

Remote Work Challenges: Work-Life Balance Issues and Job Stress During the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The given research examines the dilemmas of the remote work in digital age with particular emphasis on the work-life balance problems among the staff representatives of various industries and job stress as the problem. The study assesses the pattern of remote working, digital existence, and psychosocial results, based on survey data of 182 respondents. Findings have shown that workers spend 9.1 hours working on an average working day, utilize around 4.3 digital tools in one working day, and have increasing instances of work at after-hours on 3.6 working days per week which is a significant level of digital overload. The work-life indicators demonstrate that there is low levels of control ($M = 2.4$) and a very poor level of disconnection ($M = 2.1$) and very high work-family conflict ($M = 3.8$). The level of job stress was also high with a composite mean of 3.8 that was caused by the emotional exhaustion, and technological pressure. Correlation analysis demonstrated that job stress had a significant relationship with work-family conflict ($r = 0.61$) and the inability to disconnect ($r = -0.68$) and the regression was affirmative on the inability to disconnect ($r = -0.42$) as the most significant predictor of job stress. These observations make digital connectivity seem like a two-sided coin, with the results supporting the necessity of organisational responses that can facilitate healthier contact, decrease telepressure, and promote sustainable practices of remote work.

KEYWORDS: Remote Work, Work-Life Balance, Job Stress, Digital Connectivity, Technostress.

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INTRODUCTION

The blistering growth of digital technologies has changed the conventional work organization, resulting in a sharp increase in remote employment by the industries. Remote work is not a novel practice but slightly changed its tone during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, becoming a major global norm and a primary transformation of the characteristics of work. In the best interests of the organisations, remote working has become widely encouraged due to its possible advantages, such as flexibility, less commuting time, greater productiveness, and a greater access to talent [1]. Along with all these benefits, remote work also has complex issues that influence the well-being of the workers, their performance, and job satisfaction in general. Among them, work-life balance problems and job stress have become two critical topics in the digital era. Remote work kills the work-life balance, which frequently leads to increased work hours, constant access, and inability to relax and forget about the job duties [2]. Lack of physical distance between the house and the work place can cause conflicts of demands in family and work expectations leading to emotional burnout and lack of work satisfaction. In addition, digital overload is often generated among the employees due to constant access to communication tools, including email, instant messages, and online conferences [3]. This continuous interaction may cause pressure, raise the expectations of the performance, and create job stress. Moreover, remote workers are exposed to lower levels of social interaction, isolation and dearth of organisational support which, in turn, can heighten the level of stress and hamper mental health. With organisations aiming to maximise productivity during the digital era, the effects of remote work to psychological and emotional health have gained increasing importance. The study thus analyses issues that are related to remote working with particular areas of concern being the work life balance and employment stress. The study aims to offer insights into some of the factors that contribute to these challenges which can help organisations to design healthier and more sustainable remote work policies.

RELATED WORKS

Working at work places beyond the offices has changed organisational dynamics, employee welfare, and boundaries between work and life. The expanding literature supplies evidence proving that, along with making work more efficient, digital connectivity causes emotional and psychological stress. Arguing that higher connectivity fosters flexible work and enhanced productivity, Giorgia et al. [15] also claim that it poses a risk of technostress, boundarylessness, and diminishing well-being to the employee. This duality is further supported in another of their works [16], which demonstrates that despite the ability of digital tools to increase engagement and performance, with too much exposure there is cognitive overload and job dissatisfaction.

The interpretation of the performance-related results in remote working conditions has been of significant nature especially in the

sector such as information technology. Jayanandana and Jayathilaka [17] discovered that inadequate working conditions in the home, insufficient internet connection, and increased family work challenge are leading to decreasing performance of Sri Lankan IT professionals. The discoveries support the entire research regarding the fact that working at home should be viewed as a double-edged sword. Jun-jie et al. [18] emphasize that remote work leads not only to a sense of autonomy and lessens stress related to commuting, but also augments social isolation, emotional burnout, and unending technological strain, factors that worsen the well-being of employees.

The workforce after the pandemic has been faced by complex psychosocial issues. Junyi et al. [19] examine the experience of white-collar workers and put particular focus on the influence of digital overloading, work intensification, and the need to be available all the time. Their study also comes up with protective factors such as supportive leadership, autonomy, and flexibility that alleviate occupational stress in remote environments. The same pattern can be seen in other fields of profession. Indicatively, Kansu-Yetkiner and Bozok [20] found that the industry of translation came to a standstill because of COVID-19 as it was reported that translators had more work and were under psychological pressure because of the rapid digitalisation and the changing expectations of clients.

