

# Evaluating Productivity and Well-Being: A Comparative Study of Remote Work Versus Office Work

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**Abstract:** The Work From Office concept is traditional and is a MUST for employees whose roles require them to be on-site, but office-based staff can avail the facility of remote working/ Work From Home. Though the Work From Home (WFH) concept has its roots since World War II, the concept has revolutionized the traditional office-based work and has been widely adopted by a majority of companies across the globe after the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study compares remote working and work from office concepts. It consists of a survey which helped us better understand the pros and cons of these two work arrangements. It is obvious that the decision will be taken by the stakeholders involved in each organization viz. the employer, who seeks to receive better productivity from its employees and the employees who work hard for their organizations and both these stakeholders try to achieve the proper work-life balance along with organizational growth. The survey uses a research questionnaire to collect views and opinions from respondents. It is not always wise to choose one of the available alternatives, but one may go for a mixed strategy involving benefits of available alternatives and reduce the flaws or limitations of them.

**Keywords:** Work From Home, Work From Office, Work-life balance, productivity, health aspects

## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's technological era, companies or employers are facing more challenges to fulfill the needs of their clients as well as employees. One of these challenges is to decide the working arrangement which best suits both the stakeholders and how to manage it efficiently. After the global COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of Work From Home has spread its branches right from the field of education up to the top level decision making field. Thus, employees may work from an employer's office, or work from one's own home or work in hybrid mode. While all these approaches have their own pros and cons, the

challenge is to decide which mode will be most effective for your team and culture.

Work From Office:

In this working model, employees need to be physically present in the office to complete their operations and serve the company. Here the employees have daily interactions with their team members and they collaboratively complete the assigned tasks and are more easily available to the resources. This ensures better quality work, better communication among team members, and less chance of missing important deadlines. Thus it offers a more organized and productive work environment.



However, the wastage of time in commuting in areas with huge traffic or lack of frequent public transport has become a major challenge in metropolitan cities. Sometimes, the employees may feel fatigued and

overwhelmed due to work pressure and may lead to burnout and less productivity. Lack of flexibility or rigidity of working hours in the office can be mentally draining for employees.

Ideally speaking, Work From Office works best for organized and structured people, individuals who need one-on-one communication and guidance to complete their work, who have to spend less time commuting, and people who are fond of working in workplace culture.

**Work From Home:**

Here, employees can complete their assigned task from their comfort zone instead of coming to the office, thus saving time, energy and efforts of commuting. This energy can be utilized efficiently on assigned tasks yielding more productivity. Flexible schedule at home allows employees to take care of their well being and help them avoid feeling fatigued and burnt out. Thus they can maintain a better work-life balance and can manage their personal and family responsibilities while keeping up their work commitments. This facility of remote working offers both employers and employees the saving in financial resources. The employees don't have to bear traveling expenses and companies save money on office rent, and other miscellaneous expenses on maintenance, utilities etc.



However, lack of adequate tools and technologies including stable internet connection and reliable access to softwares may affect performance, frequent

distractions at home, and absence of social interactions leave oneself feeling isolated, thus decreasing productivity.

Ideally speaking, Work From Home best suits self-motivated and self-disciplined individuals, the job role that does not require much interaction, and to employees who have to commute longer distances.

**Hybrid Mode:**

This working mode offers the best of both worlds, combining advantages of traditional work from the office and trending work from home. Here, employees sometimes work from home and sometimes visit the office providing flexibility as well as better work-life balance that leads to improved performance. Here employers can hire talent with diverse backgrounds, experience and perspective.



This mode is best for employees who love remote work yet value the benefits of being in office.

The choice of working modes depend on the factors like the type of work culture the company wants to build, the size of the company, and the type of industry.

