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Review

Influence of Remote Work on the Work Stress of Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: The objective of this study was to explore the research carried out and the existing scientific information on remote work and its influence on the work stress of workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The specific objectives were as follows: to determine the factors of remote work that influence the work stress of workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and to analyze the findings obtained in the study (which was achieved by referring to the influence of remote work and the labor stress of the workers in the same context). The research was of a documentary type with a bibliographic design, and was conducted as a systematic review. The articles indexed in the Scopus database were reviewed through the use of the following descriptors and search limits: remote work, work stress, pandemic, as well as those studies published between 1 January 2020 and 27 February 2023. Through this process, 280 publications were obtained. The following inclusion criteria were applied: original articles that addressed the subject in English and/or Spanish, and which were open access. This left a sample of 17 publications, and these are presented via a PRISMA diagram. The main factors of remote work that influenced work stress were the organizational climate, job satisfaction, family–work conflict, social isolation, the use of digital platforms, work autonomy, and changes in the workplace.

Keywords: remote work; work stress; pandemic; factors; findings; COVID-19

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1. Introduction

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the COVID-19 epidemic had become a public health emergency of global concern. Subsequently, on 11 March 2020, the WHO declared this virus a pandemic, and this decision was made due to the high levels of spread and severity [1].

Certainly, the COVID-19 virus affected people's daily lives and slowed down economies globally. The pandemic affected the lives of millions of people who fell ill or died from the virus. Many countries restricted the transit of their populations through a strict quarantine, which was applied to control the spread of this disease as there was a high level of transmission [2].

Similarly, Pak et al. [3] pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic constituted a public health crisis that had a profound impact on the global economy and the financial market. The significant decreases in income; the increase in unemployment; and the paralysis of transport, services, and manufacturing were some of the effects that were incurred from the measures adopted by countries to control the disease [4].

Consequently, various organizations and institutions worldwide established a position on the effects caused by the pandemic and its possible solutions. Among these institutions, the International Labor Organization (ILO) [5] made a global call for actions for a recovery be taken that focused on people in an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient way. In the previous case, the increase in unemployment, underemployment, inactivity, and loss of income for workers and companies was considered, as well as the closure of companies (especially small- and medium-sized companies).

In this sense, the public health considerations implemented by the pandemic forced countries to use remote work models and to minimize economic activity or often suspend it temporarily in many sectors [6]. In addition, there was an impact on labor markets in terms of the ability of countries to adjust to new forms of work, including remote work as a possibility for many workers, but not all countries were able to implement them due to the absence of the required technological infrastructure [7].

It is important to note that prior to the pandemic, only a fraction of the workforce occasionally worked from home. In the European Union, the implementation of remote work varied from 30% or more in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden. By contrast, only 10% of the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, and Poland embraced remote work. In the case of the United States, only 20% frequently worked from home or on another alternative site; in Japan, 16%, and in Argentina, only 1.6% [8].

According to Satpathy et al. [9], as a result of the pandemic, information and communication technologies (ICT) were extensively adopted, thus becoming the new normal in the context of working from home. Therefore, the relationship between remote work and psychological stress began to be evaluated as a consequence of the crisis, and this was characterized by uncertainty in all aspects of life.

On the other hand, Shimura et al. [10], in their study on remote work and the responses to physical and psychological stress in office workers, evaluated its effects on the generation of stress and the presenteeism of workers. In this framework, they considered factors such as social support, sleep disturbance, sleep time on weekdays, and work productivity.

Vergine et al. [11] developed a study on the stress experienced by teachers in the face of the necessary adoption of technologies and information systems in remote teaching during the COVID-19 health crisis. Within this framework, they used technologies that undermined their expected performance due to the little preparation they had to train and to be able to perform adequately as a teacher remotely; this may have generated stress for them.

Similarly, Raveh et al. [12] developed a study on the measurement and characterization of the sense of competence and the feeling of stress in university education professors under the context of remote teaching during the pandemic. Stress experiences caused by frustration and work overload, lack of rewards, imbalance between work and family life, and challenges in managing technology in remote teaching were considered.

Likewise, Gomez et al. [13], in their study on the implications of COVID-19 in the work environment of remote workers, analyzed aspects concerning the human and organizational behavior of those involved. Among the findings, the impact of the pandemic and remote work on the generation of stress in workers was highlighted in addition to other factors such as the physical work environment, the conditions of the place, and open spaces for the implementation of this modality of work.

Starting from these previous assumptions, the execution of the present study was proposed with the objective of analyzing the effects and consequences of remote work that were incurred by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the generation of work stress and the effect on health workers' mentality. In addition, unlike other studies, this research seeks to analyze, in depth, the factors of remote work that cause work stress in various work contexts.

On the other hand, this study seeks to systematize the most relevant findings obtained in the area in order to propose recommendations that allow for the management of this modality of work during future crises. In this sense, the development of this study will answer the following questions:

Q. What will be the existing scientific information about the influence of remote work on the work stress of workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Q1. What are the factors of remote work that influence the work stress of workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Q2. What are the findings obtained in the study of the influence of remote work on the work stress of workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Likewise, as part of the development of the study and in order to answer these questions, the study included the development of the literature review, the theoretical framework, the materials and methods, the results, a discussion, and conclusions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Origin of Remote Work

In general, the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the expansion of remote work, where workers left their usual places of work to work from home [14]. However, remote work is not a new model since its origin is attributed to NASA scientist Jack Niles in 1973 [15].

Niles designed NASA's communication systems in the aftermath of the Apollo 11 moon landing, and in the midst of an oil crisis that resulted in a lack of fuel for vehicles. To this end, he joined the University of Southern California in its attempt to replace transportation with telecommunications, developing the concept of remote work [16]. In other words, remote work arose in the context of the productive restoration that was generated in the seventies with the incorporation of technologies as a mediating element of innovation [17].

2.2. Concept of Remote Work

Remote work consists of the use of ICTs, such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, and digital tools, to perform work outside of the employer's premises [8]. In the opinion of the ILO [18], remote work must happen through a voluntary agreement between the employer and the worker. This agreement must contemplate the workplace, work hours, communication tools, tasks to be performed, supervision methods, and the methodology for presenting results.

Remote work allows workers greater flexibility and freedom to work outside of the employer's assigned job site. However, it can also pose risks that need to be considered, such as isolation (particularly in people who live alone) and a lack of interaction with co-workers [18].

According to Sullivan [19], remote work is defined as work that is performed remotely and away from the centralized workplace, and is achieved using ICT to connect the employee with the employer. From a legal point of view, Buira [20] defines it as a form of labor organization for the performance of paid tasks, using ICTs as support to maintain the connection between the worker and the company without requiring the physical presence of the worker at a specific work site.

In this regard, when remote work became temporarily necessary for workers as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, it had to be implemented without significant previous experience or without an understanding of its definition and complexities [21].

2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Remote Work

According to Benavides et al. [22], remote work has become a model that in normal or emergency circumstances brings modernity to companies. This model allows workers to carry out their work from their home or place of preference; however, this generates positive and negative opinions, which must be analyzed [23].

