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# Telework intensity, work-family conflict, and work-family balance, during the COVID-19 pandemic

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# TELEWORK INTENSITY, WORK–FAMILY CONFLICT, AND WORK–FAMILY BALANCE, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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A

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**Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my grandmother, Vimlaben I. Bharucha, who passed away before I was able to complete my research. Your unconditional love, kindness, and support has turned me into the person I am today. I cherish our time together. Those memories will forever stay with me. Not a day goes by when I do not think of you or miss you.

Additionally, this work is dedicated to my father, Jayesh I. Bharucha, and my mother, Sandhya J. Bharucha. There are not enough words in the dictionary or hours in the day for me to properly thank you. You sacrificed everything you had known by leaving your home and starting over in a new country with nothing to your name in hopes of giving your children a better life. This accomplishment is for you. I hope, today, your dreams are realized, and you may now rest easy knowing you have more than achieved your goal. I am forever grateful to you both.

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## Abstract

## TELEWORK INTENSITY, WORK–FAMILY CONFLICT, AND WORK–FAMILY BALANCE, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Timir Jayesh Bharucha**

**St. Mary's University, 2021**

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased popularity, application, and utilization of telework. To vastly reduce the spread of COVID-19, governmental agencies worldwide have implemented lockdowns and emphasized businesses and corporations should implement telework wherever possible (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Buomprisco et al., 2021; Chong et al., 2020; Contreras et al., 2020; Mouratidis & Papagiannakis, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Oz & Crooks, 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020; Tavares et al., 2020). States of emergency can disturb employees' workflow and lead to financial difficulties; thus, telework presents an option to reduce that disruption. In such unprecedented times, telework may be a beneficial, lifesaving modality (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015). Unfortunately, limited research exists on telework experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, and telework intensity and work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a total of 201 participants who were at least

18 years of age. All participants lived in the United States and teleworked as a direct result of the pandemic.

No statistically significant correlation between telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, or telework intensity and work–life balance was found. The Pearson correlation used to examine the relationship among work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress found statistically significant negative correlations between family–work conflict and work–family balance, and work–family balance and work–family conflict. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between family–work conflict and work–family conflict, family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress, and work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress.

Keywords: Telework, telework intensity, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, COVID-19 distress, COVID-19 pandemic.

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# Chapter 1

## Rationale and Justification of the Study

In the unique era of the COVID-19 global pandemic, telework may be a lifesaving option for both individuals and corporations. States of emergency, natural disasters, and crises can disturb or halt employees' and corporations' workflow. As such, telework has been perceived as a progressively feasible and efficient option to reduce disruption in operations or workflow (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015). Although the impact of telework on work–family relationships has previously been explored, results have not been conclusive (Solís, 2017). Furthermore, telework intensity has not been extensively studied by prior researchers; however, researchers postulated that discovering appropriate telework time is vital to achieving optimal outcomes (Allen et al., 2015). Unlike previous studies with focus on only one occupation, this study, situated amid the COVID-19 pandemic, explored a variety of telework occupations after government officials encouraged use of the remote work modality wherever possible.

Telework carries a strong affinity to distributed work, distance work, telecommuting, virtual work, working from home, flexible work, remote work, and e-work, among others (Allen et al., 2015; Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012). These related terminologies are similar in nature; however, they encompass different definitions and theories. Such differences have led to an absence of a generally accepted understanding of telework, undoubtedly impacting the modality (Allen et al., 2015). Moreover, varying approaches from multiple practices have convoluted literature on telework; thus, making centralization of existing knowledge a difficult task (Allen et al., 2015). To unify relevant literature, consolidate terminology, and develop a clear direction for research, I used the

term *telework* with the following definitions that, collectively, encompass the structure and essence of the term.

The first definition derives from the Telework Enhancement Act (2010). The act, which was endorsed by President Barack Obama in response to the blizzards of 2009, created widely accepted telework structures and policies (Telework Enhancement Act, 2010). The absence of telework-related legislation during the major blizzards caused the U.S. government to lose $71 million in productivity (Spilker, 2014). The Telework Enhancement Act (2010) defined telework as:

> A flexible arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work. (p. 3165)

The second definition was proposed by Allen et al. (2015) and is like how Niles (1994) defined the term; both definitions emphasize importance of the use of communication technology to accomplish telework. Allen et al. elaborated on the importance of the extent of telework time, as individuals may be considered part-time or full-time teleworkers.

The major contribution of this study is the extension and consolidation of previous research concerning telework in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike most previous researchers, I investigated intensity of telework as a primary factor. I specifically examined the impact of telework on individuals via factors of work–family conflict, family–work conflict, and work–family balance. Finally, the study took an explanatory research perspective to investigate the impact of telework during a pandemic,

as the topic has not been studied thoroughly. Uncertainty, individual loss of control, spread of misinformation, and virus mitigation procedures (e.g., quarantine, social distancing, isolation) associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in adverse mental health symptoms (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Mello, 2007; Pfefferbaum & North; Rajkumar, 2020; Song & Gao, 2019; Weinert et al., 2015). Researchers have called for a better understanding of individual, emotional stressors faced during the pandemic (Molino et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2020); thus, the purpose of this study was to explore relationships among telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, telework intensity and work–family balance, and stressors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Statement of the Problem**

To understand employees' experiences with telework, researchers have predominantly focused on organizational constructs related to work facilitation. These constructs include employees, managers, communication, cost cutting, technical support, optimal telework, and strategies or structures (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012). Tremblay and Thomsin (2012) believed the field of telework has not evolved to its full potential due to the lack of research involving individual outcomes and the understanding of mediating factors outside of work. A relatively unexplored topic of telework is the intensity or amount of telework employees engage in during the week. Very few researchers have explored the concept of intensity; once again, findings have been inconclusive (Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012).

Researchers have advocated for further analysis of telework and have perceived it as an influential construct (Cooper & Kurland 2002; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). A

major benefit of teleworking, according to employees, is the ability to enhance both work and family life (Golden et al., 2006). Even though telework has been perceived as a strategy to balance work and family domains, limited research exists exploring the subject matter. Moreover, the limited research available has provided conflicting results (Allen, 2001; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden et al., 2006). Solís (2017) identified a need for further research that addresses discrepancies in these varied results by exploring influential factors, such as work–family interference. Additionally, Madsen (2006) indicated a need to understand when job-related pressures affect the family and when pressures from the family affect the individuals' work.

Kochhar and Passel (2020) reported results of a Pew Research Center survey that indicated corporations were encouraged to develop and enact telework arrangements wherever possible following outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the respondents, 40% reported they began to work from home after the start of the pandemic (Kochhar & Passel, 2020). With the possibility of more corporations and individuals turning to telework permanently because of the impact of COVID-19, further research is necessary. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented time and has led to increased numbers of individuals and job varieties that can accommodate telework. Still, the telework modality offers a unique set of challenges, such a role stress, isolation, and adverse mental health symptomology (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Mello, 2017; Song & Gao, 2019; Weinert et al., 2015). Those challenges have intensified and compounded due to the pandemic and governmental restrictions implemented to mitigate spread of the virus (Maurer, 2020). Until the impact of the pandemic and telework stressors are understood, mental health professionals, counselors, policymakers, and human resource

departments will be unprepared to respond to employees' challenges in the short and long term.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between telework intensity and work–family balance and work–family conflict in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, this study was grounded by the following research questions:

1.  What is the relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2.  What is the relationship between telework intensity and family–work conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3.  What is the relationship between telework intensity and work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic?

4.  What is the relationship between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress during the pandemic?

5.  What is the relationship between work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress?

**Hypotheses**

- *H$_1$*. High-intensity telework will be associated with greater work–family conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *H$_2$*. High-intensity telework will be associated with greater family–work conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *H₃.* Low-intensity telework will be associated with greater work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *H₄.* Low-intensity telework will be associated with greater perceived COVID-19 distress

- *H₅.* Work–family conflict will have a significant relationship with family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress.

**Justification for the Study**

This study was designed as one of the first to examine telework in the context of a pandemic. As such, understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on telework offers unique perspectives on how best to support teleworkers now and in the future. Previous telework research has, for the most part, focused on organizational outcomes or individual work factors, such as job satisfaction, turnover, and productivity; yet such research has failed to dive deeper into understanding the impact on the individual outside of the occupational perspective (Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012). This study was designed to understand the teleworker's experience on a larger scale by exploring factors of work intensity, work–family conflict, and work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Corporations, teleworkers, and mental health professionals will benefit from this perspective by using these findings to develop best practices for assisting teleworkers.

As a result of encouragement from government agencies to reduce the spread of COVID-19, corporations and educational institutions heavily invested in telework infrastructure (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). Researchers found 37% of jobs in the United States could be worked from home (Dingel & Neiman, 2020). Interest in this work modality is on the rise; thus, results from

this study can assist corporations and policymakers alike in designing and implementing procedures to assist teleworkers to thrive in both home and onsite work settings.

States of emergencies (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic) led to a surge in unemployment rates (Gangopadhyay & Garrett, 2020). Behrendt et al. (2019) illustrated unemployment may result in poverty, mental health issues, suicidal ideation, and drug abuse. Kochhar and Passel (2020) found at least 30 million people in the United States filed for unemployment because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Behrendt et al. (2019) determined career counseling is one of the most productive interventions in preparing individuals and decreasing the unemployment rate. Individuals who received exceptional career counseling spent less time unemployed (Behrendt et al., 2019). Relatedly, mental health and career counselors can implement results from this study and provide their clients with further insights into the telework modality. In this study, I aimed to better prepare professional counselors to guide clients through the benefits and drawbacks of telework and prepare them for the impact telework can have on individuals and their family units.

Dual-earner families are common, as both individuals in the home look to solidify professional careers (Allen et al., 2001; Frydenberg, 2004; Hill et al., 2003). In the past, women were more likely to take on dual roles; however, households have become more balanced, and men have taken on more household responsibilities (Allen et al., 2001). Furthermore, both individuals must now balance roles as parents, spouses, and employees, oftentimes leading to stress referred to as *work–family conflict* (Allen et al., 2001).

Work–family conflict negatively impacts work and home domains and can lead to decreased quality of family relationships and job satisfaction (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003). Mann and Holdsworth (2003) determined work–family conflict resulted in increased stress and anxiety for the family unit. Frydenberg (2004) expressed the crucial need for counseling interventions to relieve negative impacts of work–family conflict to assist individuals in finding a balance between domains. Results of this study can inform and assist counselors in developing best practices for working with teleworkers and their families. Researchers have found work–life balance increases productivity and positivity in relationships, childcare, and mental health (Hill et al., 2003; Madsen, 2006).

Counselors working with teleworking individuals may also benefit from results of this study. Teleworkers have expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation, which significantly reduces their quality of life (Harrington & Santiago, 2006). Golden (2004) found telework intensity impacts relationships, communication, feedback, and job satisfaction. By understanding benefits and drawbacks of telework, counselors can assist teleworkers in improving their quality of life. Workaholism, developing new routines for work and home, and childcare were found to be major stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (Maurer, 2020). Stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to result in mental health crises for many. Rogers et al. (2020) found individuals were more vulnerable to developing anxiety, depression, stress, and substance use due to COVID-19 pandemic distress. Understanding telework in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic will equip career counselors and mental health professionals with insight into best practices for assisting clients.

**Theoretical Framework**

Individuals intentionally construct boundaries to facilitate qualities of their work and home environments. Boundary strength has been linked to a person's work and life balance (Bulger et al., 2007). Ashforth et al. (2000) proposed boundary theory, which suggests some individuals may build rigid boundaries to segment or separate work and family domains, whereas others integrate domains using weaker boundaries. A stronger boundary leads to greater clarity between domains (Bulger et al., 2007).

Bulger et al. (2007) noted the strength of the boundary is determined by permeability and flexibility; a weak boundary is described as having both greater permeability and flexibility. A permeable boundary is one that allows elements of one domain to be present in the other (Bulger et al., 2007). Permeability is perceived as an interruption in flow and is thought of as a lack of control over domains. A flexible boundary is characterized by an individual's ability to move away from the present domain to resolve needs of the other (Bulger et al., 2007).

To better understand boundary management, the focal point of boundary theory comprises the transition between domains and roles of work and home. Role transition is influenced by three important factors: role boundaries, role identities, and role set (Ashforth et al., 2000). Role boundaries are created by the individual to simplify and organize their environments (Ashforth et al., 2000). Boundaries allow a person to focus on their current domain. Ashforth el al. defined role identity as goals, values, and beliefs linked to the role. Identity distinguishes what behaviors go along with what role. Role set is defined as closely associated roles or sub-roles that might be linked to the primary role (Ashforth et al., 2000). Finally, role transition occurs when the individual moves from

one role to another (Ashforth et al., 2000). According to boundary theory, as the day progresses, the individual will encounter and transition into different domains; for example, shifting from work to the home domain. When shifting domains, the individual also switches their role. As this change occurs, the individual navigates through various boundaries: physical, time oriented, and psychological (Clark, 2000).

Telework presents a rare scenario that diminishes and weakens conventional procedures and structures associated with these boundaries. As teleworkers primarily work from home, they no longer possess a physical boundary separating the two domains. Lack of a physical boundary blurs domains and roles, possibly generating additional stress and conflict for the teleworker (Greer & Payne, 2014).

The teleworker arrangement also alters boundaries of time. The temporal boundary establishes the start, end, and any breaks of a work shift (Greer & Payne, 2014). Traditionally, the temporal boundary is a Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., work shift. One perceived benefit of telework is the ability for a flexible schedule that allows individual autonomy over the workday; however, a change in the temporal boundary may also impact the time available for familial interactions and responsibilities (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Psychological boundaries influence how individuals think, behave, and feel and tend to be different depending on the present domain and role (e.g., employee or parent). Traditionally, individuals have used their commutes to and from work to mentally prepare and transition between work and home roles. Telework eliminates a person's commute and opportunity to mentally prepare for a role change (Greer & Payne, 2014). In this and other contexts, the telework arrangement weakens individual boundaries. As

such, the teleworker may experience a greater probability of conflict amid work and home domains (Greer & Payne, 2014). For this reason, I took a deeper look into the impacts of telework on work–family balance and conflict in this study.

**Limitations**

A considerable limitation to this study involved the absence of a commonly accepted definition and theory of telework. Allen et al. (2015) reported results from existing studies are not comparable due to the variety of definitions, approaches, and research fields exploring telework; thus, the definition, perspective, approach, and foundational theory used to guide the design of this study may not be comparable to other studies. Another limitation for consideration was sample size. Although this study produced an adequate and acceptable sample size to meet the requirements of empirical research, increased sample size has greater potential for statistical significance that can be generalized to the population.

Additionally, I did not account for company culture and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Harrington and Santiago (2006) reported culture impacts both the way telework is implemented and success of the modality within organizations. Ebersberger and Kuckertz (2021) asserted a swift course of action to the COVID-19 pandemic vastly mitigated adverse effects of the crisis.

Despite the purpose of this research, which was to examine experiences of teleworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants may have been swayed to answer in a certain manner. This study was carried out early in the pandemic and stay-at-home orders may have impacted individuals more than if the survey was distributed at a later point. The novelty of the modality, increased time at home with family, and

employment during the most uncertain times, among other factors, may have impacted participant responses.

A final limitation to the study concerned use of self-report assessments, which have been found to be biased in that respondents answer questions in ways they perceive will be acceptable to others (Krumpal, 2013). As such, self-reported data may not accurately reflect respondents' experiences (Latkin et al., 2017).

To conclude, mental health professionals, corporations, policymakers, and those interested in the telework modality should be cognizant of limitations when analyzing results of this study. Despite limitations, results of this study provide vital insights into experiences of teleworkers and the impact of the modality during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings provide a foundational knowledgebase for telework, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–life balance, and COVID-19 distress in the lens of the pandemic, which may be used by mental health professionals to assist teleworkers in development of routines, structures, and interventions. The data contribute to existing literature by being among the first associated with this topic; thus, this study fills significant gaps in literature.

**Definitions of Terms**

This section includes major concepts of interest in the research study. Each term is described using brief explanations. More elaborate descriptions of terms are found in the body of the study, but unique definitions pertaining to the purpose of this study are provided in this section for optimal clarity.

### COVID-19

According to World Health Organization (2021), "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus" (para. 1). In March 2020, World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic, impacting 150 countries (Bialek et al., 2020).

### Part-Time and Full-Time Telework

This study used the definition of part-time and full-time telework as proposed by Allen et al. (2015), who suggested teleworking is accomplished through use of communication technology and distinguishes the amount of time the employee teleworks away from the office. Allen et al. noted an individual may be considered a part-time teleworker who only teleworks a few hours a week, or a full-time employee, who completes most of their schedule through a telework arrangement.

### Telework

The field of research uses a variety of terminologies and definitions to describe the telework modality. For this study, I used the definition of telework from the Telework Enhancement Act (2010), which described telework as a flexible work arrangement. In this arrangement, employees fulfill their job obligations and requirements at an approved location other than the traditional office at which the employee would normally carry out work duties. Allen et al. (2015) further defined the telework arrangement by accentuating the importance of communication technology to perform job tasks.

### Telework Intensity

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) defined telework intensity as the duration of time employees work away from the worksite. The researchers separated intensity into two

categories: low-intensity and high-intensity. Low-intensity teleworkers are individuals who work away from the worksite for 1 to 2 days a week, whereas high-intensity employees telework many of their schedules at a location other than the worksite.

### Work–Family Balance

Frone (2003) defined work–family balance as a harmonious relationship due to the lack of inter-role and domain conflict. Neither domain impedes the other (Frone, 2003).

### Work–Family Conflict

Work–family conflict refers to the struggle between roles and obligations as a result of demands from work and family domains (Allen et al., 2015). Madsen (2006) stated work–family conflict can be bidirectional, where work can interfere with family (WIF) and family can interfere with work (FIW).

## Chapter 2

## Literature Review

Conceptualization of telework began in the 1970s; early telework research primarily focused on societal benefits, organizational and social needs, employee health, and work–family balance (Egan, 1997; Niles, 1975; Shamir & Salomon, 1985). Telework became an increasingly attractive and viable option due to the high cost of gas and the oil crisis at the time (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Mello, 2007; Tavares, 2017). As a possible solution to the latter issue, Mann and Holdsworth (2003) asserted the United States would not have to depend on foreign oil if 1 out of every 7 commuters engaged in telework. Beyond a reduced reliance on foreign oil, other benefits included decreased traffic and pollution in major cities resulting from fewer commutes (Handy & Mokhtarian, 1995; Pyöriä, 2011; Song & Gao, 2019).

Telework rose in popularity and became increasingly feasible for both employees and employers as a direct result of the technology boom of the 1990s. The latter offered greater accessibility to home computers, laptops, cell phones, and other telecommunication software (Allen et al., 2015; Song & Gao, 2019; Tavares, 2017). Increased availability of communication technologies gave individuals portable connections at an affordable and attainable rate (Allen et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2003). Moreover, advancement of residential, high-speed internet played a pivotal role in the surge of telework (Song & Gao, 2019). Kochhar and Passel (2020) noted a Pew Research Center survey found 73% of Americans have access to the internet at home. In addition, comparable pay for teleworkers and office workers, tensions related to work–life balance,

and a growing female labor force has further driven the telework movement (Felstead et al., 2005; Song & Gao, 2019).

In the past, most workplaces followed the Industrial Revolution blueprint, which emphasized restriction of employee time and work obligations to the workplace; however, in the past few decades, the global economy has transitioned from an industrial economy to an information- and service-driven economy (Hill et al., 2007; Mello, 2007). Additionally, employees have demanded greater occupational flexibility, with decreased work commutes. As a result, corporations have been encouraged to rethink their strategies and procedures and to no longer bind their employees to the workplace. This economic transformation has created new opportunities for when, where, and how employees complete their occupational obligations (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Hill et al., 2003).