**II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of work has its roots deep in human history. [4] Work is something we have to do for survival. Early humans belong to hunter-gatherer society, where few people used to perform hunting to ensure survival of his family and subsequently larger community. They were required to move here and there in search of their prey and hence could not settle

at one place for their survival. Around 10000 years ago, the agricultural practices by our intelligent ancestors developed into the first fixed settlement. Until this time, work was mainly an individual activity or result of collaborative practices. [5]

The concept and design of work gradually started changing from this point. Work could then be seen as organized and collective tasks linked with cycles of seasons - agriculture and animal husbandry. The ownership of lands, the possession of produce from agriculture and animals, created human hierarchies, ranking system, and differentiations among working and non-working people (priests/ chief etc.). As societies started to develop, so did ideas of work. Gradually, came the era of barter and trading systems, which required exchange of goods with other goods or labor. With the introduction and advancements of currency, labor could be exchanged with perceived value. The concept was viewed and perceived differently by different cultures.

A good sample can be found in the Bible, where we can trace three distinctive meanings of Work. (Gagnier and Dupré, 1995):1) As an achievement, with the six days spent on creation. (*“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it he had rested from all his work”* Genesis 2:3). 2) As an alternative to leisure and rest, when God rests on the seventh day (same verse). 3) As a burden and punishment, when Adam is sent away from Garden Eden, he is condemned to work. (*“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground”*, Genesis 3:19)

In Hindu literature, work is often described as worship and moral obligation to society. The Bhagavad Gita uses the term “Karma” to describe work or action. It has its origin in Sanskrit language - the verb “kri” means to do. The Gita also describes the concept of "karma yoga", which is a spiritual practice of selfless work done for the benefit of humanity.

In Islamic literature, work is considered a religious duty and a virtuous deed that is obligatory for all able-bodied people in society. It is seen as a type of jihad for the sake of God, and its purpose is to fulfill the needs of oneself and one's family through lawful means. Work is also seen as an act of worship that brings goodness to the Muslim, and it is required that one strives hard in life to seek sustenance.

With all these beliefs and concepts, and according to British naturalist Charles Darwin’s “Survival of the Fittest” theory, we know that work is necessary for survival. The concept of work has evolved along with the evolution of humans, society, and other advancements till date. But, it's a fact that one cannot continue working 24\*7 in a week, and thus the concept of 6-days working, followed by 5-days working evolved. In 1940s, during World War II, the concept of remote working arose, where many industries hired thousands of women to work from home using just their telephones. Further with the invent of internet, it became evident that there exist many jobs that can be easily carried out from home. But there was an issue of impact of remote working on employees’ productivity. So, only visionary companies adopted this concept. However, COVID-19 pandemic forced majority of the industries to adopt remote working styles in order to be functional and to survive. And today, even after people could return to work, remote work is still in function fully or partially.

[0] A work environment is a space - physical and emotional, in which employees perform their daily tasks, which is a combination of physical environment, working conditions, and work culture.

[1] Ideally, companies should care less about where employees work and more about the talent, energy, and commitment they bring to their work – wherever they do it. A healthy remote workforce will surely attract and retain high-caliber people, improve productivity—lower costs, boost morale. And make it more cost-effective and flexible for your organization to grow. Work From Home (WFH) is a flexible working arrangement that allows an employee to work from a remote location other than the company's physical office. However, Capability to work from home during the pandemic was not able to all, and that caused inequality to increase. Further there are many more challenges while working from home - need of a separate room to work and sharing room with other members in the family may be disturbing, need of separate arrangements (devices, speakers, internet connections, chairs/tables) for members working or studying from home, which may not be possible for average income group people.

A human life as compared to other living organisms or species is multi dimensional, multi-faceted. It is a combination of multiple stages, multiple aspects with diverse and varied attributes. The [2] Dimensions of

human life can roughly be categorized as mental, physical, emotional, occupational, social, financial, spiritual, environmental, intellectual and vocational. These are interdependent and influence each other. Negligence of any one dimension over time affects the others.



