

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

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**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.*

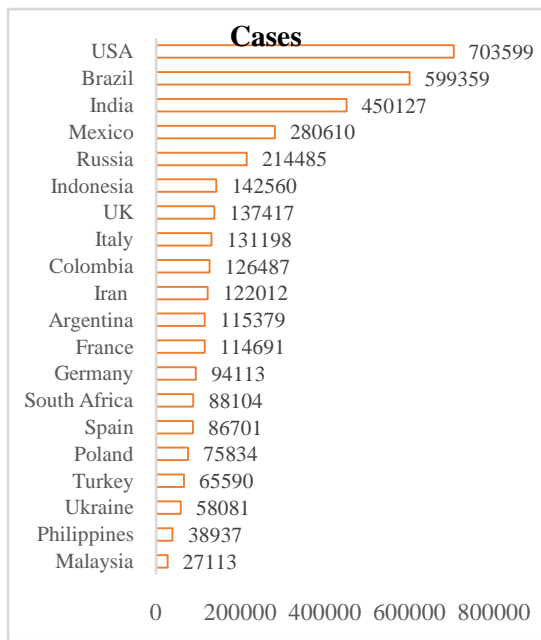
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## 1. Introduction

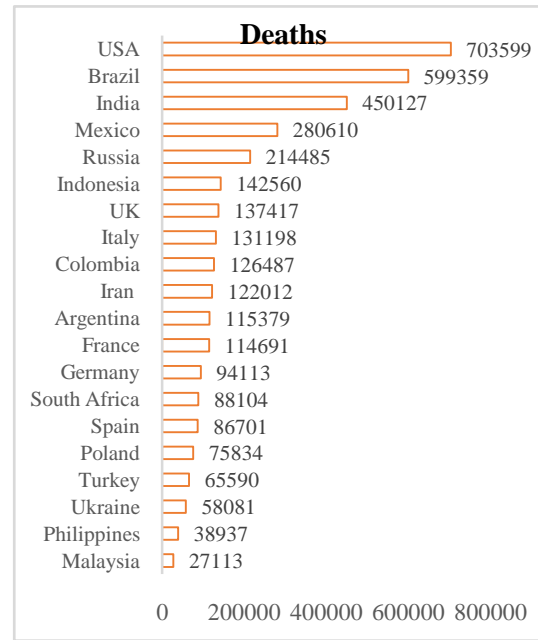
The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, also known as COVID-19, is a global pandemic of Coronavirus Disease. It was on December 31 that the World Health Organization (WHO) first learnt of this new disease (WHO, 2020). According to WHO, the symptoms of COVID-19 are variable, but often include 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). There has been a significant loss of human life worldwide due to Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (Shereen et al., 2020). A positive COVID-19 test was more likely to be reported by frontline and health-care workers than by the general population (Huang & Zhao, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).

In December 2019, Wuhan, China, was the first place where COVID-19 has been identified (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 30<sup>th</sup> 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). The first reported case of COVID-19 infection in India occurred on January 27, 2020, when a female 20-year-old with a one-day history of dry cough and sore throat was admitted to a general hospital in Thrissur, Kerala. According to her, on January 23, 2020, she returned to Kerala from Wuhan, China, due to the COVID-19 outbreak 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). According to the Higher Education Policy Institute, 63% of students said that their mental health had worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and alongside this, 38% expressed delight with the availability of mental health services. In spite of this, the director of the institute's policy and advocacy office said that it remains uncertain when and how normality will return to students in terms of their education and living situations.

### *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. According to the survey, 84% of teachers said they experienced stress and challenges when delivering education online, and nearly 50% of the teachers reported problems with the internet, both in terms of signal and data costs. There are two out of five teachers without the necessary devices to teach classes online. 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; Katoch, 2022). 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 (Katoch, 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. Justification of the Study**

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected educational systems, including in India. A number of educational institutions have temporarily closed, while most have turned to online education. The closure of educational institutions affects not only students, but also teachers, and has immense economic and societal consequences. It is the first time that faculty members have had to work from home. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers worldwide are becoming increasingly aware that the current lifestyle is not sustainable. Among many areas that need revolution, the educational sector is among them. In response, many institutions moved from face-to-face instruction to online instructions delivered from the comfort of their homes. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct this type of research to discover how teaching employees in HEIs feel about their jobs when they work from home.