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an almost-overnight transition of formerly office-bound employees working from home (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Oz & Crooks; 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020; Tavares et al., 2020). As a measure to decrease spread of COVID-19, governmental agencies have enforced lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, encouraging telework wherever possible.

**Telework**

Through the adoption of telework, businesses have benefited from reduced costs related to operating a workplace and increased compliance with government mandates, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Telework expands job opportunities for individuals who may acquire positions not previously believed to be possible due to

accommodations for disabilities (Mello, 2007). In the United States, the number of telework employees grew by 80% from 2005 to 2012 (Allen et al., 2015). According to Matos and Galinsky (2012), 63% of corporations allow employees to engage in occasional telework, and 33% allow regular telework. Tavares (2017) reported around 3.3 million people (i.e., 2.6% of the total workforce) used their homes as their primary work location. Kochhar and Passel (2020) reported results from a Pew Research Center survey that found 25% of U.S. employees had worked from home at some point. According to Schall (2019), telecommuting statistics from 2017 showed approximately 90% of the workforce in the United States was interested in teleworking on a full-time or part-time basis.

The prevailing view of telework is it enhances both employees' quality of life and their work–life balance (Allen et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2020). Researchers have reported employees who are able to work remotely perceive higher autonomy, flexibility, productivity, job satisfaction, performance, and decreased stress (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Song & Gao, 2019; Tremblay & Tomsin, 2012). Telework has also been linked to decreased rates of absenteeism and turnover (Greer & Payne, 2014).

Conversely, there are also contradictory research findings. After a review of existing literature, Bailey and Kurland (2002) emphasized there have been ambiguous findings pertaining to telework and job satisfaction; therefore, researchers do not unequivocally believe telework promotes well-being or a better quality of life (Moore, 2006). A major detriment of telework is limited socialization or communication with coworkers, which may promote isolation (Song & Gao, 2019). As a result of working offsite, teleworkers have limited in-person contact with their company's administration,

potentially hindering opportunities for promotion and increasing role stress (Mello, 2007; Song & Gao, 2019; Weinert et al., 2015). Direct supervision, communication, and feedback are more difficult when individuals telework (Song & Gao, 2019).

***Who Teleworks?***

Pinpointing the teleworker identity has consistently been a challenge for researchers. Many teleworkers are independent contractors, a status that makes proper representation a difficult task (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Another obstacle to attaining a realistic understanding of teleworkers relates to how the researcher defines telework. As a result, researchers have indicated longitudinal measures as the best way to understand teleworkers (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Early telework data from International Telework Association and Council found 51% of teleworkers were female and 49% were male (Bailey & Kurland, 2002); however, Tremblay (2003) found there were more male (58.8%) than female teleworkers (41.2%), which demonstrates a lack of clarity and consensus. The average age of teleworkers in the United States was determined to be 42 years, with a median household income of $45,200 (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Tremblay found 47% of teleworkers were married, with at least one child; 23% were married with no children; and 7% were single parents. In another study, demographic data from the United States showed teleworkers tend to be educated men who work in contract positions and have high incomes (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Full-time teleworkers were more likely to be younger men (57%) with an annual income of around $50,000 a year, whereas part-time teleworkers (75%) were found to be older women with an annual income of $34,000 (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

More recently, Vilhelmson and Thulin (2016) found workers aged 35–54 was the fastest-growing age group to participate in telework. Compared to the general U.S. population, teleworkers are more likely to be well-educated and hold a university degree (Dey et al., 2020; Garrett & Danzinger, 2007; Vilhelmson & Thulin, 2016). Based on 2017–2018 data from American Time Use Survey, Dey et al. (2020) reported 67% of respondents with bachelor's degrees were able to telework, compared to only 11% of respondents with less than a high school education. Full-time employees were more likely to telework compared to part-time employees (Dey et al., 2020). Additionally, Dey et al. revealed women had a greater ability to telework than men. Respondents who self-reported as non-Hispanic White had the greatest feasibility of telework, whereas those who self-reported as Hispanic had the lowest probability (Dey et al., 2020).

Telework usually encompasses higher end professional occupations, including management, information technology, finance, and accounting (Dey et al., 2020; Groen et al., 2018). A telework arrangement is usually offered to top-level executives as a job benefit; however, there has been a recent shift to involve lower status employees and a multitude of job roles in telework (Vilhelson & Thulin, 2016).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) estimated 31% of employed individuals had transitioned to telework by the 1st week of April 2020. Through an analysis of O*NET-ATUS and O*NET-NLSY79 data, Dey et al. (2020) found 45% of employees in the United States were in an occupation in which telework was possible. The following industries have been linked with the highest probability of telework during the COVID-19 pandemic: finance, information, professional and business, public administration, education, and health services (Dey et

al., 2020). By contrast, individuals who work in agriculture, hospitality, construction, retail, and transportation were deemed least likely to telework (Dey et al., 2020). The U.S. Census Bureau (2020) conducted a survey on the COVID-19 pandemic and telework and found most individuals who had transitioned some or all their schedules to telework were between 25–39 years of age. Furthermore, a larger number of women than men teleworked because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers with bachelor's degrees or higher comprised the largest number of individuals who transitioned to telework (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

### *Personality Traits*

O'Neill et al. (2009) suggested teleworking may not be appropriate for all personality types. Employees who possess certain characteristics, such as a need for close supervision and direction, are negatively impacted by a telework arrangement in terms of both performance and job satisfaction (O'Neill et al., 2009). Bell and Kozlowski (2002) suggested teleworkers must have exceptional organizational skills—even more so than non-teleworkers—to successfully navigate the unstructured nature of the arrangement. Organizational skills assist teleworkers in creating and maintaining schedules, coordinating tasks and responsibilities, and executing strategic planning to accomplish their occupational requirements (O'Neill et al., 2009). O'Neill et al. found diligence, which is defined by a strong work ethic and discipline, is necessary to overcome distractions and engage in successful telework. The diligent employee is also able to reduce work–family conflict.

O'Neill et al. (2009) examined personality traits of successful teleworkers using a sample of 156 employees. Of the participants, 78 were teleworkers and 78 were non-

teleworkers from eight organizations in Canada. O'Neill et al. measured participants'

personality traits through the Manifest Needs Questionnaire and the Honesty-Humility,

Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to

Experience (HEXACO) Personality Inventory; they focused on scales of organization,

diligence, socialization, achievement, and autonomy. O'Neill et al. found distinct

characteristics related to personality and motivation were related to success in both

telework and non-telework environments.

O'Neill et al. (2009) also found individuals who scored higher on sociability and a

need to develop meaningful relationships with others were less productive in a telework

arrangement. Employees who focused on achievement and sought upward mobility and

promotions were less likely to be satisfied while teleworking. Telework limits the ability

of managers to notice employees and lessens opportunities for development and feedback

(O'Neill et al., 2009). Conversely, individuals who rated higher in autonomy—meaning,

they preferred to work with less managerial oversight and of their own accord—were

found to perform better in a telework arrangement. O'Neill et al. identified diligence as

an important trait for teleworkers.

### *Telework and Women*

Early telework research suggested women were more likely to prefer to telework

than men (Mokhtarian & Salamon, 1996). Bae and Kim (2016) further explored this

finding and asserted women were drawn to telework for its scheduling flexibility,

convenience, and autonomy. Furthermore, Bae and Kim (2016) found motivation for

seeking telework differed between genders. For women, ability to care for children while

continuing to work is a strong motivator (Bae & Kim, 2016). Sullivan and Lewis (2001)

found women often perceived telework as their only opportunity to meet their children's needs while maintaining paid employment.

Women are more likely to juggle dual roles, such as handling household and family responsibilities while sustaining a professional career. As a result, they have reported higher stress levels (Bae & Kim, 2016; Gálvez, 2011). Conversely, telework may also reduce stress, as it gives the opportunity to continue a professional career (Bae & Kim, 2016; Nakrošienė et al., 2019). For women, telework has broadened career opportunities by helping them to transition back into work from maternity leave (Bae & Kim, 2016).

Nakrošienė et al. (2019) explored the relationship between telework factors and individual and organizational outcomes via a survey of 128 teleworkers in Lithuania. Notably, the researchers found female respondents did not value telework more than men, which contradicted previous research findings (e.g., Mokhtarian & Salamon, 1996). Nakrošienė et al. suggested evolution of gender roles, which has resulted in men shouldering more household responsibilities, explains this finding.

**Telework Intensity**

A fundamental issue surrounding literature on telecommuting concerns the degree to which employees take part in telework. Research exploring intensity as a telework variable has thus far remained limited (Allen et al., 2015). Cooper and Kurland (2002) recommended future studies investigate different telework intensities. By only examining telework as an all-encompassing, single mediator, previous research has ignored intensity as an essential, structural construct (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) described telework intensity as the amount of time employees work outside the central office location. Intensity is divided into two categories: high-intensity employees spend most of their scheduled work time away from the office, and low-intensity employees primarily work at the central office location and only engage in teleworking 1 to 2 days per week (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Compared to an individual who teleworks 10 days per month, an employee who only teleworks 1 day per month has a different reality. In their study on stress and job satisfaction among teleworkers, Konradt et al. (2003) found high- and low-intensity employees had different motivations for teleworking. High-intensity employees sought a balance between work and family obligations, and low-intensity employees desired a temporary, distraction-free environment in which to finish their work.

Allen et al. (2015) stated excluding intensity from studies on telework leads to inaccurate conclusions about the work modality; however, more recent literature has started to recognize high-intensity telework breaches a psychological threshold when compared to low-intensity telework, resulting in the need to separate examinations of these two employee categories (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Additionally, Allen et al. (2015) found differences in telework intensity might affect work outcomes. Telework may also aggravate work–family conflicts. An inadequate balance between work and family activities, leading to insufficient work–family boundaries, can exacerbate anxiety and stress (Mann & Holdsworth 2003; Song & Gao, 2019). High-intensity telework has been linked to lower work–family conflict (Allen et al., 2015). Allen et al. also explored the impact of telework intensity on employees' relationships with management, coworkers, and family members. They found

high-intensity telework is associated with better relationships between management and employees; however, higher intensity telework negatively affects relationships with coworkers (Allen et al., 2015).

Ganjendran and Harrison (2007) found intensity to be a structural moderator and posited telework is not an all-or-nothing modality; thus, it is conceivable intensity has an impact on work proficiency and employees. Although telework is an increasingly common work arrangement, researchers have noted the lack of an overall theory to understand the modality and its consequences (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Heiden et al. (2020) investigated the frequency of telework, health, and well-being in academia through a survey of 392 staff members from six Swedish universities. The researchers used the General Health Questionnaire, Work Stress Questionnaire, Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction at Work Scale, and Copenhagen Psychological Questionnaire. Additionally, they asked questions about recovery and frequency of telework. Heiden et al. found increased telework intensity was positively related to stress levels. Participants who teleworked multiple times per week experienced greater conflict than those who only teleworked once a month (Heiden et al., 2020).

**Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has been defined as an employee's attitude toward their work environment and circumstances and extent to which they favor these circumstances and situations (Zhu, 2013). Early occupational research found increased physical presence through face-to-face interactions in the workplace was an important mediator of employee gratification (Zhu, 2013). Employees with greater onsite presence have greater opportunities for communication, connection, and feedback. Additionally, Allen et al.

(2015) proposed several key factors influenced job satisfaction for both teleworkers and non-teleworkers: feedback, relationships with coworkers and management, organizational support, training, and decreased family interference during work hours. Fonner and Roloff (2010) theorized telework, which reduces an employee's physical presence, would inherently decrease job satisfaction; however, they did not find any significant effects after conducting a regression analysis.

For this reason, job satisfaction is an area of great research interest and a frequently reported telework component (Fonner & Roloff, 2010). Mello (2007) reported, unlike employees in the office, teleworkers perceive less pressure to be productive or look busy throughout the day. Without additional strain from management, teleworkers can improve their focus and appreciate their work. In fact, many researchers have similarly asserted a boost in job satisfaction can be attributed to flexibility and autonomy (Golden & Vieja, 2005; Virick et al., 2010). A flexible schedule allows for autonomy and independent decision making, which in turn gives the employee the option to multitask and execute personal tasks when required, satisfying both work and life obligations (Golden, 2004).

A portion of existing research has proposed telework has a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2015; Fonner & Rolloff, 2010; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Tremblay, 2002). Tremblay (2002) completed a 3-part study consisting of a literature review, survey of teleworkers, and case study in which 63 teleworkers were interviewed. Tremblay found most respondents were very satisfied with telework. These findings were reiterated in the case study; interviewees reported high levels of job satisfaction and an unwillingness to return to the traditional office (Tremblay, 2002).

Certain interviewees even suggested a preference for quitting or retiring before returning to the workplace.

Fonner and Rolloff (2010) explored the impact of telework on job satisfaction by examining variables related to work–life conflict, work stress resulting from interruptions, and office politics. The researchers surveyed 89 teleworkers and 103 office workers and found the abundance of face-to-face communication experienced by office workers could lead to information overload, which could, in turn, negatively impact production and job satisfaction. Results indicated increased time working away from office distractions, interruptions, and stressors led to higher rates of job satisfaction; as such, teleworkers in the study exhibited greater work–life satisfaction and lower stress levels compared to office workers (Fonner & Rolloff, 2010).

Golden (2004) suggested increased telework intensity results in greater isolation, which negatively impacts relationships, communication, and feedback and leads to unsatisfied employees. Related literature has also indicated a curvilinear relationship between telework and job satisfaction, with telework intensity as the mediating variable (Golden & Viega, 2005). Golden and Viega (2005) suggested a threshold for telework intensity and job satisfaction exist. Additionally, once employees have crossed this threshold, benefits of telework are no longer apparent regarding job satisfaction (Golden & Viega, 2005).

Golden and Viega (2005) developed a study to gain clarity on whether telework increases job satisfaction, taking telework intensity into consideration. Through a technological firm that encourages telework, the researchers gained access to 321 participants, who, on average, spent 23% of their work week teleworking. Furthermore,

the employees spanned a variety of occupations, including marketing, programming, engineering, accounting, and sales.

Golden and Viega (2005) found telework initially enhanced job satisfaction, which contradicted previous research indicating job satisfaction increased the more employees teleworked. Additionally, Golden and Viega found, after a certain level of intensity, job satisfaction essentially plateaued, then declined. The threshold identified in their study, which may not be applicable to the general population, was 15 hours of telework per week.

Allen et al. (2015) analyzed existing literature and found job satisfaction to be at its peak when individuals teleworked a moderate amount. Thus, lower intensity telework has been found to produce greater job satisfaction gains compared to higher intensity telework. Among higher intensity teleworkers, a reduction in social interaction and an increased sense of isolation could explain the curvilinear relationship between telework and job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2015).

**Well-Being**

Psychological health of teleworkers has generally been overlooked by researchers until more recently; for instance, Mann and Holdsworth (2003) argued, for the work arrangement to be successful and to curtail any adverse effects, teleworker well-being must be further explored. Mann and Holdsworth investigated the psychological impact of telework through a qualitative approach by interviewing 12 journalists, six teleworkers, and six office workers. The researchers used the Occupational Stress Indicator, Stressful Life Events Scale, and Physical Ill Health Scale to measure both physical and mental health. They used an independent *t* test to identify differences in mental and physical

health between teleworkers and office workers. A one-tailed *t* test revealed women experienced more stress than men (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003).

Mann and Holdsworth (2003) found teleworkers may experience greater negative emotions compared to office workers. Both work arrangements elicited a considerable amount of stress related to work requirements. Mann and Holdsworth found office workers experienced additional stressors of a work commute and the expectation to participate in office politics, which led to feelings of anger, irritability, and worry. By contrast, teleworkers reported a greater sense of control over their work and environment, which decreased stress levels (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003).

Still, teleworkers have also endorsed feelings of loneliness and isolation. Harrington and Santiago (2006) found teleworkers experienced great isolation and a significantly reduced quality of life compared to office workers. Mann and Holdsworth (2003) emphasized employees' experiences with a lack of communication and people with whom to discuss their work struggles. As a result, teleworkers were more likely to experience insecurities about their work performance. Additionally, teleworkers were frustrated with communication via technology due to a lack of assistance for technical issues (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003). Mann and Holdsworth suggested communicating with technology decreased teleworkers' sense of belonging and presence.

Conversely, office workers reported no feelings of isolation or loneliness (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003). Teleworkers and office workers both reported frustrations with long working hours; teleworkers reported difficulty switching to the home role, but office workers reported a culture of workaholism. In the second part of the study, Mann and Holdsworth (2003) surveyed 62 journalists, 30 teleworkers, and 32 office workers to

compare occupational stress. The researchers found, although office workers reported more stress in the interviews from the first part of the study, the later survey revealed teleworkers experienced more physical and mental stress. Mann and Holdsworth did not find a statistically significant difference between occupational stress and the gender identities of teleworkers.

Henke et al. (2016) explored effects of telecommuting intensity on employee health. Their longitudinal study comprised employees from Prudential Financial who ranged in age from 18–64. To measure intensity, teleworkers were categorized according to hours of remote work per month, including less than 8 hours, 9–32 hours, 33–72 hours, and greater than 73 hours. In addition to measuring intensity, the researchers examined the following health risk indicators: (a) obesity, (b) depression, (c) stress, (d) tobacco and alcohol use, (e) nutrition, and (f) physical activity. Health risks for both office workers and telecommuters were investigated in the study.

Henke et al. (2016) found office workers had a greater likelihood of obesity, alcohol abuse, and tobacco use. In addition, office workers were found to be less physically active. Telework intensity mediated the health risks of teleworkers, indicating employees may benefit from working from home. Employees who teleworked 8 or fewer hours per month were substantially less likely to experience depression compared to office workers. Finally, Henke et al. confirmed they were unable to find a relationship between teleworking and stress.

**Productivity**

A benefit of telework that may be connected to job satisfaction is productivity (Mello, 2007). Employees who work from home have reported increased productivity

(Mello, 2007). These benefits may be attributed to a greater ability to focus due to a lack of interruptions and disturbances, which may hinder completion of work (Bailey & Kurland 2002; Mello, 2007; Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012). Ganjendran and Harrison (2007) found telework was positively associated with productivity. Teleworkers received better evaluations from management for on-task completion and performance compared to non-teleworkers (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) found availability of additional hours due to the elimination of the work commute increased productivity. Moreover, flexibility of telework enables individuals to customize their work environments in a manner where they are most productive, in accordance with how and when tasks are accomplished (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007).

Butler et al. (2007) used longitudinal data from 1998 to 2003 to examine the productivity of call center teleworkers from Kentucky American Water Company. Butler found, over a 5-year period, teleworker productivity increased by 154%; conversely, office employees' productivity fell by 13% on average. Results showed a positive relationship between productivity and telework and the increase in productivity was sustainable.

Baruch (2000) explored the effectiveness of telework by interviewing 62 teleworkers from five corporations in the United Kingdom. The interview comprised open- and closed-ended questions. Participants were asked to share their rationale and goal for their decision to telework and whether they had achieved them. Baruch converted their responses to a 5-point Likert scale. Participants' performance appraisals were measured through self-reports and reports from direct supervisors. Finally,

interviewees also filled out a questionnaire that addressed job satisfaction, involvement, career future, and commitment.

Baruch (2000) found teleworkers dedicated more time to their work compared to non-teleworkers. Of those interviewed, 48% reported an increase in time spent working since the initiation of telework. Baruch also examined self-perceived effectiveness of teleworkers and reported 76% of participants reported greater productivity. The interviewees attributed their performance to minimal work distractions, which resulted in superior focus.

