

Working from home's impact on Job Performance in the IT Sector

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Preface

This thesis has been written by Zeeshan Farooqi and Fawwad Ahmed who are Juniors at DePaul University and are a part of the Atlantis program. Due to COVID-19, the thesis was written from The US as of Spring 2020.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine which factors influence job performance for IT sector employees that are required to work from home indefinitely due to COVID-19. This study is based on a framework concerning themes such as working from home, performance, motivation, work-life balance, and psychological well-being.

For the study, five IT sector employees that were required to work from home were interviewed to give the authors insight into the basis of the study. Previous studies mostly focused on IT sector employees working from home with the option of coming into the office; due to the sudden pandemic of COVID-19, there has not been much research regarding IT sector employees that are required to work from home indefinitely.

Our most important findings show that employees are compensating their lack of in-person social interactions with spending time with family and using virtual apps to maintain their relationships with coworkers to provide a work-life balance. Working with coworkers has also given employees a sense of accountability that motivates them to do work. The virus, COVID-19 has impacted employees by mentally draining them which impacts their job performance. Ultimately, the idea of a job role perception and its impact on motivation and job performance is very subjective to the individual.

Keywords: Job Performance, Motivation, Work-life, Psychological Well-being, Working From Home.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

In the first section of this paper, we will discuss the background of the research, the problem formulation, and the research questions. Then, the purpose and research questions will be presented.

1.1 Background

Over the years, we've seen an enormous development of the way technology is used. Particularly, there has been a progression in technology with performance and efficiency. The very first shift from Nokia to advanced iPhones proves that technology has changed dramatically within a very short period of time and that companies must adapt not only with their technology but also their business models. And what bridges both worlds of business and technology together is I.T. One of the most important aspects of I.T. is Digital Business Transformation, which is when a business changes its traditional way of process to the technological way of operation and management. This is essential because it is what allows the business to keep itself in the market and keep up with competitors.

As technology keeps progressing people will find the most successful companies like Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc. with the happiest employees. This would likely imply that satisfied employees result in better job performance. However, this is not the case. According to Puvada and Rao, their study shows that all those performing well are satisfied; however, the people that are satisfied do not perform well. This indicates that performance leads to job satisfaction and job satisfaction does not necessarily lead to performance (Puvada and Rao 2012). Their study supports Porter and Lawler's theory on motivation (1968), which is based on the assumption that reward causes satisfaction, enforcing our prediction that incentives correlate to job performance which causes

employee satisfaction. They believe that the relationship between satisfaction and performance is linked by the variable, rewards. They say good performance leads to reward.

The industry we chose to focus on is the IT sector, this is such a crucial sector these days and for the upcoming future. IT or information technology deals with information; its storage, retrieval, usage and processing in relation to a business or similar enterprise. This is a complete system to communicate information to authorities in a controlled manner. The IT sector is included in almost all prestigious companies, every task is being recorded in the cloud, transactions are being made via the web, and companies are conducting more business online nowadays. Therefore, emphasizing its importance and crucial service. Moreover, the topic represents an original and innovative topic to investigate, especially when coupled with employee satisfaction and job performance.

Also, with the exponential growth of the virus spread, COVID-19 has caused millions of people to lose their jobs. “This morning's extraordinary New York Times front page really says it all—the sudden spike in U.S. unemployment claims, numbering almost 3.3 million” (Meyer 2020). This virus is causing Americans to lose their job. Therefore, they cannot provide for their families and thrive as they could before. People can't work to the full capacity they could due to the pandemic with constant fears and worries in place. In a poll done by ComPsych corporations the world's largest provider of employee assistance programs, employees were asked “what concerns you most about the coronavirus pandemic?” 33% said -- “Coming to work and being exposed,” 17% said -- “being in public places or traveling and being exposed,” 14% said – “whether or not my children are safe” (ComPsych 2020). This shows the restrictions placed on people to be able to work to their full capacity. Alluding, if workers are in constant fear, they will not be able to perform to their best capacity

COVID-19 has affected the workplace by asking workers to “self-quarantine” and practice social-distancing. This means IT sector employees are staying at home and working remotely, which has “put unique pressure on IT departments and IT decision-makers” (Brown 2020). Since working remotely has become mandatory for many employees, Brown believes that “organizations are scrambling to meet the demands of remote workers” (Brown 2020). Brown quotes Jack Gold when she mentions the problems faced by the employees, “the bigger issue is training people how to work with others in remote work situations” (Brown 2020). Brown also states, referring to Kris Lahiri, that organizations must also ensure remote employees have the communication tools they need such as collaboration tools, video conferencing solutions, and access to critical documents (Brown 2020). In many cases, the employees may not be comfortable or efficient enough to use these kinds of communication tools. The training for using these kinds of tools also needs to happen remotely in order to prevent contamination of the virus.

Moreover, in relation to working from home, Nicholas Bloom co-authored a study on the benefits of working from home on 1,000 Ctrip employees whom worked four days from home and the fifth day in the office. The study revealed that working from home during a nine-month period led to a 13 percent increase in performance (Bloom et. al, 2014). The study’s findings were so successful that Ctrip rolled out working from home for the whole firm. However, after nine months of allowing work from home, Ctrip asked the original volunteers whether they wanted to keep working from home or return to the office. Half of them requested to return to the office because of feeling isolated and lonely at home (Bloom et. al, 2014). Although the study showed an increase in job performance at the time, in the long run, it also showed that employees need a social setting not only to interact with one another but because it provides a better work-life balance and psychological well-being.

A study conducted by Haider et. al, shows that an employee’s satisfaction with his/her coworker enhances the person’s psychological meaningfulness and commitment at work

and, consequently, job performance (Haider et. al, 2018). It is the system of social exchange satisfaction with supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. This idea shows that employees' satisfaction with supervisors and colleagues allows them to obtain feelings of empathy, respect, and trust, which lead towards greater psychological well-being (Haider et. al, 2018). Also, because greater satisfaction with coworkers increases employee job performance by strengthening the effect of work-life balance on psychological well-being. (Haider et. al, 2018). The research shows that psychological wellbeing mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee job performance, and this mediation process is moderated by satisfaction with coworkers (Haider et. al, 2018).

1.2 Problem Formulation

COVID-19 is affecting millions of Americans, people are not able to work as efficiently as they could before the pandemic, many Americans are also losing their jobs and those who are currently working may have their work-life impacted by being forced to work from home and to conduct work in different ways.

Haider et. al's research has found that employees' interaction with coworkers provides a better work-life balance. With the COVID-19 pandemic, IT employees are mandated to work from home. Although Bloom's research shows that work from home increases performance, the employees in his study were explicitly asked to work from home four days a week and come into the office every fifth day (Bloom et. al, 2014). The IT sector employees in this study, due to COVID-19, work from home indefinitely. They have no option to come to the office on any day of the week, which means there is little and limited social interaction with their coworkers. However, Haider et. al,'s study shows "job performance is increased by work-life balance by strengthening the psychological processes such as psychological wellbeing" (Haider et. al, 2018). Ryff's six-factor model of psychological well-being theory says that a positive relationship with others -- "others" being coworkers-- allows for a greater psychological well-being for employees. The viewpoint suggests that employees' satisfaction with coworkers plays an important role in

work-life balance and enhances psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989). Since, there is little to no social interaction with coworkers, it formulates a theoretical issue. Concludingly, IT employees working from home results in less work-life balance, which ultimately means it could affect their job performance.

As discussed Ryff's theory talks about work life and psychological well being. To theoretically show the effects of working from home and performance and motivation, theory X states human beings are lazy and need to be governed in order to work. Theory Y states human beings strive to be the best and work for their own self achievement. Based on our study, these theories will show the effects working from home will have on performance and motivation of employees; how productive and motivated they will be to their work. The employees in this study are working from home and they have nobody supervising them. Therefore, this creates a theoretical issue that needs to be explored.

Since satisfaction with coworkers enhances a person's psychological meaningfulness and commitment at work and, consequently, job performance (Haider et. al, 2018), there needs to be more research regarding the motivation of IT sector employees that are working from home due to the COVID-19 because there is not much social interaction happening between IT sector employees and their coworkers. What this research intends is to add knowledge to academia regarding the themes such as working from home, performance and motivation, work-life balance and psychological wellbeing and how the factors of those themes affect job performance in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Purpose

The study is conducted to explore how the specific factors of work-life balance, performance and motivation and psychological well-being is being affected and how that is correlated with job performance for IT sector employees that are required to work from home during COVID-19. To do so, we will conduct a qualitative study by interviewing a few employees that are working from home in the IT sector from the United States.

Another objective of the study is to determine the impact of COVID-19 has had on IT sector employees that are working from home, and to provide academia with this research.

The reason the authors chose to focus on the themes of work-life balance, performance and motivation, and psychological well-being as the specific factors is because each of those factors are correlated to each other and affect job performance. The problem formulation section of this paper has discussed this further. (section 1.2).

1.4 Research questions

Some of the questions we pose to answer are:

- It is found that employees' interaction with coworkers provides a better work-life balance, so what factors are replacing the social interactions with coworkers to provide a better work-life balance and to keep employees committed during a pandemic?
 - What impact has working from home during COVID-19 had on IT employees' psychological well-being?
 - How has working from home during the COVID-19 impacted job performance?

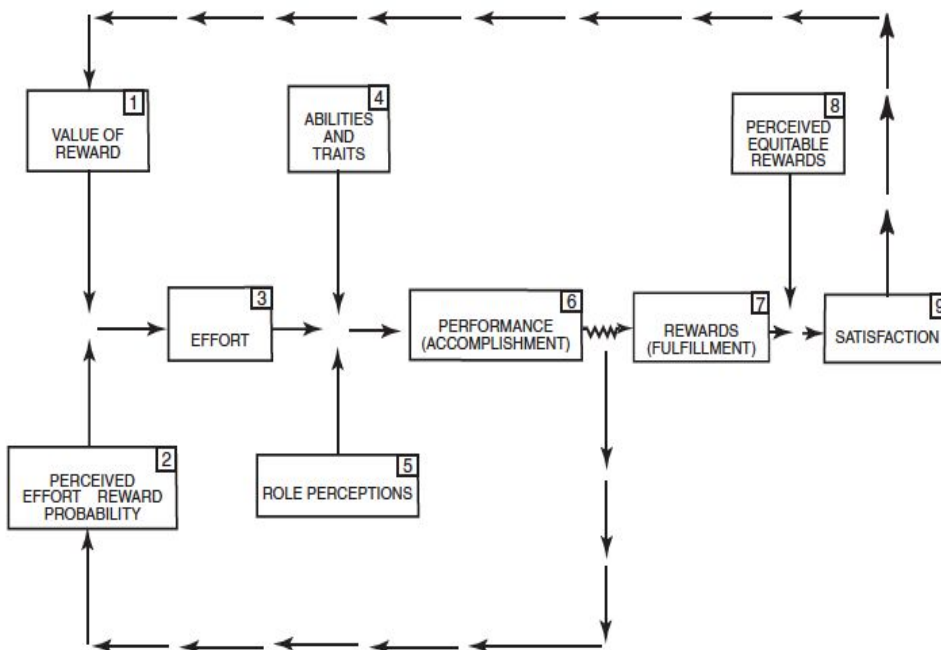
Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

In the second section of this paper, we will discuss the various theories we will be using and how they apply to the study.

