JAMP

**Original Research Article**

# ADULTS' INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESILIENCE DURING WORK FROM HOME IN COVID-19: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

T Ramesan[1], Nidhin Pallikkara Kuttyadan[2], Athulya Sreekumaary[2], T.E Vishakh[2], Reshmi Ramesan[3]

[1]Professor, Department of Physiology, Kannur medical college, Kerala, India
[2]RMO Ashraya Hospital Mattannur, Kerala, India
[3]Consultant Phychiatrist, Kerala Health Services, India

## Abstract

**Background:** Covid-19 has caused unheard-of shifts in our workplace culture, and as a result, its consequences are being investigated globally to develop a thorough grasp of how to manage them. The goal is to evaluate the literature and investigate the idea of working from home, as well as any potential effects it might have on psychological traits including resiliency, loneliness, and interpersonal interactions. **Materials and Methods:** A cross sectional study from May 2022- June 2023 was conducted among individuals working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic under the Department of Psychology. Data collection was done during a period of 3-months and the form was circulated online and consent was obtained from all participants. The sample comprised of 300 individuals - 160 males and 140 females, within the age range of 18-60 years, who had been working from home actively for at least 4 hours a day, for the past six months, having a bachelor's degree or pursuing a bachelor's degree and are proficient in English. **Result:** There were a total of 168 (59.4%) unmarried individuals and 132 (40.6%) married individuals. Further the sample was divided into various age groups consisting of 142 individuals (47%) in the 18-30 age group, 60 (20%) in the 31-40 age group, 60 (20%) in the 41-50 age group, and 38 (13%) in the 51-60 age group. Comparison of age means for all dependent variables group differences were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience and FACES (Subscales 2 and 3) at 0.01 confidence level. **Conclusion:** The findings indicate that those who are single or younger in age (18 to 30) are most affected, with low resilience, high symptoms of loneliness, and deteriorating mental health. The research's specific analyses, restrictions, and suggestions must be further explored.

## INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus Covid-19 epidemic is the greatest threat to world health in the modern era and the greatest obstacle to human progress since the Second World War, nations attempt to slow the spreading of the infection through patient testing and treatment, contact tracing, limiting travel, isolating residents, and cancelling major events like as well as sporting events, musical performances, and educational institutions. People lose their work on a daily basis income without knowing when their regular schedule will resume, or they are negatively impacted psychologically by this outbreak.[1]

Numerous psychosocial stressors were brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, including worries about one's own and their families' health, significant disruptions to daily routines, physical separation from family and friends, a shortage of necessities, a decline in income, forced social isolation, and the closure of educational institutions.[2]

The COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted many people's daily routines, including those in India. This social and economic instability caused an increase in psychological health issues, such as anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicidal-destructive ideation.[3] An employee may find it challenging to maintain a healthy and unburdened relationship with their family or friends when faced with many work-related responsibilities that cause significant levels of stress.[4]

Resilience is the adaptive process of successfully managing and coping with adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and high levels of stress, according to the American Psychological Association (2014).[5] Offering work flexibility, such as the ability to work remotely, can give employees more liberty in juggling their obligations to their families and their professional obligations, according to the idea of

human resource management. The availability of flexible work arrangements may come with implicit expectations of increased work effort and dedication, which may balance the anticipated benefits of reduced work-family conflict. This is a potential disadvantage of working from home. According to research workers who work remotely typically put in more time and feel more time-constrained than their office-based counterparts.[6]

The objective of the current study was to assess whether there were issues among employed people in India during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as loneliness, impaired interpersonal interactions, and reduced resilience levels.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study from May 2022- June 2023 was conducted among individuals working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic under the Department of Psychology. Data collection was done during a period of 3-months and the form was circulated online and consent was obtained from all participants. The sample comprised of 300 individuals - 160 males and 140 females, within the age range of 18-60 years, who had been working from home actively for at least 4 hours a day, for the past six months, having a bachelor's degree or pursuing a bachelor's degree and are proficient in English.

The participants were required to fill in a consent form accompanying an information schedule, The Resilience Scale by Wagnild and Young (1993), followed by the UCLA Loneliness Scale by Daniel Russell, L.A. Peplau, and M.L. Ferguson (1978), and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation

Scale (FACES IV) by Tiesel (1994).7 Participants were requested to complete the form in one session.