In contrast, a study by Golden et al. (2008) found greater feelings of isolation among telework employees negatively impacted productivity. The researchers explained increased productivity among teleworkers ceased when they felt isolated, disconnected, and unsupported. Furthermore, productivity was even worse for employees who engaged in high intensity telework (Golden et al., 2008).

**Job Commitment and Turnover**

Bailey and Kurland (2002) found telework reduced employees' turnover intentions; however, Vega and Brennan (2000) suggested occupational isolation may reduce teleworkers' tenure, leading them to choose different work arrangements. Isolated teleworkers felt less fulfilled, disconnected from coworkers and the corporation, and professionally frustrated, increasing their likelihood of leaving (Golden et al., 2008). Allen et al. (2015) found telework intensity to be positively related to organizational loyalty, which means higher intensity teleworkers demonstrate a stronger commitment to the company and are less likely to leave.

To explore turnover intention among teleworkers, Golden et al. (2008) surveyed 522 supervisors and 261 employees from a large technology corporation. The researchers found teleworkers who experienced greater isolation were less likely to leave the company. Golden et al. suggested, although teleworkers were unsatisfied, they were more likely to stay with the company due to their flexible schedules, which allowed them to balance work and family life. Their survey results indicated the benefits of telework outweighed its drawbacks, reducing employees' desire to seek employment elsewhere.

**Telework and Work–Family Conflict**

The concept of work–family conflict has been defined as a *clash of roles*, when stressors from the work and family domains are rendered incompatible (Allen et al., 2015). Work–family conflict may cause challenges for corporations, employees, and families, as the way employees respond to, manage, and rectify work and home domains undoubtedly impacts both environments (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Madsen, 2006). Researchers have found successfully balancing work and life demands leads to increased productivity and positive marital relationships, childcare, and mental health (Hill et al., 2003; Madsen, 2006). Allen et al. (2001) found work–family conflict leads to lower life satisfaction, increased burnout, and additional, adverse symptoms of well-being (Allen, 2001).

Allen (2001) and Hill et al. (2003) explored growing numbers of dual-earner families; namely, men and women increasingly provide care for children or others, such as the elderly, all while managing their careers. Additionally, due to an increase in mothers with young children in the workforce, households have become more equitable in terms of gender roles and responsibilities (Allen, 2001). Consequently, the amount of

time fathers spend on household responsibilities and childcare has grown from 53% to 73% (Hill et al., 2003).

The increase in dual-earner families has led to greater blurring of lines between work and family. As a result, stressors, and work–family conflict may be more common. Emotions displayed by parents impact the connectedness and well-being of the family unit. Lim and Kim (2014) suggested the way parents express their emotions impacts children's thoughts about themselves and the world. Parents who often express negative emotions are less likely to be nurturing, empathetic, and supportive of their children. Lim and Kim found work–family conflict is significantly associated with frustration and that frustration is positively linked to maladaptive parenting behaviors.

Balancing both the needs of the workplace and the home is a challenging undertaking. In response to growing concern, corporations have begun to seek and implement programs to accommodate the changing workforce (Allen, 2001). Flexible work arrangements allow for greater autonomy and control, leading to a better balance between work and personal life (Allen, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Solís, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2006). Baruch (2000) found teleworkers are less stressed, as they have greater opportunities to care for their families and respond to emergencies. Teleworkers reported being more present for their families in the mornings and evenings and for their children after school (Tremblay, 2006). Multitasking with household chores throughout the workday enables teleworkers to allocate more time for their families, increasing work–life balance (Tremblay, 2006).

Telework has gained traction in many organizations and for many individuals as a viable and effective manner of accommodating work, personal life, and family

obligations (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Hill et al., 2003). Existing literature on telework and the work–family relationship, however, has been limited and inconclusive, as findings have also suggested teleworking can lead to increased work–family conflict due to family members hindering the employee's workflow (Tremblay et al., 2006). Blurred boundaries and inability to separate home and work life have led to teleworkers displaying aspects of workaholism to compensate for any missed work (Hill et al., 2003). Prior research has shown teleworkers with young children are less likely to be satisfied with the work arrangement (Tremblay et al., 2006).

Telework blurs and weakens boundaries between work and personal life, because these domains operate in the same environment and time. Blurred boundaries allow accessibility in either domain to interfere with the other, which can lead to work–life conflict (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Telework employees may also be more susceptible to time conflicts and have more difficulty separating work and home activities. Flexible boundaries may also assist employees in coordinating work and family obligations, which can decrease work–family conflicts. Baruch (2000) found family relationships generally improve when a family member teleworks.

Hill et al. (2003) explored how different work environments affect aspects of work, personal life, and family life. The researchers used data from the 2001 IBM Global Work and Life Issues Survey, which encompassed 48 countries and 25,822 individual respondents. Occupations included information technology, programming, engineering, sales, human resources, and product support. Hill et al. found telework was significantly related to an increased balance between work and personal life and perceived family

success. They suggested elimination of a work commute saved teleworkers 4 hours per week, which was used toward household obligations.

Hill et al. (2003) also indicated teleworkers were able to develop strong boundaries between work and home life because they were not provided with additional, portable work communication tools, such as pagers or mobile phones. Similarly, a literature review by Cascio (2000) found teleworkers had significantly less work–family interference, family–work interference, and challenges dedicating time to their families after beginning telework. Findings suggested teleworkers were able to balance work and family obligations.

Madsen (2006) investigated the impact of telework on work–family conflict by surveying 123 traditional office workers and 98 teleworkers who worked from home at least 2 days per week. Participants were recruited from seven corporations in Minnesota. Madsen used a modified work–family conflict scale for the study. Telework employees reported lower perceptions of work–family conflict compared to traditional office workers. Madsen found telework allowed for greater autonomy, control, and job satisfaction, which in turn could decrease work–family conflict.

Moreover, Madsen (2006) found telework intensity may be a moderator for work–family conflict and teleworking 2 or more days per week can reduce perceptions of conflict. The researchers did not find a relationship between marital status and work–family conflict. Madsen posited including marital status as a single moderator did not yield meaningful data. Additionally, number of children at home was positively related with work–family conflict.

Work–family conflict cannot be adequately understood as a singular variable. Madsen (2006) urged further exploration of moderators was needed, including the direction of work–family conflict, hours of telework per week, children, health, and gender. Madsen found work–family conflict was directional: work may interfere with the family (WIF), and the family may interfere with work (FIW). Solís (2017) explored teleworkers' work–family conflict in a study involving 92 teleworkers and 72 non-teleworkers from public organizations. Through a hierarchical linear regression model, Solís found demands outside of work moderated both WIF and FIW. Additionally, workers with increased job requirements and obligations experienced greater FIW. Tremblay et al. (2006) suggested role overloads, which female teleworkers are more likely to experience, lead to WIF. Sullivan and Lewis (2001) found, for male teleworkers, the work domain had a greater impact on the family domain. Moreover, the family domain was found to be more impactful on the work domain for female teleworkers (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001).

**States of Emergency and Telework**

The Telework Enhancement Act (2010) perceived and encouraged telework as a viable option for ensuring continuity of work in the face of emergencies. Interest in teleworking surged after the September 11 attacks halted operations of many critical government offices (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015). As a result, telework became an important aspect of emergency preparedness plans.

Unfortunately, there remains limited research on telework and states of emergency. Natural disasters are abrupt, catastrophic incidents that produce a boundless problematic fallout, resulting in a state of emergency (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson,

2015). Following a disaster, whether naturally occurring or the result of human acts of terrorism and destruction, there is a concern about the rise of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) resulting from exposure to trauma (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The rising rate of natural disasters worldwide, however, cautions the unpredictability and ruinous characteristics of disastrous events (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015). Pervasive media attention has raised overall awareness of and energized scholarly interest in natural disasters; however, the impact of catastrophes on individuals' working lives has generally remained unexamined (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015).

Natural disasters alter and reorganize primary needs of individuals, disrupting their routine societal conceptions and processes of performing one's work, which leads to a situational reassessment and search for a viable, alternative working option (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015). Telework has become an increasingly advanced and attractive approach for reestablishing operations under complex disaster conditions (Donnelly & Proctor-Thomson, 2015); however, minimal consideration has been given to the peculiar aspect of working in a state of emergency.

Donnelly and Proctor-Thomson (2015) explored the experiences of employees after a natural disaster. Following the New Zealand earthquake on February 22, 2011, which resulted in 185 deaths, researchers explored the experiences of 247 telework employees from a government agency. Most participants reported teleworking after the earthquakes helped them to balance the needs of work and home life. In addition, respondents spoke to the increased sense of safety and control over their environments that telework provided. After the earthquakes, employees were angry, fearful, and hesitant about the possibility of traveling to a temporary workplace. Donnelly and

Proctor-Thomson suggested teleworking assisted employees in their readiness to return to work; however, readiness to return was also impacted by employees' living conditions, access to resources, and organizational support.

### *COVID-19 and Telework*

Between February and March 2020, Bialek et al. (2020) reported 170,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide, with an estimated death count of 7,000. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, corporations and individuals transitioned to performing their job responsibilities from home (Baert et al., 2020a). Molino et al. (2020) found 81% of workers worldwide were impacted by complete or partial job site closures. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic led to massive and unexpected relocation of work from the office to home almost overnight (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Oz & Crooks, 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020; Tavares et al., 2020). COVID-19 presented an unprecedented scenario that resulted in widespread lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, altering life and work routines (Carillo et al., 2020). These measures forced employees worldwide to telework.

Carillo et al. (2020) found 42% of employees were able adapt to the new work environment within 1 day. Moreover, 31% of individuals were able to adapt within 2 to 5 days (Carillo et al., 2020). Anders (2020) reported a LinkedIn Workforce Index survey found 55% of respondents believed their job could be performed through telework. Individuals from media, software, and finance industries most strongly endorsed the viability of telework; however, respondents who worked in retail, recreation, and travel did not feel telework was viable across their industries. Most survey participants felt they

could be successful and productive while teleworking, even if their industry was not best suited to this modality (Anders, 2020).

The success of businesses and health of employees were both at risk due to the pandemic, which is thought to be the most severe stressor of this generation (Oz & Crooks, 2020). Countless individuals took part in telework for the first time, most with little preparation (Molina et al., 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020). As reported by Kochhar and Passel (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in approximately 30 million U.S. workers filing for unemployment.

Approximately 2.6 million of those jobs lost could not be easily converted to telework, but according to a job characteristic analysis of occupations in the United States, Dingel and Neiman (2020) reported 37% of jobs could potentially be performed from home. Baena-Díez et al. (2020) reported highly skilled employees had greater opportunities to adapt to telework. Employers were asked to establish telework structures and procedures wherever possible to reduce the number of individuals in one place (Baena-Díez et al., 2020; Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020); however, the modality was not possible for all workers, especially in occupations involving unskilled labor and in which acquisition of communication technology was a challenge. Kochhar and Passel (2020) reported telework has only increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 40% of individuals surveyed reporting they worked from home due to COVID-19 pandemic measures.

Buffer (2020) conducted a survey with 3,500 teleworkers to explore their experiences and feelings about the telework modality. Of all respondents, 98% reported wanting to telework again at some point in their careers and noted they would

recommend it to others. Most participants teleworked full time, whereas only 27%

teleworked for half of their schedules. Most respondents were happy with the amount of

time they worked from home, but 19% reported wanting to increase their telework

schedules. The most frequently cited telework benefit was scheduling flexibility.

Additional benefits included the lack of a commute and more time with family.

Respondents identified communication, loneliness, inability to stop working, motivation,

and distractions as the greatest challenges when teleworking (Buffer, 2020). Conversely,

an Eagle Hill survey, which had 1,000 participants, found 45% of teleworkers were less

productive, and 36% were less happy with their careers compared to nonteleworkers

(Maurer, 2020).

Organizations and corporations moved to restructure and introduce new work

procedures to decrease the number of individuals at the workplace to mitigate spread of

COVID-19 (Molina et al., 2020). Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD, 2020) asserted an investment in telework infrastructure on the part

of corporations could decrease the economic impact of the pandemic. Thus, the latter has

accelerated the prospect of telework (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Guyot &

Sawhill, 2020; Molina et al., 2020). Reynolds (2019) reported remote work participation

has grown by 159%. The consensus among organizations worldwide has been that

COVID-19 will have significant short- and long-term impacts on society (Baert et al.,

2020a; Guyot & Sawhill, 2020). Guyot and Sawhill (2020) referred to COVID-19 as a

massive experiment in the probability of telework. Up to 50% of U.S. workers still work

from home, which is twice the number of teleworkers from 2019 (Guyot & Sawhill,

2020). The post-pandemic work environment will look radically different and will

involve new standards and requirements (Gurchiek, 2020). Employees will have new structures for networking, communication, socialization, and collaboration with existing and potential customers (Gurchiek, 2020). Many businesses plan to allow continuation of telework past the COVID-19 pandemic (Molina et al., 2020).

In the face of uncertain times, major corporations have made groundbreaking decisions that impact their workforce. According to Gurchiek (2020), Google and Zillow allowed employees to telework until the end of 2020, and Microsoft and Amazon told employees that telework was extended until at least October 2020. According to Lerman and Dwoskin (2020), Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's chief executive officer, announced a plan to move all employees to telework in the next decade. In addition, Twitter released a statement that employees had the option to indefinitely work from home (Gurchiek, 2020).

As a preventative measure to stop the spread of COVID-19, countries around the world have instituted lockdowns and stay-at-home orders to varying extents. Social distancing, which involves individuals distancing and isolating from one another, is another precaution government agencies have urged individuals to undertake. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) called for organizations to implement telework wherever possible, as this measure has been presented as the best option for employers to help decrease spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 added a unique twist to an already complex work arrangement for employees. Individuals fortunate enough to telework during the pandemic must now consider challenges of social distancing, vulnerability to the virus, childcare in the face of school closures, and complex relationships with

management, coworkers, family, and roommates (OECD, 2020). In general, these worries were less concerning in non-pandemic times (OECD, 2020).

A chief strategy officer, Andrew Savikas (as cited in Gurchiek, 2020), asserted before the COVID-19 pandemic, most employees were uneasy with telework, believing the absence of in-person contact would halt their career progression. Now that most individuals telework, these worries have dissipated, for the most part (Gurchiek, 2020). Telework employees now feel their opportunities for career advancement are proportionate to those of office workers. Rigotti et al. (2020) examined challenges for teleworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic and found a major challenge was the need to feel connected with one's team and coworkers while working remotely. Rigotti et al. recommended establishing common team goals to increase connectedness. Another challenge was the blurring of boundaries between work and home life. Raišienė et al. indicated this blurring of lines increased the sense of 24/7 workweek availability. Rigotti et al. described the difficulty of sharing home resources for both home and work tasks, which increased when additional family members also required space at home. The limited resources of time and energy were found to negatively impact both parents and children (Rigotti et al., 2020).

Raišienė et al. (2020) explored employees' perceptions of benefits and setbacks of telework and identified key components necessary for successful telework. By studying a sample of 436 Lithuanian employees who teleworked during the COVID-19 pandemic, Raišienė et al. found women were particularly happy with telework opportunities, as these roles enabled them to preserve their health and safety. In contrast, men were more likely to negatively view the work modality. Male participants reported greater role

conflict, an inability to focus while teleworking, and decreased interactions with coworkers and supervisors, leading to a belief in the reduction of career mobility (Raišienė et al., 2020). Older employees viewed telework as a hindrance, emphasizing the lack of supervision, feedback, and team cohesion. Additionally, they had difficulties with time management, organization, and separating work and home life. Younger telework employees were more likely to focus on and emphasize benefits of telework. Individuals new to teleworking experienced far fewer challenges than seasoned telework employees. Raišienė et al. suggested new telework employees were unaware of the drawbacks of the work modality. Finally, employees who partially teleworked were happier than full-time teleworkers (Raišienė et al., 2020)

Oz and Crooks (2020) examined organizational communication while teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic by using data collected from a technology corporation. The researchers found, after moving to telework, use of workplace messaging apps significantly increased among employees. Communication via workplace messaging apps after the completion of a work shift was common among teleworkers. In addition, Oz and Crooks found response time to messages fell by 19%. Participants also endorsed an increase in meetings, especially shorter meetings. Finally, respondents emphasized increased communication within their teams and with supervisors while teleworking (Oz & Crooks, 2020).

To gain an in-depth understanding of telework, getAbstract (2020) surveyed 1,200 U.S. teleworkers in April 2020. Results indicated around 43% of participants wanted to continue working from home once threat of the COVID-19 pandemic receded. Reasons included (a) the lack of commute (43%), (b) a feeling of greater productivity (37%), (c)

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more time with family and friends (34%), (d) more personal time (30%), and (e) increased work quality (28%; getAbstract, 2020). In addition, 20% of respondents mentioned their companies were considering the possibility of a permanent and flexible telework structure. Finally, 26% of participants trusted they would have access to a more flexible schedule in the future (getAbstract, 2020).

Baert et al. (2020a) surveyed 3,821 employees under the age of 65 who resided in Flanders, Belgium on the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on their careers and aspirations. Results indicated 21% of participants worried about losing their jobs due to the pandemic; of these, 14% believed job termination could happen at any moment. In addition, 26% of respondents assumed they would miss out on an expected promotion. Nearly half of survey participants stated their work priorities had changed since the onset of the pandemic, expressing an increased need for improved work conditions (51.8%) and work–life balance (51.1%; Baert et al., 2020a). Overall, 42% of respondents wanted to see more empathy from their employers. Most importantly, 41% of participants expressed a desire to work closer to home, and 48.1% saw telework as a necessity in the face of COVID-19 (Baert et al., 2020a).

A second study by Baert et al. (2020b) explored the experiences, expectations, and hopes of employees who teleworked from Belgium. Overall, participants reported a favorable experience while teleworking during the pandemic; 66% were satisfied with the new work arrangement. In addition, 65% reported an improvement in work–life balance. Moreover, 56% of respondents sensed an increase in work efficiency, and 51% expressed a greater ability to concentrate. Additionally, 50% of respondents reported a decrease in work-related stress and the possibility of burnout. Furthermore, Baert el al. found 85% of

participants believed telework would be a permanent option. The researchers indicated telework had a positive impact on job satisfaction, productivity, stress, burnout, and work–life balance.

Baert et al. (2020b) also found older employees were more likely to have a positive experience with teleworking. Baert et al. attributed this finding to the possibility that, because this population is at higher risk for contracting COVID-19, they were more grateful to have the option of teleworking and maintaining social distancing; however, respondents with children reported being less satisfied with telework. The early months of the COVID-19 pandemic left parents in a unique situation; as a safety precaution, governing bodies required schools and daycare centers to close, which resulted in employees having to simultaneously fulfill parenting and work responsibilities (Baert et al., 2020b). During the pandemic, teleworkers who relied on coworkers to accomplish job responsibilities were more likely to experience negative impacts. Participants disclosed increased conflicts and distress with family, roommates, and coworkers (Baert et al., 2020b).

Baert et al. (2020b) emphasized telework has its disadvantages. Overall, 27% of respondents said a major drawback of telework was the lack of physical presence, which potentially led to fewer promotion opportunities. In addition, 29% of respondents stated teleworking during the pandemic hampered their career development. Furthermore, 57% reported a negative impact on connectedness with coworkers, and 47% reported isolation from management (Baert et al., 2020b). The findings by Baert et al. aligned with those of previous studies (e.g., getAbstract, 2020; Oz & Crooks, 2020), in which researchers

found telework could impact relationships at work and the lack of employer support could be detrimental to career advancement.

