

# The Effect Of Work From Home On The Family Life Of Married Women During COVID-19: A Case Study Of Government College University Lahore

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the impact of work from home on family life of married women. Since the pandemic hit the world, it has changed the living and work patterns of the people. Covid-19 has affected women in several ways due to the changed working arrangement. A survey was conducted to see the impact of working from home on the family life of married women. For this purpose, convenience sampling was used, and respondents of the present study were married women in the faculty and admin staff of the Government College University, Lahore. Findings revealed mixed feelings; the respondents mentioned increased domestic work and disturbance that working from home caused in their lives during Covid-19. On the other hand, bonding with their family became stronger, due to working from home and the benefits of increased family integration and togetherness. The findings of this study show that increased domestic work and work-family conflict were the factors associated with stress while working from home.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Work from Home, Married Women, Family Life.

## Introduction

The outbreak of Coronavirus started in China in December 2019, spreading to different parts of the world. Due to this, WHO (World Health Organization) announced it as a Public Health Emergency of international concern. Covid-19 is highly infectious through various transmitting capacities and causes death globally. The pandemic changed the life of every person in many ways, i.e. people had to face financial constraints and emotional strain, and it added to the psychological burdens as well. Due to the pandemic, countries all over the world restricted their daily life activities by imposing lockdowns in the country. People had to face social isolation as they were forced to remain in their homes to

prevent infection but on the other hand, it was causing serious psychological distress to the people (Park et al., 2021). The pandemic has brought significant changes in the daily lives of people globally that are impacting their lives negatively. Due to the lockdown, the pattern of work changed as well. All the work has been shifted to online mode. People were asked to do work from home so that the virus can be prevented from spreading. With the shift of work mode, people feel more burdened since they have to manage work stress at home along with the house chores and other emotional baggage that Covid-19 was putting on them.

Due to Covid-19 a shift from working at the office to working from home took place, which

changed the lives of people in all aspects. According to research due to the Covid-19 crisis, 31% of employees perceived a negative impact on their work lives due to the crisis (Tušl et al., 2021). While everything has shifted from traditional mode to the online form so has teaching and learning i.e. system of education. Schools are closed and people are moved toward virtual learning and teaching which creates a huge problem for kids and the teachers as well. These issues include very evident reasons that not being used to the virtual learning and teaching method, communication gaps, etc. By all means, Covid-19 has made life very difficult for people, family life of people was disturbed due to Covid-19, as there were no specified working hours. The stress of keeping yourself protected from viruses and family-work conflict created psychological distress in the lives of people.

In educational institutions, the shift from physical classes to online teaching had caused an increase in the burden on women in academics (Tayal & Mehta, 2022). According to studies an experience of loss in creativity and productivity of the teachers due to an imbalance in work and family life. The reason for the loss of creativity in the work was varied problems such as learning the use of digital platforms for helping the students in learning and addressing the specific need & attention of every student which was only possible through face-to-face communication (Tayal & Mehta, 2022). Women were seen to be juggling work and familial responsibilities that resultantly caused a work-family conflict. According to Adisa et al. (2021) women are considered more responsible and bear the duties of children as compared to men which increases their domestic workload causing an addition to their work. According to a study in Italy, 40% of the grandparents provided daily care to the kids whereas the lockdown restrictions had decreased this proportion substantially. The rate of high mortality among the elderly due to Covid-19 was the reason for the decrease in this proportion (del

Boca et al., 2020). Due to the pandemic, the closure of childcare facilities had increased the work of women since they had to manage both children and work at the same time. Almost every other person in the work field was struggling to cope with their work shifting from physical to online means. Aperribai et al., (2020) said that virtual modes of teaching had added stress and anxiety to the life of teachers as they were unsure of how to connect with their students and help them in learning in this online mode of teaching. Teachers on the other hand need social and emotional support to face the extra burden that had been put on their shoulders while turning from face-to-face to online teaching in this time of crisis (Aperribai et al., 2020).