**Statistical Analysis**

Data so obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. Data analysis was done by SPSS software ® version 22.0. Descriptive statistical analysis, which included frequency and percentages, was used to characterize the data. Inferential statistics included One-way Anova and independent samples t test for different dependent variables of the study and p <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS

[Table 1] shows that there were a total of 168 (59.4%) unmarried individuals and 132 (40.6%) married individuals. Further the sample was divided into various age groups consisting of 142 individuals (47%) in the 18-30 age group, 60 (20%) in the 31-40 age group, 60 (20%) in the 41-50 age group, and 38 (13%) in the 51-60 age group.

[Table 2] showed that between group differences were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience and FACES (Subscales 2 and 3) at 0.01 confidence level. Results for ANOVA for between group differences were found to be significant for APS (Balanced Cohesion Percentile Score) at 0.05 confidence level where age as independent variable.

[Table 3] indicated that results were found to be significant for Loneliness, Resilience, APS (Balanced Cohesion Percentile Score), EPS (Rigid Percentile Score), FACES2, FACES3 at 0.01 level of significance when the marital status is compared with dependent variables. Results for independent sample t-test were found to be significant (p<0.05).

**Table 1: Age and Marital status wise distribution of study participants**

| Variable | Categories | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 18-30 Years | 142 | 47% |
| | 31-40 Years | 60 | 20% |
| | 41-50 Years | 60 | 20% |
| | 51-60 Years | 38 | 13% |
| Marital Status | Unmarried | 168 | 56% |
| | Married | 132 | 44% |

**Table 2: Comparison of age means for all dependent variables**

| Variables | Age | | | | | | | | p- value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 18 - 30 years | | 31 - 40 years | | 41 - 50 years | | 51 - 60 years | | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Resilience | 124.96 | 18.76 | 134.57 | 20.15 | 146.07 | 19.15 | 145.92 | 21.63 | 0.01 |
| Loneliness | 24.83 | 13.27 | 18.15 | 14.35 | 16.6 | 14.69 | 18.13 | 15.24 | 0.01 |
| APS | 63.82 | 17.4 | 64.99 | 18.41 | 64.62 | 15.62 | 66.21 | 12.74 | 0.04 |
| EPS | 45.32 | 19.33 | 51.33 | 24.71 | 51.47 | 23.06 | 48.3 | 19.7 | 0.12 |
| FACES2 | 51.15 | 30.35 | 62.08 | 31.05 | 62.17 | 30.59 | 70.25 | 25.68 | 0.01 |
| FACES3 | 52.49 | 32.91 | 60.05 | 32.66 | 61.98 | 31.78 | 68.34 | 27.19 | 0.03 |

**Table 3: Comparison of marital groups with dependent variables**

| Variables | Marital Status | | | | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Unmarried | | Married | | |
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| Resilience | 135.58 | 18.21 | 144.13 | 20.95 | 0.01 |
| Loneliness | 23.31 | 14.81 | 16.9 | 13.65 | 0.01 |
| APS | 63.31 | 17.39 | 68.15 | 13.12 | 0.01 |
| EPS | 44.67 | 21.09 | 52.44 | 20.32 | 0.06 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FACES2 | 52.42 | 31.51 | 67.1 | 27.13 | 0.01 |
| FACES3 | 52.09 | 31.38 | 66.43 | 28.69 | 0.01 |

## DISCUSSION

The response to a work-from-home arrangement during the Covid-19 epidemic is found to be strongly influenced by an individual's age. In contrast to the age group of 18–30, which showed the lowest levels of resilience, people in the 41–55 age range reported very high levels of resilience. Additionally, it was shown that those in the age range of 18 to 35 exhibited greater resilience than people in the age range of 31 to 45.[7]

Young adulthood is when the conflict between identity and role confusion peaks, leading to a split self-image, a sense of urgency, a lack of awareness and attention for necessary duties, and a disdain of family or community standards.[8] This could be the cause of the low resilience seen in people between the ages of 18 and 25. In the final psychological stage of development, the major conflict between morality and hopelessness results in wisdom.[9] The wisdom gained through a lifetime of experiences in this group of people, who have previously faced uncertainties in life before the pandemic including wars and other major medical crises, may be the reason for the high levels of resilience in the age range 46-55.

In contrast to the 18–30 age groups, middle-aged adults between the ages of 41–50 reported the highest levels of cohesion (APS), communication (FACES2), and satisfaction (FACES3). For those between the ages of 41 and 55, who may have attained stage three of Maslow's Need for Hierarchy, family satisfaction is satisfied. They have satisfied their physiological and safety demands thanks to the steadiness in their professional lives, and can now effectively focus on their belongingness needs.[10] Why the 18–25 age groups received low marks in these areas may be explained by the parent–adolescent relationship, which holds that as teenagers mature, they grow apart from parents and subsequently enter a world of autonomy.