For many employees in the United States, telework has become the new reality due to COVID-19. Even though the pandemic will eventually recede, a considerable number of employees have expressed desire to continue working from home, citing the lack of a commute, flexibility, and increased productivity as substantial benefits (Gurchiek, 2020). A LinkedIn survey administered from April to May 2020 to over 5,000 respondents revealed 55% believed their occupation could be successfully transitioned to a telework arrangement (Gurchiek, 2020). This finding was especially true for those who worked in technology and finance. Furthermore, 65% reported confidence in their own ability to be productive while teleworking (Gurchiek, 2020).

Putro and Riyanto (2020) explored stressors faced by teleworkers during the pandemic by interviewing 32 white-collar couples in Asia. All individuals had teleworked for at least 9 weeks. In addition, each person was required to work 8 hours per day and 5 days per week. Demographic data indicated each couple regularly worked longer hours, averaging 9–10 hours per day rather than 8 hours.

All couples had difficulty adapting to telework and did not feel comfortable until the 3rd week of the arrangement. Putro and Riyanto (2020) indicated a major stressor was space. The teleworking couples found developing space boundaries at home to be a challenge. Due to limited availability, teleworkers often had to share space with family and children. Others' access to their work area was considered a distraction from work. Finally, Putro and Riyanto found time was another stressor. The couples in their study had to develop time boundaries to balance home and work requirements; for example,

they focused on domestic tasks, such as chores and children's education in the morning, and focused on their work in the afternoon and into the evening (Putro & Riyanto, 2020).

      **Technostress.** Development and implementation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has facilitated and increased use of telework (Molino et al., 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020). Although ICTs have assisted organizations with their portability, reliability, and faster processing speeds, they also have disadvantages (Molino et al., 2020). Molino et al. (2020) found employees feel pressured to be available all day to meet work demands because of ICTs and continuous connectivity to the internet. In addition, ICTs have led to the assumption that work will be finished at a faster pace. For employers on top of production, employers expect greater work efficiency (Molina et al., 2020). Due to ICTs, employees may also be at increased risk of developing stress, anxiety, mental fatigue, frustration, sleep disorders, and workaholism, along with experiencing a negative impact on work performance (Molina et al., 2020). Lastly, work–family and work–life conflicts may also increase due to use of ICTs (Molina et al., 2020).

      Molina et al. (2020) explored technostress among Italian workers during the COVID-19 pandemic through a survey of 749 individuals. They found telework increased prevalence of work overload. Carillo et al. (2020) found workload had a positive relationship with technostressors, which is stress induced by using technology; a substantial workload led to techno-overload in the form of assumptions to work quicker, harder, and more hours. Additionally, workload was linked to techno-invasion; participants reported ICTs and work encroached on their time and personal lives, resulting in greater work–family conflict (Molina et al., 2020).

*COVID-19 and Mental Health*

At the time of the study conducted by Kofman and Garfin (2020), there were 720,000 reported cases of COVID-19 and 30,000 deaths worldwide. The far-reaching and devastating impact of pandemics, as with COVID-19, have been linked to negative mental health symptoms; following a natural disaster or state of emergency, individuals most frequently experience symptoms of PTSD (Kofman & Garfin, 2020). PTSD can trigger adverse mental health symptoms related to anxiety and depression (Kofman & Garfin, 2020). Stress negatively impacts adjustment to telework (Carillo et al., 2020). Carillo et al. (2020) found stress arising from employees' personal lives and the uncertainty of the pandemic carries over to and negatively impacts their work lives; however, these increased workloads have led to greater efficiency, productivity, and satisfaction. Carillo et al. highlighted the lack of a commute saved time and effort, which could in turn be redirected toward work.

Long-term confinement resulting from the continued spread of COVID-19 could lead to a mental health crisis, especially in densely populated countries and those lacking in mental health resources or disaster management plans (Dongarwar et al., 2020; Rajkumar, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented time during which individuals have experienced compounding stressors. Maurer (2020) stated:

> Stressors brought on by COVID-19 include overworking and adapting to new ways of working; caring for children in the absence of school or day care; job insecurity; health concerns; isolation; and the lack of clear boundaries between work and home. (para. 6)

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So far, the limited research on COVID-19 has suggested individuals are more susceptible to symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress, and substance use (Rogers et al., 2020). Using the PubMed database, Rajkumar (2020) conducted a literature review of 28 articles on COVID-19 and mental health symptoms. He found symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress were frequent responses to COVID-19. Czeisler et al. (2020) reported COVID-19, social distancing, and stay-at-home orders led to considerable increases in anxiety and depressive symptoms in the United States.

Uncertainty, gravity, disinformation, quarantines, social distancing, and social isolation associated with the pandemic have been found to increase stress and mental deterioration (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020; Rajkumar, 2020). Individuals who had to quarantine due to stay-at-home orders reported experiencing stress, depression, fear, insomnia, and anger. These symptoms were found to persist even after stay-at-home orders were lifted and restrictions were reduced (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Furthermore, a second study highlighted individual behaviors during the pandemic; increased fear, panic, and anxiety led people to hoard resources, such as toilet paper, disinfectant products, and food (Rajkumar, 2020). Rajkumar (2020) suggested populations vulnerable to adverse mental health effects include individuals sick with COVID-19 and their family members, immunocompromised individuals, individuals with existing mental health conditions, and healthcare professionals. Stressors for healthcare providers include insufficient protective equipment, supplies, and resources, along with increased work demands (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020)

Xiong et al. (2020) performed a systematic review using PubMed, Embase, Medline, Web of Science, and Scopus databases to identify articles related to COVID-19

and mental health symptomology. They found increased levels of symptomology for anxiety, depression, and stress. The prevalence of depressive symptoms was found to be higher during the COVID-19 pandemic than in the pre-pandemic period. Xiong et al. also found depressive symptoms were present in 14% to 50% of participants. Women, students, highly educated people, individuals under 40 years of age, and professionals were at greater risk of experiencing depressive symptoms. Furthermore, employment, finances, marital status, medical history, and exposure to news about COVID-19 were found to be predictors of developing depressive symptomology (Xiong et al., 2020). Anxiety symptoms were present in 6% to 50% of participants. Frequent exposure to news and social media was linked to development of anxiety and stress symptoms (Holman et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2020). Other predictors of anxiety included education, gender, isolation, and medical history.

Czeisler et al. (2020) examined mental health, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic; the researchers surveyed individuals from across the United States from June 24–30, 2020. Of those surveyed, 31% reported experiencing anxiety or depressive symptoms, and 26% reported symptoms of trauma and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) due to COVID-19. Additionally, 11% had seriously considered suicide in the past month. Suicidal ideation was more common among men. Individuals in the 18–24 age group were most likely to report symptoms of anxiety and depression, TSRD, substance use, and suicidal ideation (Czeisler et al., 2020).

Due to restrictions imposed by government agencies, individuals had to adjust and develop new strategies to handle stress. Maurer (2020) stated, "People have also lost many of the ways they used to manage stress, such as spending time with friends, going

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to concerts and sporting events, and going to the gym" (para. 6). Qualtrics (2021) study from the XM institute conducted a Remote Work Pulse survey to assess the experiences of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and found 85% of respondents wanted their employers to do more to assist them in the transition to working from home. Additionally, 80% felt helpless and experienced a loss of control from teleworking. Collamer (2020) found 40% of survey respondents experienced burnout directly related to the pandemic. Dongarwar et al. (2020) examined neurobehavioral factors employers could implement to assist employees to alleviate work-related stress during the pandemic. Teleworkers were likely to work beyond their scheduled work hours to appease their supervisors. As a result, teleworkers were at increased risk of burnout. According to Maurer (2020), most respondents to a survey investigating telework and burnout reported feeling burnout after only 2 months in their new work environments; however, most participants stated they did not plan on taking vacation any time soon, as they feared taking a break due to financial, health, and job security concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help employees avoid burnout, Dongarwar et al. (2020) recommended employers should encourage adherence to schedules and provide mental health care and access to fitness resources. The researchers insisted on developing and maintaining strong relationships between the leadership and employees to enhance connectedness and belonging; for example, organizations could benefit from virtual happy hours or teambuilding activities. Finally, employee well-being may increase when employers assist them to install comfortable workstations at home (Dongarwar et al., 2020).

**Substance Use.** Poor mental health and social isolation are risk factors for substance use disorders (Hochstatter et al., 2020). Czeisler et al. (2020) found 13% of study participants reported starting or increasing substance use to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Hochstatter et al. (2020) examined drug and alcohol use during the pandemic through a survey of Wisconsin residents 6 weeks prior to a lockdown and 6 weeks after a reduction in restrictions. Czeisler et al. did not find a difference in alcohol or marijuana use before or during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, Vora et al. (2020) found an increase in alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also identified an 8% increase in use of illicit drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. Moreover, participants reported being twice as likely to be around others who use illicit drugs during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic (Hochstatter et al., 2020). Hochstatter et al. found participants were at greater risk of relapsing and were less likely to use their support systems to stay sober. Fear and worry about the COVID-19 pandemic were the main reasons individuals reported starting substance use during the pandemic (Rogers et al., 2020).

**Job and Financial Stress.** A meta-analysis by Murphy and Athanasou (1999) found job loss and unemployment had a negative impact on mental health. Loss of income altered living standards for unemployed individuals. Anxiety increased due to loss of income and uncertainty about how long the individual would remain jobless (Darity & Goldsmith, 1996). Tran et al. (2018) found financial stress ranked highly among adults as a major cause of stress and anxiety. Gorgich et al. (2017) asserted job stress can lead to reduced physical and mental health. Additionally, job loss and work stressors could increase prevalence of adjustment disorders (Kazlauskas & Quero, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the unemployment of millions of people worldwide; in the United States alone, 30 million people lost their jobs and filed for unemployment (Wilson et al., 2020). U.S. Congress enacted a $2.4 trillion relief plan to lessen the pandemic's economic impact (Wilson et al., 2020). The unemployment rate resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has been compared to that of the Great Depression (Crayne, 2020). Economists have reported the impact of this recession will last long after the pandemic's peak; some jobs may take years to return (Crayne, 2020). Moreover, researchers believe millions of individuals will have difficulty attaining stable employment (Crayne, 2020).

According to Parker et al. (2020a), 15% of adults in the United States reported losing their job, and 10% know someone who has lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Half of individuals who lost their jobs are still unemployed, 33% were able to return to their old jobs, and the rest have found different jobs (Parker et al., 2020a). Additionally, individuals aged 18–29, lower income individuals, and ethnic minority groups were most vulnerable to pandemic job loss (Kochhar & Passel, 2020; Peltz et al., 2020; Venkatesh, 2020). Venkatesh (2020) found individuals with higher incomes had savings or access to resources to assist them during the pandemic. Among individuals able to stay employed during the pandemic, 32% reported a reduction in work hours or pay (Parker et al., 2020a).

The pandemic has also led to financial challenges. Parker et al. (2020a) reported 25% of respondents have struggled to pay their bills on time following onset of the COVID-19 outbreak. Consequently, 49% of adults have had to use their savings or borrow money to survive. Moreover, 36% stated they were no longer able to contribute to

savings accounts or retirement plans. In addition, 47% reported acquiring resources from charitable organizations, government assistance programs, and unemployment assistance (Parker et al., 2020a). To meet spending needs during the pandemic, 62 million individuals relied on credit cards or loans, 61 million used their savings, 30 million had to borrow money from friends or family, 27 million relied on unemployment assistance, and 44 million depended on stimulus checks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Financial struggles were most frequently reported among lower income individuals, those without a college degree, and Black and Hispanic individuals (Parker et al., 2020a). Financial strain and economic hardships have been associated with mental distress, anxiety, and depressive disorders (Wilson et al., 2020).

Job insecurity, probability of job loss, and reduced work hours and pay are stressful phenomena found to increase the likelihood of anxiety and depression (Lawson et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2020). During the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, job loss and wage reductions were predictors of stress, symptoms of depression, and aided development of a psychological disorder (Lawson et al., 2020). Additionally, job loss during the Great Recession was related to higher rates of anxiety and depression (Lawson et al., 2020). Wilson et al. (2020) explored job insecurity, financial concerns, and mental health impacts during COVID-19 by surveying 474 participants in the United States. The researchers found job insecurity and financial worries resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic were related to greater anxiety and depression symptomology.

Furthermore, 25% of participants fell in the moderate-to-severe range for both depression and anxiety (Wilson et al., 2020). Most participants expressed worry about

their employment status due to COVID-19, and 30% worried about financial stability for the following year. The relationship between job security and depressive symptoms may be related to feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty about the job market and the pandemic (Wilson et al., 2020). Holman et al. (2020) found job loss and financial strain during the COVID-19 pandemic were predictors of depressive symptoms. According to Boyraz and Legros (2020), financial losses, unemployment, housing issues, and a lack of support during COVID-19 increased risks of PTSD.

**Parenting.** The COVID-19 pandemic was an unforeseen stressor that may impact parent–child relationships (Brown et al., 2020). To decrease spread of the virus, government-led mitigation procedures were established to increase social distancing. These measures included stay-at-home orders and the closure of schools and childcare institutions. The pandemic has altered family life and dynamics (Brown et al., 2020; Cluver et al., 2020; James et al., 2020). An estimated 1.38 billion children lack access to external support in the form of schools and extracurricular activities (Culver et al., 2020). The U.S. Census Bureau (2020) found 98 million respondents had children under the age of 18 at home. Of this number, 37 million respondents also teleworked. Parents have had to balance working from home with care and educational needs of their children. Social isolation and decreased community support for children can lead to greater perceived stress among parents (Brown et al., 2020; Romero et al., 2020). This stress is intensified for low-income households or households with higher occupancy (Culver, 2020). Close contact with others in stressful situations can result in violent behaviors toward children (Brown et al., 2020; Culver et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to

financial strain for families. Unemployment has been linked with increased risk of child maltreatment (Brown et al., 2020).

The little research that exists on the subject has indicated increased parental stress and stricter parenting may have resulted due to the COVID-19 pandemic; for instance, Romero et al. (2020) suggested strict parenting has led to more negative outcomes for children. Additionally, James et al. (2020) showed child maltreatment has increased because of stay-at-home orders. Job loss during the pandemic has been found to increase psychological and physical abuse toward children (Lawson et al., 2020). Additionally, Romero et al. found confinement to the home exacerbated children's negative emotions and behaviors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased anxiety, depression, and sleep disorder symptomology (Brown et al., 2020; James et al., 2020). Research on past quarantines indicated an increase in PTSD and anger (James et al., 2020). Marchetti et al. (2020) reported elevated PTSD symptoms in both parents and children following lengthy lockdown periods. The impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health mirrored that of their parents' (Romero et al., 2020). Accounting for mental health symptomology, Romero et al. (2020) asserted children in households with more risk factors may be more susceptible to child abuse. Brown et al. (2020) found parental symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression are predictors of child neglect.

Brown et al. (2020) explored stress and parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic by surveying 183 parents with a child under the age of 18 at home. The researchers found a greater number of factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic served as predictors of parental stress. Furthermore, symptoms of anxiety or depression intensified parental

stress; however, Brown et al. could not determine if COVID-19-specific stressors were significantly related to the risk of child abuse. Results indicated families that received financial assistance and parents with adverse mental health symptoms had a higher risk of child abuse (Brown et al., 2020).

Protective factors found to potentially decrease the risk of harmful parenting practices during the COVID-19 pandemic include coping strategies and supportive family environments (Brown et al., 2020). Some participants reported the benefits of staying at home, including more time spent with family, and sense of control over COVID-19 was also found to be a protective factor that decreased parental stress. Finally, parents who received adequate social and emotional support were less likely to experience stress, which decreased the potential for child maltreatment (Brown et al., 2020).

**Relationship Conflict.** According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), 136 million Americans are married and 78 million live in a household of two individuals. In the past, increased domestic and partner violence has occurred after natural disasters, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods in the United States (Kofman & Garfin, 2020). Stress from a disaster, financial issues, a poor economy, changes in household responsibilities, increased familial interactions, and a loss of control and uncertainty can lead to a rise in domestic violence (Kofman & Garfin, 2020; Sharma & Borah, 2020). Due to the pandemic, shelter-in-place orders and more individuals having to work from home meant the only options for many victims of domestic abuse were to isolate with their abusers or leave and risk contracting COVID-19 (Béland et al., 2020; Kofman & Garfin, 2020; Sharma & Borah, 2020; Usher et al., 2020; Vora et al., 2020). Sharma and Borah (2020) found the more time families spend together, the higher the chance of domestic violence.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline reported abusers use the fear and threat of COVID-19 to control their victims (Kofman & Griffin, 2020; Usher et al., 2020). Abusers have even used misinformation to coerce victims of domestic violence into confinement (Usher et al., 2020). Isolation increases the risk of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and nullifies existing sources of support, such as extended family, friends, coworkers, and community agencies (Béland et al., 2020; Usher et al., 2020). When global stay-at-home orders were announced, many agencies and organizations expressed their concern about a probable increase in domestic violence. Following the 1st month of social distancing procedures, nine cities in the United States reported a 20% to 30% surge in domestic violence calls for assistance (Kofman & Garfin, 2020). According to the National Commission for Women (as cited by Vora et al., 2020), there was a 100% increase in violence against women in India following the lockdowns.

Although the National Domestic Violence Hotline saw a rise in calls related to the COVID-19 pandemic, other agencies also reported decreased domestic violence calls. Koffman and Garfin (2020) suggested continuous, proximity to abusers may make it difficult for victims to call 9-1-1 for help. Many individuals may not call for assistance until the violence has escalated to extreme levels (Koffman & Garfin, 2020). According to Béland et al. (2020), employment status and working from home are not predictors of domestic violence; however, inability to meet financial responsibilities leads to increased stress and domestic violence.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigation measures, such as social distancing and stay-at-home orders, have either confined romantic partners in a shared space or kept them apart in different locations (Luetke et al., 2020). Luetke et al. (2020) suggested

romantic partners may experience distress as a result of anxiety from the pandemic, a lack of physical mobility, the closure of stores and restaurants, a reduction in outdoor activities, and a reduction in physical touch. Luetke et al. examined romantic relationships during the pandemic and changes in intimacy through a survey of 1,010 adults in the United States from April 10–20, 2020. The researchers found participants experienced greater relationship conflict during the pandemic. An escalation in conflict was attributed to decreased frequency of intimate touch and sexual behavior. Luetke et al. suggested decreased sexual behavior may have resulted from external stressors during the pandemic.

## Summary

The idea of telework was introduced in the 1970's as a response to the oil crisis; its societal benefits were highlighted at the time (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Mello, 2007; Tavares, 2017). Following an increase in ICTs in the 1990s, the possibility and popularity of telework surged (Allen et al., 2015; Song & Gao, 2019; Tavares, 2017). Benefits of telework were found to include increased quality of life and work–life balance, autonomy, flexibility, productivity, job satisfaction and performance, and decreased stress (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003; Song & Gao, 2019; Tremblay & Tomsin, 2012).

Telework afforded individuals a viable and effective way to accommodate work, personal life, and family obligations (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Hill et al., 2003). Baruch (2000) indicated teleworkers experienced lower stress levels due to their ability to care for their families while working. Moreover, multitasking throughout the workday led to increased family time and work–life balance. Tremblay et al. (2006) found blurred

lines between work and home life were a disadvantage of teleworking and increased work–family conflict.

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) indicated telework intensity is the amount of the work schedule employees can work away from the office. High-intensity employees telework for most of their schedules, whereas low-intensity employees only partially telework. Allen et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of considering telework intensity, as high- and low-intensity teleworkers had different experiences.