According to various studies, we can see that women in any society are usually considered home makers resulting in their expectations of managing the house and work (if doing any) simultaneously (Tayal & Mehta, 2022). Research by Mūrage et al., (2022) state that on average, 201 working days for women and 63 working days for men annually. Due to the designated gender roles, women are considered as the primary caregivers, and men are assigned the role of breadwinners of the house. Research (Nidhi et al., 2021) asserts that working from home is more than performing the job duties at home rather than onsite. It requires a different individual and organizational structure, which should be designed to fit the needs and the goals of employers and employees alike. The females especially the married women who were doing work from home along with managing the house, work from home over burden them. Those women also had to fulfill both duties be it in their houses or at their workplaces, which means balancing their work and family life. There were some challenges related to societal and cultural norms and beliefs that further placed pressure on women which resultantly became the reason for much stress. As socio-cultural expectations from women are to take care of everything including family,

domestic work, or home chores. Work and family life both were disturbed as they did not get undivided attention. Women were unable to contribute equally to the paid labor due to unequal distribution of domestic work in the families, as the socio-cultural norms consider female paid labor as their second preference to the family and spouse work. (Uddin, 2021). Working women still struggle to maintain the proper balance between juggling the demands of both their personal and professional lives (Rendon, 2016). Pieces of evidence from the research showed that in UK and Spain, equal distribution had been seen in domestic work and duties of childcare between the partners but most of the extra work that had been caused by this pandemic is considered a duty of women alone (del Boca et al., 2020).

In this case of working from home, women are more burdened as compared to men since they must manage both work and home. Amid the ongoing situation of covid-19 women had to do it all from managing the family, doing house chores, and keeping the kids occupied to working long hours while working from home. Women in most cases get no support at all from their partners and had to manage it all by themselves. This rising burden of family and work had affected the family life of women, as managing both work and family life was difficult and caused stress.

Covid-19 had added a lot of distress in the lives of people and due to the sudden shift in work mode, people are getting more disruptions in their lives. For most women, the shifting of work mode has increased the workload. According to research by Nidhi et al., (2021), the absence of social support, the professional and private lives of working women got severely affected. The family life of women had got disturbed a lot due to working from home, as working long hours and no fixed work hours had generated an imbalance in the work and family life of a woman. Women

were getting stressed and thus it creates a problem in their lives as it was getting difficult to manage everything properly that including working from home along with the house chores. Women who were doing paid labor along with managing household work, this tends to blur the boundaries between work and life. Working from home had put a lot of extra burden of work on women and due to the lockdown, since everyone is confined at home, the responsibilities of woman has increased which generated a conflict in work and family life. The stress and anxiety caused by social isolation impact the mental health and physical health of women and changes in work patterns burden them a lot. The research found out married women working from home during covid-19 had anxiety, stress, and depression.

Almost all the world's population suffered due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced workers to suddenly shift work out of their offices and into their homes. The shift in the aspect of life and work is a big change for people especially women as it impacts both their family and work life and further poses an impact on their familial relationships. Women are trying to cope with the burden work from home has caused them. The lives of women were already no less than chaotic situations as managing work along with the responsibilities of a family is very stressful. Due to the social and cultural values of Pakistani society, woman's conventional job is of a homemaker and thus it makes most of their responsibility to manage everything at home. Very less or no social support from a partner was observed. Women in the end were seen managing everything alone and eventually guilty for not managing everything properly. Covid-19 impositions led to extreme distress as women were burdened which affect their mental and physical health. With remote working, women should be provided ease and less burdened so that they can manage both home and work easily and no work-family conflict will arise. On the other

hand, support from a partner is required so that the burden on a woman can be divided equally. While working from home support from family and partners seems to reduce the work-family conflict.

After providing the introduction to the effect of working from home, this study explores how married women in Pakistan got affected by working from home. The focus of this research is on the effects of work from home on the family life of married women. The study has three key research objectives as mentioned below.

- I. To highlight the effect of working from home on the family life of married women.
- II. To find out the relationship between work from home and family life conflict.
- III. To understand how the work mode (online working and onsite working) can impact the family life of a married female.

This study will add to the existing literature impact of work from home on the family life of a married woman. There are a lot of existing studies about how working from home had changed the lives of women and caused harm to their family life creating work-family conflict. The significance of this research is that it will provide an insight into how the work from home during Covid-19 have affected family life of married women. This research will help the scientific community and public in getting awareness about how the psychological health of the woman is affecting due to work from home during covid-19 while managing both work and family life together.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research site**

Government College University, Lahore (GCUL) was taken as the research site for this research. As this research is conducted on married working women, therefore married females from the teaching faculty and administration staff were taken to conduct the research. Since data collection from university employees was convenient that is why researcher choose it as the research site.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of this research includes all the married working women who were working from home during covid-19 outbreak. Non-probability sampling strategy was employed in the research. The sampling technique which was used for this research was convenient sampling. Convenient sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. This sampling technique was suitable for the research because of the unavailability of the sampling frame due to limitations. The available married teachers and administrative staff working during the covid-19 outbreak due to lockdown were taken as respondents with their consent. Teachers from all the departments and women working in the administrative office of the departments of the university were taken as respondents to conduct the research. The sampling frame was not inaccessible for students at the university so convenient sampling was done to conduct this research. Married females from the administrative staff and faculty who were conveniently available and willing were approached and asked to fill out the questionnaire.