## **3. 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 do they consider a good work-life balance? Working from home or in an office.

#### 4. Research Hypotheses

The present research was based on the following hypotheses:

1. **H<sub>01</sub> – gender, designation, age of the employee, and stream teaching do not have any significant influence on the perceptions of academic professionals towards WFH.**
2. **H<sub>02</sub> – 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. **H<sub>03</sub> – 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. **H<sub>04</sub> – 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.**

#### 5. 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.

#### 6. Material & Methods – sample design, questionnaire and analysis

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perceptions of academic professionals working in HEIs in India about working from home due to the COVID-19 outbreak with following steps:

4.1 **Sample Size:** 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.

4.2 **Questionnaire:** 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.

4.3 **Statistical Analysis:** Data was entered and analysed using IBM SPSS [version 28.0.1]<sup>2</sup> to test the framed hypotheses and draw the final inferences. Work-life balance, work-from-home policies, and productivity while teaching from home digitally were analysed using Chi-square techniques to test the significance of associations.

## 7. 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 (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	203	33.00
Male	412	67.00
<b>Designation of the Employee</b>		
Professor	35	5.70
Assistant Professor	336	54.60
Associate Professor	85	13.80
Contractual Teacher	159	25.90
<b>Age of the employee (years)</b>		
30 - 45 Years	413	67.20
45 - 60 Years	141	22.90
Below 30 Years	61	9.90
<b>Stream Teaching</b>		
Arts & Humanities	347	56.40
Commerce	76	12.40
Science	192	31.20
<b>Work Tenure from home (during COVID-19)</b>		
1-6 months	180	29.30
6-12 months	191	31.10
More than 12 months	244	39.70

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ibm.com/account/reg/in-en/signup?formid=urx-19774>

### 3.2 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

<b>Questions asked to know the perceptions towards WFH</b>	<b>Results summary</b>
a) <b>What is the biggest challenge faced during WFH?</b>	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 <a href="#">Fig. 3</a> .
b) <b>Do you feel trusted by the university/college and students?</b>	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, <a href="#">Figure 4</a> .
c) <b>What is the biggest benefit of WFH?</b>	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, <a href="#">Figure 5</a> .
d) <b>Which of the online tool work best for you?</b>	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, <a href="#">Figure 6</a> .
e) <b>Do you feel there is an adequate communication between you and your students?</b>	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. <a href="#">Figure 7</a> .
f) <b>Do you think that there is a need to keep some portion of the syllabus for online teaching?</b>	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. <a href="#">Figure 8</a> .

- 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](#). 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.
- h) **How satisfied are you with the Quality of Teaching (online) from home?**
- 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.
- i) **When you feel that you have a good work-life-balance?**
- 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.
- j) **How satisfied are you with the WFH policy during COVID-19?**
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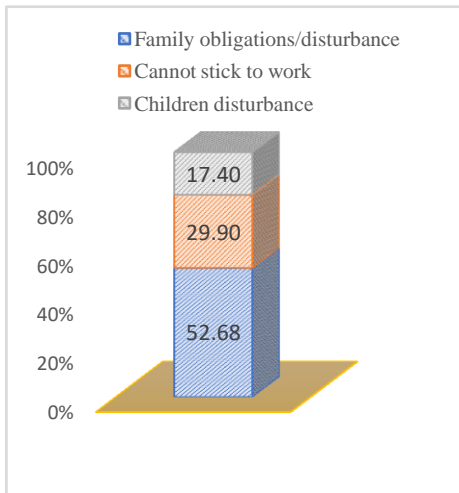


Fig.3 What is the biggest Challenge faced during work from home.

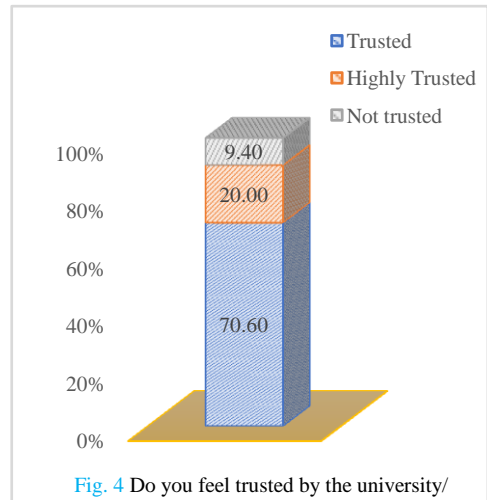


Fig. 4 Do you feel trusted by the university/ college and students?