It is estimated that if the remote work modality were designed effectively, the advantages would be greater; although the disadvantages would not disappear, they would be overshadowed by the effectiveness of the model [24].

In general, Ferreira et al. [25] pointed out that remote work represents a valid option for companies that seek to improve the flexibility of their work environment and the mobility of their workers. On the other hand, Blumberga and Pylinskaya [26] stated that remote work allows workers to schedule their workday, as well as to alternate work and family tasks, which can benefit their motivation and productivity.

The set of advantages and disadvantages of remote work are very broad. In this sense, Velázquez [27] describes those that are associated with workers, employers, and organizations, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The advantages and disadvantages of remote work.

Advantages		Disadvantages	
Workers	**Employers and Organization**	**Workers**	**Employers and Organization**
Virtual promotion	Increased productivity of workers	Inadequate workspaces	Limited communication between workers within the organization
Balance between private and work life	Reduction in expenses in facilities (electricity, water, telephone, internet, etc.)	Lack of communication Invisibility in the organization	Unclear processes
Flexible schedules	Improvements in personnel selection	Overtime work	Lack of compensation and benefits
Reduction in transfer costs	Retention of trained personnel	Expenses previously assumed by employer	Lack of work coordination
Reduction in clothing costs to work	Decentralized processes	Conflicts between work and personal life	Lack of commitment from workers
Increased productivity	Improvements to organizational culture	Career development	Organizational culture changes
Time saving	Commitment to the organization	Limitation of promotions	Job performance measurement
Autonomy	Decrease in absenteeism and turnover	Isolation Unrealistic expectations for performance	Lack of effective management and leadership of workers
Work satisfaction		Psychological impacts (stress, anxiety, depression, etc.)	Worse organizational information security
Saving and improvement of food			Lack of technical support

Source: Velázquez [27].

Similarly, Ruiz et al. [28] pointed out that remote work brings innovative and more flexible practices, as well as promotes organizational changes and strengthens the training and employability of people. In addition, it contributes to a reduction in pollution since it minimizes the use of transportation. However, it can also cause inconveniences related to information protection, continuous schedules, computer fatigue, social isolation, loss of corporate identity and stress, among others.

2.4. Factors That Affect Remote Work

In the opinion of Baruch and Nicholson [29], there are four fundamental factors that influence remote work: the individual, work, organizational, and domestic. In addition, with the support of technology, remote work has become widespread through the use of computers, smartphones, and the Internet, which allow for working without the physical presence of the worker in the organization.

On the other hand, Raghuram et al. [30] and van Zoonen et al. [31] stated that remote work is influenced by structural, relational, contextual, and moderating factors. The structural factors correspond to the aspects that can facilitate or hinder the possibilities of working remotely, such as labor independence and the clarity of labor criteria. The relational ones are the social interactions and forms of collaboration within the company, such as social isolation. Among the contextual factors are the change in workplace and the interruption of work routines. The moderating ones refer to the quality of organizational communication and the use of ICTs.

According to Pasquel et al. [32], the factors that influence remote work are as follows (as shown in Table 2): flexibility, autonomy, productivity, technology, and psychosocial risks.

Table 2. Factors that affects remote work.

Dimensions	Indicators
Flexibility	Support of the organization, execution of activities, adaptation, communication, achievement of goals, and time taken in the achievement of goals
Autonomy	Freedom of workload, planning, decision making, necessary inputs, work schedule, and required equipment
Productivity	The control and monitoring of activities, achievement of goals, performance evaluation, teamwork, working conditions, job satisfaction, and work overload
Technology	Technological infrastructure, communication platforms, ICT, internet connection, digital skills, and resistance to change
Psychosocial risks	Stress, discomfort, depression, anxiety, motivation, creativity, social isolation, and interpersonal relationships

Source: Pasquel et al. [32].

When delving into these factors, it was highlighted that there is no single concept of labor flexibility but its relationship with a change in the traditional work scheme. Remote work is considered to be a flexible arrangement that allows additional leeway to manage the working day, as well as a flexible arrangement in the form of organization and the workplace [33].

According to Faya et al. [34], labor autonomy is the freedom that workers have to make decisions about the development of their tasks and activities. In this regard, Eurofound and EU-OSHA [35] stated that workers with a greater labor autonomy experience less stress than those with equally demanding jobs but with less autonomy.

Pinto and Muñoz [36] stated that, under appropriate conditions, remote work can have positive effects on worker performance and productivity. On the other hand, Howe and Menges [37] indicated that productivity in remote work depends on the individual opinion that the worker has about it.

Likewise, Alaimo et al. [33] stated that technological advances have been the drivers of remote work, and this is due to its ability to allow people to work from anywhere and at any time. In relation to psychosocial risks, González [38] indicated that the demands and intensity of remote work affect the psychic and mental dimensions of the worker, generating stress, anxiety, and depression, among others.

2.5. Origins of Work Stress

To talk about stress, it is essential to mention the work of Hans Selye, who is considered the father of the study of stress. Selye began studying it more than 50 years ago in his work "The Stress of Life" in 1946, whereby Selye defined it as the unexpected response of the human body to a demand [39].

Similarly, in the late 1950s, research on job stress was developed further by a study from the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan [40]. Subsequently, there was further development again in the book "Stress: studies on role conflict and ambiguity", by the authors Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoeck, and Rosenthal (published in 1964), on the types of problems associated with the role of workers and their experiences of stress [41].

2.6. Concept of Work Stress

According to Peiró [42], stress experiences are generated by a series of environmental or personal events that can be defined as sources of stress or stressors. These experiences lead the individual to experience a series of emotional experiences that are generated by a demand, or demands, that they cannot control, and which becomes a threat to them.

Within this framework, the ILO [43] pointed out that work stress is related to work organization, work design, and labor relations; and it occurs when the demands are not consistent or exceed the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. It also happens when a worker's skills do not match the organization's expectations.

Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman [44] pointed out that work stress is the response of the interaction between the worker and their work environment. It is perceived by them as overwhelming; in such a way that it exceeds their own resources, and where it affects their health and well-being.

2.7. Causes of Work Stress

In the opinion of Cox et al. [45], there is a set of stressful characteristics of work that are divided into two groups: content and context of work. The content of the work refers to the conditions and organization of work; among these, the workload and the work environment stand out. The context of work is related to labor relations, organizational culture, the role played, and career development, among others.

Similarly, Michie [46] identified the situations that regularly cause job stress as unforeseen or uncontrollable, uncertain or unknown, involving conflict, or a loss in performance. Likewise, stress can be caused by events that are limited in time, such as pressure due to deadlines, or by constant situations, such as family demands or job insecurity.

In other words, the workplace factors associated with stress and health risks for the worker are focused on the social environment and the organizational context. The intrinsic factors involve long hours, work overload, pressure of time, complex tasks, lack of breaks, and inadequate physical conditions.

