

How working from home under COVID-19 affects the work-life interface

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Background & Purpose

Due to the influence of COVID-19 pandemic, the number of home workers is increasing worldwide. In Japan, because the work style of working from home was not common, most Japanese workers had to face the rapid transitions of the relationships between work and their private life.

This study is an exploratory study to investigate how working from home under COVID-19 affects the work-life interface among Japanese workers.

Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for 56 Japanese workers in June to July 2020 and 870 items were extracted. Five experts in psychology categorized these items into 78 categories. Details of the study participants are shown in Table 1.

- Participants' eligibility criteria
 - 1) Full-time employee working in the organization
 - 2) Employee who worked from home for the first time after January 2020.
- Participants' exclusion criteria
 - 1) Employer or freelance
 - 2) Employees who had an experience working from home before January 2020
 - 3) Part-time workers

Table 1. Characteristics of the study participants

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Women	29	51.8
Men	26	46.4
Age-years		
20-29	4	7.1
30-39	23	41.1
40-49	12	21.4
50-59	17	30.4
Industry		
Construction	1	1.8
Manufacture	11	19.6
Electricity, gas, heat supply or water	1	1.8
Information and technology	4	7.1
Transport or post	3	5.4
Wholesale	1	1.8
Real estate	2	3.6
Academic research or professional/technical service	5	8.9
Education or learning support	10	17.9
Medical or welfare	1	1.8
Service	10	17.9
Public	2	3.6
Others	5	8.9
Occupation		
Manager	14	25.0
Professional	18	32.1
Clerk	16	28.6
Sales	2	3.6
Service	3	5.4
Others	3	5.4
Married		
Yes	26	46.4
No	30	53.6
Having child(ren)		
Yes	36	64.3
No	20	35.7

Results

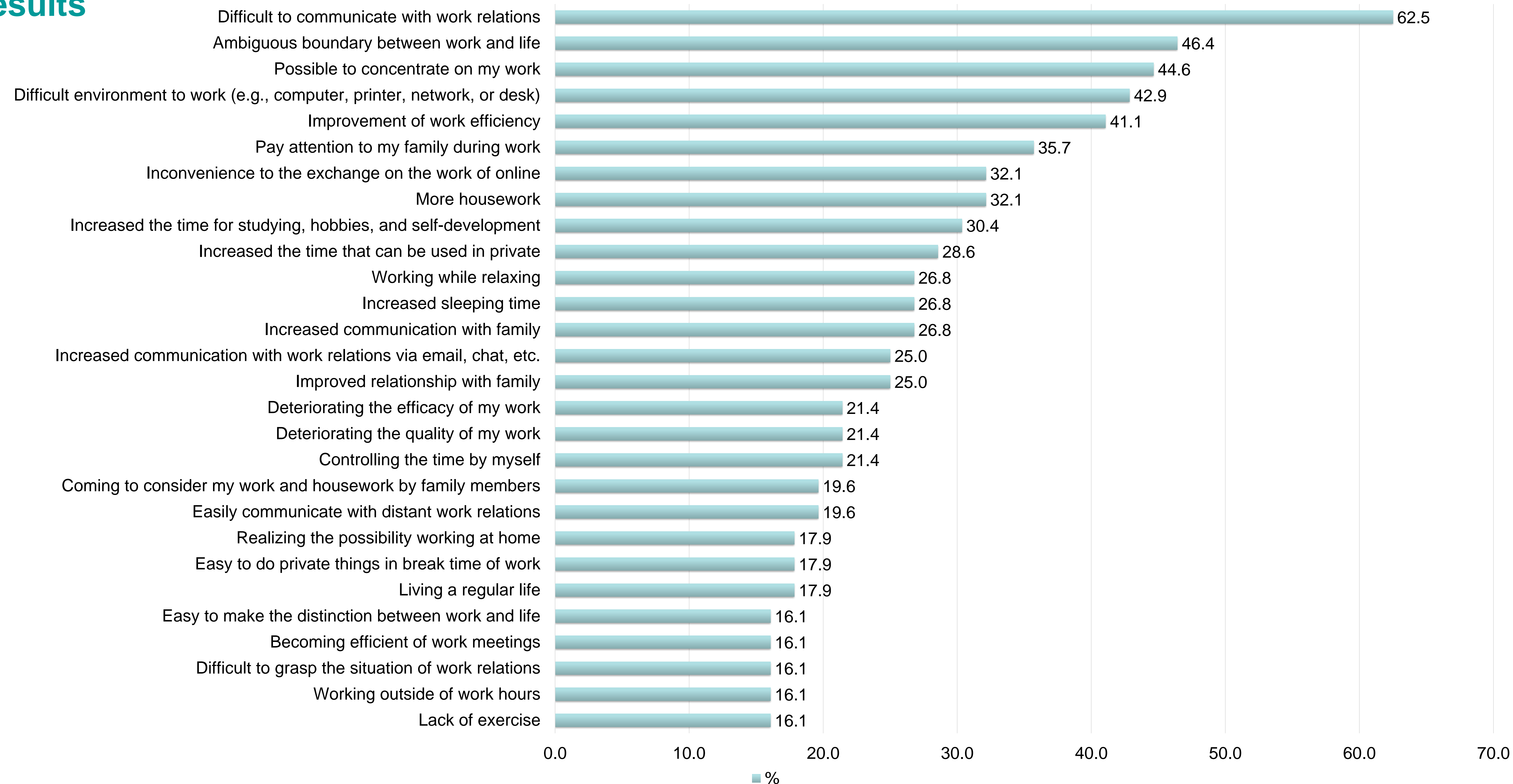


Figure 1. Experiences caused by working from home

Conclusion

The start of work from home due to the impact of COVID-19 may have negative effects on employees, such as difficulty in communicating with work relations or blurring the boundary between work and private life. However, working from home was also found to have positive effects on employees, such as concentrating on work or improving work efficiency. Because study sample in this study is limited, further study is needed to clarify how working from home under COVID-19 affects the work-life interface for Japanese workers.

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