

Teleworking's Impact on Domestic Life: A Survey in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of teleworking, reshaping the relationship between paid work and domestic life.

Objective: This study examined the impact of teleworking on home activities and work–family interference among adult teleworkers in Brazil.

Methods: The cross-sectional survey included 184 teleworkers; 59.8% were women, 47.8% were aged 30–50 years, and 27.7% reported living with dependents. The questionnaire collected demographic information and included two self-reported indicators of work-to-family interference: difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities because of work demands and the need to modify family routines to meet professional duties. Descriptive statistics were calculated, and chi-square tests of independence were used to examine associations between demographic variables and both outcomes. Effect sizes were estimated using Cramér's V.

Results: Age group was significantly associated with both indicators of work–family interference, including difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities ($\chi^2 = 24.35$, $p = 0.0004$, $V = 0.26$) and the need to change family routines to meet work demands ($\chi^2 = 21.48$, $p = 0.0015$, $V = 0.24$). No statistically significant associations were found for sex or the presence of dependents in the household. These findings suggest that teleworking may affect domestic life differently across age groups, particularly during periods of greater professional and family demands. Because the study was based on a cross-sectional convenience sample and self-reported items, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

Conclusion: The results indicate that teleworking can contribute to work–family interference and changes in home routines, highlighting the need for strategies that better support the balance between work and domestic responsibilities.

Keywords: Telework, Occupational health, Sex, Remote work

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of teleworking, accelerated by digital transformation and global health crises, has redefined traditional boundaries between work and home. In a study it was found that telework has been associated with increased autonomy, control and flexibility (Hall et al., 2024). However, it has also blurred spatial and temporal boundaries between professional and

domestic roles. In the integrative review study of Santos et al. (2021) the studies revealed difficulties in balancing family and professional demands.

Findings of another study suggest that family situation, being a provider or taking care of a child or elderly may be important considering the relationship between teleworking from home and health (Lunde et al., 2022). Both work-life and life-work conflicts produce different spillovers and significantly contribute to burnout (Sobral et al., 2025). According to Graham et al. (2021) family-work conflict increased substantially specially when children were present in the home, and in their findings, increases in work-family conflict were associated with working full time and working in a location with interruptions, and this was decreased by increasing satisfaction with the division of household tasks. Work-family conflict (WFC) occurs when demands from one domain interfere with responsibilities in another. This conflict may be bidirectional:

- **Work-to-family conflict (W→F):** professional demands interfere with family life.
- **Family-to-work conflict (F→W):** family responsibilities impair work performance.

The context of telework at home is associated with blurring of work and nonwork boundaries, affecting work-life balance and well-being (Peristera et al., 2025). Emerging research suggests that women and caregivers may disproportionately experience the domestic burdens associated with remote work. However, empirical evidence from Latin America, particularly Brazil, remains limited.

Brazil presents a particularly relevant case study due to its persistent gender inequalities in unpaid domestic labour (Pinheiro et al., 2023), which may intensify the domestic implications of telework. In addition, the country's significant socioeconomic heterogeneity creates diverse household contexts that can shape how remote work is experienced across different groups. Furthermore, Brazil experienced a rapid expansion of telework during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, making it an important setting for examining how this work arrangement intersects with family dynamics and social inequalities.

Working from home may be more challenging for woman, since females tend to be more responsible for home activities and household chores. For Graham et al. (2023) understanding the impacts of working from home on health, pain, stress, and how it is influenced by gender and parental responsibilities is essential for organizations and managers to support employee's health and wellbeing.

This study aims to examine the domestic impact of telework among Brazilian workers, focusing on perceived work-family conflict across age, sex, and caregiving status.

METHODS

Study Design and Participants

This cross-sectional study analysed survey responses from 184 Brazilian teleworkers. Participants were recruited through online dissemination and included individuals engaged in remote work at least part-time.

Data Collection Instrument

The structured questionnaire collected information on demographic characteristics, including age, sex, and the presence of dependents in the household. It also included teleworking routine items and two self-reported indicators of perceived work–family interference: (1) “My work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities” and (2) “To fulfil my work duties, I need to modify family routines.” In the present study, these items were analysed as indicators of work-to-family interference rather than as a full validated multi-item work–family conflict scale. Responses were grouped into categories for descriptive and inferential analyses.

Data Processing and Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated as frequencies and percentages. Chi-square tests of independence were used to examine associations between demographic variables (age group, sex, and presence of dependents in the household) and the work–family interference indicators. For statistically significant associations, effect size was estimated using Cramér’s V. Because the analyses were bivariate and based on a cross-sectional convenience sample, the findings should be interpreted as associative rather than causal, and possible confounding between demographic characteristics cannot be ruled out.

Data were cleaned and coded using Python (Pandas library). Visualization and exploratory analysis were conducted using Seaborn. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were calculated for demographic variables and conflict indicators. Statistical significance was established at a threshold of $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

A total of 184 teleworkers were included in the analysis. As shown in Table 1, most participants were women (59.8%), 47.8% were aged 30–50 years, and 27.7% reported having dependents in the household. Regarding work–family interference, 13.6% agreed that the time spent working made it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities, and 17.4% agreed that work required changes in family routines.

The sample reflects a predominantly mid-career workforce, with a substantial proportion balancing telework and caregiving responsibilities.