### **Method**

A survey method was used for conducting this research. The survey for this research has been done by a self-administered questionnaire in which there were closed-ended questions to

gather data. The researcher used 5 points Likert scale to measure the variables of the research and scale items were evaluated from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The researchers wish to assess about the effect of working from home on the family life of married women during covid-19 the data was collected to measure the effect. The respondents of this research consisted of 38 married working women of age between 25 and 55 years who worked from home during covid-19.

### **Data collection**

A questionnaire was developed as a tool for data collection. Socio-demographic variables of the respondent were their income, family structure, and years of job completion to see whether these variables influence the effect on the family life of a married working woman during covid-19, or not. To measure the effect of working from home, a questionnaire was developed that included questions regarding either the stress remote work has caused the working woman during covid-19 or the edge it has given to women to work at home and take care of their families. The work-from-home questionnaire also constitutes the questions regarding the flexibility of work during covid-19. To measure the effect on the family life of married women, due to working from home- a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire included questions ranging from the social support woman had from family while working from home to issues created in family life due to working from home. These questions were designed to see the effect of working from home on the family life of married women during covid-19.

### **Data Analysis**

For the data analysis of this research, the researchers used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). For data entry, it was made sure

that no duplicate responses were added, and incomplete questionnaires were discarded.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Participants were told briefly about the nature and aims of the study. The ethical considerations which were considered by the researcher included the voluntary participation of all the participants and they were free to choose if they want to take part in the research or decline it. Their consent was taken before their responses. It was assured to the participants that their anonymity will be kept, and their information will be kept confidential.