The theoretical framework will describe various theories and frameworks that have been chosen because they are related to the study as its focus is on job performance and motivation, work-life, and psychological well-being of the IT sector employees. The theoretical framework will also aim to help the reader to have a better understanding of the background related to the research purpose and questions as well as the link between the notions of incentives, work-life balance, and job performance.

Each of the theories described in this section will be used to analyze the themes of Working from home, Performance and motivation, and Work-life balance and psychological well-being. Although the three themes have sub-themes regarding each of them (as shown in table 2), the following will give a basic understanding of the connection between the theories and how they are related to each of the stated themes: the Porter and Lawler theory on motivation—since it's a theory on motivation for job performance and consists of variables such as job role perceptions, it will help to analyze our findings for the performance and motivation and working experience when working from home themes section of the paper (section 5.2 and 5.1). Theory X and Theory Y also help to analyze the findings for the themes of performance and motivation and working from home. Since they are theories that discuss performance and motivation and in our study the interviewees are working from home where these theories also have an impact. The six factor model of psychological well-being--because it covers applies to our work-life and psychological well-being theme section of the paper (section 5.3)

Porter and Lawler Theory on motivation Porter and Lawler's theory on motivation (1968) is a theory based on the assumption that rewards cause satisfaction and that sometimes performance produces a reward. The relationship between satisfaction and performance is linked by a variable called reward. The point is that effort or motivation does not directly lead to performance; it is moderated by abilities and traits and by role perceptions. And that ultimately, performance leads to satisfaction (Miner, 2005, pg. 98).



(Fig. 2: The original Porter-Lawler Model)

The variables of the -Lawler theory in the figure are as follows:

1. Value of reward—how attractive or desirable an outcome is (valence). First of all, people try to figure out whether the rewards that are likely to be received from doing a job will be attractive to them. For example, a person who is looking for more money, will not find extra vacation time to be an attractive reward. If the reward they are seeking is attractive to the individual, then the individual will put extra effort to perform the job to obtain that reward. Otherwise, he/she will lower his/her effort (Miner, 2005, pg. 98).

2. Effort–reward probability—a perception of whether differential rewards are based on differential effort. This breaks down into effort–performance (expectancy) and performance–reward (instrumentality) components (Miner, 2005, pg. 98).

3. Effort—the energy expended to perform a task (force) giving his/her maximum effort (Miner, 2005, pg. 98).

4. Abilities and traits—the long-term characteristics of a person. An example would be an IT employee that has the ability to develop software or program using coding techniques. (Miner, 2005, pg. 98).

5. Role perceptions—the types of effort a person considers necessary for effective job performance. A job role perception is, for example, a program manager whose tasks are to manage and control a certain program. So, the job role perception of the program manager would be the effort and skills perceived to be required for the program management role (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

6. Performance—a person’s accomplishment in tasks that comprise the job. Effort leads to performance. The amount of performance is based on the amount of effort and the ability and the role perception of the employee. Therefore, if the employee possesses less ability and/or has the wrong role perception, his/her performance will be lower no matter the level of effort (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

7. Rewards—desirable states of affairs received from either one’s own thinking or the actions of others (intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes). Rewards are broken down as follows:

Intrinsic rewards: Given to an individual by itself for good performance, which could include the feeling of accomplishment and/or satisfaction. Intrinsic rewards are directly related to good performance; so, if the individual feels he has performed well, he will reward himself (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

Extrinsic rewards: Given by the organization and satisfy mainly lower-level needs. They include such things as pay, promotion, status, and job security (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

8. Perceived equitable rewards—the quantity of rewards a person considers fair (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

9. Satisfaction—the extent to which rewards received meet or exceed the perceived equitable level. Performance leads to satisfaction; the level of satisfaction depends upon the amount of rewards achieved. If the amount of rewards achieved meets or is greater than the expected rewards, the employee will feel satisfied. On the other hand, if the rewards fall short of the expectation, the employee will be dissatisfied (Miner, 2005, pg. 99).

A study done by Puvada and Rao supported the Porter and Lawler theory on motivation. Their study showed that all those performing well are satisfied however the people that are satisfied do not perform well. This indicates that performance leads to job satisfaction and job satisfaction does not necessarily lead to performance (Puvada and Rao, 2012). Their study supports Porter and Lawler's theory on motivation (1968), which is based on the assumption that reward causes satisfaction, enforcing our prediction that incentives correlate to job performance which causes employee satisfaction. They believe that the relationship between satisfaction and performance is linked by the variable, rewards. They say good performance leads to reward.

With that being said, employee satisfaction is directly influenced by job performance; and job performance is influenced through effort, which is influenced by motivation. For our scope of research regarding employees working from home, this motivational model fits with what we intend to study.

Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being theory

The Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being theory is a theory developed by Carol which says that there are six factors that contribute to an individual's psychological well-being, contentment, and happiness. Psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose, meaning in life, and personal growth and development (Ryff, 1989).

Although the Six-factors of Psychological well-being theory has five other factors, to stay relevant to the topic of discussion, we will focus on the factor *Positive Relations With Others*, which reflects the engagement in meaningful relationships with other people that include reciprocal empathy, intimacy, and affection. An example of this would be “people describe me as a giving person that is willing to share my time with others” (Ryff, 1989).

A strong *positive relation with others* shows that one might have a satisfying and trusting relationship with others, is concerned about others' welfare, is capable of strong empathy, affection, intimacy; and understands the give and take of human relationships. A weak relation with others shows that one might have few close, trusting relationships with others; find it difficult to be open, warm, and concerned about others; isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships and not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others (Ryff, 1989).

As stated above, a positive relationship with others -- “others” being coworkers-- allows for a greater psychological well-being for employees. The viewpoint suggests that employees'

satisfaction with coworkers plays an important role in work-life balance and enhances psychological well-being. Haider et. al's study shows that an employee's satisfaction with his/her coworker enhances the person's psychological meaningfulness and commitment at work and, consequently, job performance (Haider et. al, 2018). It is the system of social exchange satisfaction with supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. This idea shows that employees' satisfaction with supervisors and colleagues allows them to obtain feelings of empathy, respect, and trust, which lead towards greater psychological well-being (Haider et. al, 2018). This fits in the scope of our research as we study employees working from home who currently don't have any social interaction with coworkers and hence, the situation may impact their psychological well-being and work-life balance.

Theory X

Designed by Douglas McGregor when he was working in the MIT Sloan of management in the 1950s. Douglas states human beings have an instinctive aversion towards work and are in other words lazy. Therefore, they must be forced, controlled and governed in order to work. Human beings also want to escape responsibility and prefer to be led by others (Anthony et. al, 2014, pg. 616).

With Douglas's Theory X in mind, he says they are lazy and will most likely escape responsibility. For example, if an employee who was constantly supervised and controlled by a higher authority was sent home to do the same work with no supervision he or she will perform poorly. The theory states that management believes employees work on their best self-interests. Due to these assumptions, Theory X concludes that the typical workforce operates more efficiently under a hands-on approach to management. (Anthony et. al, 2014, pg. 616).

This approach applies to the situation because many employees are working from home and they will not be able to get supervised as they were before the coronavirus outbreak.

Therefore, the authors believe their job performance will be impacted. Interviewees will be asked about this theory and their answer will determine if there is any correlation to the theory.

Theory Y

In contrast to Theory X, Theory Y was designed by Douglas McGregor when he was working in the MIT Sloan of management in the 1950s. This theory shows a positive aspect in relation to Theory X. There are multiple interpretations of Theory Y the most common as (Miller 2020) defines it as: “Theory Y believes that humans will work of their own accord in an effort to meet their individual needs for self-respect and achievement”(pg. 1). We believe there is no need, in this scenario, for oppressive supervision or the looming threat of discipline. Theory Y teaches managers to focus on an employee’s self-sustaining motivation in a way that helps achieve company-wide goals. Employees who are working from home can help achieve company goals while achieving theirs as well to do this is by “strengthening an individual employee’s commitment to organizational objectives. People will work toward mutual objectives, Theory Y contends, only to the degree that the work fulfills their individual needs (Miller 2020). Due to this theory being in contrast to Theory X, it used to see if the employees are working towards their own goals and self-respect without the need for oppressive supervision as Theory X states.

In another version, According to Theory Y, on the other hand, working comes as naturally to human beings as resting. Human beings can also lead and control their own work if it is done for important purposes and under the right circumstances human beings even desire responsibility. Inventiveness and the ability to work autonomously are common. (Anthony et. al, 2014, pg. 616). Basically, Theory Y assumes that human beings are ambitious and not lazy. It is also said that Theory Y is more in line with a managers view while Theory X is more of an employee's view (Anthony et. al, 2014, pg. 616).

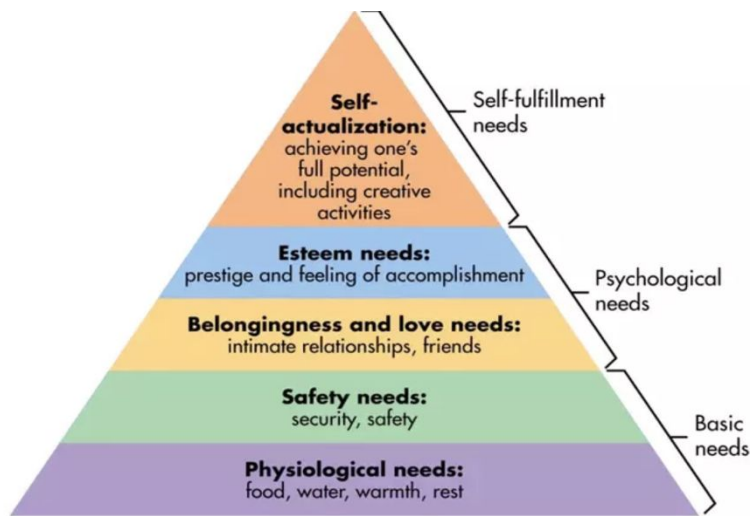
Maslow’s Theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs that are lower down in the hierarchy must be completed before attending the higher-ups. (Maslow, 1943)

At the bottom of the pyramid is the psychological needs, these are what must be prioritized first before moving up. Psychological needs consist of food, water, warmth, and rest. These are the basic human necessities that everyone should have before yearning to achieve bigger and better things in an idealistic society.