For Marcilla [47], psychosocial risk factors go beyond the company environment and include aspects that generate stress. Therefore, psychosocial risk factors are conditions at work that potentially generate stress, such as work activities and interpersonal relationships.

As a complement, PAHO and WHO [48] stated that the most frequent causes of work stress are the psychosocial risks associated with the organization, design and working conditions, as well as the external conditions that can influence health, unemployment, and job satisfaction.

2.8. Effects of Work Stress

According to the WHO and ILO [49], work and mental health are directly related. Support in a safe and healthy work environment enables people to work productively. Conversely, an unsafe and unhealthy work environment can deteriorate mental health, and poor mental health limits a person's development.

It is noteworthy that accidents at work, such as stress, long working hours, and diseases that are associated with work, cause 374 million deaths a year and have an economic, emotional, and physical well-being impact on personal and family life. One of the aspects that has caused an impact on workers is the increase in connectivity or hyperconnectivity, which has resulted in effects on mental health that affect work and personal life since they do not rest [50].

The impact of the effects of work stress varies from one person to another; however, it can cause mental illness, stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout, as well as induce cerebrovascular, musculoskeletal, and reproductive diseases. On the other hand, work stress causes different behavioral problems in the individual, such as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as increased smoking and sleep disorders [48].

Stress episodes manifest in various ways, the symptoms of which can be grouped into the following: physiological, psychological, and behavioral. Physiological symptoms are metabolic changes, such as increased heart rate, headaches, and heart attacks. The psychological ones are the changes in the attitudes and disposition of the person, such as job dissatisfaction, tension, and anxiety. Finally, the behavioral symptoms are constituted by changes in productivity, absenteeism, and diet [51].

In this sense, Chan [52] pointed out that the development of cognitive or physical symptoms of stress in workers can increase the occurrence of distractions, errors in judgment, or habitual failures in their work activities. In addition, factors such as high

workload, job demands, poor decision-making capacity, as well as problems with managers and colleagues are associated with work stress in workers.

These effects were confirmed in the study by Irawanto et al. [53], where work stress negatively affected the job satisfaction of remote workers during the pandemic, and that this was caused by the imbalance between family and work life, poor working conditions, and work overload.

2.9. Strategies to Prevent Work Stress

In general, different international organizations have been concerned with establishing strategies or methods for the prevention of psychosocial risk factors and the promotion of mental health at work through the research, promotion, development, and application of specific programs. Among these organizations, the ILO, the WHO, the International Social Security Association (ISSA), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the World Economic Forum (WEF) stand out [43].

According to Atalaya [51], there are various approaches to managing or preventing stress at work, the most notable being the following: individual approaches and organizational approaches. In this sense, Table 3 presents a description of these strategies.

Table 3. Approaches for the prevention of work stress.

Approach	Techniques
Individual	Time management, physical exercise, relaxation exercises, yoga, social support, biofeedback, behavior modification, free day, and psychological therapy.
Organizational	Personnel selection, goal setting, job redesign, group decision making, organizational communication, wellness program, emotional climate control, promoting social support at work, specific treatments for stress, and establishing the social responsibility of organizations.

Source: Adapted from Watchtower [51].

Therefore, organizations must promote resilience, improve work practices, as well as develop an organizational culture based on trust and risk reduction. This will allow an efficient remote work environment that guarantees the health and well-being of workers, while meeting the agreements and goals of the organization [18].

3. Materials and Methods

From the methodological point of view, this study was of the documentary type, which Arias [54] defines as a study focused on the process of searching, analyzing, and interpreting secondary data. Consequently, the information was obtained from studies carried out by other researchers in documentary sources. Regarding the design, the study was bibliographic, which is carried out when information reported in bibliographic sources needs to be interpreted or if sufficient knowledge is not yet available to obtain information on reality [55].

On the other hand, the study was developed following the procedure of a systematic review, which Villasís et al. [56] defined as secondary research that brings together the findings published in various studies.

Likewise, Aguilera [57] considers systematic reviews as a way of doing research to collect information and prepare a summary on a given topic in order to answer a question of interest. Within this framework, Rother [58] points out that review papers constitute a form of research that use bibliographic information sources to analyze research findings from other authors in order to theoretically support a specific objective.

According to the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions, systematic reviews must have clear objectives, predefined inclusion criteria, explicit and repeatable methodology. Moreover, a systematic search should be conducted to identify studies that fit the inclusion criteria, validity assessment, organized presentation, and synthesis of the characteristics and findings of the selected studies [59].

In addition, according to the latest update of the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions, systematic reviews seek to collect evidence that meet established eligibility criteria to answer a research question. Its objective is to reduce this bias through the use of explicit and systematic methods that are previously documented through a protocol [60].

On the other hand, the study of systematic reviews was based on the Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) statement. This is a methodology developed in 2009 by a group of researchers, methodologists, clinicians, and journal editors as a guiding model through which to help researchers conduct comprehensive systematic review studies, which are achieved by taking into account the advances in techniques for selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing research [61].

The PRISMA statement is a roadmap that allows researchers to better develop what has been performed, what has been achieved, and what is planned to be conducted. In this sense, in 2020, a major update of PRISMA was carried out, which helped authors to adequately develop systematic reviews [62].

According to the PRISMA methodology updated in 2020, a systematic review must contain the following aspects: a title that identifies that it is a systematic review; a summary; an introduction where the justification and objectives of the study are described; the methods describing the eligibility criteria; information sources; the search strategies; the selection process; the data collection process; the results; and a discussion [63].

One of the main elements for carrying out a systematic review with the PRISMA methodology is the flow chart, which describes the different phases of the process. This diagram defines the registries (studies) identified, the number of included studies, the number of excluded studies, and the reasons for exclusions [64].

Another fundamental element of the PRISMA statement is the self-check of the quality of the literature review. In this sense, the analysis of the quality of the studies included in the systematic review contemplates the following aspects: topicality; relevance; a sufficient number of studies; the absence of biases that risk credibility; execution in an orderly and systematic manner; a development according to appropriate approaches in the subject; as well as a clear narrative and use of vocabulary that are associated with the study area [65].

It is important to highlight that the present study was developed by the authors as follows: the introduction section was completed by Sánchez; the literature review section by Dávila and Espinoza; the materials and methods section by López; the results section by Castro and Ramírez; the discussion section by Palomino; and the conclusions section by Díaz. In addition to this, all of the authors participated in a general way in all of the sections of the study, thereby making contributions and resolving the differences in a collaborative manner.

3.1. Search Procedure

This study was carried out in the city of Lima, Peru during the period between the months of January to March in the year 2023. The database that was selected for the search of the articles was Scopus, which is one of the most prestigious according to the scientific community. The search of papers was carried out within the period of 1 January 2020 to 27 February 2023, and this was chosen considering the fact that the COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic by the WHO in 2020.