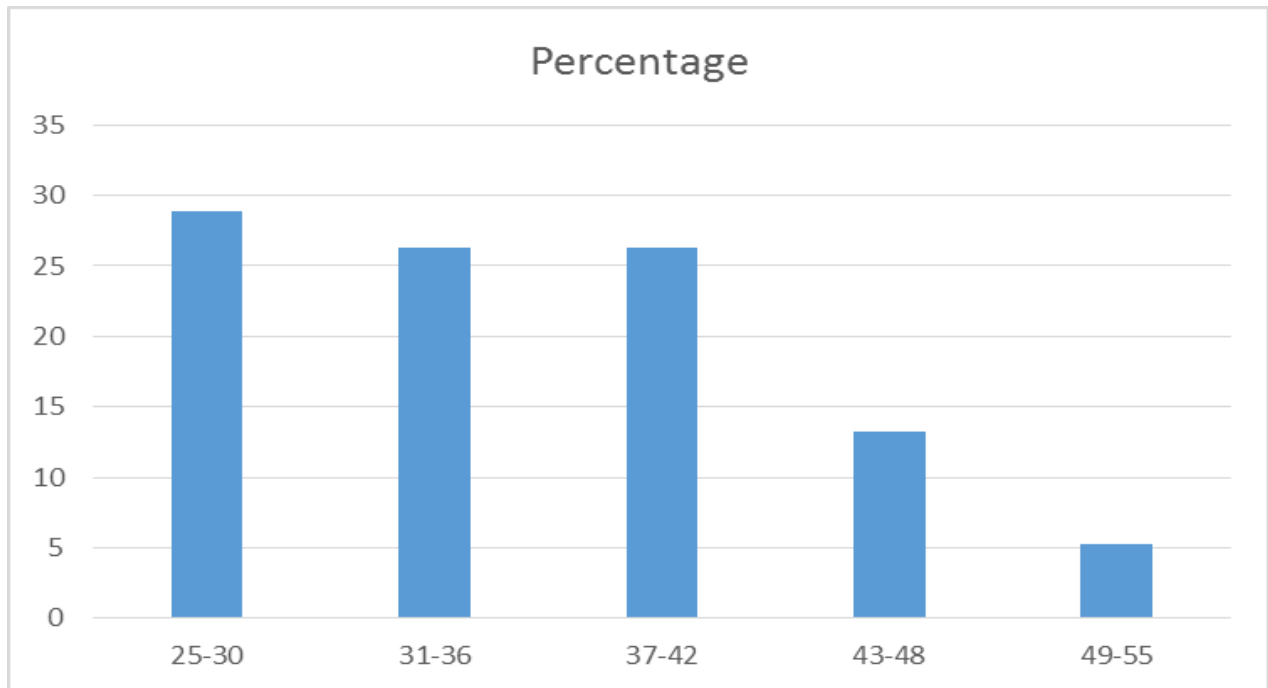
### **Results and Findings**

The findings of this study support the effectiveness of work from home on the family life of married women during covid-19. The findings of the study have been illustrated in the tables presented below. The data analysis revealed major themes including increased workload of married working females, impact on family life, and stress work from home has caused to married females.

### **Demographic Information of the Respondents**

Respondents of this research conducted were of ages ranging from 25-55. The table shows that 28.9 % of the respondents in the total sample were aged between 25-30. Almost one-fourth of working women were aged between 31-36 years. 26.3% of the respondents of this research were of age 37-42. Approximately 13.0% of them were of age ranging from 43-48 who were included in this research. Respondents in the age range 49-55 were 5.3% were part of this research. Most of the respondents that took part in this research conducted were of age ranging from 25-30 years as shown in figure 1.

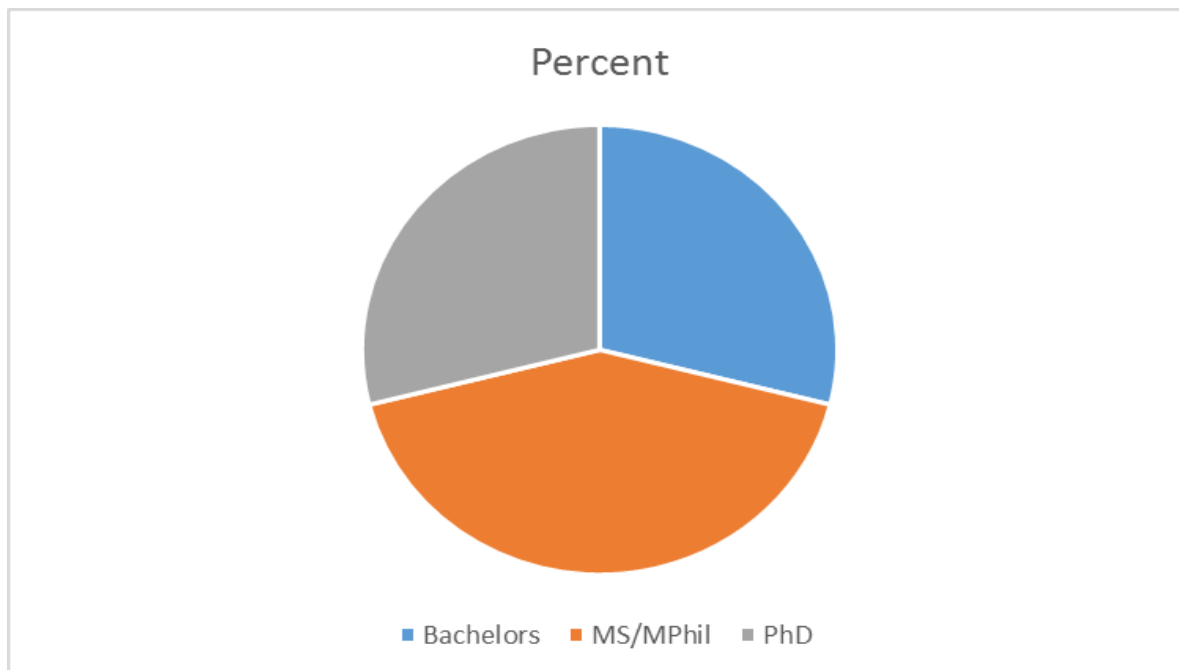
**Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents**



The data included the respondent's education. Over one-fourth of the respondents in this research had bachelor's degrees. Slightly half of the respondents who took part in the research

were MPhil degree holders. 28.9% of the respondents had Ph.D. degrees and took part in the research.

