

Original Research Article

Work from home during COVID-19: Perceptions of academic professionals in India

Abstract: The coronavirus pandemic, also known as COVID-19, spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing global pandemic. The pandemic has severely impacted educational systems globally as well as in India. Most governments have temporarily closed educational institutions, with many switching to online education. Around 168 million students and youths were affected by the closures of schools in response to this pandemic by September 2020. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of academic professionals working in higher educational institutions (HEIs) in India about working from home due to the COVID-19 outbreak. A total of 615 academic professionals working in HEIs across India took part in the survey. An online questionnaire was designed in 'Google Forms' and sent to the respondents via E-mail, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to collect the required information. The data was entered and analysed using IBM SPSS [version 28.0.1] to find the frequencies and Chi-square tests. Results indicated that gender, designation, employee age, and stream teaching were found to have significant influences on perceptions of work from home (WFH) policies, productivity while teaching from home digitally, work-life balance (except for gender), and the quality of teaching from home (except for stream teaching).

Keywords: COVID-19, work from home, pandemic, online teaching, perceptions, academic professionals.

1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic, known as the coronavirus pandemic, is a global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The World Health Organisation (WHO) first learned of this new disease on December 31, 2019 (WHO, 2020). According to WHO, the symptoms of COVID-19 are variable, but often include fever, cough, headache, fatigue, breathing difficulties, and loss of smell and taste. It spreads when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and small airborne particles containing the virus. The SARS-CoV-2 virus can spread from the mouth or nose of an infectious person when the person coughs, sneezes, sings, breathes heavily or talks (WHO, 2021b). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) that has led to a significant loss of human life worldwide (Shereen et al., 2020). As compared to the general community, frontline and health-care workers were at an increased risk of reporting a positive COVID-19 test (Huang & Zhao, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).

The first known case of COVID-19 was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Cao et al., 2020; Chakraborty & Maity, 2020; Madabhavi et al., 2020) and a Public Health Emergency of International Concern was declared by the WHO on 30th January 2020 due to this outbreak, a disease that poses a high risk to

countries with vulnerable health systems (Sohrabi et al., 2020). The disease has since spread worldwide, causing an ongoing pandemic. It is not only associated with high prevalence of adverse psychiatric symptoms, but is a major threat to the mental health of high, middle, and low-income countries (Xiong et al., 2020). In India, the first case of COVID-19 infection was reported in Kerala on January 27, 2020, when a 20-year-old female with a one-day history of dry cough and sore throat was admitted to a general hospital in Thrissur, Kerala. She has disclosed that she returned to Kerala from Wuhan, China, on January 23, 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak situation there (Andrews et al., 2020).

As per WHO reports, as of October 8, 2021, 236599025 cases and 4831486 deaths due to COVID-19 were reported globally. This includes 43792254 cases (703599 deaths) from the USA, 33915569 cases (450127 deaths) from India, 21516967 cases (599359 deaths) from Brazil, 8046394 cases (137417 deaths) from the United Kingdom, 7717356 cases (214485 deaths) from the Russian Federation, 7357336 cases (65590 deaths) from Turkey, 6825921 cases (114691 deaths) from France and the rest of the cases and deaths from other affected countries (WHO, 2021a) Fig. 1 and Fig. 2.

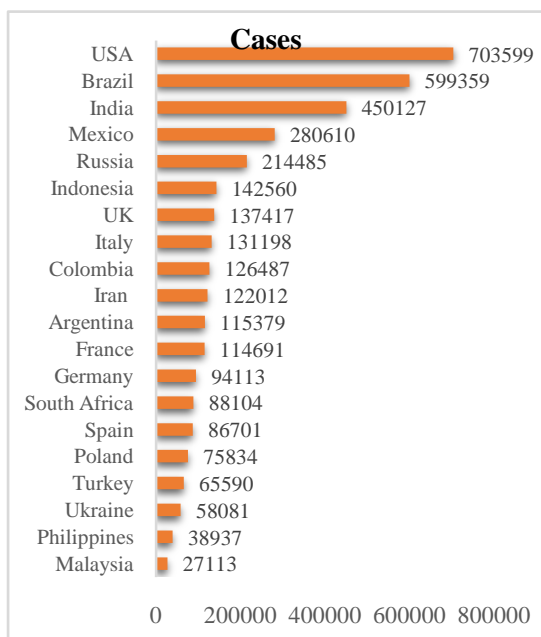


Fig. 1 Number of cumulative confirmed cases of COVID-19 in top 20 countries as on 08-10-2021