The procedure for the selection of articles was carried out using a series of descriptors or keywords with the aim of accurately identifying the studies developed on the subject. In this sense, the descriptors or keywords were as follows: “remote work”, “work stress”, and “pandemic”. These terms were searched within the title, abstract, and keywords, and this was achieved by using the Boolean operator “And”. In addition, it was established that the title of the articles must contain the two variables (key words) of remote work and work stress.

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

The following were established as the inclusion criteria for the selection of articles: (1) original articles; (2) articles addressing remote work and job stress during the pandemic; (3) articles published between 1 January 2020 and 27 February 2023; (4) articles written in English and/or Spanish; and (5) articles that are open access. Likewise, systematic review articles, letters, and expert opinions were excluded.

3.3. Research Selection

In the search process, 280 publications were initially found by applying the previously defined descriptors, the Boolean operator, and the date range. To refine the search in the database, the following inclusion criteria were applied: the type of publication corresponded to original articles, open access articles, and articles prepared in English and/or Spanish. In this sense, the search was narrowed down to 162 publications.

The title and abstract of these 162 articles were reviewed in order to verify compliance with the inclusion criteria. Consequently, 141 were excluded for not describing the subject of the study, and 4 for not containing the variables in the title of the study. Therefore, the sample was reduced down to 17 articles. Figure 1 shows the PRISMA diagram, which illustrates the search, identification, and selection process for the final sample of this systematic review study.

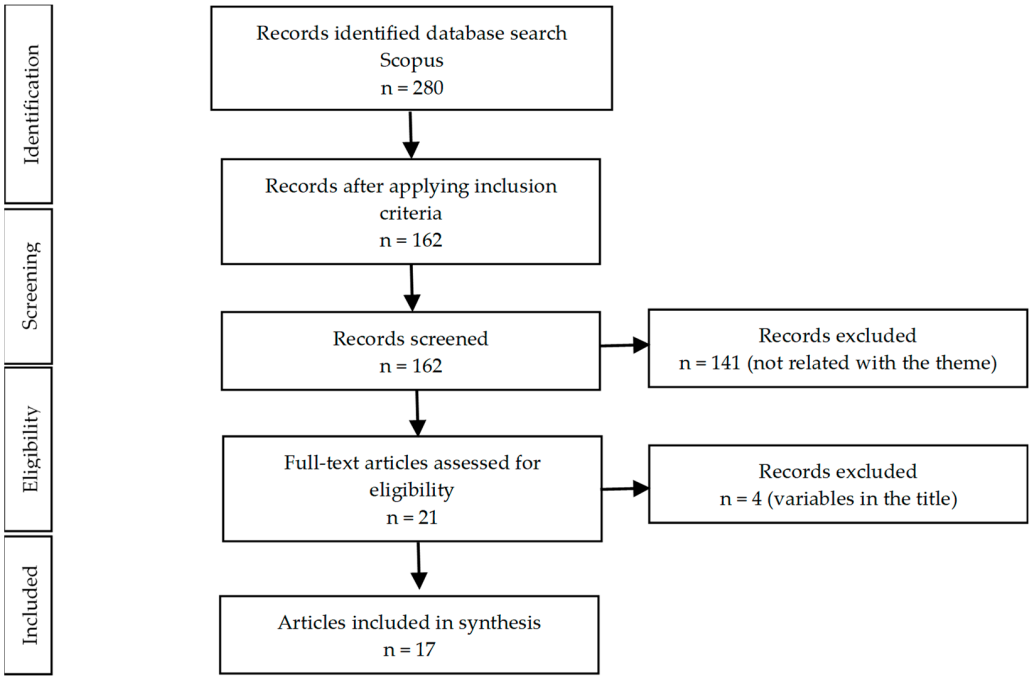

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram.

3.4. Analysis of the Quality of the Selected Articles

The articles selected in this systematic review study obeyed the various scientific criteria that facilitate the extraction of relevant information, as based on their findings. This evaluation process made it possible to generate conclusions that were centered on these findings in addition to specifying the observed limitations in order to carry out a reproducible and unbiased evaluation. Despite the fact that there are currently tools for evaluating the quality of systematic reviews, a verification scheme was used for this purpose in the present study, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Quality evaluation of the selected articles.

Criterion	Description
Actuality	All the selected articles that made up the sample are current studies referring to remote work and its influence on work stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Exhaustiveness	The studies chosen are the most relevant in the study area. Additionally, they used valid and reliable instruments.
Amplitude	From a total of 280 studies found in the database, a sufficient number were considered in the review. In addition, each study verified the use of a representative sample
Assessment of risk of bias (rigor)	The findings of each study were reviewed and analyzed in a general way; were based on the evidence that could be inferred; and lacked biases that could call into question the credibility of the review. In this sense, the studies had a cross-sectional and longitudinal design. Statistical methods were adequately applied.
Structuring	The review was carried out in an orderly and systematic manner, and followed the methodology.
Pertinence	The approaches analyzed from the selected studies were adequate in terms of deepening the subject.
Clarity	The narrative of the review was adequate from a grammatical and syntactic point of view; it was also fluid and understandable. On the other hand, the selected studies possessed clarity in way of addressing the subject.
Precision	The terms used were adjusted to the lexicon related to the study area and to the aspects that were described above.

4. Results

4.1. Existing Scientific Information about the Influence of Remote Work on the Work Stress of Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the PRISMA diagram, 280 publications dealing with the subject of study were identified, of which 17 that met the inclusion criteria were selected. To carry out an analysis of the information, the selected articles were tabulated through considering different aspects—such as author, publication date, title, journal, and methodology—as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The selected articles.

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Title	Source Title	Methodology
(Wadhen and Cartwright, 2021, [66])	Feasibility and outcome of an online streamed yoga intervention on stress and wellbeing of people working from home during COVID-19	Work	Mixed
(Wontorczyk and Roznowski, 2022, [67])	Remote, Hybrid, and On-Site Work during the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic and the Consequences for Stress and Work Engagement	International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health	Quantitative
(Pradoto et al., 2021, [68])	The role of work stress, organizational climate, and improving employee performance in the implementation of work from home	Work	Quantitative
(Galanti et al., 2021, [69])	Work From Home During the COVID-19 Outbreak	JOEM	Quantitative
(Toscano and Zappalà., 2020, [70])	Social Isolation and Stress as Predictors of Productivity Perception and Remote Work Satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic: the Role of Concern about the Virus in a Moderated Double Mediation	Sustainability	Quantitative