A man being a social animal, depends on surrounding environmental factors where he lives and works. His happiness lies in his family, friends, relatives, community and surroundings. He cannot survive happily in isolation for a long run. So proper balance along all the dimensions mentioned above are necessary for his well being, irrespective of whether he is working from office or home. Looking at the consequences of remote working, few [3] effective remote working principles should be considered, viz. maintaining consistent and transparent communication, providing necessary support for wellbeing (mainly consequences arising from working in isolation), ensuring better productivity and engagement, managing work life balance, and maintaining goals and priorities.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design is comparative study. The data is collected by random sampling using a survey method. The sample size is 100 respondents. The data is collected using Google Forms and analysis is done using Excel. This research paper combines the analysis of several research papers, articles, white papers, and case studies on work from home and work from office from which we find out the present scenario, pros and cons.

This research aims to show a comparative study between work from office and work from home from different perspectives viz. Physical, social, emotional, occupational, financial, environmental and focuses on evaluating productivity and well-being of all stakeholders.

Data collection:

Primary data:

A soft copy (Google form) of Questionnaire was floated to the people from urban areas, which consisted of respondents right from co-founder and director up to regular employees within the organization.

The following questions were asked to gain insights into the opinions of respondents about remote working and office premises working along the four major key points: productivity, health, communication and collaboration, and work-life balance.

Productivity:

- a) The overall productivity while working from home is much more compared to working from office
- b) It is easier to focus on task when working from office
- c) Saving of commute time can contribute to increase in productivity
- d) Lack of dedicated workspace at home decreases productivity.
- e) Household responsibilities tend to decrease the productivity

Health:

- a) Work from home provides better physical comfort
- b) Increase in screen time when working from home makes you exhausted physically and mentally
- c) Increase in Family conflicts when working from home causes mental and emotional illness.
- d) Blurred boundaries, lack of proper guidance and support system leave you exhausted physically at the end of the day.
- e) You feel more isolated or disconnected from your team when working from home

Communication and Collaboration:

- a) Communication with your team is much better when working from home
- b) There are more Technical issues in remote working when communicating and collaborating with team members
- c) Asynchronous communication tend to decrease productivity
- d) There are more distractions in collaboration when working from home
- e) Building personal relationships among team members is challenging in remote environment

Work-life balance:

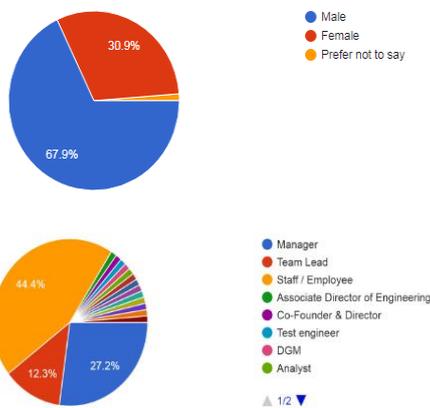
- a) Flexible schedule when working from home improves work-life balance
- b) Lack of career visibility
- c) Lack of strict routine in remote working environment affect work-life balance
- d) It is challenging to disconnect from work at the end of the day when working from home
- e) Stress is induced due to blending work responsibilities with personal life when working from home

Secondary source: It comprises websites, journals, research papers, white papers, case studies, and online data.

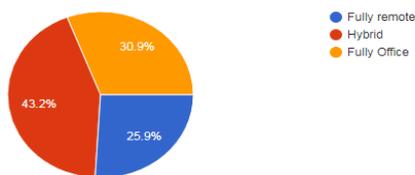
The survey results are depicted below in the form of pie charts and graphs.

#### IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

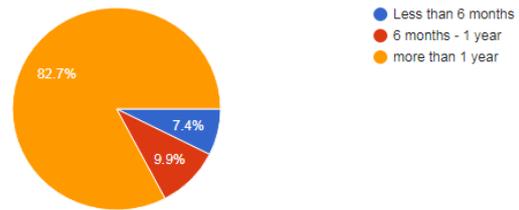
What is your current job role?



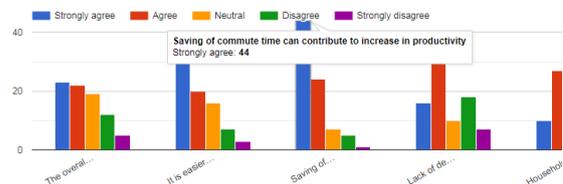
What is your current work arrangement?