Source: World Health Organisation, 2021

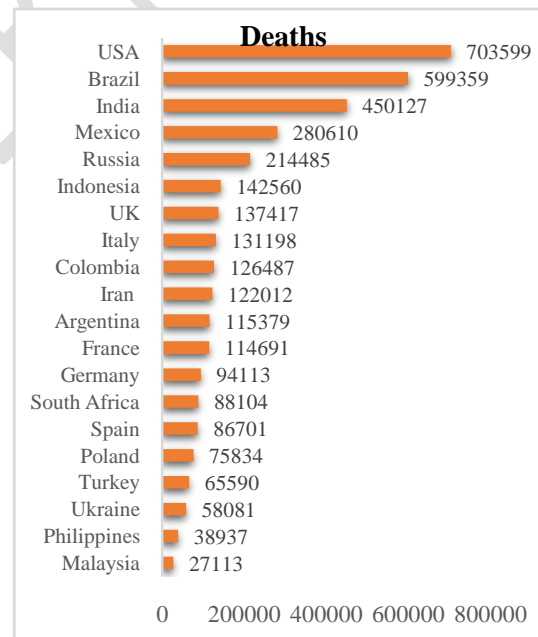


Fig. 2 Number of cumulative deaths due to COVID-19 in top 20 countries as on 08-10-2021

Source: World Health Organisation, 2021

1.1 Impacts of COVID-19 on HEIs worldwide & in India

The pandemic has severely impacted educational systems globally, including India (Habtewold, 2021; Jena, 2020). Most governments have temporarily closed educational institutions, with many switching to online

education (Bayham & Fenichel, 2020; Grewenig et al., 2021a; Muthuprasad et al., 2021). As of September 2020, approximately around 168 million students and youths were affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports, in response to the unprecedented educational challenges created by the closures of all educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 90% of countries have implemented some form of remote learning policy. The closure of educational institutions impacts not only students, teachers, and families but have far-reaching economic and societal consequences (Dalton et al., 2020). This pandemic has had far-reaching consequences for disadvantaged children and their families, particularly those in the student community (Ghosh et al., 2020; Grewenig et al., 2021b; Marques de Miranda et al., 2020).

Presently, India is the third largest higher education provider in the world, after the USA and China. As of 2020, there are more than 1000 universities in India. These include 54 central universities, 416 state universities, 125 deemed universities, 361 private universities and 159 institutes of national importance, such as AIIMS, IIMs, IIITs, IISERs, IITs and NITs. There are also over 40,000 colleges (AISHE, 2020). The Higher Education Policy Institute conducted a report which discovered that around 63 percent of students claimed that their mental health had been worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and alongside this, 38% demonstrated satisfaction with the accessibility of mental health services. Despite this, the director for policy and advocacy at the institute has explained that it is still unclear how and when normality will resume for students regarding their education and living situation.

1.2 Transformation from face-to-face teaching to online teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic has generated a world-wide consciousness among policymakers that the present way of lifestyle does not work. There are many areas that need revolutionary changes, and the educational sector is one of them (Lakshman Naik et al., 2021). As a result, many institutions were required to shift from face-to-face teaching to an online teaching mode. This movement, on the one hand, has created stress, challenges, and overburden among the faculty members, and on the other hand, has become rewarding as some have managed well to cope with the changing circumstances.

1.2.1 The transition was challenging

There are significant differences between teaching in a physical classroom and online. During this transition, educators were often required to deviate from their normal lesson plans and delivery systems to accommodate

unexpected scenarios as arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For some teachers, it is a kind of challenge that might be experienced by a classically trained ballet dancer moving to contemporary dance (Fawns et al., 2020). A survey conducted by 'India Today' on 'teachers facing challenges during online classes' (India Today, 2021) indicated that online teaching is a hurdle for teachers as well as students. The survey found that 84% of teachers reported facing stress and challenges in delivering education digitally and close to 50% of the teachers said they were facing issues related to the internet, both in signal and data expenses. Two out of every five teachers lack the necessary devices to teach classes digitally. Other issues for online teaching include: figuring out online etiquette, parents hovering during online classes, maintaining discipline online is difficult, unequal access for all students, learning patterns, technology access, additional responsibilities, and mental health (Colclasure et al., 2021). As a result of this crisis, academic professionals have been forced to examine many inadequacies and inequities in our education systems - from access to the broadband and computers necessary for online education to the supportive environments needed to focus on learning (Schleicher, 2020). Many teachers working in higher education in India are unfamiliar with online platforms/tools, lack of knowledge and skills to handle online ICT infrastructure in a challenging situation, and require professional development with a special focus on digital literacy skills and a better understanding of the value of using online platforms for teaching and learning (Mubasher Hassan et al., 2020). Students look to their teachers for guidance throughout all the crucial stages of their academic life, and when they are satisfied with their work, they are more likely to perform their responsibilities with more commitment (Author, 2012).

