain employee mental health.

Conclusion

The adoption of remote working system due to the onset of the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic has brought profound changes to work culture and psychological experiences of the workers across the globe. This study critically examined eight peer reviewed research articles published during the period of 2020 to 2025, highlighting the multidimensional impact of the remote working system or WFH on employee mental health. The findings of the research reveal a complex interconnection between the strengths and weaknesses of the adoption of remote working system in rapidly changing business environment. On the positive side, the remote working system or WFH has enhanced job satisfaction, improved work life balance and fosters autonomy of performing jobs from the own place of the employees. On the other hand, the empathetic and supportive leadership emerged as a strong determinant in preserving psychological wellbeing of the employees in a virtual work setting. Conversely, the study also identified a number of psychological stressors, which include job insecurity, techno stress, cognitive fatigue and social isolation, which can pose consequential risks to mental health of the employees. The abrupt shift towards the adoption of remote working system, often without having adequate organizational support system, has elevated these psychological stressors for many employees. Moreover, ambiguous boundaries between professional and personal life and social alienation contribute to increased emotional and psychological strain.

The study emphasizes the need for the development of comprehensive frameworks that would balance flexibility along with psychological safety of employees. Organizations are required to invest in mental health resources, leadership training, and some inclusive policies addressing diversified psychological needs of the employees. In brief, this review provides a foundation for the understanding of the implications of remote working system or WFH on the mental health of employees and calls for the

adoption of some proactive strategies for the enhancement of employee psychological well-being in virtual work environment.

Limitations of the Study

This literature review study captures the breadth of research on the impact of remote working system on employee mental health only. Physiological health impacts have not been taken into consideration. The exclusive focus on the publication of research articles in English language and selection of the research articles from a single database may restrict the diversity of regional representation. The study is restricted to the publication period of 2020 to 2025. On the other hand, direct comparison or quantitative synthesis is hindered among the research articles due to methodological heterogeneity.

Future Scope of Research

Future research works can be conducted towards exploring the long term psychological impact of the remote working system or WFH with the help of longitudinal analysis, having deeper insights into mental or psychological health trajectories across different demography. On the other hand, cross sectional analysis can be pursued for understanding the socio cultural influence and psychological resilience in different remote working contexts. The effectiveness of digital tools like stress management apps, virtual mental health platforms and AI supported human capital management system can be evaluated. Additionally, in future, research can be conducted to examine the outcome of mental health associated with the hybrid work models. These directions would strengthen both the theoretical framework along with practical applications in the evolving world of literature.

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