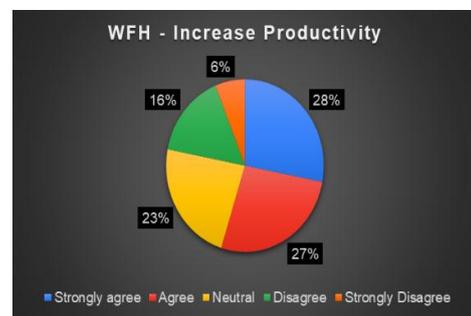
How long have you been working under your current arrangement?



#### Employee's Productivity



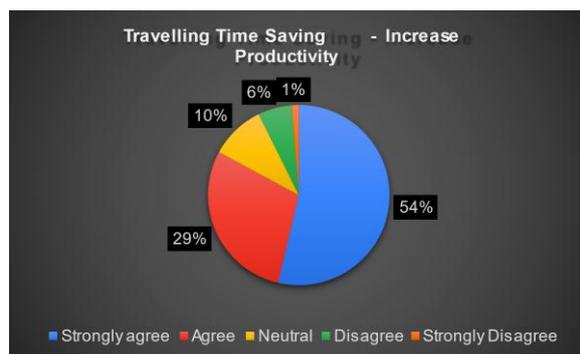
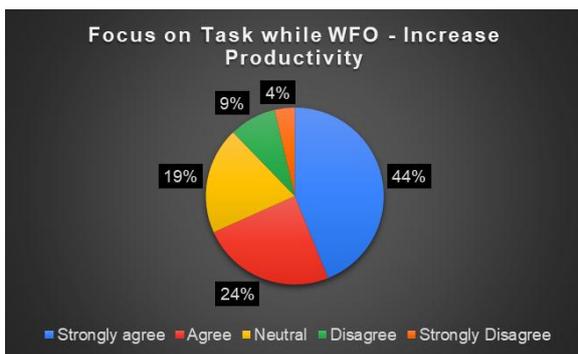
As per the Survey conducted from employees on productivity Increase while working from Home?

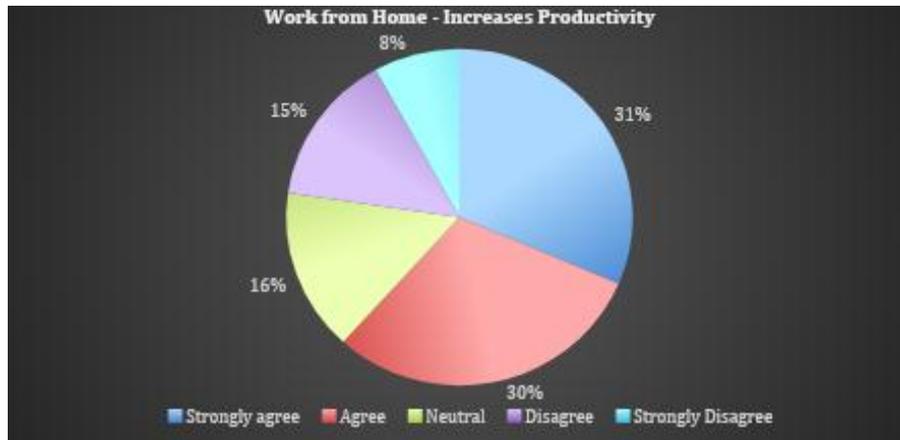
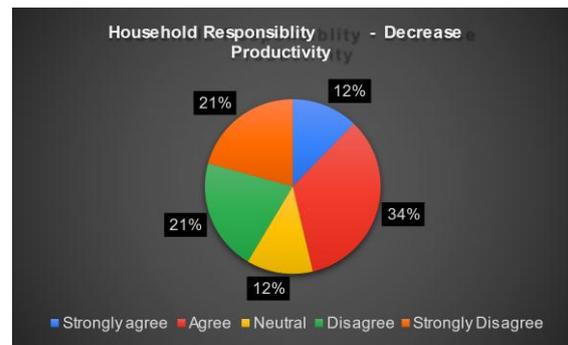
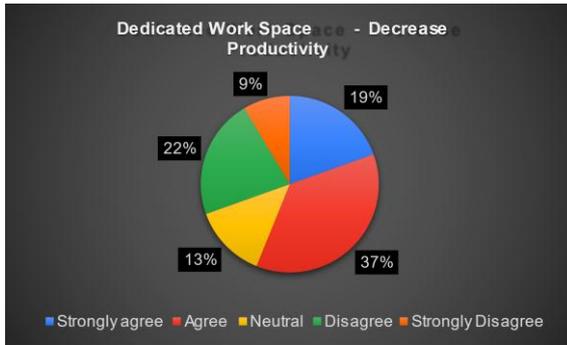