Next, there is the safety/needs; this is the concept of feeling safe and secure. When one has met their psychological needs, they start looking for security and comfort. After this is the belongingness and love needs. This is where people start looking for acceptance, forming relationships, love, etc.

Lastly, the esteem needs is where people feel prestige and feeling of accomplishment towards objectives that are more so focused on personal development. Lastly, in the pyramid is the self-actualization needs. This is where achieving one's full potential, including creative activities and self-fulfillment needs this is the top of the pyramid in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943).



(Fig. 3: Maslow's Pyramid of Needs Source: Saul McLeod 2020)

Maslow's pyramid is used in relation to the interviewees' answers, their answers tell if the basic level of Maslow's pyramid is addressed first then the following levels. The interviewee is asked certain questions related to the levels; however, if the levels are not in the same order then Maslow's theory is not met.

Motivation has proved to be a direct factor of job performance. With that being said, motivation is a source that could differ for each person. Psychological well-being of employees has also proven to be one of the underlying factors that impact job performance. The authors intend to find the commonalities of motivation for IT sector employees that are working from home and the factors that provide psychological well-being using the theoretical framework as a guideline. Theory's such as Porter and Lawler theory on motivation were used due to their findings on motivation and satisfaction linking to reward. This can be applied to IT sector employees to see if there is any correlation. Also, the Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being theory shows the importance of the relationship with other people; in regard to the study, the relationship with other people would be an employee's relationship with its coworkers. The impact it is has on an individual will show based on the interviewees' responses. Theory X is used because it states individuals are lazy and cannot work without supervision while Theory Y says

individuals work towards their own self achievement which is in contrast to Theory X. These theories are used to see if employees are lazy or if they are productive on their own. Lastly, Maslow's theory is in depth motivational theory that sort of uses all the main points of the other theories such as psychological well-being, motivation and self-achievement. This is used for its specific factors and is used to see if the factors correlate with the interviewees' responses.

Chapter 3. Methodology

In the third section of this paper, we will discuss the methodologies and how they apply to the study

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy used is based on ontology. Questions regarding ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities; the central aspect of ontology is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2018). Because our research is based on the understanding of the influencing factors for job performance, personal views are influencing the people interviewed. Hence, the epistemological position for the study is constructivism: an ontological position which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision (Bryman and Bell, 2018).

3.2 Research Approach

There are two approaches, inductive and deductive when it comes to a research approach. The research used in this research will be a deductive approach rather than an inductive approach. A deductive approach uses the literature to help you to identify theories and ideas that the authors will test using data (Saunders et. al 2009, p. 61). The research does not plan to explore data and then develop the theories from them that will relate to the literature; rather, the research is based on collecting the data with predefined theories and exploring the data and developing theories that will subsequently relate to the literature based on a clearly defined purpose and research questions in scope; so, the research does

have pre-identified theories and developed frameworks that are used to test the data. Hence, a deductive approach will be used.

3.3 Research Strategy

The research of the study will be done through a case study, which entails a detailed analysis of a single case. A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident (Yin, 2018). The term “case study” can be, as shown by Bryman and Bell, an “organization, location, person, and event” (Bryman and Bell, 2018). Particularly, this study is examining the motivational factors for IT sector employees—and the questions asked to the interviewees are shown in the data collection of this chapter. While the case is an object of interest in its own right, the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of it” (Bryman and Bell, 2018).

The case in the research is the IT employees that are working from home indefinitely due to COVID-19. Because the study is focused on the exploration of influencing factors for job performance, a case study is most appropriate because it will allow having an understanding of the phenomenon and such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to the case. What distinguishes a case study from other research designs is the focus on a bounded situation or system, an entity with a purpose and functioning parts (Bryman and Bell, 2018).

3.4 Research Methods

As previously stated, this is a qualitative study, meaning we do an analysis based on a more humanistic or idealistic approach. We are using this method to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions thus producing non-numerical data therefore not using a quantitative approach. When discussing quantitative methodology, it

is unforgiving, as all statistical procedures rely on the data addressing the assumptions underlying the procedures (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, the qualitative method will work in our favor as there are many variables that require a more personal response to our topic, and we must follow-up on the answers received and a numerical method will not give us the specific feedback which we are looking for. We will be presenting our interviewees with a set of questions that give us an insight into what they feel about the company. The answers will provide us with good feedback on whether they are satisfied with their company. We also hope to learn how much incentives play an impact on whether the employees perform well, in doing so an interview with a manager will most likely be required to establish credibility and honesty of the employee's words.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The case is based on purposive sampling because the purpose of the study is to find out what influences job performance for IT sector employees that are required to work from home during Covid-19. So, one of the sampling techniques used for the study is purposive sampling because the participants (IT employees) are selected based on a preselected criterion. Another sampling technique used is the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is described as when the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others (Bryman and Bell, 2018). The snowball sampling method is used because the researchers contacted some of their personal contacts and were then given the participants' contact. Another aspect of the sampling technique is its volunteerism; the researchers pre-identified a few stakeholders with whom the researchers had personal relationships. Of the five total interviewees, two were used with the snowball sampling and three were pre-identified stakeholders. By having two sampling techniques, it allows the research to be less biased because more sampling techniques are being used as opposed to a single one. A total of seven people were contacted by the researchers of which five were interviewed.

3.6 Data collection

The qualitative data collection for this study was made through interviews, which makes the research primary data. No secondary data will be needed because all the information needed to answer the research questions are being answered by the interviewees. Interviews give a subjective view on the issue and a chance to elaborate according to the study. The option to give feedback on answers and respond is crucial to get the employees' personal feelings on the matter and how working from home has impacted them.

The interviews were conducted through electronic meetings due to the COVID-19 quarantine. This method is not only cost-efficient as it avoids long-distance travels, and potentially reduces the stress of the interviewees as the authors were not physically present during the meeting, but it also allowed for a safer environment from potentially spreading COVID-19.

The interviews were conducted by both the authors, each interview being held by one main interviewer while the other interviewer was taking notes based on the interviewees' responses. The beginning of the interviews was just re-enforcing the interviewees about the ethical considerations to allow the interviewees to make sure they were aware of their rights towards the data collected, which ultimately allowed them to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts during the interview process. Then, a brief introduction was made to give the interviewees the background and purpose of our study. Due to time restrictions and lack of resources to hire a professional transcriber, a full transcription would have been too time-consuming. The interview focused on the key answers and moments to complete the analysis of the data.

Table 1: Interview Chart

Interviewee Letter	Position
A	Datacenter sales engineer,
B	Network and voice engineer
C	Consultant
D	Associate Program Manager Intern
E	Software engineer

Interviewee A

This interview was conducted on a weekday, through a FaceTime call. The interviewee was at home during the interview, no external sound or voices disturbed the interview. Interviewee A was attentive to the ethical considerations the authors gave in the beginning and had no concerns. Once the interviewers gave the interviewee the introduction and purpose for the interview, he seemed motivated since the start of the interview and stayed focused and interested throughout the interview even though it lasted slightly less than an hour.

Interviewee B

The interview was conducted during a weekday, through a FaceTime call. The Interviewee was attentive and focused during the interview, and there were no interruptions. The ethical considerations were attentively listened to and after explaining the purpose of the interview, the interview started.

Interviewee C

This interview was conducted on a weekday through a FaceTime call. The Interviewee was attentive and focused during the interview, and there were no interruptions.

The ethical considerations were attentively listened to and after explaining the purpose of the interview, the interview started.

Interviewee D

This interview was conducted on a weekday through a FaceTime call. The interviewee was attentive and focused during the interview and there were no interruptions. The ethical considerations were attentively listened to and after explaining the purpose of the interview, the interview started.

Interviewee E

This interview was conducted on a weekday, through a voice call. The interviewee was at home during the interview, with a small disturbance from noise in the background. Interviewee E was attentive to the ethical considerations the authors gave in the beginning and had no concerns. Once the interviewers gave the interviewee the introduction and purpose for the interview, he seemed relaxed and interested throughout the interview even though it lasted slightly less than an hour.

3.7 Data Analysis

The literature review and theoretical/empirical analysis consisted of studies from numerous authors on our topic but nothing as specific to ours as we are doing it in the US and there is an ongoing pandemic affecting it as well. A mixture of both empirical and theoretical studies is used in our analysis. In a series of interviews, employees are asked in regard to their psychological conditions amongst job performance, motivation, and working from home.

The analysis of the data follows the themes conducted in the theoretical framework; the data collected has been analyzed with a thematic content approach. One of the ways we are using to describe the data is separating the data into categories corresponding to the theories that were explained in the Theoretical Framework chapter (Bryman and Bell 2018). The

data is searched for any comparison to the theories made. The aim of using this method is to find out the path followed by the answers of the interviewees, aiming to create the framework constituting the intended contribution of this research the data was analyzed by looking for commonality in the interviewee's responses. For example, if an employee said something that relates to our theory in any way, the answer is used. There is no right or wrong answer, the response the employees give is the framework of the study.

The coding and categorizing were done by first reading and writing the interviewee response and questions. The authors created the 3 major themes of working from home, performance and motivation and work-life balance and psychological well-being. After that the authors found 2nd order of emerging themes which were working experience while working from home, work-life balance while working from home, impact of working from home on performance and motivation, and working in collaboration. From this the authors found the specific factors that ultimately affect job performance. These were: Discipline, flexibility, comfortability, positive relationship with coworkers, role perception, motivation and recognition.

To answer the research questions, we analyzed the responses from the interviewees and related it to our theoretical framework to see which responses supported or did not align with the theories in the theoretical framework. We found patterns in the majority of the interviewees responses and linked them to categories according to each of the themes. For instance, if 3 out of 5 interviewees said something similar to each other, the authors would create a category such as "discipline" and put their responses underneath that theme. Ultimately, we analyzed the responses that guided our findings.

Table 2: Coding

1 st order themes from Interview questions	2 nd order emerging themes	3 rd order themes categorization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working from home -Performance and motivation -Work-life balance and psychological well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working experience while working from home -Work-life balance while working from home -Impact of working from home on performance and motivation -Working in collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discipline -Flexibility -Comfortability -Positive relationship with coworkers -Role perception -Motivation -Recognition

3.8 Research Quality

Interviews are done either in person, phone, and or video chat. Interviewees are subject to the requirement of working in the IT industry in the US; interviewees are not subject to any racial, economic, gender, and or preference. Studies are unbiased as possible to not push our agenda onto them. Predicting results of this study can be subjective however the predicted theory is all employees want better incentives, work conditions, job satisfaction, etc which in turn impacts job performance as said. However, this will be analyzed as workers are now being forced to work from home due to COVID-19.