Rubio et al. (2015) explored work–family conflict; however, their investigation fell short due to overlooking the variable's directionality. Rubio et al. recommended future researchers examine job burnout and acknowledge the limitations of education, hours worked, professional status, and gender concerning work–family conflicts. The researchers indicated the aforementioned variables play a major role in emotional exhaustion and posited the need for further research on this front in the future. Solís (2017) assessed individuals who teleworked for a minimal portion of their schedules. Participants in the study only averaged 1.9 days of telework per week. Solís recommended future research examine populations with greater telework intensity.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, government officials have encouraged businesses and organizations to implement telework wherever possible (Kochhar & Passel, 2020). Kochhar and Passel (2020) reported 40% of participants began to work from home after the onset of the pandemic. In addition to the challenges of telework, the COVID-19 pandemic led to compounding, additional stressors because of measures implemented to decrease spread of the virus (Maurer, 2020).

Unfortunately, gaps and limitations remain in available literature, requiring a better understanding of telework intensity, work–family conflict, and work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. López-Igual and Rodríguez-Modroño (2020) called for an in-depth investigation and analysis of telework during the pandemic. Molino et al. (2020) recommended future research should examine work–family conflict. They also indicated a major limitation of their study on well-being and technology use during the COVID-19 pandemic was failure to account for the stressors experienced by study participants due to the pandemic and state of emergency. Similarly, Robinson (2020) also advocated for an analysis of stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaziri et al. (2020) found researchers have failed to account for employees who still work in an office and are at greater risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Finally, Baert et al. (2020a) recommended future studies should explore the impact of telework intensity in greater detail. Although there are many gaps in existing research on telework, the purpose of this study was to explore telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, telework intensity and work–family balance, and stressors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Chapter 3

## Research Design and Methods

### Research Design

Throughout this study, I aimed to explore the relationship between variables. To this end, I used a correlational research design for the study. Creswell (2014) indicated correlational designs may be used in a nonexperimental form to describe and measure the strength of the relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores. Similarly, Malhotra and Dash (2016) indicated correlational studies can increase understanding of existing relationships within a phenomenon.

Correlational research highlights the necessity of standardized and validated assessments or surveys administered to a large sample of individuals from the population of interest (Malhotra & Dash, 2016). I employed the validated and widely used Work–Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000), Family–Work Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000), and Work–Family Balance Scale (Carlson et al., 2009) in this study.

To gather quantitative data and explore relationships between the variables of interest, I used an online survey. The latter enabled me to contact and connect with people otherwise difficult to access through conventional methods (Wright, 2005). For example, an online survey affords researchers a greater geographical reach. According to Creswell (2014), surveys are a quantitative research tool that facilitate exploration of trends and viewpoints within the researched population. Through surveys, researchers can gather quantitative data from a sample with the purpose of generalizing findings to the overall population. Moreover, Given (2008) indicated the benefits of online surveys include increased efficiency, low administrative cost, global reach, accessible data, and

rapid capture of data. Lastly, online surveys can reach individuals who share similar characteristics, such as interests, values, or activities (Wright, 2005).

**Participants**

Participants in this study consisted of 201 individuals who reside in the United States and engaged in full-time or part-time telework as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 65 and older and were recruited through social media. I posted a message describing the research and providing a link for the survey through my personal Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts and in various telework-focused group pages on the aforementioned platforms.

**Sampling Methods**

The first method of sampling I used to recruit participants was convenience sampling, which is defined as a nonprobability approach in which the population is easy and straightforward to reach (Saunders et al., 2009). Givens (2008) indicated convenience sampling is invaluable when time is crucial, as this method enables data to be rapidly and promptly collected; this sampling method also facilitates data analysis, enables the researcher to identify and understand trends, and generalizes results to the larger population.

The second sampling method I used to recruit individuals was snowball sampling. Participants in the study were encouraged to share the survey link with others who met inclusion criteria for the study. Snowball sampling uses current study participants to recruit others who may meet the criteria and contribute to the study (Morgan, 2008). This method grants access to difficult-to-reach populations. When used in conjunction with

other sampling techniques, snowball sampling may enhance efficacy of research and reduce sampling bias (Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

**Measuring Instruments**

I measured telework intensity by the number of days an employee engages in telework during the week. Gajendran and Harrison (2007) described low-intensity teleworkers as individuals who work away from the worksite for 1 to 2 days per week, and high-intensity teleworkers as individuals who work from home for most of their work schedule. For this study, I categorized low-intensity employees as individuals who telework 1 to 2 days per week, and high-intensity teleworkers as individuals who telework 2.5 or more days per week (Ganjendran & Harrison, 2007).

*Work–Family Conflict Scales*

The Carlson et al. (2000) Work–Family Scale was used to measure both work–family conflict and family–work conflict. The scale uses a multidimensional approach to assess both work–family conflict and family–work conflict. The Work–Family Conflict Scale is made up of 9 items with 3 subscales: time-based work interference with family (WIF), strain-based WIF, and behavior-based WIF (Burke & El-Kot, 2010; Carlson et al., 2000). Similarly, the Family–Work Conflict Scale is comprised of 9 items with 3 subscales: time-based family interference with work (FIW), strain-based FIW, and behavior-based FIW (Burke & El-Kot, 2010; Carlson et al., 2000). By drawing from Burke and El-Kot (2010), I defined *time-based*, *strain-based*, and *behavior-based* as:

- **Time-based.** The amount of time given to one role leads to difficulty thriving in a different one.

- **Strain-based.** The strain experienced from one role results in difficulty with successfully participating in other roles.

- **Behavior-based.** Behaviors needed in one role are incongruent and conflict with behaviors required in another role.

Participants recorded their responses to both scales using a 5-point system ranging from 1 for *strongly disagree* to 5 for *strongly agree*. Carlson et al. (2000) assessed internal consistency of the six abovementioned dimensions. They reported all dimensions surpassed the .70 acceptance level: .97 for time-based WIF, .79 for time-based FIW, .85 for strain-based WIF, .87 for strain-based FIW, .78 for behavior-based WIF, and .85 for behavior-based FIW (Carlson et al., 2000). Moreover, Carlson et al. found discriminant validity for factors ranged from .24 to .83. The scales displayed internal consistency and invariance across samples, which indicated its applicability to a variety of populations. Carson et al. reported Cronbach's alpha to be .90 for the Work–Family Conflict Scale and .88 for the Family–Work Conflict Scale.

I first received permission from the author of the scales, Dr. Carlson, to use the scale (see Appendix A). Additional permission was granted to alter wording of questions (see Appendix B). Word substitutions were used in the scales to better achieve the study's purpose. For example, "When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities" (Carlson et al., 2000, p. 2) was changed to, "After finishing my work for the day, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities." Additionally, "I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family" (Carlson et al.,

2000, p. 2) was changed to "I am often too emotionally drained after work that it prevents me from contributing to my family."

### *Work–Family Balance*

After receiving permission from the author, Dr. Carlson (see Appendix A), I used the 6-item Work–Family Balance Scale (Carlson et al., 2009) to explore balance between the work and home domains. Carlson et al. (2009) found work–family balance is unique and separate from work–family enrichment and conflict. The correlation between work–family balance and these two factors ranged from .19 to .56; thus, Carlson et al. indicated discriminant validity. Through the exploratory factor analysis, I found all items on the assessment loaded at .77 or higher. Cronbach's alpha was .93 (Carslon et al., 2009).

Carlson et al. (2009) reported work–family balance impacts outcomes both at home and at work, such as family functioning, job satisfaction, and job commitment. Moreover, Carlson et al. suggested this scale has discriminant validity and reliability, accurately representing work–family balance. Carlson et al. also found the Work–Family Balance Scale explains variance in important work and family characteristics, including (a) job satisfaction, (b) employer commitment, (c) family satisfaction, (d) family performance, and (e) family functioning. With permission from the author, Dr. Carlson (see Appendix B), this scale was also altered with word substitutions to better meet the purpose of the study. For example, "I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family" (Carlson et al., 2009, p. 6) was changed to "I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me while working and in my family."

*COVID-19 Pandemic Stressors*

To better understand effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, I asked participants to rank the severity of its impact on their lives, with 0 indicating *no impact* and 10 indicating *extreme impact*. Additionally, I asked participants to report whether they had experienced an increase, decrease, or no change in pandemic stressors from a list of options. The latter was developed from results of a literature review of commonly encountered stressors during the pandemic.

**Data Collection Procedures**

I calculated the sample size for this study by using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). The alpha was set at .05, and the beta was set at .95. This study included one predictor variable: telework intensity. Existing literature has shown a range of effect sizes for telework on well-being. For this power analysis, the most conservative effect size found was used ($f^2$ = .3; Troup & Rose, 2012). This analysis resulted in a sample size of 46.

To aid in survey creation and administration, I used Qualtrics, a web-based tool, to develop the online survey, which was circulated to prospective participants (see Appendix C). I integrated informed consent into the first page of the survey (see Appendix D). The informed consent form included information on (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the study procedure, (c) estimated completion duration, (d) risks and benefits of participation, (e) voluntary participation with the ability to withdraw at any point, and (f) contact information for the myself (i.e., primary researcher), dissertation chair, Institutional Review Board (IRB), and affiliated university. I emphasized anonymity of the survey to participants by explaining no identifying information, such as names or emails, would be requested or collected.

Once approval was obtained from IRB (see Appendix E), I began to recruit individuals for the study. I posted a message with the Qualtrics link to the survey and a description of the study (see Appendix E) to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Reddit to spread awareness of the research and recruit participants. In addition, I posted the message to groups and pages focused on teleworking on various social media platforms. The survey was available for a period of 90 days. Participation in the research was completely voluntary, and no compensation was offered.

Once participants clicked on the link, they were directed to the first page of the survey, which contained information about informed consent. After reading through the informed consent, participants were prompted to choose either "I consent, begin the survey" or "I do not consent, I do not wish to participate." Selecting "I do not consent, I do not wish to participate" redirected participants to the end of the survey, which displayed a message thanking them for their time. Those who chose to participate were taken to the beginning of the survey, which contained questions about demographics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, yearly income, marital status, living arrangement, occupation, occupational role, tenure of telework, and days teleworked per week. Additionally, the survey asked about experiences with telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, participants filled out validated assessments that gauged work–family conflict, family–work conflict, and work–life balance.

### Ethical Considerations

All ethical standards and procedures were considered throughout the development and implementation of this research. Participation in the study was completely voluntary. In addition, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Data were

collected anonymously, as no identifying information was requested from participants. Though participants were asked to reflect on potentially uncomfortable aspects of their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, this recollection did not place them under any additional stress or risk, as the pandemic was ongoing. Demographic questions were not sensitive in nature to minimize any risk of harm to the participants; therefore, the study posed minimal risk.

### Cost of and Benefit to Participation

The only cost to participants was the time needed to complete the survey, which was estimated at 15–20 minutes. Participants did not receive any direct benefits or compensation; however, they were all informed their survey responses may enable mental health professionals and policymakers to assist other people adjusting to telework. Participants were informed the data collected may increase researchers' understanding of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Privacy

The survey data were collected and electronically stored on the password protected and encrypted Qualtrics platform, to which only I had access. Additionally, I only accessed the survey from a personal, password-protected laptop. All data extracted from Qualtrics were saved in a password-protected folder. When the laptop was not in use, it was locked in a personal filing cabinet located in my home office; both the home office and the filing cabinet were only accessible to me.

## Data Analysis

Following closure of the survey, I downloaded collected data from Qualtrics as an Excel file. Next, I uploaded the file to the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) for analysis. I first used descriptive analyses to describe the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores (Creswell, 2014). Then, I employed correlation analysis to uncover and identify the magnitude and direction of the relationship between variables and answer the research questions. The direction of a relationship can be described as positive or negative. A positive relationship (indicated by "+") is present when the variables move in the same direction, whereas a negative relationship (indicated by "-") means the variables move in opposite directions (Sheperis et al., 2010). The strength of the relationship is specified through the correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1.00 to +1.00. The strongest relationships are those nearest to the extremes (i.e., approaching -1.00 or +1.00), and a value of 0 indicates there is no relationship (Sheperis et al., 2010).

The point biserial correlation coefficient was used to analyze the first four research questions. Sheperis et al. (2010) indicated this variation of Pearson's *r* is employed when one variable is a continuous, quantitative measure, and the other is categorial or nominal in nature. This study included a dichotomous variable (i.e., telework intensity) with only two responses: high intensity or low intensity. Once the variable was coded, the point biserial correlation coefficient ($r_{pb}$) followed the same guidelines as a Pearson's *r.* According to Sheperis et al., both variables are quantitative, and the linear relationship is measured. The assumptions for the analysis were: (a) one variable was continuous, (b) the other variable was dichotomous, (c) the data were normally distributed, (d) there were no outliers, and (e) equal variances were present (Sheskin, 2011). The Bonferroni correction, which is applied when numerous statistical tests are run, was not utilized as the adjustment analysis was previously found to substantially decrease the power of a test, and it is typically used for multiple

comparisons (Perneger, 1998). The prevalence of type II error is also increased when using the Bonferroni correction leading to a greater probability of categorizing key findings as non-significant. Perneger (1998) suggested that when it comes to working with multiple comparisons, instead of employing the Bonferroni correction, researchers are better off describing and justifying their chosen tests.

I used Pearson's correlation analysis to investigate research question 5 which explored the relationships between work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used when both variables are quantitative, and the researcher seeks to predict the strength and association between them (Sheperis et al., 2010). The correlation coefficient ranges from -1.00 to +1.00. A positive coefficient means the variables both trend in the same direction; a negative coefficient signifies one variable is increasing and the other is decreasing. A score of -1.00 indicates an absolutely negative relationship, +1.00 indicates an absolutely positive relationship, and 0 indicates no relationship (Schober et al., 2018). Assumptions related to Pearson's correlation analysis included: (a) a linear relationship between variables, (b) continuous variables, (c) no outliers, and (d) pairs of values measured independently of each other (Schober et al., 2018; Sedgwick, 2012).

When examining positive correlation coefficients, values ranging from .10 to .30 indicate a small effect size, .30 to .50 indicate a moderate effect size, and .50 to 1.00 indicate a large effect size. Conversely, for negative correlation coefficients, values ranging from -.10 to -.30 indicate a small effect size, -.30 to -.50 indicate a moderate effect size, and -.50 to -1.00 indicate a large effect size (Brydges, 2019; Howell, 2008).

# Chapter 4

## Results

A total of 283 individuals responded to the online Qualtrics survey; however, 82 incomplete responses were removed. I used 201 responses for the analysis and calculated frequencies and percentages for gender, age, race/ethnicity, relationship status, and education. Most respondents identified as female (62.19%), 36.81% identified as male, and three respondents (1%) indicated they preferred not to answer. The most frequently observed age categories were 25–34 years (47.76%) and 35–44 years (27.36%). Participants who completed the survey self-identified as Hispanic/Latino (13.43%), White (66.67%), Black or African American (4.48%), Asian (10.95%), mixed race (1.99%), or other (.99%). In addition, 1.49% preferred not to answer. Approximately half of the sample was married (51.74%). Over one third of respondents held a bachelor's degree (43.28%). Detailed demographic information is found in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Frequency Table for Participants' Gender, Age, Relationship Status, and Education*

| Characteristics | $n$ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
|     Male | 74 | 36.81 |
|     Female | 125 | 62.19 |
|     I prefer not to answer | 3 | 1.00 |
| | | |
| Age | | |
|     18–24 | 18 | 8.96 |
|     25–34 | 96 | 47.76 |
|     35–44 | 55 | 27.36 |
|     45–54 | 20 | 9.95 |
|     55–64 | 10 | 4.98 |
|     65+ | 2 | 0.99 |
| | | |
| Race/ethnicity | | |
|     Hispanic/Latino | 27 | 13.43 |
|     White | 134 | 66.67 |
|     Black or African American | 9 | 4.48 |
|     Asian | 22 | 10.95 |
|     Mixed race | 4 | 1.99 |
|     Other | 2 | 0.99 |
|     I prefer not to answer | 3 | 1.49 |
| | | |
| Relationship status | | |
|     Married | 104 | 51.74 |
|     Domestic partnership or civil union | 21 | 10.45 |
|     Divorced | 8 | 3.98 |
|     Separated | 1 | 0.50 |
|     Single, never married | 67 | 33.33 |
| | | |
| Education | | |
|     Less than high school | 2 | 0.99 |
|     High school graduate (i.e., high school diploma or equivalent, including GED) | 4 | 1.99 |
|     Some college but no degree | 22 | 10.95 |
|     Associate degree (2-year) | 15 | 7.46 |
|     Bachelor's degree | 87 | 43.28 |
|     Master's degree | 56 | 27.86 |
|     Doctoral degree | 10 | 4.98 |
|     Professional degree (JD, MD) | 5 | 2.49 |

*Note. n* = 201.

Additionally, frequencies and percentages were calculated for the number of individuals in the home, individuals who provided care for children (i.e., those 17 and under) while teleworking, and individuals who provided care for other household members (i.e., those 18 or older) while teleworking. The breakdown of responses showed most respondents reported households of two (36.32%) or three (21.89%) individuals while teleworking. Additionally, 57 participants (28.36%) reported caring for children aged 17 and under while teleworking. Finally, 22 respondents (10.95%) indicated caring for other household members aged 18 or older while teleworking. Complete frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Frequency Table for Participants' Household Characteristics*

| Characteristics | $n$ | % |
|---|---|---|
| Individuals in the home | | |
| 1 | 29 | 14.43 |
| 2 | 73 | 36.32 |
| 3 | 44 | 21.89 |
| 4 | 23 | 11.44 |
| 5 | 21 | 10.45 |
| 6 | 7 | 3.48 |
| More than 6 | 4 | 1.99 |
| | | |
| Are you responsible for the care of children aged 17 and under while teleworking? | | |
| Yes | 57 | 28.36 |
| No | 144 | 71.64 |
| | | |
| Are you responsible for the care of individuals aged 18 or older while teleworking? | | |
| Yes | 22 | 10.95 |
| No | 179 | 89.05 |

*Note. n* = 201.