- 55% employees agreed on an increase in productivity while WFH out of which 28% strongly agreed on increased productivity while WFM.

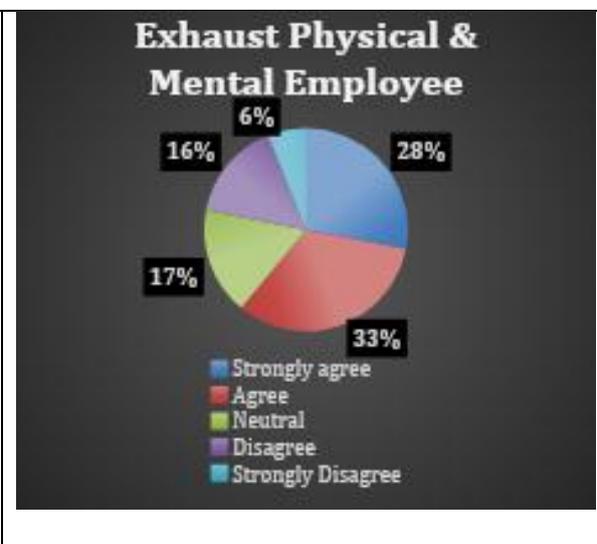
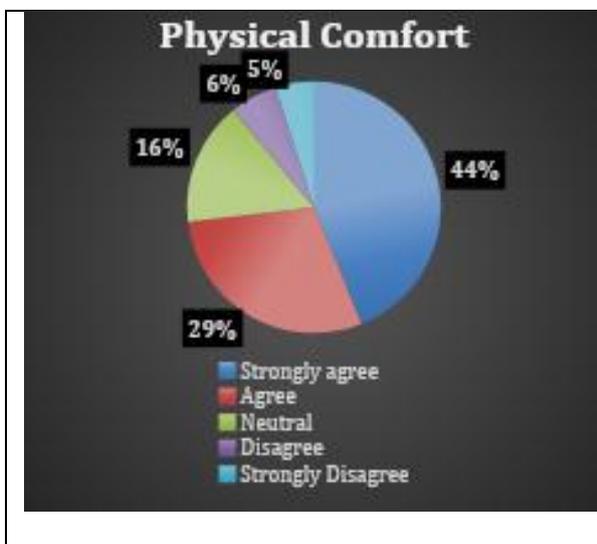
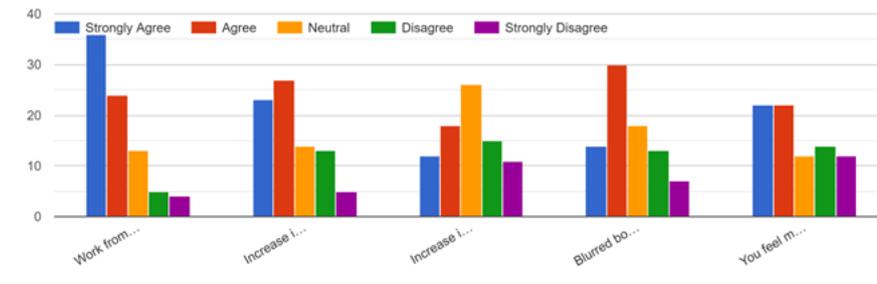
- 25% employees disagree on increased productivity while WFH out of which 6% strongly disagree on Increase in productivity while WFH.