3.9 Research Validity and Reliability/Trustworthiness

This research is a qualitative study and it is reliable. Meaning it cannot be easily replicated using the same frameworks and achieving the same outcome as this study. All employees of the interview are from The United States and an emphasis is made on the employees' perspectives. The authors have no bias towards any of the employees and the answers are recorded just as the employees say. The essence of this study is to discover and recognize patterns among interviewees' answers, in order to contribute in a meaningful way without compromising the papers reliability and validity. The interviewees answers are recorded as said.

There are 7 concepts to ensure data is useful and evokes real, 'true', trustworthy and accurate representations of 'experience', events seen, values espoused, and beliefs held (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These 7 concepts are: power, social position, value, trust, meaning, interpretation, and uncertainty (p. 42)

Power: The exchange between the interviewee and the interviewer is equal meaning one does not completely take over the interview the grounds are established, and the procedure is self-explanatory.

Social Position: The interviewees are not subject to any social position to avoid bias, all they have is the title of an employee in the IT sector. Their position does not prohibit them from disclosing any feelings they have about the job.

Value: The 'value' that this information has on the discussion is crucial, as the words given from the interviewees are the answers to the problem discussed. Whether or not they are telling the truth is up to the reader. The 'value' of the interviewees' words are seen as a testimony to their way of life in this paper.

Trust: As previously said, whether or not the interviewee is telling the truth is up to the reader; however, the desire to give the truth is up to the interviewee he or she can say whatever they like without any repercussions or rewards. There is no motive for dishonesty at all in the study.

Meaning: The meaning heard by one individual may not be the same as that intended by the others. Concepts were made clear if there were any misunderstandings or misinterpretations to get the exact meaning of the interviewee and the interviewer.

Interpretation: If there are multiple meanings, then the interpretation is critical. However, the theories are based on the interviewees' strongest interpretation of the subject.

Uncertainty: With multiple meanings and multiple interpretations a stable resting place may be difficult, even impossible, to find. As previously said the interviewees' strongest interpretation was used.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

As for the people interviewed during this research, their personal data was handled with respect to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The companies were not mentioned to respect their privacy, as this had no particular interest for the purpose of this research. The employees of the study were all voluntary and informed of their rights pertaining to the study. Each individual willingly gave their answers and had the knowledge of how those answers will be used. The individuals can stop the interview whenever they like and can give any kind of answer without disagreement/discrimination.

3.11 Delimitation (Scope) of study

Regarding the delimitations, the choice was made to focus only on the US and the Covid-19 situation there due to the number of resources and reliability for the study. Due to the

pandemic, all of the employees are interviewed via phone call/ video chat. Some of the employees previously worked from home; however, not permanently which would rule out participants of the study.

Chapter 4. Empirical data

This chapter discusses the details of the interviews by presenting the answers given by the interviewees in response to the interview questions.

4.1 Working from home (general)

Interviewee A

The main points of discussion are his company's perspective about working from home, the importance of routine, work-life balance, dealing in covid19 time. The interviewee was asked about why he thinks companies allow employees to work from home, he added that *"companies realize that you could get your work done from home, so companies want to give work-life balance."* He also mentioned that companies already allowed employees to work from home because they might have kids, other problems to deal with, and show how much they value their employees.

Next, the interviewee was asked how he felt about working from home; he added, *"it's important that you should have a routine, don't be distracted, confined to being at home so you can always be productive."* He was used to working from home before the COVID- 19, but now it's an adjustment because everyone works from home, families are home with children and spouses. So it's important to stay focused. For mental health, it's important to work out, so you don't wear out mentally.

Lastly, the interviewee was asked if working from home allows for better work-life balance, he says, *"I think having the option to work from home allows a better work-life balance."* He added that, rather than being forced to because a person has a routine when going into the office. He mentioned that the Ideal scenario is having the option to do both interacting with coworkers and being able to work from home.

Interviewee B

Interviewee B was asked why they think companies allow working from home, he believes *“working from home is more productive as there is less time in commuting and saves the company money.”*

Next, he was asked how he feels about working from home, he mentions that he misses seeing co-workers and going to the office. He added that when a person sees co-workers every day, they develop a connection and have the chance to build relationships.

Lastly, he was asked if working from home allows for a better work-life balance. He says, *“there is no work-life balance because at certain times clients contact me after hours and expect me to work after hours due to being at home.”*

Interviewee C

The interviewee was asked about why he thinks companies allow employees to work from home, he believes, *“working from home gives a little more freedom, responsibility, and trust to the employees.”* He also added that it makes it easier for certain employees because it's what they need. He believes that work can be done from home.

Next, he was asked about how he feels towards working from home, he added, *“there are ups and downs of working from home; for example, a sense of laziness because you're at home.”* He mentioned, however, a place where the employee can relax, he/she can also work if the person sets a schedule and workspace while being aware of the schedule to follow.

Lastly, he was asked if working from home allows for better work-life balance, he says, *“working from home allows for a better work-life balance because you're able to do other things and not just work;”* he further added that being able to be there for others, kids, parents. Working from home allows a person to be able to do other things at home if they

do have other responsibilities and have freedom of not being in an office. A person does not have to follow the office code and can do what they want to be comfortable. There is more productivity because working from home cuts into people's commute times, which allows more time to do more work, so productivity gets increased.

Interviewee D

The interviewee was asked about why she thinks companies allow employees to work from home, she says, *“a lot of the work can be done remotely, many IT companies are global and it can be done in non-traditional hours”*.

Next, she was asked about how she feels towards working from home, she mentioned that it requires more discipline, there's a lack of face to face communication and it can cause slower growth and make it harder to meet deadlines because many employees can become passive.

Lastly, she was asked if working from home allows for better work-life balance, she says, *“yes, because you can have more flexibility in terms of when you work as long as you get your work done”*.

Interviewee E

Interviewee was asked about why he thinks companies allow employees to work from home, he believes that working from home allows flexibility, work-life balance, family balance, comfortability, and being able to function on a job wherever the employee is.

Next he was asked about how he feels towards working from home, he added, *“it's pretty good. I'm on the phone still talking to coworkers. Sometimes, I wish I was in office more often because you want to learn or teach something and it's easier to do that when you're in person.”*

Lastly he was asked if he believed that working from home allows a better work-life balance, he responded, *“Yes, definitely!”*

4.2 Performance and Motivation

Interviewee A

When asked what the most important incentives are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector, the interviewee believes that the management that an employee has, its team, having a good team and a manager to work with is important. He added that *“You don’t want to be micromanaged where you feel like someone is looking over your shoulder. You should have some freedom, having management trust in your work and having that trusting work culture.”* He mentions that being challenged and doing work that makes people learn more are both important incentives. He also added that technology is changing so people want to learn new technologies. If a person excels in their project, they should get recognized for their work and promotion and be rewarded and compensated properly.

Next, he was asked, “how much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?” To that, he responds, *“over 60 -70% of performance is from support because you have management’s support. If not, it’s less motivating for you to do work.”*

When asked if he performs his job at home just as well as he does in the office, he responds, *“Yes, because I’m able to save a lot of time in commuting. I’m more productive at home because I’m comfortable logging in at work even at night.”* He also adds that he saves time and energy and is less exhausted. When He is at home all day, he has the ability to let loose and be productive around the house whereas commuting, he is exhausted.

To the question, “According to Theory X, human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?” The interviewee answered, *“finding motivation depends on the person because if you wake up later you can work at your pace, many more things you can do at home such as working out, so it depends on the individual.”* He explained that motivation for an individual has to be intrinsic.

Interviewee B

When asked what the most important incentives are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector, interviewee B likes working from home, but not permanently. He mentioned that he wanted a longer PTO and more than a standard 10-day vacation. He added that a work-life balance, coming into the office, and having drinks and amenities along with work culture are all important.

Next, he was asked, “how much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?” To that, he responds, *“It is important, support from the department motivates you because you might be loaded with work, so they could help out.”*

When asked if he performs his job at home just as well as he does in the office, he responds, *“No, because I’m easily distracted at home, no one is watching so no one is accounting for hours worked.”*

To the question, “According to Theory X, human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?” the interviewee answered, *“Knowing someone is relying on you helps to motivate you, being able to support someone motivates you.”*

Interviewee C

When asked what the most important incentives are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector, interviewee responded *“doing something you enjoy doing, distribution of work correctly, tasks/projects given to the right people.”*

Next, he was asked “how much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?” To that, he responds, *“A lot, probably 100 percent because if you feel that you’re supported, then you feel comfortable in doing your work.”* He added that if a person goes to a certain manager, VP, etc. it helps them perform better by boosting confidence.

When asked if he performs his job at home just as well as he does in the office, he responded that he *“Performs better in an office environment because of office structure and he works better when working with someone else.”*

To the question, “According to Theory X human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?” the interviewee answered that *“having a deadline is motivating as well as having a structure and schedule.”*

Interviewee D

When asked what the most important incentives are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector, interviewee D says, *“salary, good management, and growth opportunities. A lot of employees in the IT area want to be able to move up the ladder.”*

Next, he was asked “how much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?” To that, she says, “*They want to know that you are skilled and valued and they will invest time into you then.*”

When asked if she performs his job at home just as well as he does in the office, she responded that “*I work better in the office because a lot of my work involves meeting different people and working with different teams.*” She also added that it was difficult to do so when completely virtual and would prefer to work in an office.

To the question, “According to Theory X, human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?” The employee responded, “*To make money and build a career is the motivation, and ‘meeting’ people every day over video chat creates the illusion of face-to-face contact.*”

Interviewee E

When asked what the most important incentives are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in the IT sector, the interviewee responded, “*the management that you have and having a good team and a manager are all important*” He also added that employees Don’t want to be micromanaged where a person feels like someone is looking over their shoulder. The employee should have some freedom, having management trust in the employee’s work, and have that trusting work culture. He continued to say that being challenged to do work is what makes people learn more, technology is changing, so people want to learn new technologies If an employee excels in their project, they should get recognized for their work and promotion. They should be rewarded and compensated properly.

Next, he was asked, “how much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?” To that, he responds, “*they’re pretty accommodating to your needs.*”

When asked if he performs his job at home just as well as he does in the office, he responded.

“Yes, because I’m able to save a lot of time commuting. I’m more productive at home, because I’m comfortable logging in at work even at night. Saving time and energy less exhausted.” He says, when a person is at home, they have all day to let loose and be productive around the house. Whereas commuting is exhausting, and the energy level is lower.

To the question, “According to Theory X, human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?” he added that finding motivation depends on the person, so waking up later a person can work at their own pace, many more things a person can do at home such as working out; so, it depends on the person. He continued, “*IT positions you’re able to do work from home. incentives of working from home so the company doesn’t take it away from you.*”

4.3 Work-life and psychological well-being

Interviewee A

When asked how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why?

Interviewee A replied “*Good workers motivate me to work. It makes going to work easy. People have lives. So, they understand they don't force you to work day and night.*” Next he was asked about his relationship with his coworkers and how a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts work life balance. In which he replied, relationships with coworkers outside of work is important, having your co-workers back so they can cover for

you if something happens and talk to co-workers to develop a relationship. Relationship with coworkers outside of work is important because life outside of working.