One of the key elements of comprehending job stress during the digital era is work-life balance. According to Karwa [21], being connected twenty-four hours a day and organisational demands of being responsive, modern professionals are finding it difficult to manage healthy boundaries. This is in line with Ke et al. [22] who indicate that telepressure in the workplace is a key predictor of burnout in educators and work-related rumination is a mediator. Significantly, the organisational support gets perceived, moderating this relationship and diminishing the emotional load of digital expectations.

The digital workplace has also become volatile in the way of job satisfaction. Based on text-mining analysis, Kim et al. [23] uncover that the intensity of remote work, isolation and work burden, were commonly expressed as dissatisfaction in the course of and following the COVID-19 era among employees. Similar contextual difficulties by Lajtman [24] include vague job expectations, domestic distractions, and unavailable ergonomic tools, all of which negatively affect the work of telecommuting. Mahohoma and Harpal [25] in their study found that work-life balance, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment have a close relationship in the higher education sector, as remote academic employees tend to experience emotional detrimental and less loyalty as a result of a blurred personal-professional environment. Similarly, Maiter et al. [26] reveal that child welfare workers received opportunities as well as challenges in transitioning to digital tools, and the technology enhanced service continuity but exacerbated cognitive and emotional load.

Comprehensively, all the available literature agrees that remote work is advantageous in terms of flexibility and productivity but dangerous when the pressure of digital demands becomes too intense without the ability of employees to cope with it. The analysed articles demonstrate that the organisational support, clarity of boundaries, and adaptive strategies are crucial to ensure job stress reduction and well-being improvement in digitally linked workplaces.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.1 Introduction

The chapter describes the methodological process to study the problem of remote work, and the perspective is on the work-life balance problem and the problem of job stress during the digital age. The methodology addresses the philosophy of research, the research design, sampling strategy, collection of data and the data analysis methods [4]. It incorporates the ethics as well because it is essential to have the study carried out in an ethical manner.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy selected is that of the interpretivist research because it takes into account that the understanding of work-life balance and job stress is subjective and can differ among individuals. The interpretivism is appropriate since the study aims to comprehend the human experiences, emotional responses and behavioural responses in remote work environments. Such a philosophical position enables the researcher to examine various forms of intricate social realities founded on digital work spaces, organisational expectations and individual situations [5]. However, as opposed to positivism and its emphasis on quantifiable variables, interpretivism favors the subtle investigations needed in the study of stress and burnout and everyday work-family conflicts.

3.3 Research Design

The descriptive research design was selected because the study attempts to identify and describe the problems of remote work without controlling any variables. Descriptive design assists in tracking the existing trends, trends, and impressions of employees working at home. The design is suitable concerning the determination of the level of work-life imbalance, the causes of digital stress, and the overall effects of remote working on the psychological well-being of employees. The study presents a quantitative research design, which allows statistically evaluating the patterns and correlations between distance working and stress levels and indicators of work-life balance [5].

3.5 Population and Sampling Strategy

The target of the study will be made up of those employees working remotely either working on a full time basis or on a hybrid basis in different sectors including IT, education, finance, marketing and customer service. Convenience sampling method was used as the researcher sampled the whole population of remote workers because they are prevalent and were accessible. Those who participated in the study became part of the participants via online, social media groups, and professional networks. A sample size of 150 to 200 respondents was targeted as a sample with enough statistical reliability that is not beyond the reach of

practicability.

Table 1 below summarises the sampling characteristics
Table 1: Sampling Framework

Sampling Element	Description
Target Population	Remote and hybrid employees aged 18+
Sampling Technique	Non-probability convenience sampling
Expected Sample Size	150–200 respondents
Recruitment Platform	Email, LinkedIn, WhatsApp groups, Google Forms
Inclusion Criteria	Individuals working remotely ≥ 6 months
Exclusion Criteria	Unemployed individuals or office-only workers

3.5 Data Collection Method

The data were obtained via a designed, self-administered online questionnaire created with the help of Google Forms. The questionnaire was separated into four major divisions:

1. **Demographic Information:** age, sex, job position, type of employment, industry.
2. **Remote Work Experience:** how many work days are spent working remotely every week, the work hours and digital means of interaction.
3. **Work-Life Balance Measures:** these include the measures of boundary control, family work conflict and disconnecting ability [6].
4. **Job Stress Indicators:** questions of the digital overload, the signs of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and perceived pressure.