Table 5. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Title	Source Title	Methodology
(Singh et al., 2022, [71])	Enforced remote working: The impact of digital platform-induced stress and remote working experience on technology exhaustion and subjective well-being	Journal of Business Research	Quantitative
(Sandoval et al., 2021, [72])	Remote Work, Work Stress, and Work–Life during Pandemic Times: A Latin America Situation	International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health	Quantitative
(Şentürk et al., 2021, [73])	Predictors of depression, anxiety and stress among remote workers during the COVID-19 pandemic	Work	Quantitative
(Ingusci et al., 2021, [74])	Workload, Techno Overload, and Behavioral Stress During COVID-19 Emergency: The Role of Job Crafting in Remote Workers	Frontiers in Psychology	Quantitative
(Dela Cruz, 2022, [75])	Machine Learning—Based Risk Assessment on Stress of IT Employees Working from Home During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines	International Journal of Emerging Technology and Advanced Engineering	Quantitative
(Marawan et al., 2021, [76])	Effects of remote virtual work environment during COVID-19 pandemic on technostress among Menoufia University Staff, Egypt: a cross-sectional study	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	Quantitative
(Kondratowicz et al., 2022, [77])	Satisfaction with job and life and remote working the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of perceived stress, self-efficacy and self-esteem	Current issues in personality psychology	Quantitative
(Chudzicka et al., 2023, [78])	Remote and on-site work stress severity during the COVID-19 pandemic: comparison and selected conditions	International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health	Quantitative
(Iacolino et al., 2022, [79])	The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Metacognition inTeachers' Stress during Pandemic Remote Working: A Moderated Mediation Model	European Journal of Investigation Health, Psychology and Education	Quantitative
(Natomi et al., 2022, [80])	Work-Related Stress of Work from Home with Housemates Based on Residential Types	International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health	Quantitative
(Tump et al., 2022, [81])	Stressors and Destressors in Working From Home Based on Context and Physiology From Self-Reports and Smartwatch Measurements: International Observational Study Trial	Jmir Formative Research	Quantitative
(Hayes et al., 2021, [82])	Perceived Stress, Work-Related Burnout, and Working From Home Before and During COVID-19: An Examination of Workers in the United States	SAGE Open	Quantitative

In this sense, the analysis of the information reflects the following: one article was published in 2020, eight in 2021, seven in 2022, and one in 2023. In addition, the articles were published in thirteen different journals. On the other hand, only one of the articles was developed under a mixed methodology, while the rest (16) were developed under a quantitative methodology.

4.2. Remote Work Factors That Influence the Work Stress of Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The analysis of remote work factors that influence the generation of work stress in workers during the COVID-19 pandemic was carried out systematically in each of the articles that made up the sample, as observed in Table 6. In this sense, the most relevant factors of remote work that, according to the authors, cause stress in workers were extracted.

Table 6. Remote work factors that influenced work stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Remote Work Factors That Influence Work Stress	Main Factors
(Wadhen and Cartwright, 2021, [66])	This study focused on exploring the potential of online, streamed yoga to help reduce stress for remote workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yoga implementation transmitted online minimizes stress, anxiety, depression, and improves self -efficacy and mental well-being.	Mental well-being and physical well-being.
(Wontorczyk and Roznowski, 2022, [67])	This study focuses on analyzing remote work and hybrid work, as well as its influence on the stress and labor commitment of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional loads were associated with workers such as isolation, the blur of borders between work and home, as well as domestic conflicts. In addition, the insufficiency of the team, organization, and ergonomics were also considered.	Work commitment, isolation, lack of work–home balance, absence of team and organization, demands, control, support management, support from colleagues, and relationships.
(Pradoto et al., 2021, [68])	This study was based on the effect of work stress and organizational climate on the behavior of remote workers of small and medium enterprises during the pandemic. In this sense, the organizational climate was the cause of labor inconveniences, especially in terms of work stress, which manifested as low satisfaction, performance, the rotation of personnel, absenteeism, and abandonment of work.	Inadequate organizational climate and worker performance.
(Galanti et al., 2021, [69])	This research concentrated on the impact of the pandemic in conflicts between family and work, social isolation, environmental distractions, labor autonomy, self-leadership, productivity, labor commitment, and stress in remote workers.	Lack of balance between family and work, social isolation, distractions, work autonomy, self-leadership, productivity, and work commitment.
(Toscano and Zappalà., 2020, [70])	This research involved the analysis of social isolation and its impact on the stress, productivity, and personal satisfaction of the workers within the framework of the implementation of remote work.	Social isolation, productivity, personal satisfaction, and concern for health.
(Singh et al., 2022, [71])	This study concentrated on analyzing the forced remote work during the pandemic, the impact of stress induced by digital platforms, as well as exhaustion and subjective well-being. The process of adapting to digital platforms stood out since excessive technology use can cause techno-stress.	Impact of digital platforms, exhaustion, intensity, resilience, and subjective well-being.
(Sandoval et al., 2021, [72])	This study focuses on people who were able to switch from traditional work to remote work during the pandemic in certain Latin American countries. Remote work lead to increased perceived stress, decreased work–life balance, increased productivity, and engagement.	Work–life imbalance, productivity, and commitment.

Table 6. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Remote Work Factors That Influence Work Stress	Main Factors
(Şentürk et al., 2021, [73])	This study stands out for addressing the predictors of depression, anxiety, and stress in workers who participated in working remotely for the first time in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Various factors determined the appearance of stress, such as poor sleep quality, concentration problems, and low levels of control over work time, as well as low levels of physical activity, increased workload, and financial situations.	Time spent on housework, time spent caring for children, daily work hours, workload, distractions, and financial situation.
(Ingusci et al., 2021, [74])	This research focuses on exploring the effect of work overload on behavioral stress in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote workers faced different difficulties such as those related to workspaces, equipment and internet connection, among others. The workers also expressed the difficulty in establishing limits between work and personal life.	Workload, technological overload, and work preparation.
(Dela Cruz, 2022, [75])	This study involved evaluating the level of stress in the home workers of a computer consulting company. The advantages and disadvantages of working from home and the effect on well-being were discussed, and the classification of employees, their needs, and concerns were highlighted.	Human interaction, office benefits, saving time and money, personal time, and habits.
(Marawan et al., 2021, [76])	This research was based on the study of techno-stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, which became more common as a result of the measures that were implemented to restrict the spread of the virus. In this regard, techno-stress and the challenges of the virtual remote work environment among members of the Menoufia University located in Egypt were analyzed.	Age, gender, fear of unemployment, economic hardship, health concern, type of residence, type of job, Wi-Fi performance, computer status, and cortisol level.
(Kondratowicz et al., 2022, [77])	This research was based on the evaluation of the relationship between remote work during the pandemic and the degree of job and personal satisfaction, as well as the perception of stress, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.	Job satisfaction, personal satisfaction, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.
(Chudzicka et al., 2023, [78])	This study was developed with the objective of analyzing the severity of work stress in remote workers and on-site workers during the pandemic.	Work–family conflict, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, affective commitment, regulatory commitment, and commitment to continuity.
(Iacolino et al., 2022, [79])	This study involved an investigation on the adaptation to social, labor changes, and the technological methods for distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were subjected to greater work pressures, which affected their well-being, as well as increased their stress and exhaustion. In this sense, the dysfunctional changes in adaptation to the new forms of teaching that were mediated by technological tools could be reduced through protective factors of emotional intelligence and metacognition.	Emotional intelligence, metacognition, burnout, remote-teaching risk factors, unfamiliarity with technology platforms, a lack of a dedicated location for remote teaching, a need to adjust to Internet use and teaching methods, difficulties in class management, and difficulties in coordinating with colleagues.
(Natomi et al., 2022, [80])	This study analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work environments, specifically the influence of remote work on worker stress. The relationship between work stress and the remote work environment was analyzed through various factors such as the type and size of the house, housemates, workspace, and environmental improvements.	Gender, age, housemates, environmental conditions, physical activity, job and personal satisfaction, outside noise, family group interference in the work environment, and mental stress from web meetings.