Then we asked how does a better work-life balance impact job performance? He said, *“this goes hand-in-hand, if you hate your job, then it will show in your job. Having work-life balance, you get burned out and quit. It will affect the company. People who work well, have well work-life.”* He wants to be satisfied with his job and if one is not satisfied, they will most likely hate their job according to interviewee A.

Since he is working by himself, we asked, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance? He said, *“I spend time with family, more communication with family. Communicates with coworkers through online tools where they socialize that is virtualized.”*

Interviewee B

When asked how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why? Interviewee B replied, *“I like my job, coworkers are good, talk constantly with co-workers, and I'm at home constantly.”* Next he was asked about his relationship with his coworkers and how a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts work life balance. In which he added, that it's really good they talk constantly, joke around and talk outside of work. Also, having a strong relationship is good co-workers helps motivate you and makes work enjoyable, need to feel that you are accomplishing things.

Then we asked how does a better work-life balance impact job performance? In which he replied, *“having a strong work-life balance improves job performance because you can distinguish work from outside and inside, no pressure when to do work.”*

Since he is working by himself, we asked, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance? In which he replied, *“We do video calls, daily check-in with the whole team, coworkers sometimes message each other and talk.”*

Interviewee C

When asked how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why? Interviewee C replied, *“Okay, until you overwork yourself with long hours, certain tasks require more hours. It can be Mentally draining.”*

Next he was asked about his relationship with his coworkers and how a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts work life balance. In which he added, its limited, certain respect in between. Certain number of co-workers he is close to some not. A strong relationship does not matter to much for him, try to keep work life and personal separate. Issues with coworkers can be problematic if working from home. Then we asked how does a better work-life balance impact job performance? In which he replied, *“I feel safe and secure, you can do what you most care about, more motivated and less stress and anxiety.* Since he is working by himself, we asked, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance? In which he replied, *“video calls, team meetings help with work-life balance.”*

Interviewee D

When asked how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why? Interviewee D replied, *“do not think it is stimulating enough, being on your own does not give you the satisfaction as you would get in person.”* Next she was asked about his relationship with his coworkers and how a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts work life balance. She added, she is fairly new, still working on developing relationships, relationship with co-workers, and strong relationships negatively affect work-life balance, hard to draw the line between normal life and work life. Also, a

relationship with a supervisor is strong and positive. The role has an impact on bonds with co-workers.

Then we asked how does a better work-life balance impact job performance? In which she replied, *“stressors are a part of regular life, which doesn’t end up affecting job performance when your work-life balance is good.”* Since she is working by herself, we asked, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance? In which she replied, *“Nothing replaces social interaction.”*

Interviewee E

When asked how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why? Interviewee E replied, *“not draining because Culture sets the tone, very relaxed from management and culture of the team.”*

Next he was asked about his relationship with his coworkers and how a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts work life balance. He added, it’s really good, because they do pair-programming (working with one other person), they sit down with teams and eat lunch with them, getting to know people on a personal level. Also, he thinks a strong relationship does matter, especially in his position because he's working with team members, so people need to understand where they’re coming from.

Then, we asked how does a better work-life balance impact job performance? In which he replied, *“better work-life balance allows more comfortability, would want to work better. When in strict culture, motivation gets taken away because of pressure.”*

Since he is working by himself, we asked, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance? In which he replied, he is *“still on calls with coworkers with workers.”*

4.4 Chapter 4 Summary

This chapter intends to give the reader each of the interviewees raw answers to the questions given to them. To find all the questions please refer to the (Appendix). Based on these answers the interviewees personality is shown and their mindset, from this a generalization can be made about them. In the next chapter the findings will be discussed based on these answers.

Chapter 5. Findings

In this chapter we will discuss the findings of the study from the interviews

5.1 Working experience and working from home

The data below describes interviewees and how they perceive working from home. This aims to give the context of each interviewee's activity to get a better understanding of the answers gathered in the next sections.

Table 3: The working experience of the interviewees

Interviewee	Years of experience	Experience of working from home	Working from home during COVID19 pandemic
Interview A	5 years.	Yes	8 weeks
Interview B	2 years.	No	6 weeks
Interview C	1.5 years.	Yes	8 weeks
Interview D	4 months.	Yes	6 weeks
Interview E	3 years.	Yes	6 weeks

Based on (Table 3) there were some interesting findings. Most of the interviewees have had experience working from home besides interviewee B who has not worked from home before. Interviewees A, B, C, and E have worked for at least 1 year while interviewee D has been working for 4 months. Due to COVID 19 they have been working from home for at least 6 weeks or more.

5.1.1. Productivity while working from home

One of the recurring themes that was found in many of the interviews was the idea of better productivity when working from home. When asked about how they feel about working from home, interviewees A to D all mentioned working from home allows for more productivity because it cuts commuting time, which allows them to be more productive. For instance, when interviewee A was asked if he's able to perform his job at home just as well as when he works in the office, he responded, *"Yes, because I'm able to save a lot of time in commuting."* Interviewee C added, *"there is more productivity because working from home cuts into people's commute times, which allows more time to do more work. Productivity gets increased."* Both interviewees, B and D, also mentioned that saving time on commutes allows for better productivity. In contrast, although interviewee E didn't mention the idea of a cut in commuting time allowing for better productivity, he focused on work-life balance--which is discussed in (section 5.3).

5.1.2. Discipline while working from home

Another theme we found was the concept of discipline while working from home. When asked about their feelings towards working from home, many responded with the idea of not having a physical routine that they once had while working in the office. Specifically, interviewee's A, C and D value discipline to make the most out of their job performance. Interviewee A explained, *"it's important that you should have a routine, don't be distracted, confined to being at home so you can always be productive. I was used to working from home before, but now it's an adjustment because everyone works from home, families are home with children and spouses. So it's important to stay focused"*. Interviewee C said, *"there are ups and downs of working from home; for example, a sense of laziness, because you're at home. However, a place where you relax, you can also work if you set a routine and work space, especially be aware of the routine to follow."* Interviewee D added in her response *"it requires more discipline to be able to finish tasks when nobody is looking and stay focused."* On the other hand, when asked the same

question interviewees B and E elaborated on other topics such as work culture and flexibility.

5.1.3. Work-life balance while working from home

Lastly, interviewees C to E all mention that working from home allows for a better work-life balance. When asked if working from home allows for a better work-life balance, Interviewee C says, *“Yes, totally because I’m able to do other things besides work and be able to be there for others like parents and kids.”* Interviewee D says working from home allows for better flexibility because, as she puts it, *“you can work whenever as long as you get your work done.”* Interviewee D holds the same view of working from home allowing for a better work-life balance. However, interviewees A and B hold a different opinion when it comes to working from home allowing a better work-life balance. Interviewee A says *“I think having the option to work from home, rather being forced to because you have a routine when going into the office. Ideal scenario is having the option to do both interacting with coworkers and being able to work from home.”* Interviewee B holds the opinion that working from home indefinitely doesn’t allow for better work-life balance because *“certain times clients contact me after work hours. They expect you to do work after hours because you’re already at home.”* Both interviewees A and B hold differing opinions which shows that some employees do prefer working from home and others do not.

5.2 Performance and Motivation

5.2.1 Recognition for performance and motivation

When asked about what sort of incentives do IT employees look for, there were a lot of differing incentives, but the most recurring incentive was said by four of the five interviewees as they mentioned promotion based on performance or being recognized for their work. Interviewee A says that *“If you excel in your project, you should get recognized for your work and be promoted or rewarded and compensated properly.”* Interviewees C

and D also talk about wanting a promotion based on performance and having the opportunity to grow. Interviewee D says, *“A lot of employees in the IT area want to be able to move up the ladder.”* It was prevalent that the interviewees were predominant on the idea of promotion based on performance; and interviewee E explains this when he says, *“At my old company, I would have to follow a very strict structure for a promotion even though I was performing better than many of the senior software developers. At my new company, there is an increased chance of promotion based on performance.”* Interviewee B was the only one that didn’t mention the idea of a promotion or recognition for work. He mentioned wanting a longer PTO and longer standard vacation.

5.2.2 Working from home’s impact on performance and motivation

Another recurring theme found is having the option to work from home and not being forced to do it, this is a huge factor in performance and motivation. When asked *“How working from home has affected their performance and motivation during this pandemic.”* Interviewees A, B and C mentioned the idea of having the option to work from home being an influence on performance and motivation. For example, interviewee A says *“with COVID-19 going on many IT employees like myself are being forced to work from home in ways we haven't before, and this affects my motivation.”* Interviewee B mentioned *“I like to be able to work from home at times but when you are forced to work from home it affects your performance and you can't work like you used to.”* Interviewee C added *“working from home all the time is hard at times and I can't work like I used to.”* In contrast, interviewees D and E mentioned that they were performing well and their jobs made it easy for them to work from home keeping a stable motivation as well.

5.2.3 Flexible management on performance and motivation

Also, a recurring theme found when asked what are the most important factors that are influencing job performance and employee satisfaction, mentioned by interviewees A, B, C, and E was the idea of flexible management. For example, interviewee A says, *“You don’t want to be micromanaged where you feel like someone is looking over your shoulder*

and you should have some freedom, having management trust in your work and having that work culture.” Interviewee E explains the most influencing factors for job performance and satisfaction is, *“Flexibility, not someone pressuring you to do work - trust and understanding between the managers and employees.”* Interviewees B and C both mentioned work culture as an influencing factor incentive for job performance, but they did not elaborate much on the topic. However, Interviewees A and E felt very strongly about a trusting and understanding work culture as an influencing factor for job performance and employee satisfaction. Interviewee E also describes his work culture when he says, *“The VP of my company comes by and checks in with the teams and we have a very relaxed culture. Other companies don’t necessarily have that. When in a strict culture, motivation gets taken away because of pressure.”* A positive work culture allows for people such as interviewees A and E to perform better and be satisfied.

5.2.4 Working with others increases performance and motivation

Interviewees B to E all talked about the idea of working with another person that is motivating to perform their job when not governed to do work. The question posed was: *“According to Theory X human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don’t have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?”*

Interviewee E responded to the question by elaborating on the concept of *“pair-programming”* that his company implemented. Pair-programming is when one programmer is paired up with a partner when programming; while one is actively programming, the other is guiding the other programmer. Interviewee E *“says pair-programming brings a sense of accountability”* because he is working with another person. Although interviewee E is working from home, he is still on calls with his coworkers throughout the day that keeps him motivated. Moreover, interviewee B says, *“Knowing someone is relying on you helps to motivate you, being able to support someone motivates you.”* which shows that working with someone else even remotely is a motivating

factor when working from home because it brings a sense of responsibility. Interviewee D mentioned, *“To make money and build a career, the motivation, to work towards one’s goals.”* This shows the self-oriented mindset a person has while working.