A person may experience negative health repercussions if they are personally affected by a marriage ending, such as a divorce or the death of a spouse. Stressors from relationships can be harmful to one's health. On the dimensions of communication (FACES2), happiness (FACES3), and balanced cohesiveness and flexibility, married people outperformed single people. According to marriage experts, dedication and forgiveness are essential qualities of a happy marriage.[11,12] In healthy partnerships, self-repair is a process that includes several elements. Again, compared to those who were single, married people performed better on these two scales. The changing norm of male-female equality in marriage and an increase in excessive wedding expectations have led to marriages that can be particularly delicate and emotional.[13,14] Couples that get along well have greater problem-solving skills and are more aware of their needs. Contrarily, a lack of communication between couples may lead to an increase in unhealthy behaviours like problematic drinking.[15]

Our study has few limitations firstly large disparity in the sample sizes of various groups since the survey was conducted in an online mode. Secondly, due to lack of technological knowledge, data response from the older population was much lower in comparison to the younger population. Thirdly, the methods of sampling used were purposive and snowballing which are non-probability methods of sampling and are not very appropriate generalized samples from a population.

## CONCLUSION

Particularly in uncharted times like the Covid-19 pandemic, the unexpected switch to working from home entailed enormous adjustments in one's interpersonal relationships, general wellbeing, and mental health. In general, it was discovered that those who were single or younger in age (18 to 30) were more affected, having low resilience and a high level of loneliness. The other three age groups as well as married working people reported high levels of family togetherness, adaptability, and enmeshment along with decreased levels of loneliness and high levels of resilience. Understanding the trends and outcomes from this study can aid future researchers in creating practical solutions for a work-from-home situation.

## REFERENCES

1. Bilge P, Alkan A.C, Ağanoğlu R, October 2020. Managing work-life balance during the Covid-19 crisis. A survey with 1500+ participants worldwide.
2. Cacioppo, S.; Grippo, A. J.; London, S.; Goossens, L.; Cacioppo, J. T. (2015). Loneliness: Clinical Import and Interventions. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10(2), 238–249.
3. Cockshaw WD, Shochet I(2010). The link between belongingness and depressive symptoms: An exploration in the workplace interpersonal context. Aust Psychol.; 45(4):283-9.
4. Hwang, T.-J., Rabheru, K., Peisah, C., Reichman, W., and Ikeda, M. (2020). Loneliness and social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic. International Psychogeriatrics, 32(10), 1217–1220.
5. Killgore, W. D. S., Taylor, E. C., Cloonan, S. A., & Dailey, N. S. (2020). Psychological resilience during the COVID-19 lockdown. Psychiatry Research, 291, 113216.
6. Labrague, L. J., De los Santos, J. A. A., & Falguera, C. C. (2021). Social and emotional loneliness among college students during the COVID- 19 pandemic: The predictive role of coping behaviors, social support, and personal resilience. Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 57(4), 1578–1584.
7. Neto, M., Chambel, M. J., and Carvalho, V. S. (2018). Work–family life conflict and mental well-being. Occupational Medicine, 68(6), 364–369.
8. Persson S S, Lindstrom P N, Pettersson P and Andersson I, (18 August 2017). Workplace relationships impact self-rated health: A survey of Swedish municipal health care employees. Work 60 (2018) 85–94

9. Prince, S. A.; Reed, J. L.; McFetridge, C.; Tremblay, M. S.; Reid, R. D. (2017). Correlates of sedentary behaviour in adults: a systematic review. Obesity Reviews, ().

10. Chakraborty, A., Banerjee, D., Mitra, M. & Jeejeebhoy, D.R. (2023). An Exploratory Study on Resilience and Interpersonal Relationships of Adults During the Work from Home in Covid-19. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 11(3), 315-325.

11. Tugade MM, Fredrickson BL (2004). Resilient individuals use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology;86(2):320-33.

12. Wu, Y., Sang, Z., Zhang, X.-C., & Margraf, J. (2020). The Relationship Between Resilience and Mental Health in Chinese College Students: A Longitudinal Cross-Lagged Analysis. Frontiers in Psychology, 11.

13. Van der Lippe T, Lippényi Z, 30 August 2018. Beyond Formal Access: Organizational Context, Working from Home, and Work–Family Conflict of Men and Women in European Workplaces. Social Indicators Research.

14. Matud, M. P., Bethencourt, J. M., & Ibanez, I. (2021). Relevance of gender roles in life satisfaction in adult people. Personality and Individual Differences, 70, 206–211.

15. Morriss, J., Saldarini, F., & Van Reekum, C. M. (2019). The role of threat level and intolerance of uncertainty in extinction. International Journal of Psychophysiology, 142, 1–9.