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Data 734

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Effect of working from home on a woman's lifestyle and mental health

Introduction

Working remotely is referred to as working from home when both the employer and the employees consent to it. Usually, telework is maintained between the office and employees, and the timetable is flexible. Working in an office used to be commonplace. Many women have chosen to work from home due to the epidemic and rising demand for remote work in recent years [1]. According to U.S. bureau of labor statistics nearly half of employed women worked at home on days in 2000[3]. While there are certain advantages to working from home, many individuals have reported increased work-related stress. A study found that half of the workers who worked from home experienced stress [2]. Another research showed mental health has direct effects on productivity of an employee. Poor mental health is one of the main reasons for less productivity in employees [4]. Due to new environments for employees who previously worked in office jobs, their lifestyle and mental health are being impacted, particularly for women. The proposed research would look at how American working women's mental health and lifestyle are impacted by working from home.

Statement of the problem:

The proposed research explores the mental impact on women while working from home. The following analytical framework will explore the various types of mental issues women have faced during their jobs from home due to missing the socializing side of work at office.

The following are the research questions that will studied in the survey:

- Do you have infrastructure for working at home?

- What is the difference between working from home and in-person office in terms of lifestyle for women?
- What is the difference between working from home and in-person office in terms of mental health for women?

Hypothesis/Action Required:

Following hypothesis will be tested in this research-

- Participants don't have a designated desk for their official work at home.
- Working from home makes caregiver duties more achievable and easier compared to in-person office work
- Working from home has a more negative impact on mental health compared to in-person office work.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the working women who are working from home and previously worked in the office using a random probability sample of companies across the United States.

Overall Recruiting Approach and Data Collection Method

Women who work from home are invited to participate in an online survey. The targeted companies will be selected from a purchased comprehensive list of all firms in the United States, such as a list maintained by Dun and Bradstreet. Companies listed will be organized by size into three categories – small, medium, and large based upon the number of employees at that location. The exact definition of small, medium, and large will be determined after a review of the list purchased. I will request that the name of the Human Resource Officer (HR) be included, but I am aware that it might not be possible.

After getting the list of targeted companies, the head of the HR department from those companies will be asked by phone if they are willing to participate in the study and informed of its procedures. I realize that I must first find the right person if the purchased list does not give me that information and this will be accomplished through company website verification and/or contacting the company receptionist. The head will be given a proposal for this project where the benefits of their company as well as their staff will be discussed. Most notably, the companies will be given the results of our survey in aggregate across all companies.

After approving the project, the companies will be given instructions as to how to distribute the URL link to all women working from home at that location. No quotas or further sampling will be conducted by type of work, title of employee or pay scale. Women employees will also receive a unique pin (password) that I will devise that will allow them to access the survey and will be tied to that specific company. In this way, I will not have to handle any sensitive information such as employee identification numbers or employee email addresses. Women will also be asked to complete the survey on company time (it only takes 15 minutes or less) but to use a device not monitored by the company to ensure confidentiality.

This project will include a pretest survey to acquire response rates that will help us finalize the sample quantity in the main survey. More information will be given in the sample design section.

Since the research deals with lifestyle and mental health, some participants may find the topic sensitive. Given that the questions will ask about the state of one's mental health, medical experts will be on standby to handle any emergencies that may arise during the interview. Participants will be provided with medical expert contact information should they need to talk to a professional. For general questions about the survey, there will be a website FAQ site and a contact email will be included in the survey URL.

Each participant will be given a gift card of \$25 when the survey is completed if the respondent is willing to provide an email address where it can be sent. This includes those participating in the main and pretest portion of the survey.

Sample Design

A list of companies will be purchased through a list provider such as Dun and Bradstreet. The sample will be divided into three separate groups: large, medium-sized, and small companies. This project includes the companies with female employees that work remotely. We are assuming that there are approximately 150,000 American women aged between 25 years to 60 years who are currently working from home and previously worked in office jobs. They are the target demographic of this research.