5.2.5 Working from home vs In-office on performance and motivation

Lastly, a recurring theme found amongst 3 out of 5 of the interviewees, specifically interviewees B, C and D is not performing as well at home compared to the office. When asked “do you feel that you perform your job at home just as well as you work in the office” For example, interviewee B states *“No, because I am easily distracted at home, no one is watching so no one is accounting for hours worked. I feel that I can do anything and get away with it.”* Interviewee C mentions *“I perform better in an office environment because of office structure, and I work better when working with someone else.”* Interviewee D added *“I do better in the office because a lot of work involves meeting different people and working with different teams, difficult to do when completely virtual would I prefer to work in an office.”* On the other hand, interviewees A and E preferred working at home due to the freedom and flexibility which was not seen as a recurring theme amongst everyone.

5.3 Work-life balance and psychological well-being

5.3.1 Impact of overworking on psychological well-being

When asked “how do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective?” This shows employees who are sometimes overworked causes them to stress out. Moreover, there was a commonality amongst interviewees A, B and C. Interviewee A said, *“people have lives so they understand they don't force you to work day and night and this can be draining”*. Interviewee B states, *“it can be exhausting at times and can be overloading with work which causes me to stress out.”* Interviewee C added, *“you feel okay, until you overwork yourself with long hours, certain tasks require more hours, which could be mentally draining.”* These responses show the effect on mental health and how being

overworked can disrupt an employee's well-being. On the other hand, interviewees D and E expressed a relaxed and less stimulating experience. They believe their workplace does a good job in caring for employees and not overworking them.

5.3.2 Coworkers' impact on work-life balance

The importance of an employee's relationship with coworkers is essential to a work-life balance.

Interviewees A touched upon the importance of having good coworkers because *“they can cover for you if something happens, and you can talk to coworkers and develop a relationship with them, because relationships with coworkers outside of work is important, because there is a life outside of working.”* Interviewee B also mentions the idea of having a relationship with coworkers outside of work because they *“help motivate you and make work enjoyable and give you the need to feel that you are accomplishing things.”* Interviewee E describes his relationship with his coworkers as he says, *“really good, because we do pair-programming (working with one other person), sit down with teams and eat lunch with them, getting to know people on a personal level.”* When asked if a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts your work-life balance and why, interviewees A, B, and E all said that a strong relationship with coworkers impacts work-life balance. Interviewee E puts it as *“Yes, especially in my position because you're working with team members, so people need to understand where you're coming from and connect with them.”*

In contrast, interviewees C described his relationship with his coworkers as limited and respectful while interviewee D described her relationship with her coworkers as fairly new. When asked if a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts your work-life balance and why, Interviewee C responded *“Not that much, I try to keep work life and personal relationships separate because issues with coworkers can be problematic if you're not working from home.”* Interviewee D responded that a strong relationship negatively affects work life balance because her opinion is that *“there should be a strong distinction between*

work-life and your social life.” She believes there should be a professional relationship with co-workers to be as productive as possible and not treating them as if it were a social life.

5.3.3 Job performance relation to work-life balance

In response to the question, “How does a better work-life balance impact job performance?” The answers given showed a better work-life balance allowing for better job performance. The recurring answer was that you need a good work-life balance because, as interviewee B puts it, *“you feel safe and secure, so you have no pressure when doing work.”* Interviewee C and B both mention that everybody has stressors so having a good work-life balance is needed to still perform well in your job. Interviewee E touched upon better work-life balance allowing for more comfortability. He also says that *“When in a strict culture, motivation gets taken away because of the pressure.”* So, all interviewees’ findings show that a better work-life balance not only allows employees to perform better in their jobs, but also allows for better comfortability.

5.3.4 Family and virtual tools’ impact on work-life balance

As employees are working at home and do not have the same social interaction compared to the office, it was found that employees are compensating their lack of in-person social interactions with spending time with family and using virtual apps such as to maintain their relationships with coworkers and its impact on work-life balance. This came the question “what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance?” What was found amongst interviewees A, B, C and E is that the use of connecting with co-workers using apps such as zoom or skype is seen often and spending more time with close family. According to interviewee A, *“Spending time with family, more communication with family. Communicating with coworkers through online tools.”* Interviewee B said, *“video calls, daily check-in with the whole team, coworkers sometimes message each other and talk.”* Interviewee C and E added getting on calls with coworkers

as well. In contrast, Interviewee D found that nothing replaces the social interaction she received at her office environment.

5.3.5 Conclusion on Empirical Studies and Findings

Although some of our findings had differing answers, one of the most recurring themes found for each section such as employees' experience when working from home is the idea of being disciplined. We found that because employees are working from home, it's easy for them to become lazy, so it's important they follow a routine and schedule to keep themselves motivated to do work. When it comes to performance and motivation when working from home, working with others is most effective and allows them to stay motivated because it gives them a sense of accountability. Employees also value an understanding and flexible management because they don't want to be micromanaged by their managers; they feel that their work should be trusted. Lastly the topic of work-life balance and psychological well-being, the importance of social interaction in relation to the office was an overwhelming response which was not predicted.

Chapter 6. Analysis

The following chapter links the findings from the interviews to the theoretical framework discussed in (Chapter 2).

The authors categorize the following section as the 3rd order themes (Section 3.7: Table 2). This is because these factors are found and analyzed from the findings which is the 2nd order of themes (Section 3.7: Table 2). Based on the interviewees responses, the authors categorized the following subchapters as the most common factors that described the impact of Working from home, Performance and motivation, and Work-life and psychological well-being.

6.1 Discipline

Discipline has been an essential factor to working from home and in regard to performance. Discipline is also related to Douglas McGregor's Theory X. Douglas states, "human beings have an instinctive aversion towards work and are in other words lazy" (Anthony et. al, 2014, pg. 616). Therefore, they must be forced, controlled and governed in order to work. Interviewees A, C, and D all mention the idea of having discipline in the sense that they need to work in an office environment that sort of forces them to work. This relates to Theory X where Douglas states that employees need to be governed in order to work. Specifically, Interviewee C said, "*there are ups and downs of working from home; for example, a sense of laziness, because you're at home. However, a place where you relax, you can also work if you set a routine and workspace, especially be aware of the routine to follow.*" Interviewee D added in her response "*it requires more discipline to be able to finish tasks when nobody is looking and stay focused.*" Both interviewees C and D mention the idea that employees are lazy and that a sense of routine adds discipline and forces employees to work and stay focused. This is in direct correlation to McGregor's Theory X. Based on the findings some employees need to have some sort of discipline that forces them to work and now that they are working from home it is much harder to find.

Discipline that must be acquired by employees stems from a lack of self respect and achievement and this correlates to Douglas McGregor's Theory Y. Theory Y states human beings work towards their own self respect and achievement. However, in this scenario the interviewees find it hard to perform well at times when working from home, due to the lack of supervision which further supports Theory X. However, the interviewees were productive in other matters but the main objective is work in which they found trouble in finding discipline.

6.2 Flexibility

Moreso, to go against Douglas McGregor's Theory X in which he states human beings have an instinctive aversion towards work and are in other words lazy. Therefore, they must be forced, controlled and governed in order to work. Some of the interviewees mention the idea of being more flexible since they are working from home and they can multitask on certain things which allows them to be productive without the need of some authority which Douglas states. For example, Interviewee C says, “ *I'm able to do other things besides work and be able to be there for others like parents and kids.*” Interviewee D explains working from home allows for better flexibility because, as she puts it, “*you can work whenever you want as long and you can get your work done.*” Interviewee E added the idea of “*Flexibility, not someone pressuring you to do work - trust and understanding between the managers and employees.*” Douglas McGregor's Theory X was not present here. Instead, Theory Y is shown due to the interviewees working towards their own achievement without the need for governing. These workers previously worked in the office and were being monitored by some sort of manager however, now as they are being forced to work from home there is nobody monitoring them, but they are still able to complete their tasks and do other things as well.

The idea of a flexible management goes beyond just flexibility for employees in order to complete their work. It is, as interviewee E puts it when describing the most influencing factor for job performance, “*flexibility, not someone pressuring you to do work - trust and*

understanding between the managers and employees.” The idea of flexibility also includes trust and understanding, which supports Ryff’s six-factor model of psychological well-being. The factor of a strong positive relation with others shows that one might have a satisfying and trusting relationship with others (Ryff, 1989), which is in direct correlation with our finding that shows trust and understanding between coworkers. Ultimately,

6.3 Accountability

In regard to Douglas McGregor’s Theory Y in which he states, “humans will work of their own accord in an effort to meet their individual needs for self-respect and achievement” (Miller 2020, pg.1). Interviewees B, D, and E brought up something relating to accountability. For example, Interviewee B says, “*Knowing someone is relying on you helps to motivate you and being able to support someone motivates you.*” Interviewee D mentions, “*To make money and build a career, the motivation, to work towards one’s goals.*” Interviewee E added, “*pair-programming brings a sense of accountability.*” These responses demonstrate Theory Y due to the interviewees showing self-oriented actions and holding themselves to their own standards without the need for external control; this also goes against Theory X as these interviewees show no signs of laziness and are productive without supervision for this matter.

In section 6.1, the idea of discipline is supported by Theory X because the employees show signs of laziness and lack of discipline in terms of job performance. However, in this scenario, the interviewees are rather productive and strive for their own self achievement in terms of holding themselves accountable for their actions and being a reliable co-worker which supports Theory Y. The interviewees hold themselves accountable to their actions and they try to perform the best they can due to coworkers, personal goals, promotions and building a career.

6.4 Comfortability

Working from home allowing employee comfortability is an idea we found from three of our interviews. Comfort is also part of Maslow's theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs that are lower down in the hierarchy must be completed before attending the higher ups. (Maslow, 1943) On the first level of needs is the concept of feeling safe and secure. When one has met their physiological needs, they start looking for security and comfort. As three interviewees mention that working from home allows for more comfortability, it relates to Maslow's theory in the sense that working from home allows employees to be in a more comfortable environment where they're able to have a better work-life balance. The second level is the psychological needs, from the questions pertaining to work life and psychological well-being the interviewees showed a concern for their intimate relationships and esteem needs which Maslow's theory predicted. Next, is the third level called self-actualization where one achieves full potential of their goals, this was ranked in the highest level in Maslow's pyramid however it was not seen in the responses from the interviewees.

