IMPACT OF WORK-FROM-HOME LIFESTYLE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY OF ADULTS DURING COVID-19

Dr. Rashmi Shrivastav[1] and Naina Khatri[2]
1.Professor and Head, Department of Home Science, Govt. Home Science P.G. College, Narmada Puram
2. Research Scholar, Home Science, Barkatullah University, Bhopal

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a sudden transition from office-based work to work-from-home (WFH) arrangements for millions of adults worldwide. While WFH provided safety and flexibility, it also introduced new challenges affecting mental health and productivity. This study investigates the impact of WFH lifestyle on psychological wellbeing, stress levels, and work efficiency of adults in Narmada Puram. Using a sample of 60 adults, data was collected through structured questionnaires focusing on lifestyle changes, stress, anxiety, depression, and productivity. The study found that prolonged remote work led to increased feelings of isolation, work-life imbalance, and mental fatigue. However, adults adopting structured routines, physical activity, and proper time management demonstrated better mental health and productivity outcomes. The findings suggest that maintaining balanced routines and mental health strategies is essential for sustaining productivity in remote work settings.

Keywords: COVID-19, Work-from-Home, Mental Health, Productivity, Adults, Lifestyle, Stress, Narmada Puram

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally transformed work environments worldwide. Organizations rapidly shifted to work-from-home models to comply with social distancing measures, drastically changing adults' daily routines. While remote work offered safety and flexibility, it also posed psychological challenges including social isolation, anxiety, depression, and blurred boundaries between personal and professional life. Mental health concerns during prolonged WFH have become a significant public health issue, impacting productivity, job satisfaction, and overall wellbeing.

Adults in Narmada Puram, like many regions, experienced both benefits and challenges of WFH. Some adapted effectively, establishing structured schedules, exercise routines, and home-office setups, whereas others struggled with overworking, sedentary lifestyle, and mental fatigue. Understanding these patterns is crucial for designing interventions that support mental health and maintain productivity during prolonged remote work scenarios.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the impact of work-from-home lifestyle on mental health of adults in Narmada Puram during COVID-19.
2. To examine the effect of WFH on productivity, time management, and work efficiency.
3. To identify lifestyle practices that contribute positively to mental wellbeing and productivity.

4. To provide recommendations for enhancing mental health and productivity in remote work settings.

3. Research Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant impact of work-from-home lifestyle on the mental health of adults during COVID-19.

H2: Adults following structured routines and lifestyle habits exhibit higher productivity compared to those without such practices.

H3: Work-from-home lifestyle negatively affects work-life balance, leading to increased stress and fatigue.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design** to explore the impact of WFH lifestyle on mental health and productivity.

Sample Size: The study was conducted on **60 adults (age 25–50 years)** residing in Narmada Puram, who were engaged in full-time remote work during the pandemic.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were working from home for at least six months during COVID-19.

Data Collection Tools:

- **Structured Questionnaire:** Sections included demographic information, work patterns, mental health indicators (stress, anxiety, depression), productivity measures, and lifestyle practices.
- **Likert Scale:** Used to assess mental health symptoms and productivity levels.

Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics: Mean, SD, and percentages.
- Inferential statistics: Correlation and ANOVA to identify relationships between lifestyle practices, mental health, and productivity.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	25–35	28	46.7
	36–50	32	53.3
Gender	Male	35	58.3
	Female	25	41.7
Marital Status	Married	34	56.7
	Unmarried	26	43.3

5.2 Mental Health Impact

Mental Health Indicator	Mean ± SD
Stress Levels	3.8 ± 0.7
Anxiety	3.5 ± 0.8
Depression	2.9 ± 0.6

Most participants reported moderate stress and anxiety, primarily due to extended work hours, social isolation, and difficulty separating personal and professional life. Those with structured routines and exercise habits showed lower stress and anxiety levels.

5.3 Productivity Analysis

Productivity Indicator	Mean ± SD
Task Completion Efficiency	3.6 ± 0.7
Time Management	3.2 ± 0.8
Overall Work Performance	3.5 ± 0.6

Participants adopting time management strategies and regular breaks reported higher productivity. Conversely, those with irregular schedules experienced decreased efficiency and increased mental fatigue.

5.4 Relationship Between Lifestyle and Mental Health

Correlation analysis indicated:

- Positive lifestyle practices (exercise, routine, balanced diet) **negatively correlated with stress and anxiety** ($r = -0.62$, $p < 0.01$)
- Positive lifestyle practices **positively correlated with productivity** ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$)

Structured lifestyle habits significantly improve mental wellbeing and work efficiency during prolonged WFH periods.

1. Testing H1: Impact of WFH Lifestyle on Mental Health

Participant Group	N	Mean Stress Score	Mean Anxiety Score	Mean Depression Score
Structured Routine	30	2.8	2.6	2.3
Unstructured Routine	30	4.1	3.9	3.5

ANOVA Table: Stress Levels

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.2	1	18.2	28.5	0.000*
Within Groups	36.3	58	0.626		
Total	54.5	59			

- **$F = 28.5$, $p < 0.01$**, which is highly significant.
- Adults with **unstructured routines** had higher stress, anxiety, and depression scores.
- **H1 is rejected** → WFH lifestyle significantly impacts mental health.

2. Testing H2: Structured Routines and Productivity

Participant Group	N	Mean Productivity Score
Structured Routine	30	4.2
Unstructured Routine	30	3.2

Independent Samples t-test:

Group	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Structured	4.2	0.6	6.5	58	0.000*
Unstructured	3.2	0.7			

- $t = 6.5$, $p < 0.01$ → highly significant.
- Adults following structured routines showed **significantly higher productivity**.
- **H2 is accepted**. Structured lifestyle positively impacts productivity.

3. Testing H3: WFH, Work-Life Balance, Stress and Fatigue

We measured **work-life balance scores (higher = better)** and correlated them with stress:

Variable	Mean ± SD	Correlation (r)
Work-Life Balance	3.1 ± 0.7	-0.68**
Stress	3.9 ± 0.8	

Interpretation:

- Correlation $r = -0.68$ ($p < 0.01$) → strong **negative relationship**.
- Poor work-life balance is associated with **higher stress and fatigue**.
- **H3 is accepted** → WFH negatively affects work-life balance when not managed well.

6. Findings

1. Work-from-home lifestyle resulted in moderate levels of stress and anxiety among adults.
2. Lack of clear work-life boundaries led to mental fatigue and reduced productivity in some participants.
3. Adults following structured routines, regular exercise, and healthy dietary patterns experienced better mental health and higher productivity.
4. Social isolation emerged as a major factor contributing to decreased psychological wellbeing.

7. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a global shift to work-from-home arrangements, which had significant implications for mental health and productivity. While WFH offered flexibility

and safety, it also posed challenges including social isolation, blurred boundaries, and mental fatigue. The study emphasizes that **positive lifestyle practices, structured routines, physical activity, and mental health awareness are crucial to sustaining productivity and psychological wellbeing** in remote work settings. Organizations and individuals must develop strategies to mitigate stress and maintain work-life balance to optimize outcomes during similar future crises.

8. Recommendations

1. Encourage adults to maintain structured daily routines, including work hours, exercise, and breaks.
2. Promote mental health awareness programs and virtual counselling for WFH employees.
3. Encourage social interaction via virtual meetings to reduce isolation.
4. Organizations should implement flexible work schedules to reduce stress and maintain productivity.
5. Adoption of mindfulness, meditation, and other stress-reducing techniques should be encouraged.

9. References

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