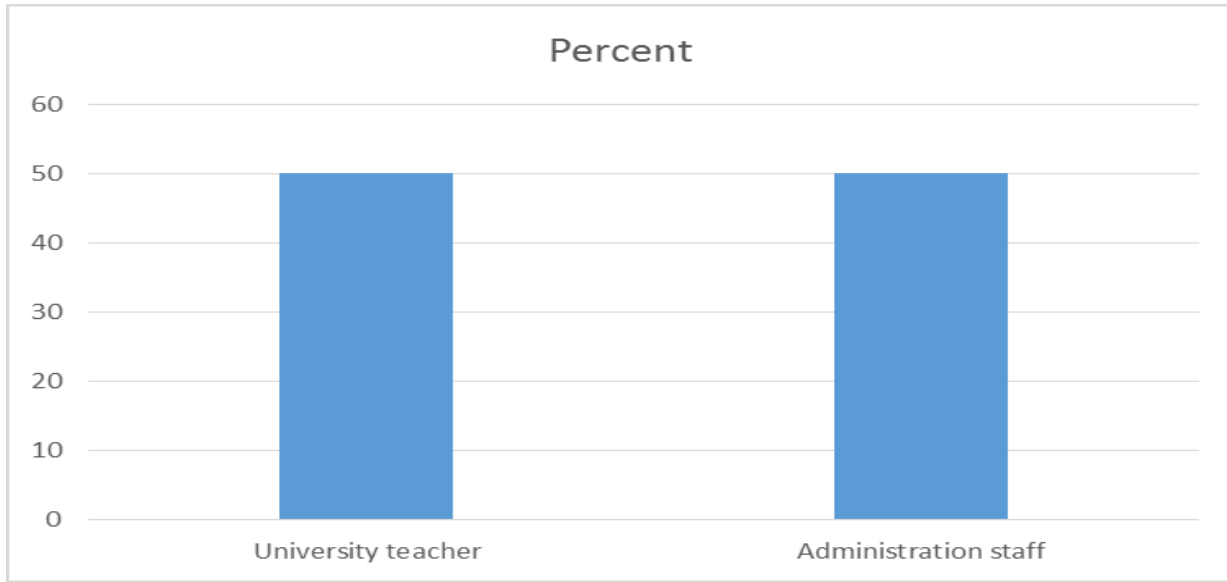
**Figure 2: Education of the Respondents**



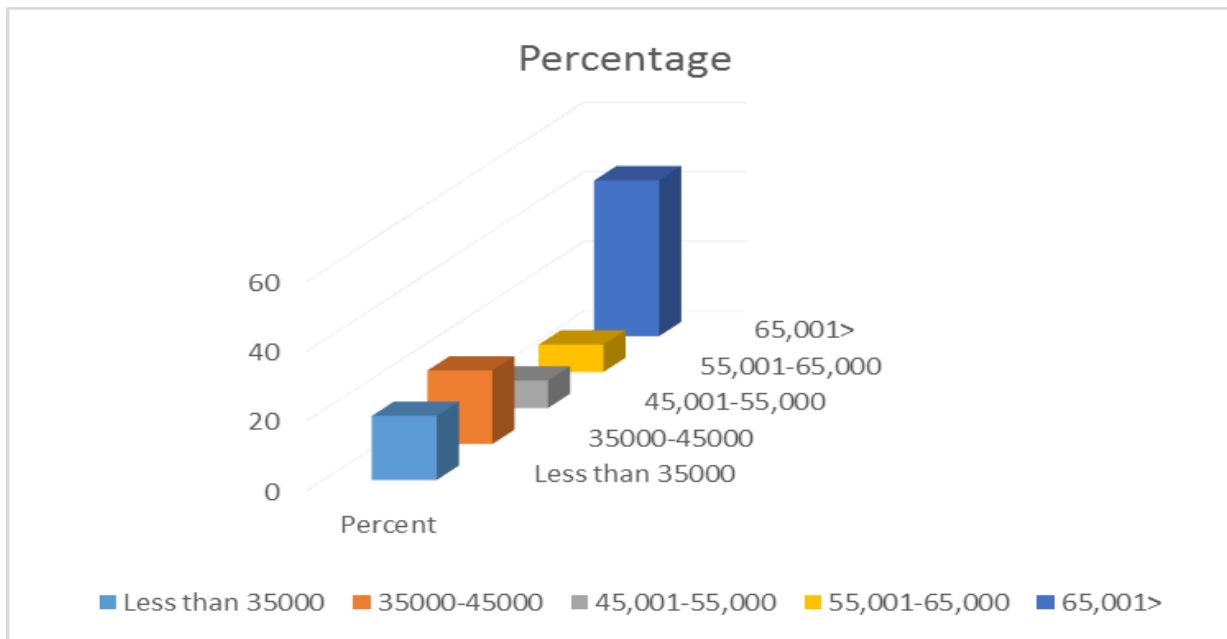
One- half of the data for this research have been collected from female university teachers of different departments. The other half of the respondents were from females of the administrative staff of the university who was