The questions were mostly designed to incorporate 5-point Likert scale, i.e. Strongly Disagree (1), Strongly Agree (5). The survey culture allowed anonymity, ease of use, and simplicity among the respondents.

3.6 Measurement of Variables

The work-life balance and the job stress were measured with validated constructs that were based on scales of well-being in the workplace. This made it reliable and it was possible to compare it with prior studies.

Table 2: Key Research Variables and Measurement

Variable	Measurement Tool / Indicators	Scale Type
Work-Life Balance	Boundary control, work–family conflict, time flexibility, ability to disconnect	5-point Likert
Job Stress	Digital overload, emotional exhaustion, role pressure, perceived burnout	5-point Likert
Remote Work Hours	Total hours worked per day/week	Numeric

Use of Digital Tools	Number and frequency of digital platforms used for communication	Categorical
Job Satisfaction (Control Variable)	General satisfaction, motivation, engagement	5-point Likert

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

Statistical methods were used to analyse data obtained in the online survey with the help of the Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Data analysis included:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** mean, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviation to summarise demographic characteristics and remote work nature.
- **Correlation Analysis:** to estimate the association between work-life balance and job stress.
- **Regression Analysis:** to determine the degree to which digital tools, workload, and hours predict job stress as a factor of remote work [7].
- **Reliability Testing (Cronbachs Alpha):** to test internal consistency of the Liker-scale items.

The quantitative method of analysis makes it possible to generalise results and to make objective conclusions on the experiences of working remotely.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical research was followed in the study. Before taking the questionnaire, the subjects were told the aim of the study and were given their consent [8]. No personal identifying information was gathered, which was not a problem, and ensured confidentiality and anonymity. The respondents could quit anytime, and without reprisals. Data were data mined such that it was safeguarded and utilized exclusively on academic work. To ensure that the study did not present any danger to the privacy or psychological wellbeing of the participants in the study, ethical clearance was taken before data collection [9].

3.9 Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was employed in order to investigate the issue of remote work as problems with work-life balance and job stress in the digital era. The research to be discussed is based on a descriptive, quantitative research design grounded in interpretivism whereby the qualitative nature of the study involves capturing the lived experience of employees, following a systematic approach to the data collection through the use of structured questionnaires and statistical data analysis. The integration of ethical protection makes the research responsible and credible.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the authors reveal the findings of the survey conducted in remote and hybrid workers in different industries. The number of respondents who returned the questionnaire was 182, which allowed gathering enough data to discuss the trends associated with the work-life balance, work-related stress, and general impacts of remote work in the digital age [10]. The discussion consists of demographic profiles, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modelling to determine the important predictors of job stress. Important results are illustrated using tables to aid in interpretation.



Figure 1: “Remote Working Methods”

4.2 Demographic Respondent Characteristics

The demographic findings indicate the variety of workers involved in remote and hybrid jobs. The respondents were mostly attracted towards IT, finance, education, marketing, customer service and consulting sectors. Table 1 shows the key demographic features [11].

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 182)

Variable	Category	Freq uency	Percenta ge (%)
Gender	Male	96	52.7
	Female	84	46.1
	Other / Prefer not to say	2	1.2
Age Group	18–25	39	21.4
	26–35	78	42.9
	36–45	47	25.8
	46+	18	9.9
Work Arrangeme nt	Fully Remote	112	61.5
	Hybrid	70	38.5
Industry	IT	54	29.7
	Education	32	17.6
	Finance	28	15.4
	Marketing	26	14.3
	Customer Service	22	12.1
	Others	20	11.0

The demographic analysis demonstrates that remote employment is particularly prevalent among those aged 26–35 years and it is possible to conclude that professionals with early and mid-career are more willing to work at home. The large turnout in IT and education is indicative of fields that were quickly changing to online operations throughout the of digital transformation wave [12].



Figure 2: “Maintaining Work-Life Balance When Working Remotely”

4.3 Teleworking and Online interactions

The questions posed to the respondents concerned their remote working hours, how often digital communication occurred and the kind of internet platforms. Table 2 shows important descriptive statistics.