Table 6. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Remote Work Factors That Influence Work Stress	Main Factors
(Tump et al., 2022, [81])	This study covered the analysis of remote work that was developed through the use of technology (smart watches, smart phones, etc.) to establish stressful and de-stressing factors during the pandemic.	Age, gender, workspace, burnout experienced in the past, family events that clash with work, support from colleagues, work intensity, pandemic anxiety, use of smart watches as a work tool, and environmental conditions such as air and light.
(Hayes et al., 2021, [82])	This study was developed with the purpose of analyzing the impact of involuntary remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic on perceived stress and job burnout in workers with and without experience in this type of work.	Age, gender, remote work experience, number of hours worked per week, time at current job, education, and burnout.

In this regard, the use of the following terms in the different publications stood out (among others): work stress, perceived stress, techno-stress, mental health, depression, anxiety, mental well-being, workload, and burnout. The impact of the measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, including remote work, triggered countless effects on workers; this can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Summary of the conditions involved in remote work, as well as the positive and negative effects on workers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Condition	Negative Effects of Remote Work That Can Generate Stress	Positive Effects of Remote Work
Mental well-being, physical well-being, financial situation, age, gender, unemployment, type of residence, type of job, Internet access, computer status, cortisol level, self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, physical conditions of the workplace, and remote work experience.	Social isolation, changes in work–home balance, increased job demands, increased control, lack of supportive management, lack of peer support, inadequate organizational climate, decreased performance, distractions, decreased productivity, lack of commitment labor, impact of digital platforms, technological exhaustion, and burnout.	Increase in performance, improvement in work commitment, improvement in work autonomy, greater self-leadership, increase in productivity, improvement in work commitment, personal satisfaction, resilience, and saving time and money.

4.3. Findings of the Study on the Influence of Remote Work on the Work Stress of Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The results achieved on the influence of remote work on the generation of work stress in workers during the COVID-19 pandemic reflect the great incidence of this type of work on worker behavior and performance. In this sense, the results were evaluated in relation to the various factors that impacted the workers due to the abrupt change from going from face-to-face (traditional) work to remote work (working from home), as presented in Table 8. Likewise, the changes produced in work–family balance, performance, productivity, self-efficacy, autonomy, and job satisfaction, among others, were verified.

Table 8. Results obtained in the selected articles.

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Sample	Results	Effects
(Wadhen and Cartwright, 2021, [66])	A six-week pilot study was developed with a sample of $n = 34$, of which 17 were part of the control group and 17 of the experimental group.	The control group obtained an average of 9.59 and the experimental group 10.18 in the pre-test. Meanwhile, in the post-test, they obtained 8.06 and 6.47, respectively.	Significant improvements were found in the control group for perceived stress, mental well-being, depression, and self-efficacy, but not for stress and anxiety. The benefits they experienced in physical and mental health were verified, as well as the acceptance and enjoyment of participation.
(Wontorczyk and Roznowski, 2022, [67])	This study was cross-sectional, and the sample was 544 workers: remote ($n = 144$), hybrid ($n = 142$), and in person ($n = 258$).	Part of the findings reflected that 46.7% responded that they do not respond to matters not related to work outside of working hours.	No significant differences were found between the groups regarding the intensity of work engagement, whether remote or hybrid. People who worked remotely perceived the most positive, negative, and temporary aspects of remote work. The temporary aspect of remote work was also felt by employees performing their professional functions in a hybrid way.
(Pradoto et al., 2021, [68])	The sample was 95 remote workers from small- and medium-sized companies.	The organizational climate had a significant impact on work stress with $p = 0.023 < 0.05$. Job stress had a significant influence on the performance of workers with $p = 0.004 < 0.05$. The organizational climate had a direct effect on the performance of workers with $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.	The organizational climate had a significant impact. Job stress had a significant influence on the performance of workers. The organizational climate had a direct effect on the performance of workers.
(Galanti et al., 2021, [69])	The sample was 209 remote workers.	Conflict between family and work, as well as social isolation as part of remote work during the pandemic were negatively associated.	On the other hand, self-leadership and self-esteem were positively related to productivity and work commitment. Similarly, family–work conflict and social isolation were negatively associated with the stress caused by remote work, which was not impacted by autonomy and self-leadership.
(Toscano and Zappalà., 2020, [70])	The sample was 265 remote workers.	It was found that social isolation was significantly related to stress since $\beta = 0.59$; $p < 0.01$.	Social isolation played a fundamental role in the generation of stress in the remote workers, which lead to a decrease in productivity, and this was related to job satisfaction. Concern about the virus decreased the relationships between social isolation and job satisfaction, on the one hand, due to the perceived productivity of remote work and, on the other hand, job satisfaction. Concern about the virus moderated the relationships between social isolation and job satisfaction.
(Singh et al., 2022, [71])	The sample was 306 workers.	A total of 83.0% of participants worked remotely (at least 1% of their work), and 57.2% worked remotely completely.	The digital platforms used in the work and personal context induced techno-stress during the mandatory remote work period, which increased psychological tensions, generated technological exhaustion, and decreased subjective well-being. Employees with experience working remotely could better handle techno-stress. Employees with high resilience suffered decreased well-being in the presence of induced techno-stress and technology burnout.

Table 8. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Sample	Results	Effects
(Sandoval et al., 2021, [72])	The sample was 1285 participants.	Remote work increased perceived stress (β = 0.269; $p < 0.01$), reduced work–life balance (β = 0.225; $p < 0.01$) and job satisfaction (β = 0.190; $p < 0.01$), as well as productivity (β = 0.120; $p < 0.01$) and commitment (β = 0.120; $p < 0.01$).	Perceived stress had a mediating consequence that minimized the positive effect of working remotely on productivity and engagement. On the contrary, perceived stress exerted a mediating function between the remote work that benefits the negative influence of demands and the perception of the balance between work and personal life. On the other hand, the gender study indicated that perceived stress affected the productivity of men more acutely than in women.
(Şentürk et al., 2021, [73])	The sample was 459 participants.	The levels of depression, anxiety, and stress were 17.9%, 19.6%, and 19.6%, respectively.	Predictors of stress in remote workers were poor sleep quality, difficulty concentrating at work, worrying about financial situation, and loneliness in the workplace. In the case of depression, the predictors were poor sleep quality, difficulties concentrating at work, loneliness, lack of control over work hours, and lack of physical activity. Regarding the predictors of anxiety, the influence of poor sleep quality and increased workload was verified. On the other hand, the existence of greater stress, anxiety, and depression was found in women.
(Ingusci et al., 2021, [74])	This study involved 530 remote workers.	This study reflected acceptable results in work overload, and this was measured by the latent variables of workload (λWORKLOAD = 0.62, $p < 0.000$) and technological overload (λTECHNO OVERLOAD = 0.70, $p < 0.000$).	The measurement of job crafting was partial; specifically, the direct consequence between work overload and behavioral stress was positive. In addition, the negative effect through the mediation of job crafting was significant. Therefore, the findings reflected that job crafting can play a fundamental role as a protective element in terms of managing the negative effects of work overload, especially in the context of intense remote work and the use of technologies.
(Dela Cruz, 2022, [75])	The sample consisted of 103 technology employees.	The results indicated that 63.1% believed that domestic problems and the lack of interaction were disadvantages of remote work. Likewise, 83.3% indicated that the lack of human interaction affected the health of workers, causing them stress.	Single employees were the ones who experienced the most stress. The biggest disadvantage of working from home was that homes are not suitable for working. There were problems due to the slowness of the internet and the increase in public service expenses. The advantages of working from home were related to the elimination of travel hours, regardless of the marital status and position of the worker.