1.2.2 The transition was rewarding

Online teaching is rewarding as it is well accepted by the students (Khalil et al., n.d.), based on the principle of flexibility (Muthuprasad et al., 2021), the ability to improve the quality, bring education right to home, offer more individual attention, be connected with the global village, have easier access to world resources, make them self-disciplined (Paudel, 2021), learn and deliver while enjoying the comforts of home (Tello et al., 2002), and improve the ability to create multiple strategies for the submission of student work and clarifications (Stone & Perumean-Chaney, 2011). Learning online has become one of the most important educational strategies for higher education, educators need to rethink fundamental subjects such as teaching, learning, and assessment in non-traditional settings (Gikandi et al., 2011). It provides an alternative platform for academic professionals to reach out to students at a distance from their comforts of home (Moule, 2016). Students' and teachers' attitudes and perspectives can be influenced by online education. When the students do not understand

something right away, one can improve and provide materials that are engaging and enhance student learning (Graham, 2019). Classroom instruction, however, has its advantages over online instruction (Cutri et al., 2020).

2. Research Questions

This research investigates the perceptions of WFH among academic professionals in HEIs in India. As part of this research, researchers sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of employees working in HEIs towards WFH, i.e how do they feel while teaching online from home?
2. Is there any difference between teaching face-to-face and delivering education digitally, i.e., do they feel as productive at home as they were at the office/institution?
3. What are the different online platforms they used while teaching online from home?
4. When do they feel that they have a good work-life balance?
 - a) Working from office.
 - b) Working from home
 - c) Neutral
5. Do they believe they and their students had adequate communication, and how satisfied were they with the work-from-home policy during COVID-19?

3. Research Hypotheses

The present research was based on the following hypotheses:

1. **H₀₁ – gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching do not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards WFH.**
2. **H₀₂ – there is no significant association among the gender, designation, age of the employee, stream teaching and the perception of academic professionals towards productivity while teaching from home digitally.**
3. **H₀₃ – gender, designation, age of the employee and stream teaching do not have any significant impact on the perceptions of academic professionals towards good work-life-balance.**
4. **H₀₄ – gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching do not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards the quality of teaching (digitally) from home.**

4. Objectives

To test the hypotheses, the following objectives were set up:

1. To know the perceptions of the academic professionals while working from home during COVID-19.
2. To know how satisfied they were while teaching online from home,
3. To know from where they were more productive, i.e., whether from home or office,
4. To know when they were in a good work-life balance while teaching online from home or from their respective institutions.

5. Material & Methods – sample design, questionnaire and analysis

The population for the study was selected in a non-probabilistic way and was comprised of 615 academic professionals working in various colleges and universities across India. For data collection, a questionnaire was designed using "Google Forms" and sent online via E-mail, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter to the respondents in the month of September, 2021. The responses recorded up to November 20, 2021 were included for analysis in the present study. Data was entered and analysed using IBM SPSS [version 28.0.1]¹ to test the framed hypotheses and draw the final inferences.

6. Results & Discussion

6.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

A total of 615 respondents (academic professionals working in HEIs across India) were surveyed online by using a convenience sampling technique. Results revealed that the majority of the respondents (67.0%) were males, with more than half (54.60%) working as assistant professors, and another 25.90% being contractual teachers, and another 13.80% being associate professors. It is further found that the majority (62.20%) were within the 30–45-year age bracket. More than half (56.40%) of the respondents were teaching arts and humanities, followed by science (31.20%) and the commerce stream (12.40%) [Table 1](#).

Table 1 Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
Gender		
Female	203	33.00
Male	412	67.00
Designation of the Employee		
Professor	35	5.70
Assistant Professor	336	54.60
Associate Professor	85	13.80
Contractual Teacher	159	25.90
Age of the employee (years)		

¹ <https://www.ibm.com/account/reg/in-en/signup?formid=urx-19774>

30 - 45 Years	413	67.20
45 - 60 Years	141	22.90
Below 30 Years	61	9.90
Stream Teaching		
Arts & Humanities	347	56.40
Commerce	76	12.40
Science	192	31.20
Work Tenure from home (during COVID-19)		
1-6 months	180	29.30
6-12 months	191	31.10
More than 12 months	244	39.70

Source: Online Survey Data, 2021

5.2 Perceptions of academic professionals

To know the perceptions of academic professionals working in HEIs towards working from home, the following responses were recorded from the respondents against the questions asked; [Table 2](#).