working from home during covid-19. 19 responses to questionnaires for this research were collected from the university teachers and 19 responses were collected from the admin staff as shown in the figure 3.

**Figure 3: Work Category of the Respondents**



**Figure 4: Monthly Income of the respondents**



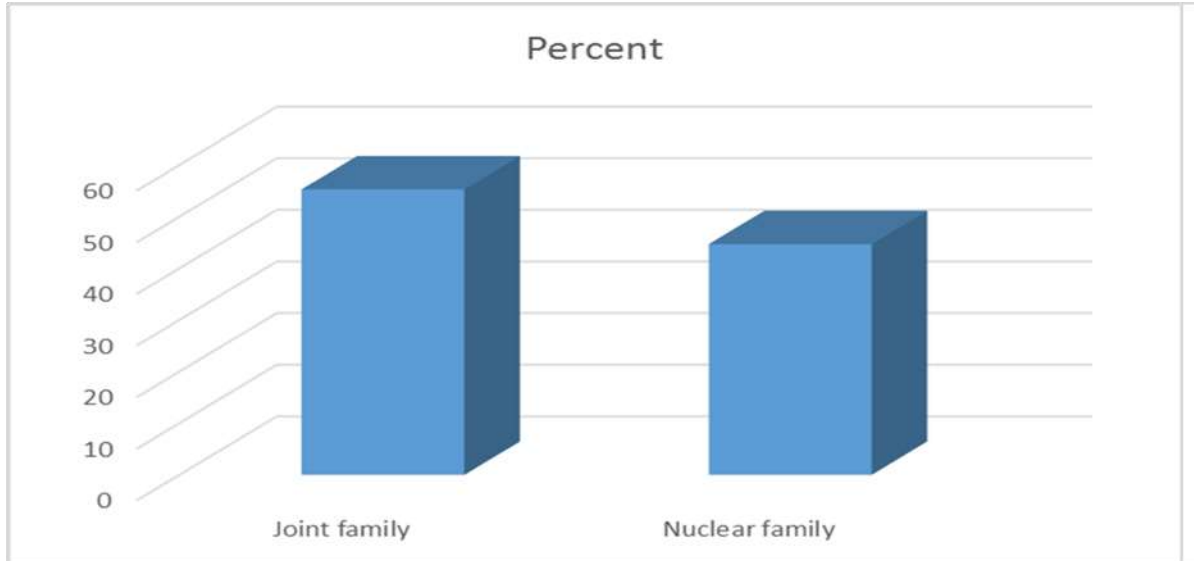
The figure 4 shows the income of the respondent of the research. According to this figure, 18.4%

of respondents that were included in the research were low-paid having an income of less than

35000. 21.1% of respondents had their pay in the range from 350000-450000. Some of the admin staff and female teachers had an income among 45000-65000. Almost one-half of the respondents

reported their income was more than 650000. Most of the respondents of this research had a monthly income of more than 65000.