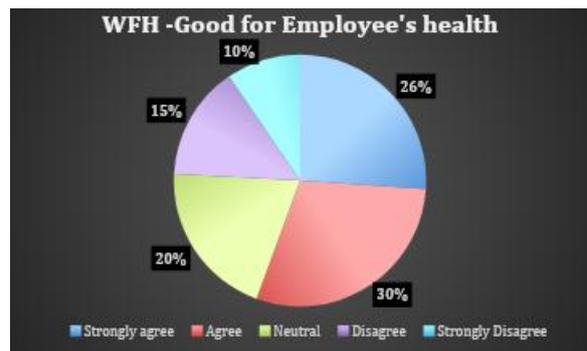
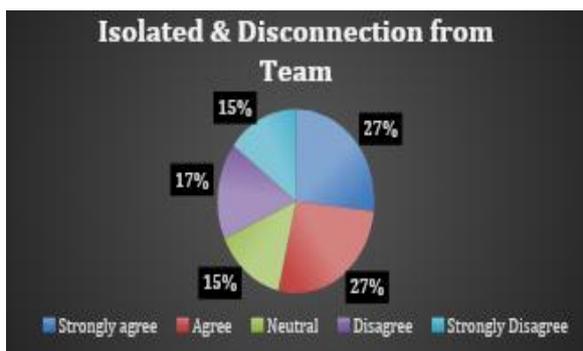
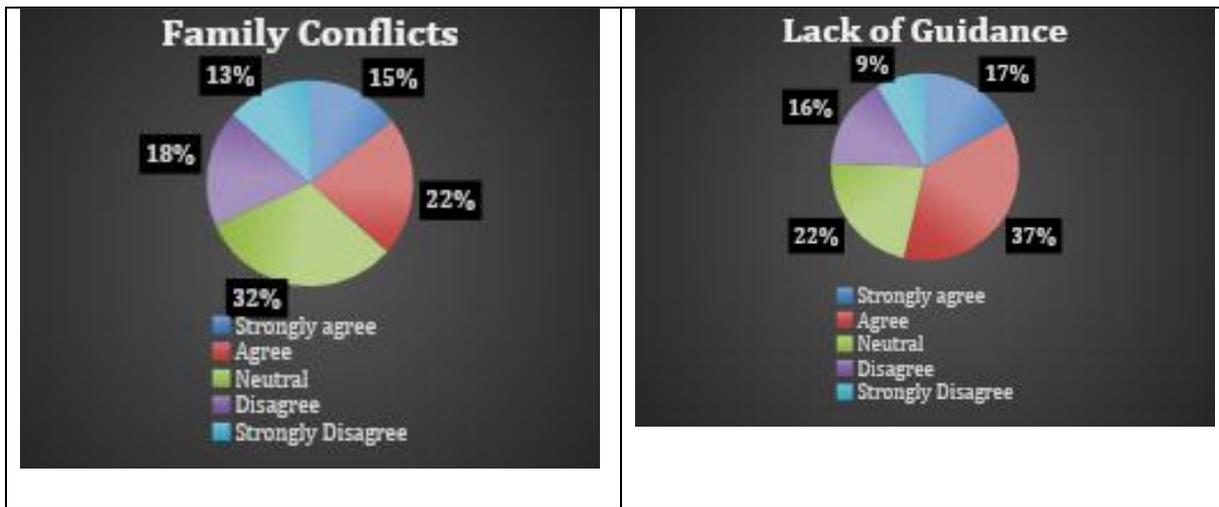
6% Employee are Neutral on impact on Productivity while WFH.