Table 2 Summary of the results-perceptions towards WFH

Questions asked to know the perceptions towards WFH	Results summary
a) What is the biggest challenge faced during WFH?	According to the survey results, most respondents (52.68%) believe that family obligations pose the biggest challenge to working from home. The opinion of 29.90% of respondents indicates that they are unable to stick to their work at home, while 17.40% cite that their children's disturbances make it difficult for them to continue working at home Fig. 3 .
b) Do you feel trusted by the university/college and students?	Among the respondents, 70.60% state that they are highly trusted by their institution and students, while 9.40% state that they are not trusted, Figure 4 .
c) What is the biggest benefit of WFH?	39.00% of respondents said that managing family matters is the biggest advantage of working from home, 33.80% said that they can balance work and life easily, and 11.20% believed they could teach more efficiently from home than in the office, Figure 5 .
d) Which of the online tool work best for you?	Based on the results, the respondents revealed that for online teaching, Zoom Meetings' (45.04%) and Google Classroom/Google Meet's (42.60%) remain the two most preferred tools for teaching remotely, Figure 6 .

e) **Do you feel there is an adequate communication between you and your students?**

During the lockdown period, 42.90 % of the academic professionals (respondents) working in universities or colleges felt they had adequate communication with their students, whereas 31.70 % said they did not. [Figure 7](#).

f) **Do you think that there is a need to keep some portion of the syllabus for online teaching?**

Considering the current scenario aroused by the COVID-19 outbreak, it was a great surprise that 84.7% of the respondents said that some portion of the syllabus should be kept for online teaching so that if this type of situation occurs again in the future, students will not be affected. [Figure 8](#).

g) **Did you feel as productive at home as at office?**

Nearly half (48.80%) of the respondents said they were less productive at home than in the office, while 40.5% felt more productive at the office than at home, and only 10.70% thought they were as productive at home as they were at work, [Figure 9](#).

h) **How satisfied are you with the Quality of Teaching (online) from home?**

When it comes to online education, the quality of instruction is a major topic of debate. [Figure 10](#) shows that the majority of respondents (54.80 percent) were highly satisfied with the quality of teaching from home, while 25.40 percent were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching from home digitally.

i) **When you feel that you have a good work-life-balance?**

Work-life balance is an important aspect of any person's life. According to the study's findings, 47.60 percent of respondents said they had a good work-life balance when working only from the office. [Figure 11](#) shows that only 29.30 percent of those who worked from home due to the COVID-19 outbreak felt they had a good work-life balance.

j) **How satisfied are you with the WFH policy during COVID-19?**

During COVID-19, nearly every organisation in the world chose WFH. According to the findings of the current study, 46.80 percent of respondents were satisfied with the WFH policy. [Figure 12](#) shows that only 14.80 percent of those surveyed were dissatisfied with working from home.

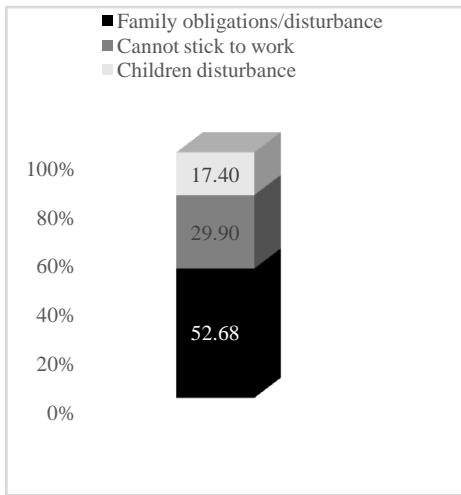


Fig.3 What is the biggest Challenge faced during work from home.

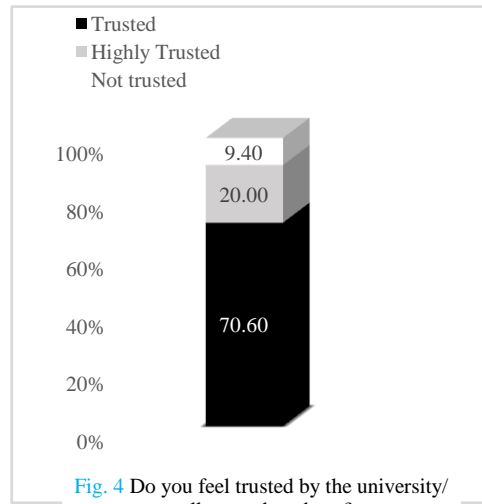


Fig. 4 Do you feel trusted by the university/ college and students?

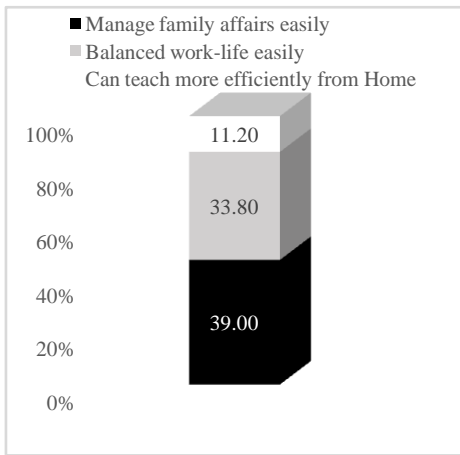


Fig. 5 What is the biggest benefit of WFH?