Table 2: Remote Work Patterns and Digital Tool Usage

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Hours Worked Per Day (Remote Days)	9.1	1.8	5	14
No. of Digital Tools Used Daily	4.3	1.2	1	7
Virtual Meetings Per Day	3.2	1.5	0	7
Emails/Chats Received Per Day	48.7	20.1	10	120
After-Hours Work Frequency (Days/Week)	3.6	1.9	0	7

These results prove a number of main points:

- Employees who work remotely have an average work experience of 9.1 hours as compared to the 8-hour expectations.
- The typical worker works with four or five online applications in one day, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Google Meet, and WhatsApp.
- The elevated rate of email and messaging implies that there is digital overload, which is one of the contributors to job stress [13].
- The after-hours working (mean = 3.6 days/week) is an indicator of inappropriate work-life boundaries.

4.4 Work-Life Balance Statistics

In order to measure work-life balance, items were distinguished into three groups namely; boundary control, work-family conflict

and being able to disconnect. Scores range from 1 (low) to 5 (high). In Table 3, the general results are shown.

Table 3: Work-Life Balance Indicators

Work-Life Balance Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Boundary Control	2.4	0.9	Low boundary control
Work-Family Conflict	3.8	0.7	High level of conflict
Ability to Disconnect	2.1	0.8	Very poor detachment after work
Time Flexibility Satisfaction	3.3	0.6	Moderate satisfaction

Key findings include:

- The respondents present low level of boundary control ($M = 2.4$) that shows the inability to separate work and personal life.
- The level of work-family conflict is high ($M = 3.8$), which might indicate that remote work is associated with more family disruptions, emotional stress, and role conflict.
- The disconnection capability is extremely poor ($M = 2.1$), which shows that even after work, remote workers are still connected to digital communication.

This evidence confirms that remote work is flexible but results in psychological and behavioural spillovers into personal life.

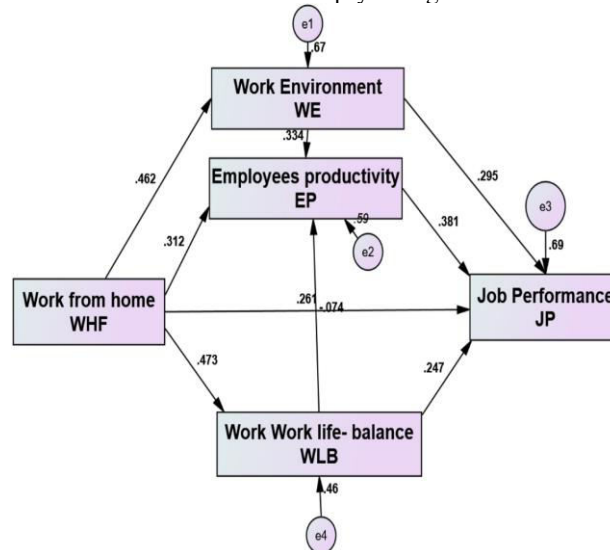


Figure 3: “The remote revolution: assessing the impact of working from home on finance professionals”

4.5 Job Stress Levels

The level of job stress was estimated on digital overload, emotional exhaustion, perceived burnout, and role pressure. The high stress is indicated by a mean score of more than 3.5. The findings are as follows:

- **Digital overload:** mean = 3.9
- **Emotional exhaustion:** mean = 3.7
- **Role pressure:** mean = 3.5
- **Overall job stress composite score:** mean = 3.8

These values show that most of the respondents are highly stressed at work, which is mainly caused by the pressure of digital communication and the availability of work all the time [14].

The respondents had often indicated:

- experiencing tiredness following online meetings,
- inability to cope with fast communication,

- need to react immediately,
- and common burnouts.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

To determine relationships between variables of work-life balance and job stress, Pearson correlation test was obtained. Results are shown below.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Job Stress	Work-Family Conflict	Boundary Control	Ability to Disconnect
Job Stress	1	0.61**	-0.55**	-0.68**
Work-Family Conflict	0.61**	1	-0.43**	-0.49**
Boundary Control	-0.55**	-0.43**	1	0.57**
Ability to Disconnect	-0.68**	-0.49**	0.57**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$ (highly significant).

Key interpretations:

- There is a significant positive relationship between job stress and work-family conflict ($r = 0.61$).
- There is a negative relationship between ability to disconnect and job stress ($r = -0.68$).
- Personal regulation is valuable as shown in the boundary control whereby it reduces job stress ($r = -0.55$).
- Job stress is best predicted by the capability of disconnection.

Such relationships indicate the remote workers who are not able to disconnect are the ones that find stress to be the greatest.

4.7 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Job Stress

The issue of predicting job stress using remote work hours, the use of digital tools, the presence of work-life conflict, and boundary control with the help of a multiple regression model was tested [27].

