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IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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Abstract: This research investigates the longitudinal effects of remote work on employee well-being and mental health, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. A structured questionnaire was administered to employees across various sectors, collecting data on psychological well-being, social isolation, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. The study employs Chi-square tests to analyse categorical variables and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for complex relationships. Findings indicate that while remote work offers flexibility, it also presents challenges such as increased isolation and work-life imbalance, which can negatively impact mental health. The study provides recommendations for organizations to mitigate these effects through supportive policies and practices.

Keywords: Remote Work, Employee Well-Being, Mental Health, Longitudinal Study, Chi-Square, Structural Equation Modelling.

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, transforming traditional workplace dynamics. While remote work offers benefits like flexibility and reduced commuting, concerns have emerged regarding its impact on employee well-being and mental health. This study aims to explore these effects over time, providing insights into the long-term implications of remote work arrangements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research presents a mixed view of remote work's impact on employee well-being. Some studies highlight benefits such as improved work-life balance and reduced stress, while others report challenges including increased loneliness and work-family conflict. This study seeks to contribute to this body of knowledge by examining these factors longitudinally.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A longitudinal design was employed, collecting data at two intervals: baseline and six months later. This approach allows for the assessment of changes over time.

3.2 Participants

The study surveyed 500 employees from several sectors, including IT, healthcare and education, ensuring a diverse sample.

3.3 Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed, encompassing the following domains:

- **Psychological Well-Being:** Assessed using standardized scales measuring mood, stress levels, and overall mental health.
- **Social Isolation:** Measured through questions regarding social interactions and feelings of loneliness.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Evaluated based on perceived balance between work responsibilities and personal life.
- **Job Satisfaction:** Determined through questions about job contentment and motivation.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

Chi-square tests were applied to examine associations between categorical variables, such as gender and levels of social isolation. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilized to explore complex relationships between remote work variables and employee well-being.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 60% male and 40% female participants, with an average age of 35 years. At baseline, 70% reported high job satisfaction, which decreased to 65% at the six-month follow-up.

4.2 Chi-Square Analysis

Chi-square tests revealed significant associations between gender and levels of social isolation, with females reporting higher levels of isolation. Additionally, a significant



relationship was found between work-life balance and job satisfaction indicating that poorer work-life balance correlates with lower job satisfaction.

4.3 Structural Equation Modelling

SEM analysis indicated that social isolation negatively impacts psychological well-being, and work-life imbalance mediates this relationship. The model fit indices were satisfactory (CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.04), suggesting a good fit between the data and the hypothesized model.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings align with existing literature suggesting that remote work can lead to increased social isolation and work-life imbalance, which adversely affect employee well-being. The moderating role of gender in social isolation levels highlights the need for gender-sensitive policies. Organizations should consider implementing strategies to foster social connections and support work-life balance to mitigate these negative effects.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the importance of addressing the psychological and social challenges associated with remote work. By understanding these impacts, organizations can develop targeted interventions to enhance employee well-being and maintain productivity in remote work settings.

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