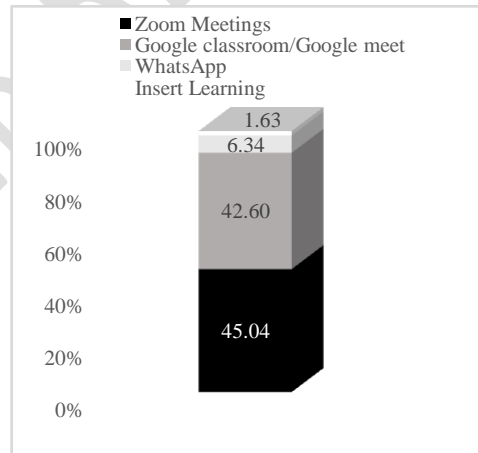


Fig. 6 Which of the online tools work best for you?

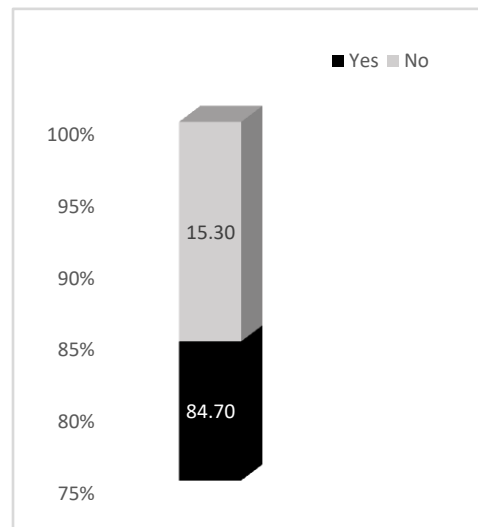
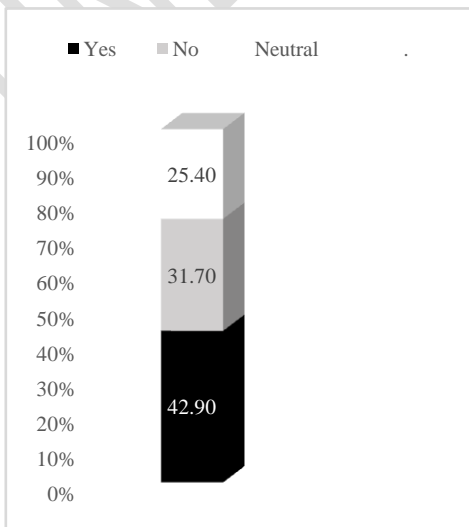


Fig. 7 Do you feel there is an adequate communication between you and your students?

Fig. 8 Do you think there is a need to keep some portion of syllabus for online teaching?

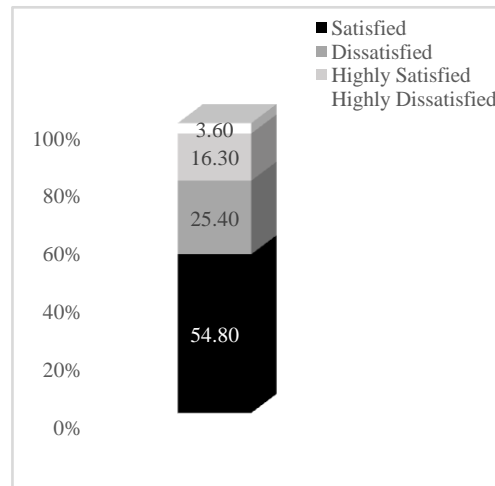
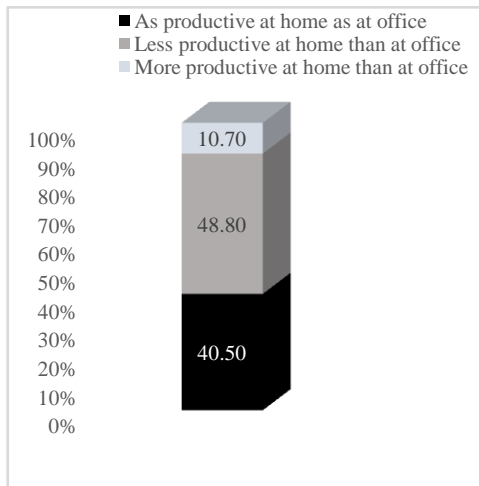


Fig. 9 Did you feel as Productive at home as at Office?

Fig. 10 How satisfied are you with the Quality of Teaching (online) from home?