**Telework Characteristics**

Next, I calculated frequencies and percentages for telework characteristics, such as occupation, occupational role, telework tenure, and number of days teleworked in a week. Most respondents held occupations that fell into the following categories: business and financial (20.90%), information and technology (19.90%), healthcare and social assistance (16.42%), and administration and support (13.93%). Furthermore, the most frequent occupational role was employee (nonmanager; 42.8%), followed by entry-level roles (23.38%). Most participants had teleworked for 1 to 2 years (56.72%) and for 5 to 6 days per week (71.64%). Detailed frequencies and percentages are displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Frequency Table for Participants' Telework Characteristics*

| Characteristics | *n* | % |
|---|---|---|
| Occupation | | |
| Education and training | 10 | 4.98 |
| Sales | 19 | 9.45 |
| Business and financial | 42 | 20.90 |
| Real estate or rental and leasing | 2 | 0.99 |
| Administration or support | 28 | 13.93 |
| Healthcare or social assistance | 33 | 16.42 |
| Arts, entertainment, or recreation | 1 | 0.50 |
| Information or technical | 40 | 19.90 |
| Government | 8 | 3.98 |
| Legal | 4 | 1.99 |
| Other | 14 | 6.96 |
| | | |
| Occupational role | | |
| Self-employed | 6 | 2.99 |
| Advisor, consultant, or contracted | 22 | 10.95 |
| Entry-level | 47 | 23.38 |
| Experienced employee (nonmanager) | 85 | 42.28 |
| Manager or supervisor | 29 | 14.43 |
| Senior leadership | 10 | 4.98 |
| Executive leadership | 2 | 0.99 |
| | | |
| Telework tenure | | |
| 0–3 months | 6 | 2.99 |
| 3–6 months | 13 | 6.47 |
| 6–9 months | 14 | 6.96 |
| 9–12 months | 54 | 26.86 |
| 1–2 years | 114 | 56.72 |
| | | |
| Days teleworked per week | | |
| 1–2 days | 18 | 8.96 |
| 3–4 days | 30 | 14.93 |
| 5–6 days | 144 | 71.64 |
| 7 days | 9 | 4.47 |

*Note. n* = 201.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for responses related to the number of other people teleworking at home, whether respondents wanted to continue

teleworking, and whether they recommended telework. Most participants responded *no* (57.71%) to the question of whether other family members also teleworked from home. Additionally, 81.09% of respondents reported they would like to continue teleworking, and 85.57% noted they would recommend teleworking to others. Frequencies and percentages of these responses are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Frequency Table for Participants' Telework Context*

| Characteristics | *n* | % |
|---|---|---|
| Are others in the home teleworking as well? | | |
| Yes | 85 | 42.29 |
| No | 116 | 57.71 |
| | | |
| Is telework something you would like to continue? | | |
| Yes | 163 | 81.09 |
| No | 38 | 18.91 |
| | | |
| Is telework something you would recommend to others? | | |
| Yes | 172 | 85.57 |
| No | 29 | 14.43 |

*Note. n = 201.*

**Telework Experiences**

Participants reported their experiences with telework by indicating whether they had experienced an increase, decrease, or no change to physical health, mental health, happiness, financial savings, and time spent with family since they began this work modality. Approximately 33.33% of participants responded they had experienced an increase in physical health; 40.82% indicated a decrease. Furthermore, 45.52% of

participants reported an increase in mental health, and 55.22% reported a positive change in happiness. Overall, 75.62% experienced increased financial savings. Finally, 60.70% reported an increase in time spent with family since they began to telework. More detailed frequencies and percentages for these responses are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Frequency Table for Changes in Physical Health, Mental Health, Happiness, Financial Savings, and Time Spent with Family*

| Telework impact | Increase | | Decrease | | No change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* |
| Physical health | 67 | 33.33 | 82 | 40.80 | 52 | 25.87 |
| Mental health | 91 | 45.27 | 60 | 29.85 | 50 | 24.88 |
| Happiness | 111 | 55.22 | 47 | 23.38 | 43 | 21.40 |
| Financial savings | 152 | 75.62 | 9 | 4.48 | 40 | 19.90 |
| Time spent with family | 122 | 60.70 | 31 | 15.42 | 48 | 23.88 |

*Note. n* = 201.

Respondents were also asked to identify changes in their work motivation, productivity, focus, workload, and difficulty unplugging from work by indicating whether there had been an increase, decrease, or no change in each category. Overall, they reported an increase in motivation (31.84%), productivity (50.25%), and focus (38.31%). Approximately 47.26% of respondents indicated an increase in workload, and 57.71% reported an increase in difficulty unplugging from work. Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Frequency Table for Changes in Motivation, Productivity, Focus, Workload, and*

*Difficulty Unplugging from Work*

| Telework impact | Increase | | Decrease | | No change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* |
| Motivation | 64 | 31.84 | 68 | 33.83 | 69 | 34.33 |
| Productivity | 101 | 50.25 | 41 | 20.40 | 59 | 29.35 |
| Focus | 77 | 38.31 | 73 | 36.32 | 51 | 25.37 |
| Workload | 95 | 47.26 | 17 | 8.46 | 89 | 44.28 |
| Difficulty unplugging from work | 116 | 57.71 | 29 | 14.43 | 56 | 27.86 |

*Note. n* = 201.

I analyzed changes in work-specific factors, such as support and feedback from a

supervisor, communication/socialization with coworkers, job satisfaction, job

commitment, and promotion opportunities, by calculating frequencies and percentages.

Most participants reported no change in support and feedback from a supervisor

(51.24%), but 55 participants (27.36%) indicated a decrease. In addition, most

respondents reported a decrease in communication/socialization with coworkers

(74.63%); however, 49.26% of participants indicated increased job satisfaction.

Moreover, 47.76% reported no change in job commitment, and 64.18% reported no

change in promotion opportunities. Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Frequency Table for Support/Feedback from a Supervisor, Communication with*

*Coworkers, Job Satisfaction, Job Commitment, and Promotion Opportunities*

| Telework impact | Increase | | Decrease | | No change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* |
| Support/feedback from supervisor | 43 | 21.40 | 55 | 27.36 | 103 | 51.24 |
| Communication with coworkers | 22 | 10.95 | 150 | 74.63 | 29 | 14.42 |
| Job satisfaction | 99 | 49.26 | 47 | 23.38 | 55 | 27.36 |
| Job commitment | 67 | 33.33 | 38 | 18.91 | 96 | 47.76 |
| Promotion opportunities | 31 | 15.42 | 41 | 20.40 | 129 | 64.18 |

*Note. n* = 201.

**Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic**

Finally, I examined frequencies and percentages for anxiety, stress, sadness, fear, anger, loneliness, exhaustion, burnout, and financial stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most respondents reported feeling increased anxiety (54.72%), stress (60.20%), and sadness (42.79%). Additionally, many participants experienced increased loneliness (50.25%), exhaustion (42.79%), and burnout (47.95%). Detailed frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Frequency Table for Changes in Anxiety, Stress, Sadness, Fear, Anger, Loneliness,*

*Exhaustion, Burnout, and Financial Stress Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

| COVID-19 impact | Increase | | Decrease | | No change | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* | *n* | *%* |
| Anxiety | 110 | 54.72 | 34 | 16.92 | 57 | 28.36 |
| Stress | 121 | 60.20 | 42 | 20.90 | 38 | 18.90 |
| Sadness | 86 | 42.79 | 34 | 16.91 | 81 | 40.30 |
| Fear | 75 | 37.31 | 32 | 15.92 | 94 | 46.77 |
| Anger | 65 | 32.34 | 35 | 17.41 | 101 | 50.25 |
| Loneliness | 101 | 50.25 | 20 | 9.95 | 80 | 39.80 |
| Exhaustion | 86 | 42.79 | 48 | 23.88 | 67 | 33.33 |
| Burnout | 100 | 49.75 | 41 | 20.40 | 60 | 29.85 |
| Financial stress | 42 | 20.90 | 84 | 41.79 | 75 | 37.31 |

*Note. n* = 201.

## Research Question 1: Relationship Between Telework Intensity and Work–Family Conflict During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Descriptive statistics for participants' responses to the Work–Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000) are presented in Table 9. The maximum score possible on the scale was a 5, indicating the highest work–family conflict. Low-intensity teleworkers had an average of 2.71 ($SD = 0.95$, $SE_M = 0.22$, min. = 1.00, max. = 4.33), whereas high-intensity teleworkers had an average of 2.70 ($SD = 1.01$, $SE_M = 0.07$, min. = 1.00, max. = 5.00). Table 9 also presents the scores of the subscales Time-Based WIF, Strain-Based WIF, and Behavior Based WIF for both low-intensity and high-intensity teleworkers. The

maximum score of the subscales was 5, indicating the highest work interference with family.

**Table 9**

*Table of Summary Statistics for Work–Family Conflict Scale*

| Telework intensity level | *M* | *SD* | *SE$_m$* | *Min.* | *Max.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low intensity | 2.71 | 0.95 | 0.22 | 1.00 | 4.33 |
|     Time-Based WIF | 3.02 | 1.12 | 0.26 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Strain-Based WIF | 3.04 | 1.15 | 0.27 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Behavior-Based WIF | 2.10 | 1.03 | 0.24 | 1.00 | 4.67 |
| | | | | | |
| High intensity | 2.70 | 1.00 | 0.07 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Time-Based WIF | 2.65 | 1.29 | 0.10 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Strain-Based WIF | 2.92 | 1.31 | 0.10 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Behavior-Based WIF | 2.55 | 1.05 | 0.08 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

**Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient for Research Question 1**

I conducted a point biserial correlation analysis ($r_{pb}$) to determine the relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict. I examined the result using an alpha value of .05. Hypothesis 1 stated high-intensity telework will be associated with greater work–family conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results showed no statistically significant correlation between telework intensity and work–family conflict, $r_{pb}$ (199) = 0.00, *p* = .972. Because the *p* value was above .05, the result likely occurred due to random chance. Therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis, which meant no relationship was found between the variables (Creswell, 2014). Table 10 presents results of the correlation analysis. Figure 1 shows the scatterplot with regression line added for telework intensity and work–family conflict.

**Table 10**

*Point Biserial Correlation for Telework Intensity and Work–Family Conflict*

| Combination | $r_{pb}$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Telework intensity and work–family conflict | 0.00 | [-0.14, 0.14] | .972 |

**Research Question 2: Relationship Between Telework Intensity and Family–Work Conflict During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Descriptive statistics for participants' responses to the Work–Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000) are presented in Table 11. The maximum score possible on the scale was a 5, indicating the highest family–work conflict. Low-intensity teleworkers had an average of 2.35 ($SD = 0.85$, $SE_M = 0.20$, min. = 1.00, max. = 3.78), and high-intensity teleworkers had an average of 2.28 ($SD = 0.87$, $SE_M = 0.06$, min. = 1.00, max. = 5.00). Table 11 also presents the scores of the subscales Time-Based FIW, Strain-Based FIW, and Behavior Based FIW for both low-intensity and high-intensity teleworkers. The maximum score of the subscales was 5, representing the greatest family interference with work.

**Table 11**

*Table of Summary Statistics for Family–Work Conflict Scale*

| Telework intensity level | *M* | *SD* | *SE$_m$* | *Min.* | *Max.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low intensity | 2.35 | 0.85 | 0.20 | 1.00 | 3.78 |
|     Time-Based FIW | 2.00 | 0.79 | 0.19 | 1.00 | 3.67 |
|     Strain-Based FIW | 2.67 | 1.06 | 0.35 | 1.00 | 4.33 |
|     Behavior-Based FIW | 2.37 | 1.14 | 0.27 | 1.00 | 4.37 |
| | | | | | |
| High intensity | 2.28 | 0.86 | 0.06 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Time-Based FIW | 2.09 | 1.01 | 0.08 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Strain-Based FIW | 2.21 | 1.10 | 0.08 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
|     Behavior-Based FIW | 2.52 | 1.08 | 0.08 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

**Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient for Research Question 2**

To examine research question 2, I conducted a point biserial correlation analysis ($r_{pb}$) for telework intensity and family–work conflict. I examined the result based on an alpha value of .05. Hypothesis 2 stated high-intensity telework will be associated with greater family–work conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic. Results from the analysis indicated there was no significant correlation between telework intensity and family–work conflict, $r_{pb}$ (199) = 0.02, *p* = .741. The *p* value was greater than .05, which indicated a great probability of random chance. As such, I failed to reject the null hypothesis; thus, there was no relationship between the variables (Creswell, 2014). Table 12 presents results of the correlation analysis. Figure 2 shows the scatterplot with regression line added for telework intensity and family–work Conflict.

**Table 12**

*Point Biserial Correlation for Telework Intensity and Family–Work Conflict*

| Combination | $r_{pb}$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Telework intensity and family–work conflict | 0.02 | [-0.12, 0.16] | .741 |

## Research Question 3: Relationship Between Telework Intensity and Work–Family Balance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Descriptive statistics for participants' responses to the Work–Family Balance Scale (Carlson et al., 2009) are presented in Table 13. The maximum score possible on the scale was a 5, indicating the highest work–family balance. Low-intensity teleworkers had an average of 4.24 ($SD = 1.39$, $SE_M = 0.19$, min. = 2.50, max. = 5.00), whereas high-intensity teleworkers had an average of 3.88 ($SD = 0.92$, $SE_M = 0.07$, min. = 1.00, max. = 5.00). This finding points to a curvilinear relationship between telework intensity and work–family balance.

**Table 13**

*Table of Summary Statistics for Work–Family Balance*

| Telework intensity level | $M$ | $SD$ | $SE_m$ | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low intensity | 4.24 | 1.39 | 0.19 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| High intensity | 3.88 | 0.92 | 0.07 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

## Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient for Research Question 3

I explored the relationship between telework intensity and work–family balance using a point biserial correlation coefficient ($r_{pb}$). I examined the result using an alpha value of .05. Hypothesis 3 stated low-intensity telework will be associated with greater work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although a small effect size was

found, no significant correlations exist between the variables, $r_{pb}$ (199) = 0.11, $p$ = .107.

A $p$ value above .05 indicated a high likelihood of random chance or the possibility of a

type 1 error. Thus, I could not reject the null hypothesis. Table 14 presents results of the

correlation analysis. Figure 3 shows the scatterplots with regression line added for

telework intensity and work–family balance.

**Table 14**

*Point Biserial Correlation for Telework Intensity and Work–Family Balance*

| Combination | $r_{pb}$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Telework intensity and work–family balance | 0.11 | [-0.02, 0.25] | .107 |

**Research Question 4: Relationship Between COVID-19 Distress and Telework**

**Intensity During the Pandemic**

I calculated frequencies and percentages for COVID-19 distress. On a scale of 0

to 10 (where 0 = no impact and 10 = extreme impact), respondents were asked to rate the

severity of the impact COVID-19 has had on their lives. Most respondents reported a

distress level of 7 (25.4%), 8 (18.41%), or 6 (17%). Two individuals (.10%) indicated no

impact. Frequencies and percentages are displayed in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Frequency Table for COVID-19 Distress*

| Severity of impact | $n$ | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 2 | 0.10 |
| 1 | 1 | 0.05 |
| 2 | 8 | 4.00 |
| 3 | 9 | 4.50 |
| 4 | 5 | 3.00 |
| 5 | 29 | 14.50 |
| 6 | 34 | 17.00 |
| 7 | 51 | 25.40 |
| 8 | 37 | 18.41 |
| 9 | 15 | 8.00 |
| 10 | 10 | 5.00 |

*Note.* Due to rounding error, percentages may not equal 100%.

Descriptive statistics for participants' responses to COVID-19 distress are presented in Table 16. Low-intensity teleworkers had an average of 6.28 ($SD = 1.67$, $SE_M = 0.39$, min. $= 3.00$, max. $= 9.00$), and high-intensity teleworkers had an average of 6.49 ($SD = 2.04$, $SE_M = 0.15$, min. $= 0.00$, max. $= 10.00$).

**Table 16**

*Table of Summary Statistics for COVID-19 Distress*

| Telework intensity level | $M$ | $SD$ | $SE_m$ | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low intensity | 6.28 | 1.67 | 0.39 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| High intensity | 6.49 | 2.04 | 0.15 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

**Point Biserial Correlation Coefficient for Research Question 4**

I conducted a point biserial correlation coefficient analysis ($r_{pb}$) for telework intensity and COVID-19 distress to address research question 4. The correlation was investigated based on an alpha value of .05. Hypothesis 4 stated low-intensity telework

will be associated with greater perceived COVID-19 distress. There was no significant correlation between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress, $r_{pb}$ (199) = 0.03, $p$ = .667. The null hypothesis could not be rejected as no relationship was found between the variables (Creswell, 2014). Table 17 presents results of the correlation analysis. Figure 4 shows the scatterplot with regression line added for telework intensity and COVID-19 distress.

**Table 17**

*Point Biserial Correlation for Telework Intensity and COVID-19 Distress*

| Combination | $r_{pb}$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Telework intensity and COVID-19 distress | 0.03 | [-0.17, 0.11] | .667 |

**Research Question 5: Relationship Between Work–Family Conflict, Family–Work Conflict, Work–Family Balance, and COVID-19 Distress**

I conducted a Pearson's correlation analysis for family–work conflict, work–family balance, work–family conflict, and COVID-19 distress to investigate research question 5. The results were examined using an alpha value of .05. First, a statistically significant negative correlation was found between family–work conflict and work–family balance, $r_p$ = -0.42, $p$ < .001, 95% CI [-0.53, -0.30]. The correlation coefficient between the variables was -0.42, which indicated a moderate effect size. This finding meant that when family–work conflict increases, work–family balance decreases.

Next, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between family–work conflict and work–family conflict, $r_p$ = 0.56, $p$ < .001, 95% CI [0.45, 0.65]. The correlation coefficient between the variables was 0.56, which indicated a large effect size.

The finding suggested, as family–work conflict increases, so does work–family conflict. A statistically significant positive correlation was also observed between family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress, $r_p = 0.14$, $p = .046$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.27]. The correlation coefficient represents a small effect size. When family–work conflict increases, so does COVID-19 distress.

Through the Pearson's correlation analysis, I found a statistically significant negative correlation between work–family balance and work–family conflict, $r_p = -0.50$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.59, -0.38]. The correlation coefficient was -0.50, implying a moderate effect size. Finally, I observed a statistically significant positive correlation between work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress, $r_p = 0.16$, $p = .026$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.29]. The correlation coefficient was 0.16, which indicates a small effect size. This finding implied, as work–family conflict increases, so does COVID-19 distress. Thus, I failed to reject hypothesis 5 as work-family conflict had significant relationships with all variables. Table 18 displays results of the correlation analysis.

**Table 18**

*Pearson's Correlation Results for Family–Work Conflict, Work–Family Balance, Work–Family Conflict, and COVID-19 Distress*

| Combination | $r_p$ | 95% CI | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Family–work conflict and work–family balance | -0.42 | [-0.53, -0.30] | <.001 |
| Family–work conflict and work–family conflict | 0.56 | [ 0.45,  0.65] | <.001 |
| Family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress | 0.14 | [ 0.00,  0.27] | .046 |
| Work–family balance and work–family conflict | -0.50 | [-0.59, -0.38] | <.001 |
| Work–family balance and COVID-19 distress | -0.12 | [-0.25,  0.02] | .092 |
| Work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress | 0.16 | [ 0.02,  0.29] | .026 |

**Summary**

As part of this study's quantitative design, I employed point biserial correlation and Pearson's correlation analysis to evaluate the five research questions on telework intensity, work–family conflict, work–family balance, during the COVID-19 pandemic. I used the Qualtrics online survey tool with embedded validated assessments to gather data. In addition, I collected information on demographics, telework, and household characteristics. Participants lived in the United States, were 18 years or older, and teleworked (part time or full time) as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research question 1 explored the relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict. Results of the point biserial correlation indicated no statistically significant correlation between the variables. Lapierre et al. (2005) validated the Work–Family Conflict Scale using a sample of participants from the United States and New Zealand. The mean score for the assessment was 2.93 out of 5. Mean scores on the subscales were found to be: 3.18 for Time-Based WIF, 2.94 for Strain-Based, and 2.68 for Behavior-Based WIF (Lapierre et al., 2005).

Moreover, Golden et al. (2006) found a mean score of 3.05 for work–family conflict. The mean score for work–family conflict in this study was 2.70 for low-intensity teleworkers and 2.71 for high-intensity teleworks. Both scores are lower compared to the scale validation study conducted by Lapierre et al., (2005). Low-intensity means for the subscales were 3.02 for Time-Based WIF, 3.04 for Strain-Based WIF, and 2.10 for Behavior-Based WIF. High intensity subscale means were 2.65 for Time-Based WIF, 2.92 for Strain-Based WIF, and 2.55 for Behavior-Based WIF. When comparing the subscale means found in this study to Lapierre et al., low-intensity teleworkers reported

lower Time-Based WIF and Behavior-Based WIF and high-intensity indicated lower Time-Based WIF and Strain-Based WIF.

I found almost identical scores for work–family conflict among both high- and low-intensity workers. Prior research has found high-intensity teleworkers experience lower work–family conflict (Allen et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden et al., 2006; Leung & Zhang, 2017). Conversely, Leung and Zhang (2017) reported higher telework intensity was positively associated with work–family conflict. In addition, Wang et al. (2021) indicated work–family conflict was the greatest challenge related to teleworking during the pandemic.