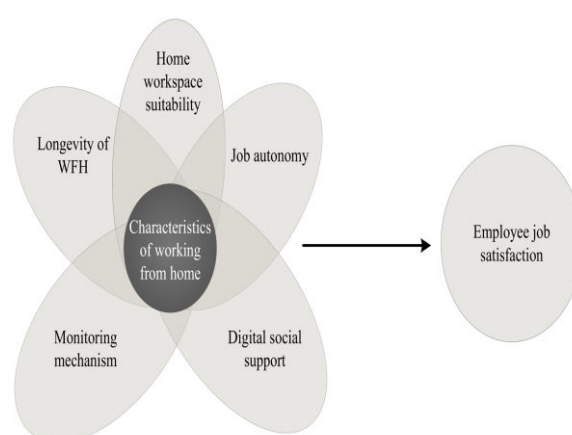


Figure 4: “The Impact of Enforced Working from Home on Employee Job Satisfaction during COVID-19”

Regression Model Summary

- $R^2 = 0.63$
- Adjusted $R^2 = 0.61$
- The model explains 63% of the variance in job stress.

Significant Predictors

1. **Ability to Disconnect ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$)**

- Strongest predictor of job stress.
- Employees unable to disconnect report significantly higher stress.
- 2. **Work-Family Conflict ($\beta = 0.37, p < 0.001$)**
 - High conflict increases emotional strain.
- 3. **Remote Work Hours ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.05$)**
 - Longer daily hours contribute to stress.

The use of digital tools did not have any significant predictive power as they were used alongside some other variables, which is that digital overload affects stress indirectly, by creating conflict and the lack of the ability to disconnect [28].

4.8 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

Despite the quantitative style of study, there was a small part that gave the respondents the opportunity to comment freely. Several themes emerged:

Theme 1: Constant Digital Pressure

The respondents mentioned that they felt always online, forced to give an immediate answer and flooded with multiple notifications.

Theme 2: Difficulty Maintaining a Routine

Lack of physical boundaries and thus abnormal working schedules, work at odd time, and disrupted sleep were reported by many.

Theme 3: Family Distractions and Role Conflict

According to parents, taking care of children back at home and having to be at the meetings poses greater stress and decreases productiveness.

Theme 4: Social Isolation

The respondents were not bonded with the colleagues as much resulting in a decrease in emotional support and loneliness [13]. These topics contribute to the quantitative results and provide layers to the knowledge about the remote work environment.

4.9 Summary of Key Findings

- Workers at a distance work longer hours and are highly digitally engaged.
- Balance between work and life is very poor, in respect to control over boundaries and disconnection.
- The level of job stress is elevated and almost entirely due to the digital overload and exhaustion.
- There are high associations between job stress and work-family conflict.
- The findings of the regression indicate that inability to connect up is the most notable predictor of job stress [14].
- Open ended questions showed more psychological effects such as isolation as well as emotional exhaustion.

On the whole, the outcomes show that digital age has brought comfort and flexibility as well as escalated the psychological stress and work-life discontinuity. These results serve as a solid basis of discussion and suggestions, in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the complicated issues related to remote working during the digital age and specifically on the problems of work-life balance and work stress. The results show that as much as remote work has significant benefits that include flexibility, less commuting and the ability to be more autonomous, it is also associated with considerable pressures that are detrimental to the well-being of employees. The findings demonstrated that remote workers often have death-to-death boundaries between personal and professional lives, become more conflicted about work-family dynamics, work more hours, and cannot cease to work, which are their main problems. It was discovered that high levels of digital engagement, constant connectivity, and speedy pace of communication had significant contribution in technostress, emotional exhaustion, as well as burnout. The statistical analysis also revealed that there were strong relationships between poor boundary control, work-family conflict as well as high levels of job stress and the failure to disconnect was the strongest predictor of psychological strain. These insights are supported by the literature, which points to the issues of the same nature in the different industries and professional communities. On the whole, the study highlights why the organisations need to become more health-digitally measured, enforce explicit communication guidelines and offer more effective support mechanisms that would enable the employees to meet the demands of working remotely. Flexible schedules, embrace of digital detox practices, and inculcation of a culture that ensures that the personal boundaries of individual employees are honed are critical in ensuring that productivity is maintained and the welfare of employees remains intact. With remote work still developing, this research provides useful evidence that would inform the policy formulation and decision-making in organisations to create a balanced, sustainable, and healthy remote work environment.