6.5 Positive relationship with coworkers

The importance of an employee's relationship with coworkers is essential to a work-life balance, which we learned from three of our interviews as they described their relationships with their coworkers as positive. A positive relationship with others is one of the factors of Ryff's Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being theory, which shows one might have a satisfying and trusting relationship with others, is concerned about others' welfare, is capable of strong empathy, affection, intimacy; and understands the give and take of human relationship (Ryff, 1989). a positive relationship with others -- "others" being coworkers-- allows for a greater psychological well-being for employees. The viewpoint suggests that employees' satisfaction with coworkers plays an important role in work-life balance and

enhances psychological well-being. As interviewees A, B, and E believe that a positive relationship with coworkers impacts work-life balance also felt positively about their jobs from a psychological perspective. This relates to Ryff's theory as the theory states that a positive relationship with others allows for a greater psychological well-being. Moreover, interviewee B mentions that having a positive relationship with coworkers "makes work enjoyable."

On the other hand, the other two interviewees that believe that a positive or negative relationship with their coworkers doesn't necessarily impact work-life balance also didn't feel positive about their jobs from a psychological perspective. This is in direct correlation with Ryff's theory of psychological well-being as interviewee C and D didn't believe that a positive relationship with coworkers positively impacts work-life balance.

6.6 Job role perception

An employee's role perception is detrimental to his/her performance and motivation. The idea of job role perception impacting performance and motivation supports Porter and Lawler's theory on motivation, which defines role perception as the type of effort a person considers necessary to effective job performance. The theory says that if the employee possesses less ability and/or has the wrong role perception, his/her performance will be lower no matter the level of effort (Miner, 2005, pg. 99). As our findings show that some of the interviewees preferred to have the option of working from home as opposed to working from home indefinitely because they feel that their role allows them to perform better when in the office, so that is their perceived role. As Interviewee C added "*working from home all the time is hard at times and I can't work like I used to.*" This supports Porter and Lawler's theory because the employees perceived their role to be performed in the office. Interviewee A specifically mentions that being forced to work from home affecting his motivation. Interviewee B mentions that working from home indefinitely doesn't allow him to work like he used to, which shows the change in his role perception and its effect on performance and motivation on the employees. Likewise, interviewees D and E mentioned

that they were performing well and their jobs made it easy for them to work from home while keeping a stable motivation as well, meaning that their role perception hasn't changed because they felt that they're able to complete their work from home. This ultimately supports the Porter and Lawler theory of motivation.

6.7 Motivation

The essence of having an incentive to motivate employees was established from the interviewees, 4 out of 5 interviewees mentioned having some sort of recognition or reward which motivates them and helps job performance. The Porter and Lawler theory of motivation is based on the assumption that rewards cause satisfaction and that sometimes performance produces reward (Miner, 2005, pg. 98). Based on this theory the interviewees should all want something which motivates them to work which was seen. For example, interviewees A and C mentioned the idea of reward. Specifically, Interviewee A says that *"If you excel in your project, you should get recognized for your work and be promoted or rewarded and compensated properly."* This shows the support for a reward for doing something good, if an employee knows they will get an award they will perform better. Interviewee D mentioned *"A lot of employees in the IT area want to be able to move up the ladder."* Likewise, interviewee E mentioned something similar along the lines. When employees are performing well and they know there is a chance of promotion, they will strive to achieve their best job performance in order to get a promotion which is seen as a reward according to The Porter and Lawler theory. Moreover, The Porter and Lawler theory was accurate based on the interviewees' responses, 4 out of 5 interviewees wanted some sort of reward or recognition based on their achievements which in turn motivates them to perform better (job performance).

Chapter 7. Discussion

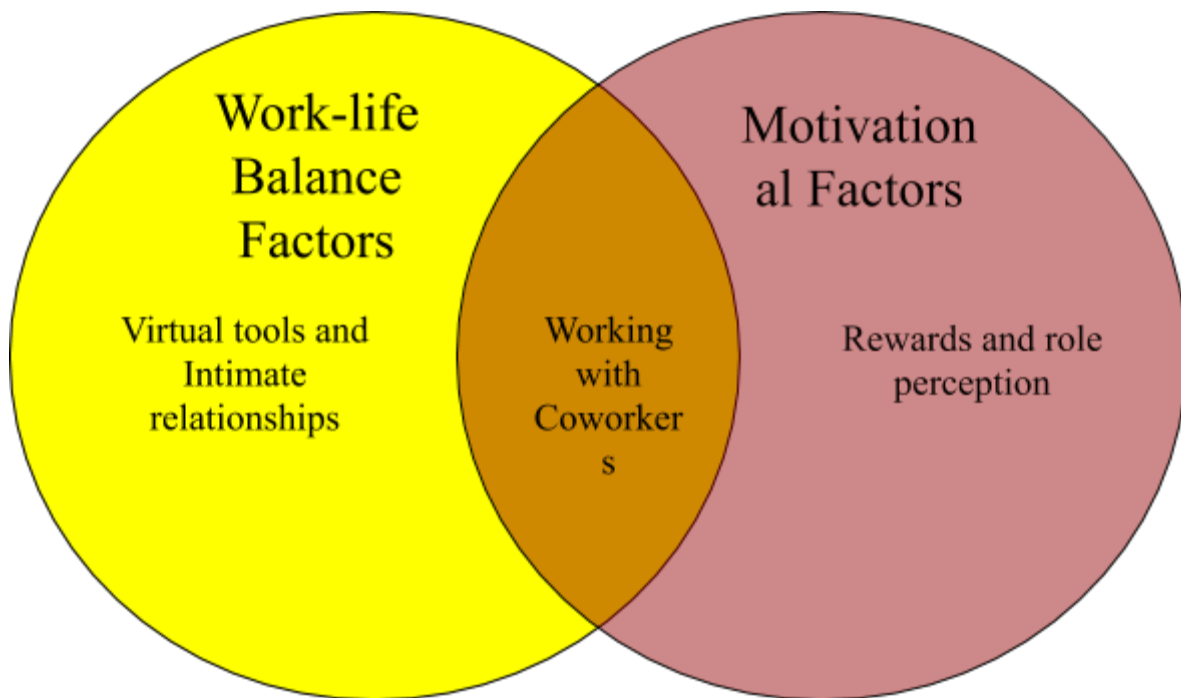
In this section of the paper, the topic of ‘working from homes’ impact on Job Performance in the IT sector will be discussed as well as to interpret and describe the significance of the findings in light of what was already known about the research problem being investigated, and to explain any new understanding or fresh insights about the problem after taken the findings into consideration

In this part of the discussion, the focus is on the research question:

“It is found that employees’ interaction with coworkers provides a better work-life balance, so what factors are replacing the social interactions with coworkers to provide a better work-life balance and to keep employees committed during a pandemic?”

To answer the research question, the factors replacing social interaction to provide work-life balance will first be discussed. Next, it will discuss the overlapping factors that keep employees committed during a pandemic and highlight the relationship between the two. It will then describe the factors that keep employees committed during pandemic that are independent from work-life balance factors.

The following figure provides a visual to better understand the following discussion regarding the distinction between the work-life balance factors and motivational factors while highlighting the overlapping factor. The authors arrive at the understanding of the following figure as the aspect of Working with Co-workers is a factor for both, Work-life balance and Motivational factors; hence, it’s an overlapping factor.



(Fig. 4: Model for Work-life and Motivational Factors)

7.1 Work-life balance factors

7.1.1 Virtual tools, intimate and positive relationships

The findings have shown that employees are compensating their lack of in-person social interactions while spending time with family and using virtual apps such as zoom, skype, or phone calls to maintain their relationships with coworkers to provide a work-life balance. The employees highlighted the idea that just because they're not able to interact with them in-person doesn't mean they don't have a positive relationship with each other. They are still in contact with their coworkers and still have the same conversations over the phone as they would in person. As most employees highlighted that spending time with family as a factor to provide work-life balance, this idea builds a bridge between Maslow's theory (Maslow, 1943) and Ryff's theory (Ryff, 1989). Maslow's model on psychological needs, from the questions pertaining to work-life and psychological well-being the interviewees showed a concern for their intimate relationships and self-esteem needs is also intertwined with Ryff's aspect for positive relationships with others -- that allows for a greater

psychological well-being for employees. The viewpoint suggests that employees' satisfaction with coworkers as well as the intimate relationship both play an important role in work-life balance and enhance psychological well-being.

It is important to highlight that both factors-- a positive relationship with others and intimate relationships-- are independently contributing factors that provide employees with a better work-life balance and psychological well-being. On one hand, a positive relationship with coworkers provides psychological relief at work. On the other hand, intimate relationships provide psychological relief in life outside of work. Due to the fact that employees are working from home during a pandemic, both these factors provide a unique aspect to work-life balance because employees are spending time with family while maintaining their work relationships via virtual tools.

7.2 Working with co-workers

Not only has a strong relationship with coworkers allowed for a better work-life balance when working from home, working with coworkers has also given employees a sense of accountability that motivates them to do work. In accordance to McGregor's theory Y, which assumes that employees seek and accept responsibility, the interviewees also mirrored this same idea of taking initiative towards their responsibilities. For example, interviewee E talks about the concept of "pair-programming" that his company implemented. Pair-programming is when one programmer is paired up with a partner when programming; while one is actively programming, the other is guiding the other programmer. Interviewee E *"says pair-programming brings a sense of accountability"* because he is working with another person. Employees who don't work using the concept of pair-programming still mentioned that they work with others by still having conference calls and other virtual tools. Ultimately, the sense of responsibility that comes from employees' relationships with their coworkers is a factor that keeps them committed and motivated to work when working from home.

It is important to highlight that the relationship between employees and their coworkers not only impacts their psychological well-being and provides a better work-life balance, it has also shown to be a motivating factor for employees who are working from home indefinitely during a pandemic. So, we can conclude that a relationship and working with coworkers is detrimental to an employee because of its underlying factors that it strings along with it.

7.3 Motivational factors

7.3.1 Rewards

From the data collected from the interviews, one of the most identifiable factors for IT employees that was mentioned was some sort of recognition or reward as a factor which motivates them and helps their job performance. This idea of a reward or recognition for their performance was brought up by four of the interviewees, which strengthens the importance of this value for them and is related to the Porter and Lawler theory of motivation as it is based on the assumption that rewards are cause satisfaction and that sometimes performance produces reward (Miner, 2005, pg. 98). Based on this theory and the findings, we can say that the interviewees' desired intrinsic reward is the feeling of accomplishment after being recognized while their extrinsic reward is the promotion they seek. The interviewees' desire of intrinsic reward for the feeling of accomplishment also builds a bridge between McGregor's theory Y as it states that humans will work for their own accord in an effort to meet their individual needs for self-respect and achievement. Moreover, an employee's desire of accomplishment and self-respect is a motivational factor supported by both McGregor's theory Y and Porter and Lawler's theory of motivation. We can say that an employee's own desire of accomplishment and self-respect is the ultimate motivator for IT employees working from home.