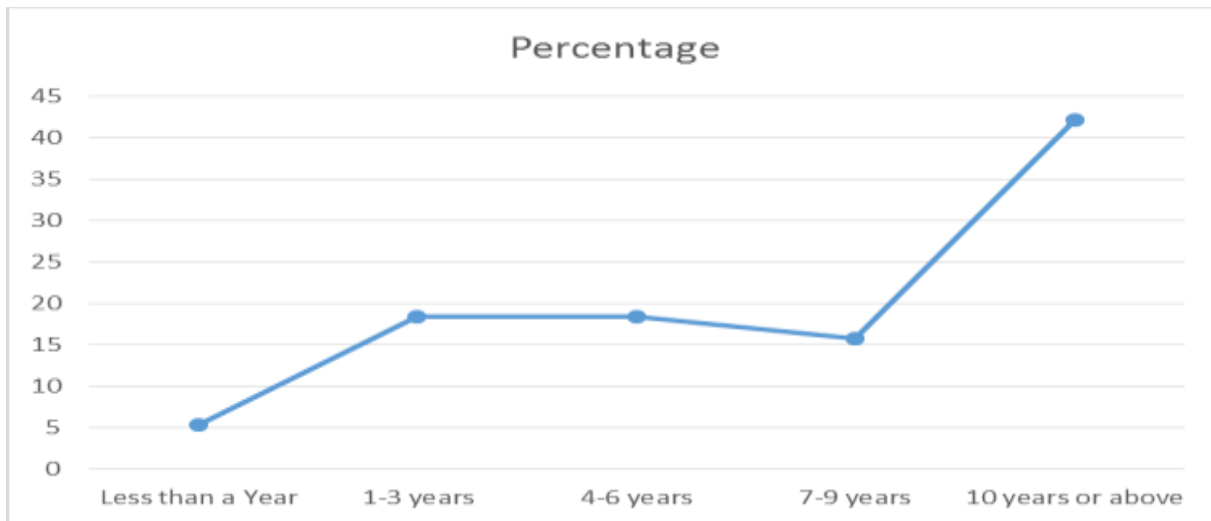
**Figure 5: Family Structure of the Respondents**



The family structure of the respondents is shown in figure 5. As the figure shows, that majority of the respondents were living in joint family systems. 55.3% of respondents were living in the

joint family system. Approximately one-half of the respondents were living in a nuclear family structure.

**Figure 6: Years of Job Completion before Covid-19**





Years of job completion of the respondents before covid-19 is shown in the figure. Figure 6 indicates that respondents who had working experience of less than a year were very few. According to the data 18.4% of the respondents fall in the category of 1-6 years of job completion before covid-19. A significant proportion of the respondents had completed their 7-9 years of job before covid-19. Figure 6 indicates that almost half of the respondents have completed 10 years or more in their job before covid-19. The majority of the married working females of GCU, Lahore

have completed their 10 years or more in the job before covid-19.

### Work from home

Work from home was measured during covid-19, how it over-burden it caused to the married women. As married women went through a lot due to working from home during covid-19, so we are going to see how the psychological health of married women got affected by working from home during covid-19.

**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of the responses against every item associated with working from home**

No.	Items	Response Categories				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.1.	Working from home was very stressful for me.	21.1	34.2	7.9	26.3	10.5
1.2.	My job performance has increased while working from home.	0	39.5	26.3	26.3	7.9
1.3	Due to working from home, I feel like my job and personal life are intermingled.	5.3	18.4	36.8	31.6	7.9
1.4	Working from home has created a disturbance in my life.	10.5	36.8	7.9	42.1	2.6
1.5	I have been unable to concentrate on my job due to work.	7.9	31.6	13.2	44.7	2.6
1.6	Working from home was not an easy task for me.	5.3	34.2	13.2	42.1	5.3
1.7	Working from home has increased the burden of my job.	7.9	34.2	10.5	42.1	5.3

1.8	I was satisfied with working from home.	2.6	39.5	21.1	26.3	10.5
1.9	I felt drained due to working from home.	5.3	26.3	22.1	44.7	2.6
1.10	Remote working during covid-19 has made my life easier.	5.3	36.8	15.8	34.2	7.9
1.11	Working from home has increased my efficiency in task performance	5.3	36.8	21.1	34.2	2.6

Table 1 indicates the items of work from home. Work from home in these statements is measured as in during covid-19 what is the nature of work from home was over-burden it has caused to the married women. Statement 1.1, working from home during covid-19 was not stressful for married women as about two-third of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Statement 1.2 indicates that the job performance of the respondent has not increased while working at home. By the above statement, we can analyze that job and personal life of the respondent were intermingled. Over 40.0% agreed with the statement that working from home has created a disturbance in their life in statement 1.4.

Due to working from home, it has been seen from the data collected that respondents were unable to concentrate on their job. Statement 1.6 indicates that working from home during covid-19 was not easy for married women. Working from home has increased the burden of the job of working women, it has been analyzed by statement 1.7 as approximately one-half of the respondents agreed to this. The findings suggest that the married women were not satisfied while working from home since it has increased their burden. From statement 1.9 the responses show that working from home has made the life of working women difficult. The above statement indicate that the efficiency of task performance has decreased.