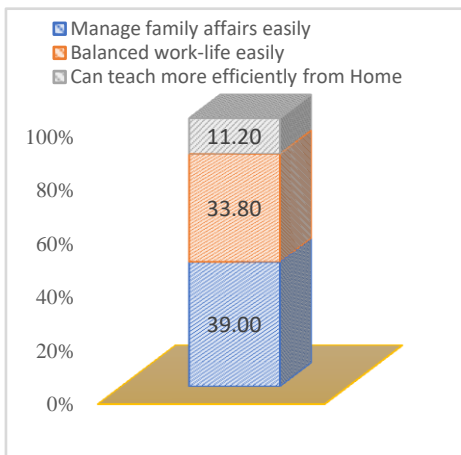


Fig. 5 What is the biggest benefit of WFH?

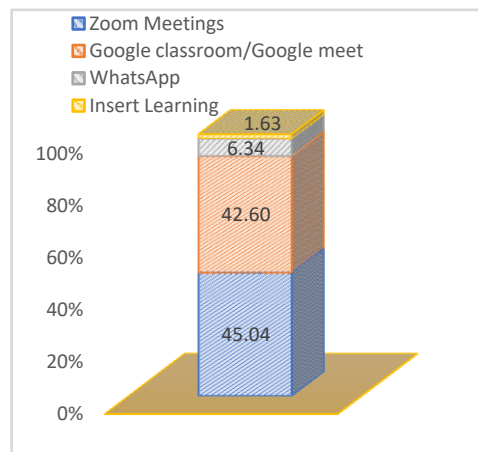


Fig. 6 Which of the online tools work best for you?

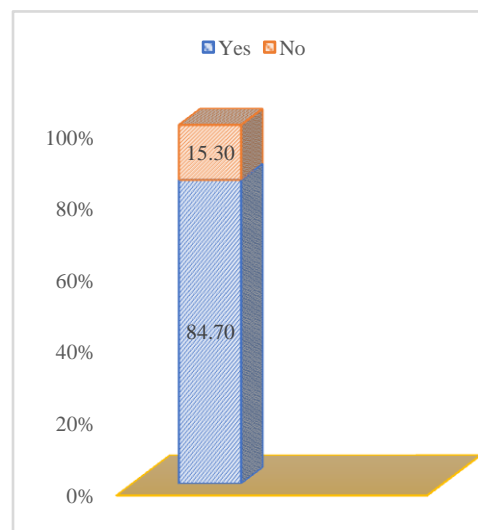
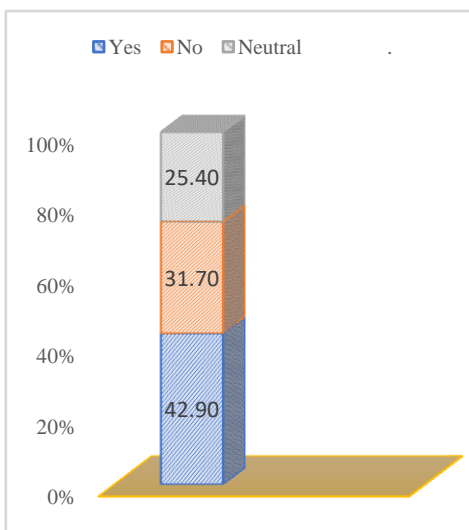


Fig. 8 Do you think there is a need to keep some portion of syllabus for online teaching?

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

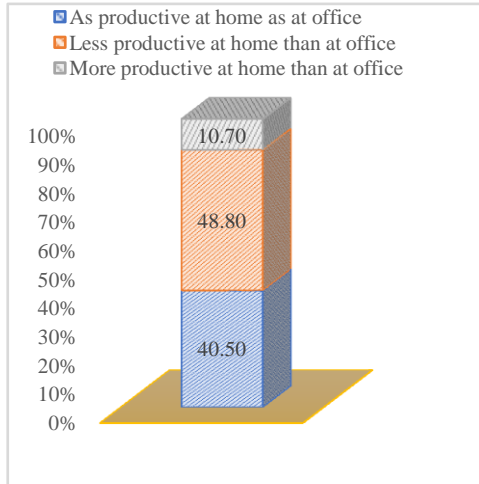


Fig. 9 Did you feel as Productive at home as at Office?