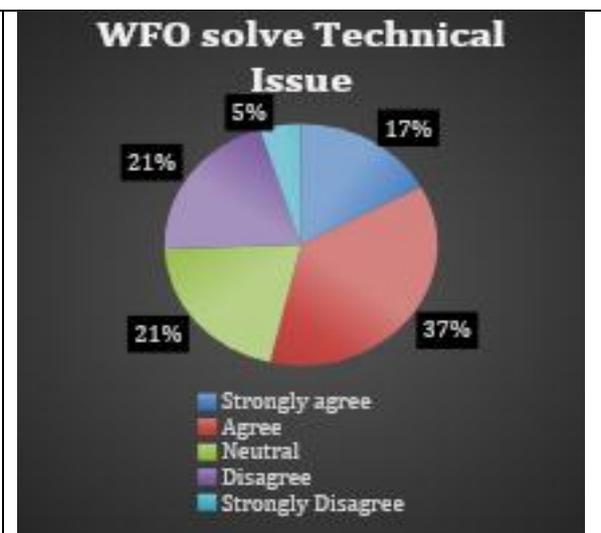
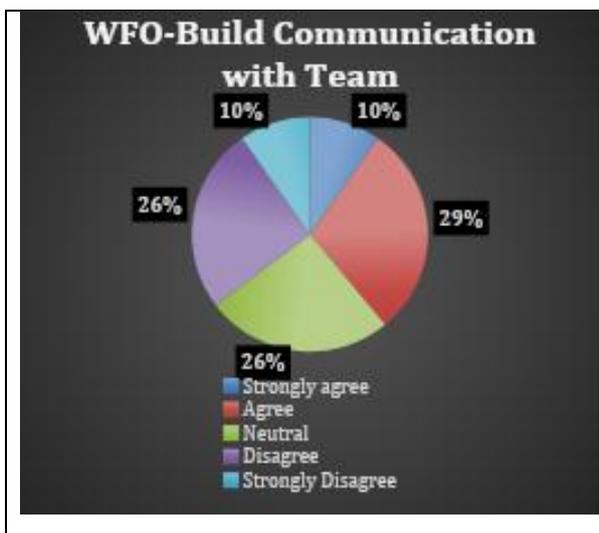
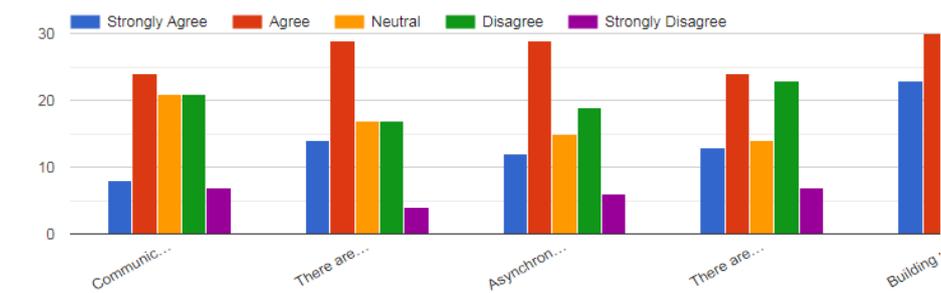