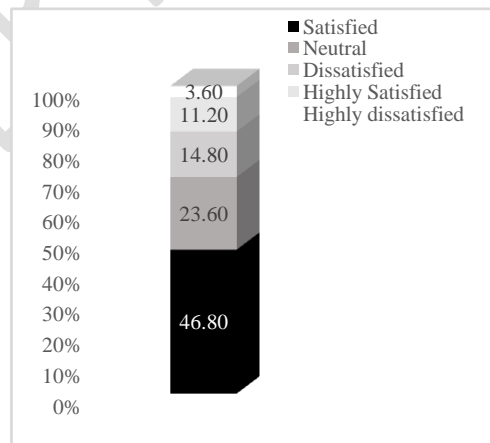
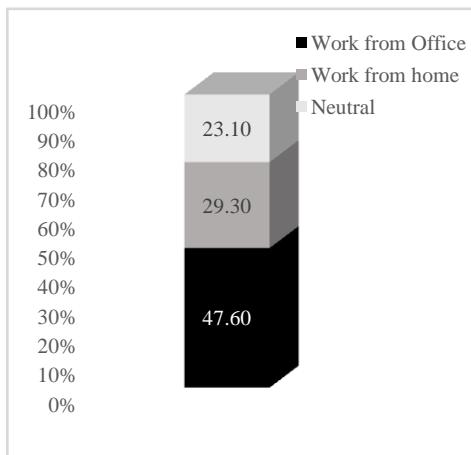


Fig. 11 When you feel that you have a good Work-Life-Balance?

Fig. 12 How satisfied are you with the WFH policy during COVID-19?

5.3 Testing of hypotheses

In order to study the impact of various demographic variables (gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching) on the perceptions of academic professionals working in HEIs towards working from home (WFH), productivity while teaching from home, quality of teaching from home digitally, and good work-life-balance, the following null-hypotheses are framed and tested for Chi-square (χ^2) analysis.

H₀₁ – gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching do not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards WFH.

Table 3 records the responses of respondents towards working from home during COVID-19. The results indicated that 43.84% of the females and 48.30% of the males were satisfied with the WFH policy, on the one hand, and on the other hand, 8.87% of females and 17.72% of the males showed dissatisfaction with the WFH policy. About 33.50% of the females and 18.69% of the males perceived their perception as neutral.

Table 3 Perception of respondents towards WFH during COVID-19 outbreak

Variables	How satisfied are you with the WFH policy					Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Highly Satisfied n (%)	Satisfied n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Dissatisfied n (%)	Highly Dissatisfied n (%)		
Gender	Female	21 (10.34)	89 (43.84)	68 (33.50)	18 (8.87)	7 (3.45)	$\chi^2 = 20.647$ df=4 p= 0.001
	Male	48 (11.65)	199 (48.30)	77 (18.69)	73 (17.72)	15 (3.64)	
Designation	Assistant Professor	30 (8.92)	170 (50.60)	84 (25.00)	45 (13.39)	7 (2.08)	$\chi^2 = 72.140$ df =12 p = 0.001
	Associate Professor	23 (27.05)	38 (44.71)	6 (7.06)	15 (17.65)	3 (3.53)	
	Contractual Teacher	6 (3.78)	66 (41.51)	52 (32.70)	23 (14.47)	12 (7.55)	
	Professor	10 (28.58)	14 (40.00)	3 (8.57)	8 (22.86)	0 (0.00)	
Age of the Employee	30 - 45 Years	30 (7.27)	200 (48.43)	93 (22.52)	72 (17.43)	18 (4.36)	$\chi^2 = 57.246$ df = 8 p = 0.001
	45 - 60 Years	33 (23.40)	64 (45.39)	25 (17.73)	19 (13.48)	0 (0.00)	
	Below 30 Years	6 (9.83)	24 (39.34)	27 (44.26)	0 (0.00)	4 (6.56)	
Stream Teaching	Arts & Humanities	49 (14.12)	163 (46.97)	64 (18.44)	59 (17.00)	12 (3.46)	$\chi^2 = 20.249$ df = 8 p = 0.009
	Commerce	6 (7.90)	31 (40.79)	23(30.26)	13 (17.11)	3 (3.95)	
	Science	14 (7.30)	94 (48.96)	58 (30.21)	19 (9.90)	7(3.65)	

Source: Online Survey Data, 2021

The data showed that 50.60% of assistant professors, 44.71% of associate professors, 41.51% of contractual teachers, and 40.00% of professors were satisfied with the policy of working from home during COVID-19. The WFH policy was perceived to be satisfactory by the majority of academic professionals in any age group (30–45 years - 48.43%, 45–60 years - 45.39%, and below 30 years - 39.34%) and stream of teaching (Arts &

Humanities, 46.97%, Commerce, 40.79%, and Science, 48.96%). Since the $p < 0.05$ for *gender*, *designation*, *age of the employee* and *stream teaching*, null hypothesis was rejected at 5% level of significance. Thus, we can say that an employee perception towards working from home varies with their designation.

H₀₂ – there is no significant association among the gender, designation, age of the employee, stream teaching and the perception of academic professionals towards productivity while teaching from home digitally.

The below is given Table 4 describes the perception of respondents towards productivity while teaching from home digitally. Results show that female teachers (46.80%) perceive that they are as productive at home as at the office, and 14.29% reveal that they are more productive at home than at the office. This may be due to the fact that female teachers have to attend to their children and other assignments at home. That is why they feel that they are more productive at home than at the office.