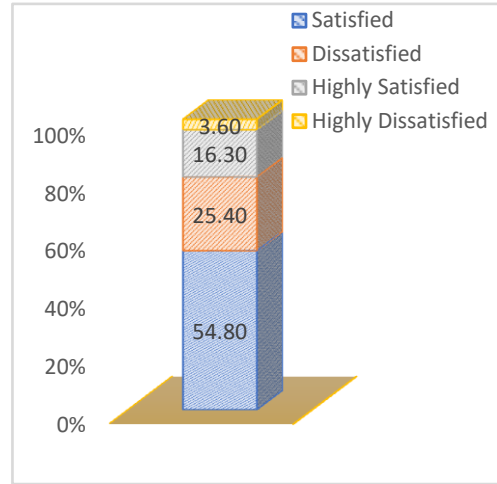


Fig. 10 How satisfied are you with the Quality of Teaching (online) from home?

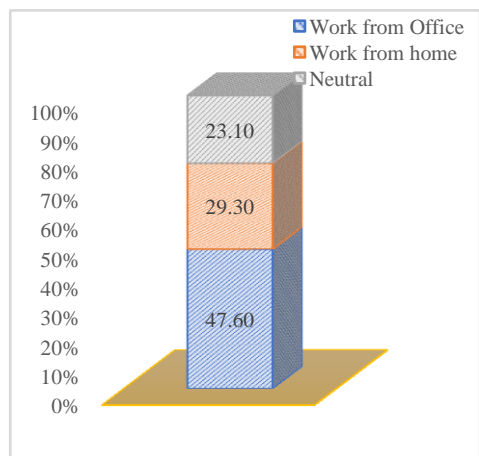


Fig. 11 When you feel that you have a good Work-Life-Balance?

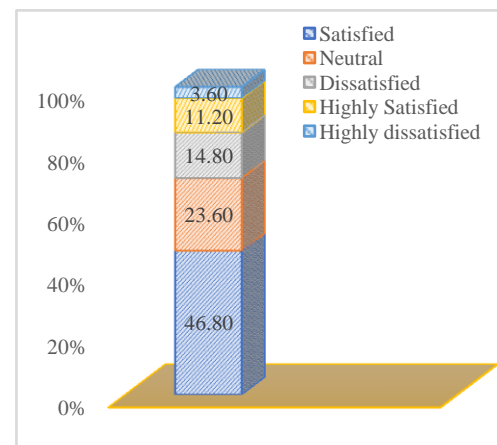


Fig. 12 How satisfied are you with the WFH policy during COVID-19?

### 3.3 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 ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis.

**H<sub>01</sub> – 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)	203 $\chi^2 = 20.647$ df=4 p= 0.001	
	Male	48 (11.65)	199 (48.30)	77 (18.69)	73 (17.72)	15 (3.64)		412
Designation	Assistant Professor	30 (8.92)	170 (50.60)	84 (25.00)	45 (13.39)	7 (2.08)	336 $\chi^2 = 72.140$ df =12 p = 0.001	
	Associate Professor	23 (27.05)	38 (44.71)	6 (7.06)	15 (17.65)	3 (3.53)		85
	Contractual Teacher	6 (3.78)	66 (41.51)	52 (32.70)	23 (14.47)	12 (7.55)		159
	Professor	10 (28.58)	14 (40.00)	3 (8.57)	8 (22.86)	0 (0.00)		35
Age of the Employee	30 - 45 Years	30 (7.27)	200 (48.43)	93 (22.52)	72 (17.43)	18 (4.36)	413 $\chi^2 = 57.246$ df = 8 p = 0.001	
	45 - 60 Years	33 (23.40)	64 (45.39)	25 (17.73)	19 (13.48)	0 (0.00)		141
	Below 30 Years	6 (9.83)	24 (39.34)	27 (44.26)	0 (0.00)	4 (6.56)		61
Stream Teaching	Arts & Humanities	49 (14.12)	163 (46.97)	64 (18.44)	59 (17.00)	12 (3.46)	347 $\chi^2 = 20.249$ df = 8 p = 0.009	
	Commerce	6 (7.90)	31 (40.79)	23(30.26)	13 (17.11)	3 (3.95)		76
	Science	14 (7.30)	94 (48.96)	58 (30.21)	19 (9.90)	7(3.65)		192

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.