Research question 2 sought to examine the relationship between telework intensity and family–work conflict. The point biserial correlation analysis showed no statistically significant relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict. In the validation study, participants had a mean score of 2.29 out of 5 for family–work conflict (Lapierre et al., 2005). Golden et al. (2006) found a mean score of 2.12 for family–work conflict among teleworkers. Subscale means were 2.35 for Time-Based FIW, 1.96 for Strain-Based FIW, and 2.58 for Behavior-Based FIW (Lapierre et al., 2005).

I found a mean score 2.35 for low-intensity teleworkers and 2.28 for high-intensity teleworkers, indicating high-intensity workers experienced slightly less family–work conflict compared to the validation study. Low-intensity subscale means for this study were 2.00 for Time-Based FIW, 2.67 for Strain-Based FIW, and 2.3.7 for Behavior-Based FIW. High intensity subscale means were 2.09 for Time-Based FIW, 2.21 for Strain-Based FIW, and 2.52 for Behavior-Based FIW. When comparing the

subscale means found in this study to Lapierre et al. (2005), low-intensity and high-intensity teleworkers reported lower Time-Based FIW and Behavior-Based FIW. Previously, researchers found high-intensity teleworkers had increased family–work conflict compared to low-intensity workers (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden et al., 2006, 2012).

Research question 3 assessed the relationship between telework intensity and work–family balance; however, I found no statistically significant relationship between the variables. When validating the Work–Family Balance Scale, Carlson et al. (2009), obtained a mean score of 3.61 out of 5. In this study, the mean score for low-intensity workers was 4.24 and 3.88 for high-intensity workers. Results indicated a curvilinear relationship meaning at a certain point, the benefit of telework is lost when it comes to work–family balance. Ganjendran and Harrison (2007) previously found a similar curvilinear relationship for the telework modality. Wang et al. (2021) found the telework modality, in general, positively impacted work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Grincevičienė (2020) reported high telework intensity was positively associated with work–life balance, time for family and friends, and personal time.

Research question 4 measured the relationship between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress. The point biserial correlation revealed no statistically significant relationship between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress. Participants were asked to rank the impact that COVID-19 has had on their lives, with 0 indicating *no impact* and 10 signifying *extreme impact*. The mean score for low-intensity teleworkers was 6.28, whereas the mean score for high-intensity teleworkers was 6.49. Gajendran and Harrison

(2007) found teleworking was negatively associated with psychological stress. According to Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2021), the pandemic has increased feelings of loneliness, stress, anger, sadness, worry, and numbness, among others.

The alternate hypotheses for all research questions were not supported, as no statistically significant correlations were found; therefore, I failed to reject the null hypotheses. Results of this study indicated no statistically significant correlations between telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, telework intensity and work–family balance, and stressors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, stronger predictor variables not considered in this study may exist.

Finally, research question five, examined the relationship between work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress through Pearson's correlation. A statistically significant negative correlation ($r_p$ = -0.42) was found between family–work conflict and work–family balance; thus, when family–work conflict increases, work–family balance tends to decrease. I also discovered a positive correlation ($r_p$ = 0.56) between family–work conflict and work–family conflict. This finding meant, as family–work conflict increases, so does work–family conflict. A statistically significant positive association was observed between family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress ($r_p$ = 0.14), implying that when family–work conflict increases, so does COVID-19 distress. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between work–family balance and work–family conflict ($r_p$ = -0.50). Lastly, a statistically significant positive correlation between work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress

($r_p = 0.16$) was found indicating as work–family conflict increases, so does COVID-19 distress increase.

These findings are supported by boundary theory, which states people navigate roles and expectations in their personal and work lives through the implementation of boundaries or the integration of domains (Ashforth et al., 2000; Bulger et al., 2007). Throughout the day, individuals transition between different boundaries, roles, and domains (Ashforth et al., 2000). Teleworkers primarily work from home and may no longer have physical boundaries dividing their work and personal environments. Telework diminishes conventional boundaries, as the individual may now experience all roles and domains at once, which increases likelihood of stress and conflict (Greer & Payne, 2014).

## Chapter 5

## Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

**Summary**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rise in the prevalence of telework and a swift transition to the telework modality. To minimize spread of COVID-19, government officials around the world have implemented lockdowns and stay-at-home orders and urged businesses and corporations to offer telework wherever possible (Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Buomprisco et al., 2021; Chong et al., 2020; Contreras et al., 2020; Mouratidis & Papagiannakis, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Oz & Crooks, 2020; Raišienė et al., 2020; Tavares et al., 2020). Teleworking is now a common occurrence. Parker et al. (2020b) reported results of a Pew Research Center survey of 10,332 individuals that found 71% of respondents were able to telework, 55% were able to telework full-time, and 16% were able to telework part-time. In addition, Dingel and Neiman (2020) indicated 37% of jobs in the United States could potentially be performed from home.

Telework is a modality likely to continue long after the COVID-19 pandemic (Guyot & Sawhill, 2020). According to Smit et al. (2020), more than 20% of global employees have the potential to telework 3 to 5 days per week, even post-pandemic. This number is 3 to 4 times greater than the number of individuals who teleworked prior to the pandemic. Similarly, a survey by Jargalsaikhan and Oliveira (2021) found 80% of organizations will offer some form of telework post-pandemic, as most respondents were considering downsizing their physical locations. The International Labor Organization (2020) found many employees would like to continue teleworking despite reduced

governmental restrictions. Based on their experiences with the modality, both workers and corporations have realized teleworking can be conducted successfully and in ways beneficial for both parties.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing phenomenon with the potential to generate more lockdowns and stay-at-home orders. COVID-19 also continues to evolve with different variants, increasing its prevalence and infection rates (World Health Organization, 2021). Thus, further exploration into the telework modality is warranted. López-Igual and Rodríguez-Modroño (2020) suggested future researchers explore and analyze telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. Molino et al. (2020) and Robinson (2020) also both advocated for investigation of work–family conflict and stressors experienced by study participants due to the pandemic. Other researchers have recommended exploring telework intensity to better understand the experiences of employees who have continued to work at the office during the pandemic (Baert et al., 2020a; Vaziri et al., 2020).

A thorough literature review was conducted to uncover existing gaps in research on telework. The review found little empirical evidence for telework intensity, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, and work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, I designed this study to explore the relationships between these variables and provide related insights. Based on the literature review and justification for this study, I combed through available articles to identify the most used, validated, and reliable assessments that aligned with the research objectives. Following this process, the Work–Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000), Family–Work Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000), and Work–Family Balance Scale (Carlson et al., 2009) were

chosen. Once the study was proposed and I reviewed all necessary approvals, a Qualtrics survey was distributed through social media platforms. I posted messages on my personal social media accounts and telework-related groups to invite individuals currently teleworking for all or a portion of their schedules as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic to participate in the study. In total, 201 individuals submitted a survey that met the criteria for research. Following closure of the survey, I analyzed all collected data.

An examination of participation demographics revealed most respondents were female (62.19%), ranged from 25–34 years of age (47.76%), held a bachelor's degree (43.28%), and were experienced employees in a nonmanagerial role (42.28%). Most participants had been teleworking for 1 to 2 years (56.72%) and teleworked 5 to 6 days per week (71.64%). I also examined participants' experiences while teleworking. Participants indicated an increase in mental health (45.27%), happiness (55.22%), financial savings (75.62%), and time with family (60.70%). Conversely, 40.80% indicated a decrease in physical health.

I also examined telework characteristics. Since beginning to telework, participants reported an increase in productivity (50.25%), focus (38.31%), workload (47.26%), difficulty unplugging from work (57.71%), and job satisfaction (49.26%). On the other hand, respondents experienced a decrease in support/feedback from a supervisor (27.36%), communication/socialization with coworkers (74.63%), and promotion opportunities (20.40%). I also investigated distress endured due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents indicated an increase in anxiety (54.72%), stress (60.20%), sadness (42.79%), fear (37.31%), loneliness (50.25%), exhaustion (42.79%), and burnout (49.75%).

No statistically significant correlation was found between the variables associated with research question 1, which explored the relationship between telework intensity and work–family conflict. The mean score for the Work–Family Conflict Scale was 2.70 for low-intensity teleworkers and 2.71 for high-intensity teleworkers. In comparison, during the validation process for the Work–Family Conflict Scale, Lapierre et al. (2005) observed a mean score of 2.93. When the scale was used on teleworkers, the mean score was 3.05 (Golden et al., 2006). The mean score in this study was less than that of Lapierre et al.'s study and Golden et al.'s study, signifying participant experience decreased work–family conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking specifically at the subscales in this study, high-intensity teleworkers had lower mean scores for Time-Based WIF and Strain-Based WIF than low-intensity teleworkers.

Research question 2 examined the relationship between telework intensity and family–work conflict. Following the analysis, no statistically significant correlation was found between telework intensity and work–family conflict. The mean score for family–work conflict was 2.35 for low intensity teleworkers and 2.28 for high intensity teleworkers. Lapierre et al. (2005) obtained a mean score of 2.29 for family–work conflict, whereas Golden et al. (2006) found a mean score of 2.12 for teleworkers. Although slightly higher than Golden et al.'s result, the mean score for family–work conflict in this study was similar to that of Lapierre et al.'s study and is representative of the population. When examining the subscales in this study, low-intensity teleworkers had lower mean scores for Time-Based FIW and Behavior-Based FIW in comparison to high-intensity teleworkers.

Research question 3 analyzed the relationship between telework intensity and work–family balance. Again, no statistically significant association was identified between the variables. Participants' mean score on the Work–Family Balance Scale was 4.24 for low-intensity workers and 3.88 for high-intensity workers. In the validation study, Carson et al. (2009) found a mean score of 3.61 out 5 (Carlson et al., 2009).

Research question 4 assessed the relationship between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress. No statistically significant correlation between telework intensity and COVID-19 distress was found. The mean score for low-intensity teleworkers was 6.28, and the mean score for high-intensity teleworkers was 6.49. The results suggest both high- and low-intensity teleworkers are experiencing similar distress levels and that telework intensity was not a mediating factor.

Research question 5, investigated the relationships between work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress using Pearson's correlation. Results indicated (a) a negative correlation ($r_p$ = -0.42) between family–work conflict and work–family balance, (b) a positive correlation ($r_p$ = 0.56) between family–work conflict and work–family conflict, (c) a positive relationship between family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress ($r_p$ = 0.14), (d) a negative correlation between work–family balance and work–family conflict ($r_p$ = -0.50), and (e) a positive correlation between work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress ($r_p$ = 0.16). These findings are supported by boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000).

**Implications**

This study managed to fill gaps in existing literature concerning telework intensity, work–family conflict, and work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic

(Baert et al., 2020a; López-Igual & Rodríguez-Modroño, 2020; Molino et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2020; Vaziri et al., 2020). The importance and need for this research are evident as 81% of individuals in this study reported wanting to continue teleworking. Many researchers believed the rise of telework and interest in the modality will continue throughout and long after the COVID-19 pandemic (Guyot & Sawhill, 2020; OECD, 2020). This study was one of the first to explore teleworkers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and gather crucial insights for practitioners who support teleworkers, whether they specialize in individual, family, or career counseling.

First, this study raises awareness on individual experiences and adjustment with the telework modality during the COVID-19 pandemic. I found similar results to prior research, such as increased productivity, focus, workload, difficulty unplugging from work, job satisfaction, and decreased support from a supervisor, and socialization with coworkers (Baert et al., 2020b; Gurchiek, 2020; Mann & Holdsworth, 2003). Findings suggested, despite the ongoing pandemic, teleworkers still experience the previously mentioned factors associated with telework. These finding may benefit the career counselor when presenting the telework modality as an option, as well as scenarios where the counselor is assisting the client develop personal and work boundaries. The career counselor may suggest tips and strategies to overcome the previously mentioned setbacks. In addition, corporations or employers may use the findings to develop policies and procedures to support the workflow & wellbeing of teleworkers.

Secondly, I explored psychological distress experienced by participants as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Behrendt et al. (2020) asserted crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic can increase mental health issues. Respondents indicated increases

in adverse mental health symptomology in the form of anxiety, stress, sadness, fear, loneliness, and burnout. As such, these findings can help inform clinicians about what to anticipate when assisting teleworkers and increase awareness of the impact of teleworking both in the work and family domain as well as living in a state of emergency.

Mental health practitioners can increase their knowledge base and update their toolkits to better serve this population using the previously mention findings. Based on results from the study, mental health clinicians can work with clients to develop expectations and increase awareness of the risks and benefits of teleworking and living in a state of emergency. Counselors may use psychoeducation to teach skills and interventions to prevent or reduce the impact of both. Governmental agencies may use these results to create telework legislature, offer pandemic specific mental health and family resources, and develop outreach programming to assist individuals living and working in the pandemic

Although statistically significant correlations were not found between telework intensity and work–family conflict, telework intensity and family–work conflict, telework intensity and work–family balance, nor telework intensity and stressors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health clinicians, researchers, and employers should still consider the potential impact of telework intensity as more research is conducted on the pandemic, no matter the effect size. I highly encourage other researchers to continue in exploring this factor. Clinicians would also benefit from taking a closer look at the subscales of work–family conflict family–work conflict being time-based interference, strain-based interference, and behavior-based experience to take an all-encompassing approach when seeing teleworking clients. Prior researchers have found telework

intensity has a significant impact on individuals, even outside of the COVID-19 pandemic (Allen et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Golden, 2004; Heiden et al., 2020; Henke et al., 2016).

Factors unaccounted for in this study include company culture and adaptability, and leaders' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Harrington and Santiago (2006) indicated culture impacts the success of telework implementation. Due to living and navigating through unprecedented times, leadership of an organization may be more flexible and understanding of employees' everyday struggles, leading to a decrease in experienced conflicts and greater work–life balance for both low- and high-intensity teleworkers.

Additionally, this study offers a unique perspective as participants were for the majority experienced employees in nonmanagerial roles with ranging education levels. Prior researchers have found the telework modality is primarily offered to those in management and executive leadership positions who obtained higher degrees (Dey et al., 2020; Groen et al., 2018); therefore, participants in this study may not have experienced conflict because their occupational roles may not have been as stressful compared to managerial and executive roles. Still, practitioners should be knowledgeable about telework intensity and its advantages, disadvantages, and impacts on individuals and their families to better assist their clients in achieving success, both at home and in the workplace.

Next, I found a negative correlation between family–work conflict and work–family balance, and work–family balance and work–family conflict. Mental health clinicians should assist teleworkers to develop procedures, strategies, boundaries, and

routines to reduce work–family conflict and family–work conflict and increase balance. Clinicians can educate clients on how work can impact the family (and vice versa). Additional education should focus on certain roles such as employee, spouse, and parent, along with the expectations individuals take on throughout the day and how to successfully the transition between them while teleworking. Otherwise, an inability to find balance may lead to heightened stress and conflict.

A positive correlation was discovered between family–work conflict and work–family conflict, family–work conflict and COVID-19 distress, and work–family conflict and COVID-19 distress. Taking these results into consideration, counselors who work with individuals suffering from work–family conflict should also assess family–work conflict. As a result, counselors will be better able to assist their clients in taking an approach that encompasses multiple perspectives. This study may also prepare counselors to understand and assist individuals and families experiencing distress due to the pandemic.

**Recommendations**

Due to limited research on the telework, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, work–family balance, and COVID-19 distress during the pandemic, it is imperative researchers build on findings from this study and continue investigating the subject matter in the future, especially considering it is uncertain how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last; additionally, the telework modality is expected to last long after the end of the pandemic (Guyot & Sawhill, 2020). This study was developed using a correlation research design, which increases understanding of relationships. Future research should employ a mixed methods approach. Advantages of mixed methods

research include collection and comparison of quantitative and qualitative data, which provides rich data and a deeper understanding of participants' experiences (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). Research on telework intensity, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, and COVID-19 distress during the COVID-19 pandemic could greatly benefit from qualitative interviews about firsthand experiences that may better account for and unearth other critical factors influencing experiences with telework and the pandemic. Because this study was conducted toward the beginning of the pandemic, future research could also adopt a longitudinal approach.

Furthermore, future research should redefine the term *telework intensity*. For example, Gajendran and Harrison (2007) defined low-intensity teleworkers as individuals who teleworked 1 to 2 days per week and high-intensity teleworkers as employees who worked from home 2.5 days per week or for most of their schedules. Looking at high intensity, an individual who teleworks 3 days a week may have vastly different experiences than someone who teleworks 6 days a week. Instead of number of days, telework intensity would be better represented as the number of hours worked per week. This adaptation would more appropriately represent the variety of work schedules available to employees. In addition, telework intensity could be further disaggregated into low-, moderate-, and high-intensity telework.

Future research should also include additional constructs that may influence an individual's work–family conflict, family–work conflict, and work–life balance. One construct that could be further explored is organizational response and support for teleworkers. According to Klein (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need to improve employee benefits, with a greater focus on and access to support for mental

and behavioral health. More factors to consider are occupation and role. As telework becomes more common, various occupations and roles, such as entry-level employees, will now have telework opportunities they previously did not have. Other constructs to investigate include assistance with childcare or care for others while teleworking and types of benefits and leave offered by the employer. Allen (2021) found 98% of leaders in a survey planned to expand employee benefits, such as childcare, senior care, flexible schedules, and additional mental health support. Future research would benefit from a closer investigation on teleworker schedules (e.g., daytime, nighttime, weekdays, or weekends) and home office makeup (e.g., shared space or a private office). Finally, as pandemic restrictions are lifted and workers are given the opportunity to return to the office, future research should examine differences between individuals who choose to and those who are forced to telework.

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**Figure 1**

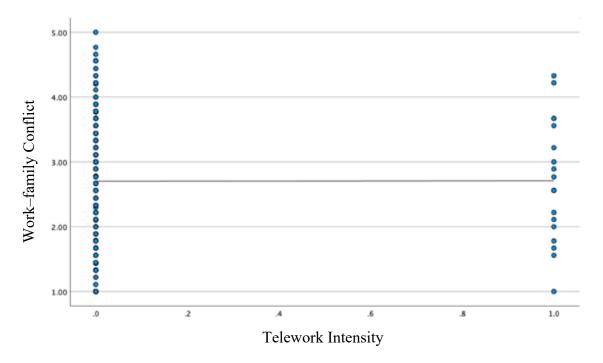*Scatterplot for Telework and Work–Family Conflict*

**Figure 2**

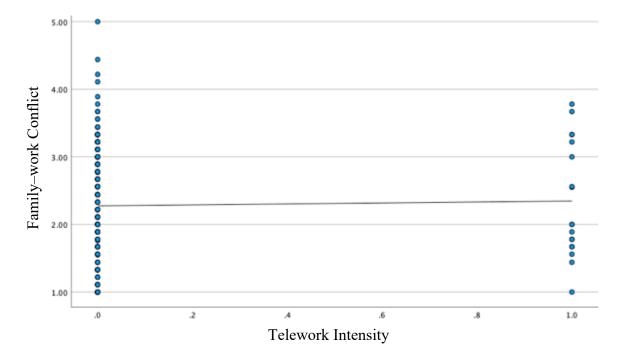*Scatterplot for Telework Intensity and Family–Work Conflict*

**Figure 3**

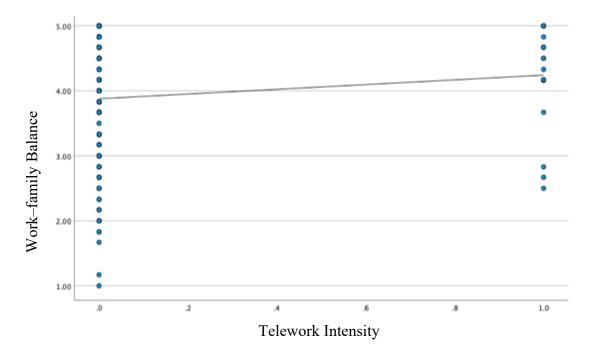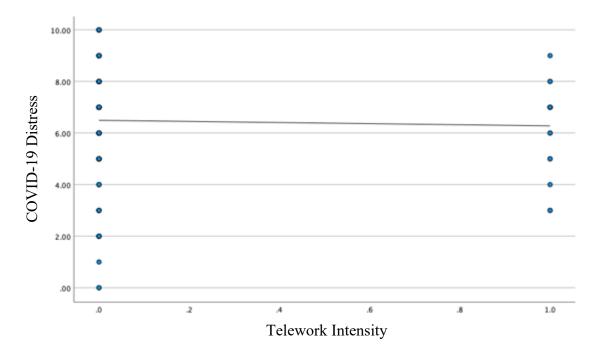*Scatterplot for Telework Intensity and Work–Family Balance*

**Figure 4**

*Scatterplot for Telework Intensity and COVID-19 Distress*

# Appendix A
## Permission to Use Scales

**Baylor University**
HANKAMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Regarding: Work-Family Scale Permission

To Whom it May Concern:

This document grants you permission to use any of the following scales that I have developed along with my colleagues for the purposes of research.