This research will be done in two steps. First, we will conduct a pretest survey and then we will conduct the main survey. The goals of the pre-test survey are to determine the percent of companies where the head of HR is known from a purchase list; to measure response rates, to learn the penetration of companies with female home workers that once worked in an office, and to estimate the total universe of female home workers who once worked in an office. Thus, assumptions made in this proposal for the main portion of the study will likely need to be tweaked based on the findings of the pre-test.

To make this happen, the project will try to reach 1500 pretest participants in total with established quotas for company size. Since we assume larger companies have more eligible participants for this project compared to smaller companies, we have divided the participants by quotas of 50% for large companies, 40% for medium companies and 10% for small companies.

By projecting that most HR heads will not accept the proposal or that many of these companies will not have any women who are eligible for this survey, this project assumes about 10% companies will eventually participate. Assuming there will be 250 participants per company for large companies, the pretest survey will start by selecting 30 large companies to contact using a simple random sample method with the assumption that three will participate (10%). Moreover, by assuming this project will select 30 participants from each medium company using a simple random sampling, the project will need 200 medium companies to get the estimated 600 participants. Similarly small companies have minimum staff working from home, so the project assumes there will be 3 participants per small company available for this survey. To make this happen the project will need about 500 companies to get an estimated 150 participants. The figures may be overstated since it assumes 100% of eligible employees in each selected company will participate with HR encouragement. The following figure shows the number of companies and participants stated in the above design.

Figure 1: Sample Design for Pre-Test Survey

Company Size	Company Contacts	Company Participants	Percent of Companies Eligible and Willing to Participate	Targeted Population
Large	30	3	50%	750
Medium	200	20	40%	600
Small	500	50	10%	150

The pretest will ask a shortened questionnaire that will only capture confirmation of gender and work location history.

Once the pretest is complete, the main survey will commence with the goal of capturing 15,000 participants representing 10% of total demographic using the method as described above. Since as per our presumption only 10% companies will agree to our proposal, getting 10% of the total demographic from those limited companies is our ideal number. Apart from that by using sampling methods we are actually using those 10% as a representative of the total demographic which we think is a good number of samples for our research.

This portion of the project will deduct those companies from the initial lists of companies which participated in the pretest survey.

Assuming my initial assumptions did not change, the following figure shows the number of estimated companies and participants for the main survey

Figure 2: Sample Design for Final survey

Company Size	Company Contacts	Company Participants	Percent of Companies Eligible and Willing to Participate	Targeted Population
Large	300	30	50%	Approx. 7500
Medium	2000	200	40%	Approx. 6000
Small	5000	500	10%	Approx. 1500

Every participant who will be selected for the survey will have a scheduled time before the link expires.

Limitations

The main limitation of this project is locating a large enough amount of data to produce accurate results. Because this project employs a random sampling method, bias in participant selection is

possible. Individual participant biases may influence the outcome since only 10% of the total demographic will participate in this project, which may not reflect the entire population across the country. Quotas based on company size may yield biased results too. The data supply of faulty or incorrect data given by the organizations can cause sampling error. More resources are required for better sampling in this project. Sensitive topic of survey can make participants uncomfortable to participate.

Survey Questions

Pre- Test:

1. What is your gender?
2. Do you have experience working in the office?
3. Do you currently work from home?

Main Survey:

Screening Questionnaire:

1. What is your gender?
2. Do you have experience working in the office?
3. Do you currently work from home?
4. What is your age bracket?

Core Survey:

5. How many people live in your current residence?
6. How many children do you have?
7. Do you have your own dedicated workspace at home?
8. When you wake up, do you take the time to dress in work attire when working at home?
9. What kind of person are you (choose one or more)?
10. What do you do in your private time?

11. Do you find yourself practicing your hobbies more when you work from home or more when you are at the office?
12. How often do you go out with your friends or family?
13. Do you find yourself going out with your family more when you work from home?
14. Do you feel more stressed when working from home or working in the office?
15. How would you describe your current mental health?
16. Do you feel more anxiety around your coworkers when you work from home or in person?
17. What type of environment do you feel more work pressure (at home or in person)?
18. What kind of working environment do you prefer in the future that will impact your happiness?

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