7.3.2 Job roles

Our most interesting finding is the idea of job role perception being a motivational factor and consequently, a detrimental factor for job performance. As our findings show that some of the interviewees B and C, whose job roles are network engineer and consultant, preferred to have the option of working from home as opposed to working from home indefinitely because they feel that their job role allows them to perform better when in the office. On the other hand, interviewees D and E, whose job roles are associate program manager and software engineer, believed that they were performing well and their jobs made it easy for them to work from home while keeping a stable motivation as well, because they felt that they're able to complete their work from home. We can see the difference in role perception from both of the sides. On one side, employees feel that they're not able to perform as well at home due to their perceived role. On the other side, the other employees feel that they're able to perform their job well due to their own perceived role. This supports Porter and Lawler's theory, which says that if the employee possesses less ability and/or has the wrong role perception, his/her performance will be lower no matter the level of effort (Miner, 2005, pg. 99). So, we can conclude that the idea of role perception and its impact on motivation and job performance is very subjective to the individual. If the employee feels that he/she is able to work from home indefinitely without it impacting his/her performance, then the employee will be able to work from home indefinitely. If the employee believes he/she needs to work in the office to be more effective, then working in the office is what is necessary for that specific individual.

7.4 Impact of COVID-19 on IT employees

7.4.1 Impact on Psychological well-being

This section of the paper will address the following question, "*what impact has working from home during COVID-19 had on IT employees' psychological well-being?*"

Based on the interviewees, it is found that in general COVID-19 has impacted employees psychological well-being due to them working from home. Interviewees A, B and C explained how their job can be mentally draining at times and how they could be overworked. However, due to COVID-19 these employees are now working from home which allows for them to take breaks when needed and do other tasks while completing the job. Employees are now spending more time with families and they are trying to maintain their co-worker relationships, as said previously a strong co-worker relationship not only is beneficial for a better work-life balance it also helps employee's psychological well-being. Interviewees A, B and E elaborated on having a strong relationship with coworkers. Examples such as making work more enjoyable, having the motivation to come to work and establishing the connection so when you are in need, they can cover for you. Although these employees are now working from home, they still found ways such as virtual tools to stay connected and keep the relationship going. Overall, it may be said that employees value their co-worker relationships and it helps their psychological well-being. If another pandemic or instance where employees are forced to work from home were to occur, some of the focus should be on their psychological well-being. The interviewees found their jobs to be mentally draining as they can be overworked and since they are indefinitely working from home it does not mean they are constantly working, they have other tasks to attend to and spending time with family and maintaining relationships has shown to be a priority.

7.4.2 Impact on Job Performance

The focus on this section of the paper is to address the question, *“how has working from home during the COVID-19 impacted job performance?”*

Not only has working from home impacted employee's psychological well-being it has also impacted job performance as well. The employees interviewed are all working from home and some of them have previously never worked from home before. This proved to be beneficial to some interviewees due their discipline and being able to focus on their job without the need for supervision. Others such as interviewee C and D found it hard, as they

can get off track sometimes because there's a sense of laziness when working from home enforcing Douglas McGregor's Theory X in the sense that they are lazy. However, interviewee C and D both mentioned flexibility while working from home and even though this has impacted their job performance, they have been productive in other areas of life such as working out, errands and family. In one aspect this supported Douglas McGregor's Theory Y in the sense that they are working towards their own self-achievement while acknowledging the "self-governing" discipline required to work that can impact their job performance.

In a different set of questions pertaining to performance in the office vs at home, interviewees B, C and D felt that they are not performing well at home vs the office. There are numerous factors that go into this which also relate to the work life and psychological well-being of an employee. Factors such as distractions at home as nobody is watching them, they feel like they can get away with anything (interviewee B). The office structure is more suitable for a working environment vs working at home (interviewee C). Co-worker relationships and working with different people in the office is more productive vs working at home using virtual tools (interviewee D).

Nevertheless, job performance depends on the person, if he or she is disciplined and can be productive working from home while not being supervised and not being affected by other distractions then they're job performance will not be impacted negatively. However, it can also be said that some employees may have a positive impact on their job performance due to the flexibility and freedom which allows them to work at their own pace and be productive; ultimately, job performance is subjective to the individual.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This section aims to wrap up the thesis and answer any possible further questions about the topic.

8.1 Summary

After all is said and done it can be concluded that job performance is subjective to each individual based on our study. All of the theories were exemplified in our study which brought up some interesting findings. One being McGregor's Theory X (Anthony et. al, 2014) and Theory Y (Miller, S. 2020) which showed the subjectiveness of the IT sector employees in relation to our study of “Working from Home in The IT Sector.” For example, some interviewees seemed to be more disciplined than others and could work without the need for supervision and they strived for their own self achievement. Others talked of how there are possibilities of laziness and less chance of getting “caught” slacking off due to lack of supervision. Thus, being a perfect case for both Theory X and Y. Also, Maslow’s theory (Maslow, 1943) and The Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being theory (Ryff, 1989) were also exemplified. Interviewees showed that they valued co-worker relationships and found it vital to their work life and psychological well-being, interviewees want to feel safe/secure and have a positive relationship with co-workers which is the “safety-needs” level of Maslow’s pyramid and “positive relation with others” is one of the Six-factor Model of Psychological well-being. From the findings we can also see the similarities with the Porter and Lawler Theory on Motivation, especially in terms of incentive (Miner, 2005, pg. 98). The interviewees talked about working towards an incentive such as rewards, they want to feel recognized when they are performing well at work. Factors such as promotion, salary and vacations are all incentives to motivate employees to perform well which is also proclaimed in Porter and Lawler’s Theory on Motivation. This research intended to add knowledge to academia regarding the themes such as working from home, performance and motivation, work-life balance and

psychological wellbeing and how the factors of those themes affect job performance in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors found commonalities from the interviewee responses and discovered factors that show how the themes of working from home, performance and motivation, work-life balance and psychological wellbeing are intertwined and its effect on job performance on IT sector employees working from home during COVID-19 (Chapter 7).

8.2 Limitations

This study examined the impact of working from home in the IT sector which also allows future researchers to do a similar study based on our framework. Due to COVID-19 and lack of time there could have been more data retrieved and a broader scope. There should be more research done on this topic, as the authors believe working from home will be a norm in the upcoming future. There are predictions of a “second-wave” for COVID-19 coming soon and more people may be forced to work from home. Also, the IT sector is constantly evolving. There will be new problems in the future that may arise and people's wants and needs change.

8.3 Implications

The purpose of this thesis was to find out what influences job performance for IT sector employees in the US that are required to work from home during COVID-19. Ultimately, it came down to subjectivity as everyone is different however there were major commonalities which can be used to make a generalization amongst all of IT sector employees in the US. The major categorial influences of job performance are *working from home, work-life balance, psychological well-being, and performance and motivation*. Each of these categories went into depth on certain factors that showed the impact of working from home on job performance in the IT Sector.

There were some exclusive findings in working from home, work-life balance, psychological well-being and performance and motivation. In working from home, discipline was the most common theme. The ability to set a routine and stick to it is crucial for IT sector employees and impacts job performance while working from home. Next, in work-life balance, the way employees perceive their jobs impacts their work-life balance the most, if an employee feels he or she can work well at home they will perform well however if they don't feel they can work well they perform poorly. Continuing, in psychological well-being co-worker relationships are vital to an employee. It was found that employees must use virtual tools to stay in contact with co-workers because it is important to have a connection with co-workers so everybody can look out for each other and maintain relationships to improve psychological well-being. Lastly, in performance and motivation the idea of reward is really important. When employees are recognized or promoted for their work, they perform better; there needs to be an incentive for employees to perform better.

8.4 Recommendations

If another pandemic such as COVID-19 were to happen, or a situation where IT sector employees are forced to work from home again. IT sector employers should keep in mind that employees are subjective in their wants and needs; however, employers should address the basic needs of employees such as:

- Providing a support system where employees chat with co-workers and answer questions.
- Online virtual workshops that help build mental skills which support the psychological wellbeing of employees
- Providing incentives to motivate employees while encouraging job performance
- Adding value to them and making sure that they are not stressed or overworked
- Making sure that employees can work from home efficiently and effectively

8.5 Further Research

The topic of “working from home's impact on the IT sector” has not been discussed in the US. This qualitative study can be used by employers to see unspoken wants and needs IT sector employees generally have. In light of this, future researchers can expand on this study by delving into a larger audience and seeing if the results of this study apply to a larger population rather than a sample. Other countries may show different results than the US. For example, there can be studies done on “working from home’s impact on the IT sector” in Sweden. Overall, this study can be conducted in many ways, researchers can change the factors used in this study and replace it with theirs or there can be different theories used to support underlying responses that were not seen in this study.

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Appendix

Interview Questions:

We engage to:

- use the interview data only for study purposes.
- keep your anonymity, meaning we will not disclose your name and your company name.
- not use your personal information that can revile your identity in public.
- delete your personal information: email, telephone, skype contact in May after we will complete our thesis.
- You can ask to delete the interview if you wish so. After the interview you can modify and delete the whole or part of the interview, if you want to.

Requirements for interviewee:

- IT Industry
- Working from home

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- Name
- What company do you work for?
- What is your job position?
- How long have you been working for your current company?
- How long have you been working in your current position?
- How long have you been working from home?

CORE QUESTIONS

Working from home (general)

- Have you been working from home prior to COVID-19?
- Why do you think companies allow employees to work from home?
- How do you feel about working from home?
- What do you think are the benefits of working from home?
- Do you think working from home gives you a better work-life balance?

Performance and motivation

During our research for this topic, we found a study that studied a company that gave its employees the option of working four days from home and the fifth in the office because another study showed that employees working from home had better performance on their job. However, after 9 months, half of the employees requested to return to the office because they started to feel lonely and isolated. Ultimately, the study showed that working in the office with coworkers creates a better work-life balance.

- What type of incentives do IT employees generally look for and why?
- What are the most important incentives influencing job performance and employee satisfaction in IT employees?
- To what extent do managers meet the incentives IT employees are looking for?
- What kinds of incentives play an impact on the employee's performance?
- How much does employee performance depend on the support they are receiving from their IT department?
- Do you feel that you perform your job at home just as well as you work in the office?

- why or why not?
- According to Theory X human beings are lazy and must be forced or governed to work. As you are working from home, you don't have someone forcing you to work, so how do you find the motivation to work at home as you would at the office?

Work-life and psychological well-being

Another study showed that employees' satisfaction with coworkers allows them to obtain feelings of empathy, respect, and trust, which lead towards greater psychological well-being. Also, greater satisfaction with coworkers increases employee job performance by strengthening the effect of work-life balance on psychological well being.

- How do you feel about your job from a psychological perspective and why?
- How is your relationship with your coworkers?
 - Do you feel that a strong or weak relationship with coworkers impacts your work-life balance And Why?
- How does a better work-life balance impact job performance?
- Since you are working by yourself and have limited social interaction working from home, what factors do you find replacing the social interaction that gives you a work-life balance?

General

- If you were to give advice about staying focused/motivated during work from home, what would it be?
- Would you like to add anything else to this interview?