Work-Family Conflict
Work-Family Enrichment
Work-Family Balance
Work-Family Deviance

These scales can be used in research and need to be cited with the source document citation provided next to each of the scales below. If you intend to reproduce the instrument, please contact the copyright owner of the publisher of the article. If you need a copy of the original article for the scale beyond what is provided, please let me know.

If you desire to translate the scale to another language, please feel free to do so adapting for the language and culture of your target audience. If your research produces published results using one of the above-mentioned scales, I would appreciate an electronic copy of that research.

If you would like to use these for commercial purposes, please provide me with the details so that I might arrange use. If you have any question about my scales or my broader research program please contact Dawn Carlson at Dawn_Carlson@baylor.edu.
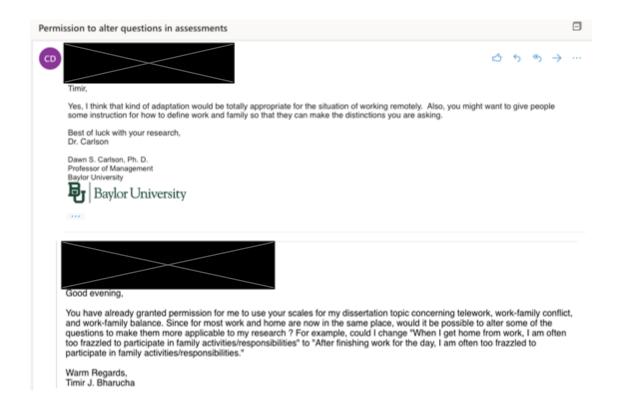
Best Regards,

Dawn S. Carlson

Dawn S. Carlson
Professor of Management
H.R. Gibson Chair of Organizational Development

HANKAMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation

# Appendix B
## Permission to Alter Wording of Questions

Permission to alter questions in assessments



Timir,

Yes, I think that kind of adaptation would be totally appropriate for the situation of working remotely. Also, you might want to give people some instruction for how to define work and family so that they can make the distinctions you are asking.

Best of luck with your research,
Dr. Carlson

Dawn S. Carlson, Ph. D.
Professor of Management
Baylor University

**BU** | Baylor University

...



Good evening,

You have already granted permission for me to use your scales for my dissertation topic concerning telework, work-family conflict, and work-family balance. Since for most work and home are now in the same place, would it be possible to alter some of the questions to make them more applicable to my research ? For example, could I change "When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities" to "After finishing work for the day, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities."

Warm Regards,
Timir J. Bharucha

# Appendix C
# Qualtrics Survey

**Participant Demographics**

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other (Specify)

[          ]

○ I prefer not to answer

Please select your relationship status

○ Married

○ Domestic partnership or civil union

○ Widowed

○ Divorced

○ Separated

○ Single, Never Married

○ I prefer not to answer

What is the highest level of school or degree you have complete?

- ○ Less than high school degree
- ○ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- ○ Some college but no degree
- ○ Trade/Technical/Vocational Training
- ○ Associate degree in college (2-year)
- ○ Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ Doctoral degree
- ○ Professional degree (JD, MD)

What is your age?

- ○ 18-24
- ○ 25-34
- ○ 35-44
- ○ 45-54
- ○ 55-64
- ○ 65+

How many individuals live/reside in your home? (Please include yourself in the count.)

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ More than 6

How many children live/reside in your home (17 years old or younger)

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ More than 6

Please select the answer that includes your entire household income before taxes.

- ○ Less than $25,000
- ○ $25,000– $50,000
- ○ $50,000– $75,000
- ○ $75,000– $100,000
- ○ $100,000– $125,000
- ○ $125–150,000
- ○ $150,000+

Are you Hispanic, Latino, or none of these?

○ Yes

○ None of these

○ I prefer not to answer

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

☐ White

☐ Black or African American

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

☐ Other

☐ I prefer not to answer

**<< PREVIOUS**          **NEXT >>**

**Telework Information**

Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

| | |
|---|---|
| ○ Arts, Entertainment or Recreation | ○ Educational and Training |
| ○ Real Estate or Rental and Leasing | ○ Sales and Related |
| ○ Health Care or Social Assistance | ○ Personal Care and Service |
| ○ Administration or Support | ○ Government |
| ○ Business and Financial | ○ Legal |
| ○ Information or Technical | ○ Other (Specify) |
| | |

Which of the following best describes your role?

○ Self-Employed

○ Advisor/Consultant/Contracted

○ Entry-level Employee

○ Experienced Employee (Non-Manager)

○ Manager/Supervisor

○ Senior Leadership

○ Executive Leadership

How long have you been Teleworking?

- ○ 0-3 months
- ○ 3-6 months
- ○ 6-9 months
- ○ 9-12 months
- ○ 1-2 years

In total, how many hours a week do you work?

- ○ 0-10 hours a week
- ○ 10-20 hours a week
- ○ 20-30 hours a week
- ○ 30-40 hours a week
- ○ More than 40 hours a week

How many days a week do you currently work from a traditional worksite (ex. office building)

- ○ 0 days a week
- ○ 1-2 days a week
- ○ 3-4 days a week
- ○ 4-5 days a week
- ○ 5-6 days a week
- ○ 7 days a week

Do you feel your traditional worksite (office building) has taken the necessary precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (mandating masks, supplying hand sanitizer, routine cleanings, plexiglass separators, distancing workers, etc.)?

○ Yes

○ No

Since you are working at a traditional worksite (office building), how worried are you about being exposed to COVID-19?

| Not at all worried | | | | | Neutral | | | | | Extremely worried |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

How many days a week do you currently Telework?

○ 1-2 days a week

○ 3-4 days a week

○ 5-6 days a week

○ 7 days a week

What percentage of your work schedule do you currently Telework?

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Percentage of work schedule teleworked

○——————————————————————————

Are you responsible for the care of children under the age of 17 while Teleworking?

○ Yes

○ No

Are you responsible for the care of individuals 18 or older while Teleworking?

○ Yes

○ No

Are others in the home Teleworking as well?

○ Yes

○ No

Is Telework something you would like to continue long-term?

○ Yes

○ No

Is Telework something you would recommend to others?

○ Yes

○ No

While Teleworking, have you noticed an INCREASE/DECREASE/NO CHANGE in your...

|  | Increase | Decrease | No Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Health | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Mental Health | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Happiness | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Motivation | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Focus | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Personal Time | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Time with Friends | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Time with Family | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Time to Complete Household Responsibilities | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hours of Sleep | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Financial Savings | ○ | ○ | ○ |

While Teleworking, have you noticed an INCREASE/DECREASE/NO CHANGE in...

|  | Increase | Decrease | No Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Support/Feedback from Supervisor | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Communication/Socialization with Co-Workers | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Job Commitment | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Job Satisfaction | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Promotion Opportunities | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hours Worked in a Week | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Time Management | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Productivity | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Workload | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Distractions | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Difficulty taking work breaks | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Difficulty unplugging from work | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Loneliness | ○ | ○ | ○ |

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you noticed an INCREASE/DECREASE/NO CHANGE in...

| | Increase | Decrease | No Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anxiety | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Stress | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Sadness | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Fear | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Anger | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Loneliness | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Exhaustion | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Burnout | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Financial Stress | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Relationship Quality (Friends and Family) | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Support Resources (Social or Financial) | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please select the severity of impact COVID-19 has had on your life

| No Impact | | | | | Neutral | | | | Extreme Impact | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Instructions: Please think of how your work influences your family and choose the option that best reflects your agreement level with the statement.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like | O | O | O | O | O |
| The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities | O | O | O | O | O |
| I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work resposibilities. | O | O | O | O | O |
| After finishing my work for the day, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities | O | O | O | O | O |
| I am often too emotionally drained after work that it prevents me from contributing to my family | O | O | O | O | O |
| Due to all the pressures of work, sometimes I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy after my shift. | O | O | O | O | O |
| The problem-solving behaviors I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems related to my home life. | O | O | O | O | O |
| Behavior that is effective and necessary for me while working would be counterproductive for my home life. | O | O | O | O | O |
| The behaviors I perform that make me effective while working do not help me to be a better parent and spouse. | O | O | O | O | O |

Instructions: Please think of how your family influences your work and choose the option that best reflects your agreement level with the statement.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The time I spend on family responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The time I spend with my family often causes me to not spend time in work activities that could be helpful to my career. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters while working. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The behaviors that work for me in my home life do not seem to be effective in my work life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Behavior that is effective and necessary for me in my home life would be counterproductive in my work life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The problem-solving behaviors that work for me in my home life do not seem to be as useful in my work life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Instructions: Instructions: Please think of how you balance your work and family and choose the option that best reflects your agreement level with the statement.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me while working and in my family. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I do a good job of meeting the role expectations of critical people in my work and family life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| People who are close to me would say that I do a good job of balancing work and family. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am able to accomplish the expectations that my supervisors and my family have for me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| My coworkers and members of my family would say that I am meeting their expectations. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It is clear to me, based on feedback from coworkers and family members, that I am accomplishing both my work and family responsibilities. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

# Welcome to the Telework, Work–family Conflict, and Work–family Balance during COVID-19 Pandemic Research Study!

St. Mary's University
San Antonio, Texas

My name is Timir Bharucha, and I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX. You are being invited to participate in a research study designed to help researchers understand the experiences of those who worked from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are interested in participating in this study, please review the Informed Consent below. You must be 18 years of age or older, live in the United States, and currently working from home to participate.
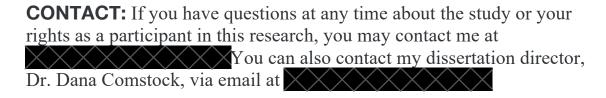
## Informed Consent

**PURPOSE, PROCEDURES AND DURATION:** The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding how teleworkers handled and balanced the demands of working from home with family life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants who volunteer to participate in this study will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the nature of their job and their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. After responding to these questions, participants will be asked to complete two short assessments about how they balanced work with their family life. It is anticipated that completing the survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

**PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may choose to participate in this study by completing the surveys, or you may choose not to participate. Even if you choose to begin the surveys, you can choose not to complete them by exiting the study by simply closing the browser. There will be no penalty to any choice you make.

**BENEFITS:** You will receive no direct benefits or compensation from participating in this research study, however, your survey responses will help mental health professionals and policymakers assist others who are adjusting to telework. Your participation will also help researchers understand the experience of telework during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**RISKS:** While the present study does not pose any risk, participants will be asked to reflect on what it was like for them to adjust during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants may have experienced some stress or illness during this adjustment.

**ANONYMITY:** You will not be identified in any way as a participant in this study. All responses will be anonymous. No identifying information will be asked of participants and your responses cannot be traced back to you.

**CONTACT:** If you have questions at any time about the study or your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact me at ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ You can also contact my dissertation director, Dr. Dana Comstock, via email at ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or concerns about this research study please contact the St. Mary's University Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Dan Ratliff by phone at ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY ARE GOVERNED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

St. Mary's University Institutional Review Board Contact Website: ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the "I consent, begin the study" button acknowledges that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You understand your participation is anonymous
- You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time for any reason by closing the browser
- You are at least 18 years of age or older
- You reside in the United States of America
- You are currently teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic for any part of your schedule (a few hours, part-time, full-time)

The IRB has approved the study, Bharucha, T. (Comstock, faculty sponsor). Telework, Work-Family Conflict, and Work-Family Balance during COVID-19 Pandemic. If research participants have any questions about their rights as a research subject or concerns about this research study please contact the Chair,

Dan Ratliff, Ph.D.
IRB Chair
St. Mary's University

- o I consent, begin the survey
- o I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

## Appendix E
## IRB Approval Letter

April 9, 2021

Timir Bharucha Dept. of Counseling St. Mary's University

DELIVERED BY EMAIL TRANSMISSION Dear Mr. Bharucha:

The IRB has approved the study, Bharucha, T. (Comstock, faculty sponsor). Telework, Work–family Conflict, and Work–family Balance during COVID-19 Pandemic. If research participants have any questions about their rights as a research subject or concerns about this research study please contact the Chair, █████████████████████████████████████████████████████████

Dan Ratliff, Ph.D. IRB Chair
St. Mary's University

The proposal is determined to meet criteria for exemption under
45 CFR 46.104(d)(2), the use of survey procedures with de-identified, minimal risk data.

Exempt research does not require IRB review or renewal for five years (2022). However, IRB requests a closure report when the data collection is completed, or, if active data collection continues, a summary report of the sample size at the May IRB meeting of each academic year.

Exempt research can proceed with an abbreviated consent process in which the subjects are informed of the purpose and duration of the survey, and with no signature necessary for informed consent. The approval stamp must be visible in the information about the study provided to potential subjects.

You may collect data from human subjects according to the approved research protocol. The approval stamp must appear on any Information Form or Informed Consent Form approved by the IRB (jpeg file attached).

If, at any time, you make changes to the research protocols that affect human participants, you must file a "Changes to Approved IRB Protocol and/or Unanticipated Problems" form. Changes must be reviewed and approved by IRB before proceeding with data collection.

Good work on an interesting approach to a timely issue. I look forward to seeing your results.

Dan Ratliff, Ph.D.
IRB Chair

CC: Dana Comstock, PhD, Faculty Sponsor
Priscilla Reyna-Vasquez, PhD, IRB Area Representative

Attachment: IRB Approval Stamp jpeg file

**Appendix F**
**Social Media Recruitment Post**

Hello,

I am completing my dissertation on telework, work–family conflict, and work–family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are working from home for any portion of your schedule (a few hours, part-time, or full-time) due to the pandemic, I would greatly appreciate you filling out my survey. Thank you!

**Appendix G**
**Curriculum Vitae**


Timir J. Bharucha, M.A., LPC.

PROFILE
Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Texas with a work history and expertise in higher education, community services, and corporate setting. Thought leader paving the way in empirical research focused on content moderation. Specialization on work from home, corporate wellness, corporate research, and content moderation. As well as the development of wellness programming, interventions, and tooling.

SKILLS
- Exceptional research skills (Qualitative, Quantitative, Mixed-Method)
- Data Collection, analysis, and reporting
- Strong leadership skills
- Organized, creative, critical thinker, and a decision maker
- Strong presentation and communication skills
- Proficiency with SPSS, MAXQDA, Trint, MS Office


PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
**TaskUs, San Antonio, TX**                              **Jun 2020- Present**
*People research Analyst NAMEULA*
- Lead researcher with direct oversight of global initiatives across North America, Europe, and Latin America.
- Worked with Global Wellness Managers to ensure proper collection and storing of data related to wellness KPIs
- Consulted with stakeholders to outline project scopes and strategic goals.
- Conducted literature reviews to guide in the development and design of research projects.
- Carried out and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative global studies.
- Presented results, wrote reports, and made recommendations for change to major stakeholders.
- Oversaw the development of initiative such as tooling from the development to execution stages
- Audited training and recruitment processes to make recommendations for improvement.
- Conduct program evaluation for wellness department.
- Demonstrate exceptional judgment and discretion when dealing with highly sensitive people data.
- Collaborate with data engineering to ensure proper management of data and to create visuals for story telling purposes.

**Mandala Counseling & Consultation, San Antonio, TX          Jan 2017-Present**
*Chief Executive Officer*
- Providing personal counseling for individuals, couples, and families.
- Develop relationships and create business opportunities.
- Create and execute specialized research initiatives to make recommendations for improvement.
- Conduct audits and program evaluations.
- Areas of focus: Anger Management, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder, Career Counseling, Coping Skills, Depression, Developmental Disorders, Divorce, Drug Abuse, Family Conflict, Life Transitions, Peer Relationships, Pregnancy, Self Esteem, Self-Harming, Spirituality, Stress, and Suicidal Ideation.
- 

**TaskUs, San Antonio, TX                         Nov 2018- Jun 2020**
*Independent Contract Clinician*
- Research Consultant for the Director of Research. Assisted in the development and execution of research initiative.
- Completion of contracted duties with high regard to confidentiality. Duties include but are not limited to development and facilitation of Resiliency Training Sessions, individual sessions, assessment for crisis management, employee check-ins, and development of outreach programming.
- Acting site point of contact in the absence of the Senior Wellness and Resiliency Manager.
- Collaborate with recruiting to develop standardized hiring practices for content moderators.
- Created and initiated on site mindfulness meditation program.

**Family Life Center, San Antonio, TX               Aug 2018- Jan 2019**
*Neurofeedback/Biofeedback Practitioner*
- Perform Neurofeedback/Biofeedback sessions
- Map and evaluate brain map
- Sourced, researched, utilized, and coordinated various treatment plans.

**University of Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX        Sep 2016 – Nov 2018**
*Counseling Intern*
- Provide individual and group counseling session to university students.
- Prepare treatment plans and documentation
- Create outreach programs to increase awareness of mental health.
- Areas of focus: Anger Management, Anxiety, Career Counseling, Conduct Issues, Coping Skills, Depression, Drug Abuse, Family Conflict, Peer Relationships, Self Esteem, Self-Harming, Spirituality, Stress, and Suicidal Ideation.

## EDUCATION
**St. Mary's University, San Antonio, TX**
**Doctoral Candidate**                              **Aug 2016 – Dec 2021**
*Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision: CACREP Accredited*
*Specialization in Neurofeedback and Biofeedback*
*Expected Graduation: Dec 2021*

**Dissertation Successfully Defended**            **October 15, 2021**
Dissertation topic: Telework Intensity, Work-Family Conflict, and Work-Family Balance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Bradley University, Peoria, IL**                 **Aug 2013 – May 2016**
*M.A. Clinical Mental Health Counseling: CACREP Accredited*

**University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL**  **Aug 2009 – Dec 2012**
*B.A. Psychology and Criminal Law and Justice*

## PUBLICATIONS
- Steiger, M., Bharucha, T.J., Venkatagiri, S., Riedl, M.J., & Lease, M. (2021). The psychological well-being of content moderators.
- Bharucha, T., (In Progress). Telework intensity, work-family conflict, and work-family balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS
**UX Research & Design**                            **In progress**

**Strategic Talent Acquisition**                    **Oct 2019**
*Human Capital Institute*

**Certified Corporate Wellness Specialist**         **Jul 2019**
*Corporate Health and Wellness Association*

**Entrepreneurship and Business Coach**             **Mar 2019**
*Transformation Academy*

                                                    **Apr 2017**


                                                    **Aug 2018**


                                                    **May 2016**