### Family Life

The following statements in table 2 are about family life. Family life is measured as support from the family, issues experienced by or in family life due to work from home during covid-19. The disturbance caused by work from home in the family life of married women. It shows that most of the respondents have support from their families while working from home. It also indicates that the families of married women were not suffering due to working from home and it was seen through the responses that many respondents disagreed that they had less time to give to their families while working from home. This implies while working from home women had enough time and attention to give to their families. Findings also show that the work of respondents was juggling with their family life as 47.4% agree with this statement.

It is found that respondents were able to give attention to their families because of working from home. There is an equal ratio of agreement and disagreement responses to the statement that respondents can easily manage both work and family while working online. Through this response, it can be analyzed that for a few married women working from home was easily manageable on the other hand, few of them find it hard to manage family work. Responses by the respondents showed an inclined ratio toward managing the household during work from home.

Responses showed that due to working from home, females can give attention to their families.

Findings also suggest that married working females in Government College University, Lahore had a hard time keeping pace with work along with managing the family. Due to the cooperative behavior of the families, females were able to manage working from home. Over one-third of the respondents agreed that working from home had made their life easier. One-half of the respondents agreed with the statement that their families motivated them when they felt

distressed while working from home. The respondent agreed that their family bonding has become stronger due to working from home. Responses showed that while working from home, respondents were motivated to work more efficiently. The responses also indicated that for working women it was easy for them to manage household chores due to working from home. Our analysis revealed that work from home has created stress in the life of married women but due to the cooperative behavior of their families they were able to manage work and family life.

**Table 2: Percentage distribution of the responses against every item associated with family life-related items**

No.	Items	Response Categories				
		S. Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	S. Agree
2.1	I feel my family was cooperative during lockdown while I was working online from home.	0	5.3	18.4	57.9	18.4
2.2	I feel my family was suffering due to my work from home during Covid-19.	5.3	34.2	26.3	23.7	10.5
2.3	I felt I had less time to give to my family after working from home.	7.9	36.8	21.1	23.7	10.5
2.4	My work was juggling with my family life.	5.3	18.4	26.3	47.4	2.6
2.5	I was able to give attention to my family because of working online.	2.6	23.7	26.3	36.8	10.5
2.6	I found it difficult to give time to my family due to work.	5.3	42.1	15.8	31.6	5.3
2.7	I felt like I can easily manage both family and work together.	0	36.8	10.5	36.8	15.8
2.8	I was unable to manage my household due to my workload.	5.3	47.4	21.1	23.7	2.6

2.9	I was unable to pay attention to my family due to my work.	7.9	39.5	21.1	23.7	7.9
2.10	Whenever I felt distressed due to work, my family motivated me.	0	21.1	5.3	50	23.7
2.11	Due to working from home, I can easily look after my family.	0	18.4	18.4	42.1	21
2.12	I had a hard time keeping pace with my work along with managing my family.	2.6	28.9	23.7	36.8	7.9
2.13	I used to feel my work was draining my energy.	2.6	47.4	10.5	34.2	5.3
2.14	I felt working from home has made my life easier.	5.3	18.4	18.4	39.5	18.4
2.15	Due to working from home, I was motivated to work more efficiently.	5.3	26.3	31.6	31.6	5.3
2.16	Due to working from home, my bonding with family became stronger.	2.6	10.5	13.2	50.0	23.7
2.17	Due to working from home, I had to spend more time with my family.	0	7.9	10.5	60.5	21.1
2.18	It was easy for me to manage my household chores due to working from home.	2.6	15.8	15.8	52.6	13.2

## Conclusion

It was concluded from the present study that working from home during the pandemic for women was quite stressful. Thus, our findings have reported mixed feelings – the participant's complaint of increased domestic work, and disturbance that working from home has caused in their lives during covid-19, but on the other hand how their bonding with their family has become stronger due to working from home and the benefits of increased family values and togetherness during these times. A significant contribution from this study relates to the lived experiences of Married working women in Government College University, Lahore, Pakistan, and the impact of working from home on their family life during covid-19. This study

shows that the majority of married women were not satisfied with working from home and it has caused a lot of burden on them. An interesting finding that is in contrast with the research showed that working from home was stressful for women but due to the cooperative behavior of the family stress was managed. Due to the cooperative behavior of families, a few women were able to manage the house and office work together. Online work arrangements, mental burdens have been caused to women as well which adds to their suffering.

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