Table 8. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Sample	Results	Effects
(Marawan et al., 2021, [76])	This study involved 142 workers.	The findings revealed that work overload was significantly related to female gender and a poor Wi-Fi work environment (p value < 0.001 and 0.002, respectively).	The participants were mostly resident teachers from rural areas who had access to Wi-Fi in an inadequate work environment, had a lack of technical training, and had significantly higher levels of techno-stress subscales. Most of the techno-stress subscales had a significant correlation with age and blood cortisol levels. The predictors of work overload in the multivariate regression were female gender and a work environment with poor Wi-Fi. High levels of techno-stress were significantly influenced by age, teacher level, and the female gender.
(Kondratowicz et al., 2022, [77])	This study was carried out with the participation of 283 workers.	The results indicated that there was a relationship between remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic and job and personal satisfaction. In addition, the levels of perceived stress, self-efficacy, and self-esteem played a mediating role in this relationship.	Remote work was related to personal and job satisfaction, and this relationship was mediated by the degree of stress, self-efficacy, and self-esteem experienced.
(Chudzicka et al., 2023, [78])	This study involved 946 workers from the education system and the BSS sector in different Polish organizations.	A total of 39% of the participants believed that work stress had a greater impact in the face-to-face modality, while 35% affirmed that it was in the remote modality.	Conflict between remote work and family, as well as job satisfaction, were the predictors of work stress in the remote and face-to-face contexts. In summary, remote work was related to less serious work stress than in the case of face-to-face work. In both forms of work, the greater the degree of work–family conflict, the greater the severity of the stress, but the greater the job satisfaction, the less the severity of stress.
(Iacolino et al., 2022, [79])	A total of 604 teachers participated in the study.	The findings reflected that stress was a dependent variable (R^2 = 0.23, F (3, 600) = 89.42, p < 0.001), while the direct impact of remote work risk factors on stress was slightly significant.	Emotional intelligence was a mediator in the relationship between various risk factors of remote work, as well as stress and burnout. Metacognition was a significant mediating factor in the relationship between risk factors and emotional intelligence. The importance of the emotional and metacognitive skills of teachers in promoting quality of life and psychological well-being was highlighted.
(Natomi et al., 2022, [80])	The study sample consisted of 500 workers.	Work-from-home environments according to the top three types of residences in Japan were studied in relation to high stress levels, which accounted for 17.4% of the participants.	The workers had problems associated with noise regardless of the type of residence. HSWs in single-family homes and apartments had issues with the noise levels generated by their housemates. The workers who lived in these types of residences were relatively older, so they usually had older children who would require a certain level of privacy. Home workers with insufficient privacy could not adapt to these types of environments and suffered from a great deal of stress.

Table 8. *Cont.*

(Authors, Year, Citation Number)	Sample	Results	Effects
(Tump et al., 2022, [81])	The sample was 202 workers.	The remote-work stressors detected were as follows: daily life limits on work (p = 0.05), work intensity (p = 0.01), burnout history (p = 0.03), anxiety toward the pandemic (p = 0.04), and environmental noise (p = 0.01).	The most significant environmental stressors in remote work were the distractions caused by other people, distractions from daily life, and noise in the environment. The most significant lifestyle-related environmental stressors were access to fresh air and sunlight, and de-stressors were short breaks, social interactions outside of work, and physical activity. No significant relationship was found between low and high stress during work hours and the quality of sleep during the previous night.
(Hayes et al., 2021, [82])	The sample was 256 workers.	Overall perceived stress scores yielded PSS-10 pre-COVID-19 M = 16.82, SD = 6.29, and during COVID-19 it was M = 19.52, SD = 6.08.	The restrictions of the pandemic increased the perceived stress in all the participants; in addition, age and gender had significant effects on the stress and burnout of the workers. Burnout turned out to be more significant for workers who were previously working remotely before the pandemic.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to analyze the influence of remote work on the work stress of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was achieved by identifying the existing scientific information in the Scopus database, which was complemented with studies from Google Scholar, as well as from relevant reports and books. Based on the publications selected in the review, work stress as a result of the pandemic was considered one of the main effects of remote work on the mental health of workers.

As part of the systematic review and the PRISMA methodology, the quality of the studies was assessed based on the following criteria: sample size, design rigor, instruments used, and statistical analysis. For example, in the study by Natomi et al. [80], 500 workers were surveyed online. The research protocol was approved by the ethics committee of the Osaka City University Graduate School of Life Sciences. Individuals were selected based on the following criteria: workers over the age of 20 who live in Osaka Prefecture and who live with partners while working from home. The distribution and collection of questionnaires was outsourced to Rakuten Insight, Inc., which has a unique system for weeding out incorrect surveys. Statistical analysis was performed with Fisher's exact test and residual analysis by using IBM JMP Pro 16.0 and SPSS Statistics 26 software.

In relation to the content analysis of the publications, an exhaustive evaluation was carried out in order to determine the factors of remote work that generated occupational stress in workers. In this sense, it was verified that the selected investigations addressed the following factors or negative effects: social isolation, changes in the work–home balance, increased labor demands, increased control, lack of support management, lack of support from colleagues, inadequate organizational climate, decreased performance, distractions, decreased productivity, lack of work commitment, as well as the impacts of digital platforms, technological exhaustion, and burnout.

Based on the greater or lesser success in coping and controlling stress, one or more effects may be generated in the workers. In addition, the duration of these effects may be more significant and enduring in the individual. According to Peiro [42], these variations can be moderated by a series of personal and environmental aspects. For example, if the individual has adequate social support, the results of stress will be less negative than if their social support is little or nonexistent.