Respondents (13.6%) agreed that work made it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities, and 51.1% said sometimes this is an issue. They also reported that meeting work demands required changes in family routines.

Table 1: Sample characteristics and distribution of work–family interference indicators among teleworkers (n = 184).

Variable	Category	n	%
Age Group	Up to 30 years	58	31.5
	30–50 years	88	47.8
	Over 50 years	38	20.7

(Continued)

Table 1: Continued.

Variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Female	110	59.8
	Male	71	38.6
	Prefer not to say	3	1.6
Dependents in Household	Yes	51	27.7
	No	133	72.3
Work-Family Conflict Indicators			
Work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities	Agree	25	13.6
	Disagree	48	26.1
	Sometimes	94	51.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	9.2
Work requires changes in family routines (Agree)	Agree	32	17.4
	Disagree	40	21.7
	Sometimes	94	51.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	9.8

Teleworkers experience meaningful domestic interference related to professional obligations. Participants aged 30–50 years were significantly more likely to report adjusting family activities to meet work demands ($\chi^2 = 21.48$, $p = 0.0015$). This age group often represents individuals in peak career development stages, frequently combined with active caregiving responsibilities.

Women reported higher levels of perceived work-family conflict than men; however, the difference was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Despite the lack of statistical significance, the observed trend aligns with the broader literature on the gendered distribution of domestic labour. Respondents living with dependents exhibited a greater tendency toward work-family interference. However, this association was not significant. Table 2 presents the chi-square analyses examining the associations between age group, sex, and the presence of dependents and the two work-family interference indicators.

Table 2: Associations between demographic variables and work-family interference indicators among teleworkers ($n = 184$).

Comparison	Outcome	χ^2	p-value	Cramér's V	Interpretation
Age group	Work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities	24.35	0.0004	0.26	Significant association
	Work requires changes in family routines	21.48	0.0015	0.24	Significant association

(Continued)

Table 2: Continued.

Comparison	Outcome	χ^2	p-value	Cramér's V	Interpretation
Sex	Work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities	2.91	0.8205	0.09	Not significant
	Work requires changes in family routines	9.61	0.1420	0.16	Not significant
Dependents in household	Work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities	3.30	0.3482	0.13	Not significant
	Work requires changes in family routines	3.59	0.3095	0.14	Not significant

Note: $n = 184$. Chi-square tests of independence were used.

Age group was significantly associated with both difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities ($\chi^2 = 24.35, p = 0.00045, V = 0.26$) and the need to change family routines to meet work demands ($\chi^2 = 21.48, p = 0.0015, V = 0.24$). No statistically significant associations were found for sex or the presence of dependents in the household.

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the growing body of research examining the social and domestic implications of telework.

The finding that workers aged 30–50 years experienced significantly greater adjustments to family routines suggests that life stage plays a critical role in telework-related domestic strain. Similar patterns of domestic strain and blurred work–life boundaries have been reported in other telework studies, although not exclusively among workers aged 30–50 years (Zhang et al., 2020). Individuals in this age group may often simultaneously advancing professionally and managing childcare or eldercare responsibilities. The family life stage (e.g. having children) influences telework experience and the negotiation of work-family boundaries (Rofcanin et al., 2026).

Although differences by sex and caregiving status were not statistically significant, the observed patterns are noteworthy. The higher reported conflict among women reflects persistent gender inequalities in unpaid domestic labour in Brazil. Many studies reported gender inequalities in teleworking from home environment (Yves et al., 2026; Peristera et al., 2025; Hermann et al., 2024; Graham et al., 2021). Telework may not eliminate these inequalities; instead, it may relocate and intensify them within the home.

The lack of statistical significance in some subgroup analyses may be due to sample size limitations rather than the absence of an effect. Larger studies may detect more robust associations. Importantly, telework appears to be neither uniformly beneficial nor uniformly harmful. Instead, its impact depends on household composition, caregiving demands, and career stage.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings underscore the need to develop gender-sensitive telework policies that recognize persistent inequalities in domestic labor distribution.

They also highlight the importance of implementing flexible scheduling frameworks that allow workers to better manage competing professional and household demands. Furthermore, employers should acknowledge the additional burdens of caregiving and promote institutional support mechanisms that facilitate effective boundary management between work and family life.

Organizations should avoid assuming that telework automatically enhances work-life balance. Instead, tailored policies acknowledging diverse domestic contexts are essential.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, its cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, as data were collected at a single point in time. Second, the use of self-reported measures may have introduced response bias, including social desirability or recall bias. Third, the reliance on convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population of Brazilian teleworkers. Finally, the sample size may have reduced the statistical power of subgroup analyses, potentially limiting the detection of significant associations in certain comparisons.

An additional limitation is that work–family interference was assessed using selected self-reported items rather than a full validated multi-item scale, which may have reduced measurement precision.

Future research should include longitudinal designs and multivariate modelling approaches.

CONCLUSION

Telework reshapes domestic life in complex and uneven ways. A notable proportion of teleworkers reported work-to-family interference, particularly the need to modify family routines to meet work demands. Workers aged 30–50 years were particularly affected, suggesting that life stage is a key determinant of domestic strain in remote work contexts.

While gender and caregiving status showed non-significant trends toward greater conflict, these patterns highlight the continued relevance of domestic inequality in teleworking arrangements. Equitable telework policies must account for diverse household realities to prevent the reinforcement of existing social disparities.

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