

Working from Home and Resilience among Working Parents During Covid-19

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Abstract

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, working from home (WFH) was introduced wherever it was possible around the world. For working parents (employees with at least one dependent child), it was not simply WFH, but it also included challenges related to a new way of learning from home for their children. The pandemic changed the way people worked in organisations; we've all had to adjust our daily routines to cope with it and we are still learning how to do so. The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of working parents and examine the factors that contributed to their resilience while working from home during New Zealand's first lockdown in March–April 2020. Ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with working parents (having at least one school-aged child) drawn from sectors such as banking, education and professional services in the Wellington region. Data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Study results highlight that WFH was effective in enabling business continuity facilitated by virtual tools. However, participants reported high levels of stress as a result of uncertainty due to the pandemic and balancing work–family life, which had a negative impact on their performance and productivity. The key implication for organisations is to be mindful of the unique needs and challenges that working parents face when working from home. They need to nurture a culture of empathy while providing the right work set-up, including the use of virtual tools to connect and collaborate for WFH effectiveness. The study provides insight into the experiences of working parents and possible factors that contribute to resilience during a pandemic.

Keywords: Working parents, working from home, resilience, Covid-19, pandemic

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