In the study by Hayes et al. [82], it was verified that the restrictions implemented as a result of the pandemic increased the perceived stress in workers, with the variables age

and gender being the ones that had the greatest influence. In this sense, the restrictions increased the perceived stress of all participants, but age and gender had significant effects on stress and burnout since men reported greater stress than women in the 18–24 age group, but women reported greater stress than men in the 45–54 and 55–64 age groups. Likewise, exhaustion was greater in workers who had already been working remotely prior to the pandemic, which made up of 47% of the participants. On the other hand, the most significant challenges of remote work during the pandemic were communication, collaboration, and time management.

On the other hand, in the study by Tump et al. [81], the stressors and de-stressors in remote workers who used state-of-the-art technology (smart watches and smartphone questionnaires) were analyzed. In this regard, it was determined that the stressors of the environment were constituted by distractions (other people in the house), distractions from daily life, and noise from the environment. In addition, environmental stressors were from access to fresh air and sunlight, and lifestyle stressors were breaks, social interactions outside of work, and physical exercise. No relationship was found between low and high stress levels during the workday and the quality of sleep the night before.

Other aspects analyzed were those related to the positive effects of remote work, including increased performance, improved work commitment, improved work autonomy, increased self-leadership, increased productivity, improved work commitment, personal satisfaction, resilience, and saving time and money. The evaluation of these factors was carried out in each publication; however, those by Wadhen and Cartwright [66], Pradoto et al. [68], and Singh et al. [71] particularly highlighted them.

In the study by Wadhen and Cartwright [66], an online yoga intervention was conducted to address the stress in remote workers during the pandemic. In this sense, the existence of significant improvements on perceived stress, mental well-being, depression, and self-efficacy was verified, as well as the benefits in physical and mental health in addition to the acceptance and enjoyment of participation. This coincides with what was stated by Atalaya [51], who defined relationship exercises such as yoga as a valid option for reducing stress in workers.

There are numerous studies that suggest that the development of physical activity (including relaxation exercises) constitutes one of the main strategies for the prevention of work stress, and this is achieved by taking into account the level of distraction and entertainment that both strategies can provide. Likewise, there are more personal strategies that can help reduce the stress of remote work, such as the one proposed by Iacolino et al. [79], who highlighted that emotional intelligence and metacognition play an important role in helping teachers manage the stress associated with remote work. This is because these factors can minimize burnout and other dysfunctional effects that result from the difficulties that arise from adapting to new ways of teaching when using technological tools.

The research by Pradoto et al. [68] reflected that the organizational climate in the remote modality has a significant impact on work stress, and this in turn effects the performance of workers. In other words, in an unclear organizational climate, workers tend to suffer more from job stress, which affects their performance. On the contrary, in the study by Shimura et al. [10], working remotely helped to minimize psychological and physical stress, despite increasing the risk of exacerbating presenteeism.

There are many causes or reasons that cause stress in humans, as has been explained in this study. Likewise, the causes of stress can vary from one population to another for various reasons, such as environmental and personal, among others. However, it is undeniable that the appearance of the COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted as a factor that brought about changes in the work environment and in the health of workers. This is very well described by the ILO [43], who described psychosocial risk factors as variations in the work environment, work content, as well as the forms of organization, skills, needs, culture, and external personal considerations of work that can—based on perceptions and experiences—influence health, performance, and job satisfaction.

Within this framework, organizations must seek to intervene adequately so as to minimize the generation of stress in remote workers. In this regard, the ILO [18] pointed out that a valid tool to help workers maintain a balance between their work and private lives is to manage work based on results and not on the number of hours executed. By establishing a manageable workload and clear expectations about the specific results to be achieved, remote workers will be better equipped and organized across time and areas.

On the other hand, the study by Singh et al. [71] analyzed the impact on the use of digital platforms, exhaustion, and subjective well-being on the work stress of remote workers. Their study confirmed that the excessive use of technology can cause techno-stress. This is similar to the findings of Satpathy et al. [9], who indicated that the fear of becoming unemployed due to the implementation of technology was one of the factors that most influenced the generation of work stress.

Certainly, many people are afraid of technology, handling computers, or using digital applications, but this is due to ignorance, as it is remote work that is most often mediated by technology. It is considered that this factor is one of the important ones in the generation of stress.

Regarding the analysis of the results achieved in the sample articles, those by Wontorczyk and Roznowski [67], Galanti et al. [69], and Toscano and Zappala [70] were the most significant. In the study by Wontorczyk and Roznowski [67], it was found that people who work remotely perceived the most positive and negative aspects of this way of working. Likewise, the research by Galanti et al. [69] reported that family–work conflict and social isolation were negatively associated with the stress caused by remote work, and this was not impacted by autonomy and self-leadership.

These findings were similar to those of van Zoonen et al. [31], who determined that the structural and contextual factors of remote work, that is, those related to work autonomy and the change in workplace, respectively, are important predictors of adjustment, and that these relationships mediate the quality of communication.

Indeed, organizations have to consider that the mental health of workers must be cared for in the same way as physical health; therefore, it is important to deepen the study of the effects of this form of work after the health crisis.

Regarding the study by Toscano and Zappalà [70], it was determined that social isolation plays a fundamental role in the generation of stress in remote workers, which leads to decreased productivity and personal satisfaction. Similarly, Pasquel et al. [32] pointed out that the psychosocial risk of workers reached a medium level during the pandemic, and this was caused by situations of stress and anxiety due to social isolation; however, in some cases, increases in motivation and creativity were recorded.

In summary, during the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work allowed economic activities to continue; however, it constituted a challenge in the management and control of associated work stress. Considering that the evidence indicates that there are innumerable factors that influence the generation of remote-work-related job stress, in the same way, there are individual and organizational factors that can help reduce it and maximize the benefits of remote work.

6. Conclusions

The implementation of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic was a solution for continuing the development of economic activities; however, this solution had significant effects on the mental health of workers, with work stress being one of the main factors. This review study verified the large number of studies developed in the area. However, it must be taken into account that a single database was used for the selection of the sample.

In this sense, seventeen works were selected through the application of the PRISMA statement as a methodological guide. Following this methodology, the studies were adjusted to the inclusion criteria and were analyzed so as to extract the necessary information to answer the questions posed: what remote work factors influence work stress and how the findings were reached.

In this regard, most of the publications showed the great impact that was had on workers when moving from working in person to working remotely, especially in terms of mental health, performance, productivity, and work performance. On the other hand, the approaches used by the authors explored different contexts of remote work, as well as the various characteristics, factors, and effects of this modality of work.

The study findings showed that the influence of remote work on the work stress of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic generated positive and negative effects that impacted quality of life, family–work balance, physical and mental well-being, productivity, self-leadership, and autonomy, among others. In addition, the main factors of remote work that influenced work stress were the use of technological platforms, social isolation, work conditions, work overload, and job demands.

Despite this, the present study has limitations, such as the fact that a small number of publications were analyzed. In addition, it should be considered a short investigation, where—as previously stated—a single database was used. Therefore, it is important to delve further into this topic, given that the modality of remote work is increasingly used worldwide and its effects on mental health may vary.

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