A majority of the associate professors (65.89%) and professors (48.58%) perceived that they were as productive at office as at home. The academic professionals teaching the science stream revealed that they are less productive at home than at the office. This could be due to the fact that laboratories and other teaching tools were required in science fields, but were not available at home. The results in Table 4 illustrates $p < 0.05$, that at 95% confidence intervals for gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and inferences can be drawn that gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching influence their perception of productivity while teaching from home digitally.

Table 4 Perception of respondents towards the productivity while teaching from home digitally.

Variables		Do you feel as productive at home as at office			Total	Pearson Chi-Square
		As productive at home as at office <i>n (%)</i>	Less productive at home than at office <i>n (%)</i>	More productive at home than at office <i>n (%)</i>		
Gender	Female	95 (46.80)	79 (38.92)	29 (14.29)	203	$\chi^2 = 12.591$ df = 2, p = 0.002
	Male	154 (37.38)	221 (53.64)	37 (8.98)		
Designation	Assistant Professor	118 (35.11)	171 (50.89)	47 (13.99)	336	$\chi^2 = 37.903$ df = 6, p = 0.001
	Associate Professor	56 (65.89)	29 (34.12)	0 (0.00)		
	Contractual Teacher	58 (36.48)	82 (51.57)	19 (11.95)		
Age of the Employee	Professor	17 (48.58)	18 (51.43)	0 (0.00)	35	$\chi^2 = 27.502$ df = 4 p = 0.001
	30 - 45 Years	158 (38.25)	196 (47.46)	59 (14.29)		
	45 - 60 Years	74 (52.49)	64 (45.39)	3 (2.13)		
Stream	Below 30 Years	17 (27.87)	40 (65.57)	4 (6.56)	61	$\chi^2 = 11.915$
	Arts & Humanities	150 (43.22)	157 (45.24)	40 (11.53)		

Commerce	38 (50.00)	31 (40.79)	7 (9.21)	76	df = 4 p = 0.018
Science	61 (31.78)	112 (58.33)	19 (9.90)	192	

Source: Online Survey Data, 2021

H₀₃ – gender, designation, age of the employee and stream teaching do not have any significant impact on the perceptions of academic professionals towards good work-life-balance.

Work-life balance is an important aspect of a healthy work environment. Maintaining a good work-life balance helps reduce stress and helps prevent burnout in the workplace. If a person doesn't have time to relax and recharge, their ability to do their job decreases and their performance level suffers (Meenakshi, 2013). Long work hours and highly stressful jobs not only hamper an employee's ability to harmonise work and family life but are also associated with health risks, such as increased smoking and alcohol consumption, weight gain, and depression (Babin Dhas, 2015).

Most women prefer flexible timing for good work-life balance (Santhi, 2012). Table 5 records the perception towards work-life-balance during WFH. According to the findings, 31.52% of female teachers believe that they have a good work-life balance while working from home. Therefore, since $p > 0.05$ for gender of the employee and $p < 0.05$ for designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching, the null hypothesis was accepted and it was inferred that there was no significant impact of gender on the perception of work-life balance. The null hypothesis was rejected at a 5% level of significance for the designation, age of the employee, and stream of teaching. Therefore, we can say that an employee's perception of balancing work and life varies with their designation, age, and stream of teaching.

The findings of the study are in line with the study (Gautam & Sameeksha, 2013) conducted in Uttarakhand where it was found that an employee's perception of the balance between work and life varies with their age.

Table 5 Perception of respondents towards work-life-balance during WFH.

Variables	When you feel, you have good work-life-balance?			Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Working from Home n (%)	Working from Office n (%)	Neutral n (%)		
Gender	Female	64 (31.52)	87 (42.86)	52 (25.62)	$\chi^2 = 2.822$ df = 2 p = 0.244
	Male	116 (28.15)	206 (50.00)	90 (21.84)	
Designation	Assistant Professor	93 (27.68)	160 (47.62)	83 (24.70)	$\chi^2 = 37.156$ df = 6 p = 0.001
	Associate Professor	45 (52.94)	30 (35.29)	10 (11.76)	
	Contractual Teacher	34 (21.39)	79 (49.69)	46 (28.93)	
Age of the Employee	Professor	8 (22.85)	24 (68.57)	3 (8.57)	$\chi^2 = 35.832$ df = 4 p = 0.001
	30 - 45 Years	99 (23.98)	196 (47.46)	118 (28.57)	
	45 - 60 Years	64 (45.40)	60 (42.55)	17 (12.06)	
	Below 30 Years	17 (27.87)	37 (60.66)	7 (11.48)	

Stream Teaching	Arts & Humanities	114 (32.85)	165 (47.55)	68 (19.60)	347	$\chi^2 = 21.215$ df = 4 p = 0.001
	Commerce	31 (40.79)	27 (35.53)	18 (23.68)	76	
	Science	35 (18.22)	101 (52.60)	56 (29.17)	192	

Source: Online Survey Data, 2021

H₀₄ – gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching do not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards the quality of teaching (digitally) from home.