**H<sub>02</sub> – 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 n (%)	Less productive at home than at office n (%)	More productive at home than at office n (%)		
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)	412	
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)	85	
	Contractual Teacher	58 (36.48)	82 (51.57)	19 (11.95)	159	
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)	413	
	45 - 60 Years	74 (52.49)	64 (45.39)	3 (2.13)	141	
Stream Teaching	Below 30 Years	17 (27.87)	40 (65.57)	4 (6.56)	61	$\chi^2 = 11.915$ df = 4 p = 0.018
	Arts & Humanities	150 (43.22)	157 (45.24)	40 (11.53)	347	
	Commerce	38 (50.00)	31 (40.79)	7 (9.21)	76	

**H<sub>03</sub> – 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.**

A healthy work environment is dependent on work-life balance. Work-life balance reduces work-related stress and helps prevent burnout at work. The ability of a person to do their job decreases when they do not have time to relax and recharge (Meenakshi, 2013). Work hours that are too long or too stressful negatively influence employees' ability to balance work and family life, as well as contribute to weight gain, smoking, 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)	
Stream Teaching	Below 30 Years	17 (27.87)	37 (60.66)	7 (11.48)	$\chi^2 = 21.215$ df = 4 p = 0.001
	Arts & Humanities	114 (32.85)	165 (47.55)	68 (19.60)	
	Commerce	31 (40.79)	27 (35.53)	18 (23.68)	

**H<sub>04</sub> – 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 <i>n</i> (%)	Satisfied <i>n</i> (%)	Dissatisfied <i>n</i> (%)	Highly Dissatisfied <i>n</i> (%)		
Gender	Female	31 (15.27)	125 (61.58)	36 (17.73)	11 (5.42)	203	$\chi^2 = 12.555$ $df = 3$ $p = 0.006$
	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)	336	$\chi^2 = 61.002$ $df = 9$ $p = 0.001$
	Associate Professor	30 (35.29)	35 (41.18)	17 (20.00)	3 (3.53)	85	
	Contractual Teacher	13 (8.18)	86 (54.09)	48 (30.19)	12 (7.55)	159	
Age of the Employee	Professor	13 (37.14)	10 (28.57)	12 (34.29)	0 (0.00)	35	$\chi^2 = 37.188$ $df = 6$ $p = 0.001$
	30 - 45 Years	48 (11.62)	227 (54.96)	116 (28.09)	22 (5.33)	413	
	45 - 60 Years	40 (28.37)	69 (48.94)	32 (22.70)	0 (0.00)	141	
Stream Teaching	Below 30 Years	12 (19.67)	41 (67.21)	8 (13.11)	0 (0.00)	61	$\chi^2 = 7.228$ $df = 6$ $p = 0.300$
	Arts & Humanities	59 (17.00)	181 (52.16)	95 (27.38)	12 (3.46)	347	
	Commerce	9 (11.84)	40 (52.63)	24 (31.58)	3 (3.95)	76	
	Science	32 (16.67)	116 (60.42)	37 (19.27)	7 (3.65)	192	

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## 8. 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. In view of time constraints, the research was restricted to academic professionals working in Indian higher education institutions and excluded students. The outcome of the study cannot be generalized since only a small group of employees from HEIs in India were surveyed. As a result of the study, several avenues for further investigation were opened in areas such as work-life balance, digital education quality, etc. Researchers can explore these topics in great depth by conducting further research.

## 9. 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 proved to be advantageous since it provided convenience and flexibility to the learners. Almost all the teachers surveyed thought that a portion of each course's syllabus should be restricted to online instruction. This would give students and teachers more flexibility, and situations like this pandemic could be handled more efficiently through online instruction. In these difficult times, online education is the most effective option available. A widely accepted online/virtual education system is expected to be the norm in post-COVID-19 higher education. Study results show that gender, designation, age, and stream of teaching are significant determinants of 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*). For a country like India, the present study has significant policy implications. The present study indicates that working from home is an alternative way to accomplish an organisation's goals. As a result, overtime, stress, and workloads will be reduced at work, while family, leisure, and flexibility will be increased at home. Hence, the present study may be useful for reshaping and redesigning higher education with online components.

## Consent

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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