A quality education provides the outcomes needed for individuals, communities, and societies to prosper. The quality of teaching transforms students' perceptions and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems. Results indicated that $p < 0.05$ at 95% confidence intervals for gender ($\chi^2 = 12.555$, df = 3, $p = 0.006$), designation ($\chi^2 = 61.002$, df = 9, $p = 0.001$), and age of the employee ($\chi^2 = 37.188$, df = 6, $p = 0.001$), [Table 6](#). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and inferences can be drawn that *gender*, *designation*, and *age* of the employee have significant influences on their perceptions of the quality of teaching from home (digitally).

The result for stream teaching revealed that $p > 0.05$ ($\chi^2 = 7.228$, df = 6, $p = 0.300$), thus we can say that stream teaching does not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards the quality of teaching from home (digitally).

Table 6 Perception of respondents towards the quality of teaching from home (digitally)

Variables	How satisfied are you with the Quality of Teaching from home (digitally)				Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Highly Satisfied n (%)	Satisfied n (%)	Dissatisfied n (%)	Highly Dissatisfied n (%)		
Gender	Female	31 (15.27)	125 (61.58)	36 (17.73)	11 (5.42)	$\chi^2 = 12.555$ df = 3 p = 0.006
	Male	69 (16.75)	212 (51.46)	120 (29.13)	11 (2.67)	
Designation	Assistant Professor	44 (13.10)	206 (61.31)	79 (23.51)	7 (2.08)	$\chi^2 = 61.002$ df = 9 p = 0.001
	Associate Professor	30 (35.29)	35 (41.18)	17 (20.00)	3 (3.53)	
	Contractual Teacher	13 (8.18)	86 (54.09)	48 (30.19)	12 (7.55)	
	Professor	13 (37.14)	10 (28.57)	12 (34.29)	0 (0.00)	
Age of the Employee	30 - 45 Years	48 (11.62)	227 (54.96)	116 (28.09)	22 (5.33)	$\chi^2 = 37.188$ df = 6 p = 0.001
	45 - 60 Years	40 (28.37)	69 (48.94)	32 (22.70)	0 (0.00)	
	Below 30 Years	12 (19.67)	41 (67.21)	8 (13.11)	0 (0.00)	
Stream	Arts & Humanities	59 (17.00)	181 (52.16)	95 (27.38)	12 (3.46)	$\chi^2 = 7.228$

Commerce	9 (11.84)	40 (52.63)	24 (31.58)	3 (3.95)	76	df = 6 p = 0.300
Science	32 (16.67)	116 (60.42)	37 (19.27)	7 (3.65)	192	

Source: Online Survey Data, 2021

6. Limitations of the research study and scope for further research

The study was conducted under the assumption that the information provided by the respondents was authentic and that there was minimal bias in responding to the questionnaire. Due to time constraints, the study was restricted only to academic professionals working in HEIs in India. Furthermore, for the sake of brevity and time constraints, we limited our analysis to understanding teachers' perceptions and excluded students. The outcome of the study cannot be generalised as the data was collected only from a section of employees working in HEIs in India.

As a result of the study, several avenues for further investigation in the areas of WFH, quality of digital education, work-life balance, etc. have been opened. Researchers can explore these topics in great depth through further research. Work-life balance, for example, is important, but we are lacking in that area in our current times. Further research could be conducted among employees of all sectors as to how to balance work and personal life.

7. Conclusions & Policy Implications

The present study has outlined the perceptions of academic professionals in higher education in India. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for a change in teaching methods and the introduction of digital education. As we do not know how long the pandemic situation will last, the present system of higher education must be revamped on a digital line. The findings of this study indicated that the majority of the academic professionals working in HEIs showed a positive attitude towards online teaching from home during the lockdown period. Digital learning was found to be advantageous as it provided flexibility and convenience for the learners. There was an overwhelming majority of teachers who thought that a portion of each course's syllabus should be restricted to online instruction, since it gives flexibility both to students and teachers, and situations such as this pandemic can be managed effectively. Virtual education is the most preferred mode of education during this crisis. It is believed that post COVID-19 higher education seems to be an education with a widely accepted online/virtual education system. According to the findings of the present study, gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching, all significantly influence perceptions of WFH policies,

productivity while teaching from home digitally, work-life balance (*except for gender*), and the quality of teaching from home (*except for stream teaching*).

The present study has important policy implications for the country like India. It reflects from the present study that working from home is an alternative way to carry out the work of an organisation. It will help to reduce overtime, stress, and workloads on the work front and increase flexibility, family and leisure time on the domestic front. The present study, therefore, could be useful for redesigning and reshaping higher education with online components.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

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