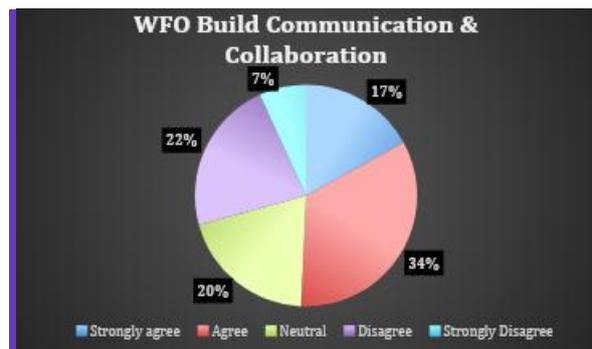
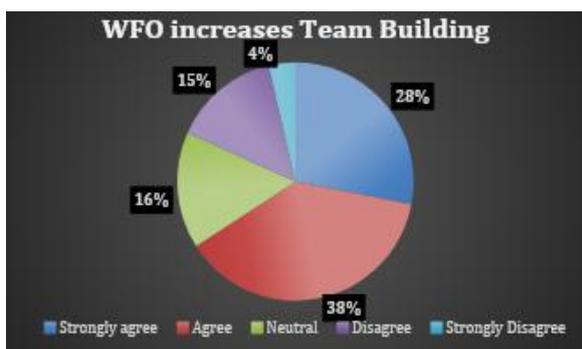
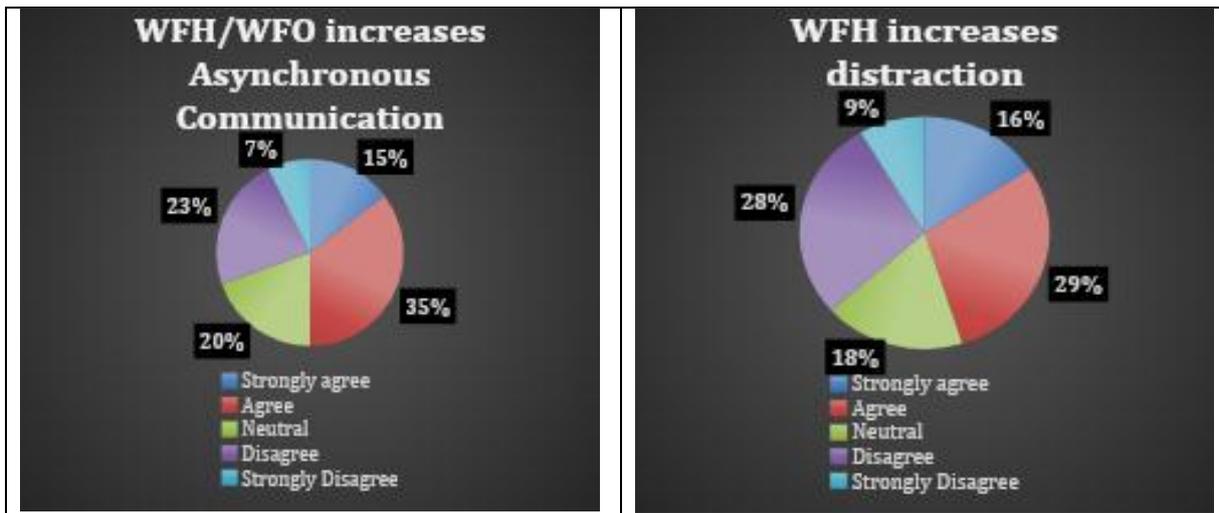
**Employee's health**



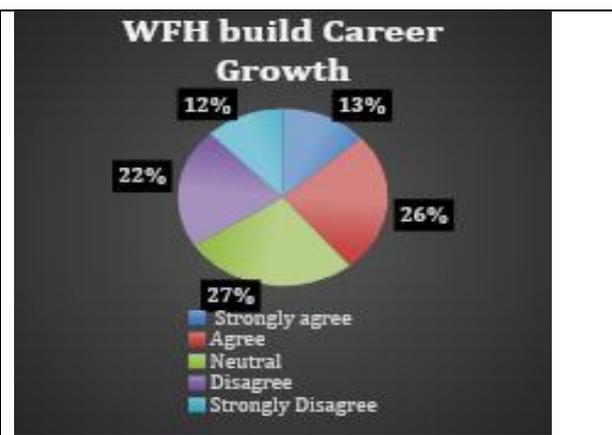
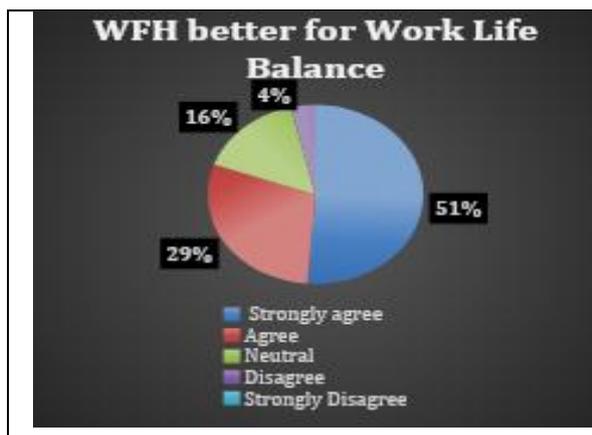
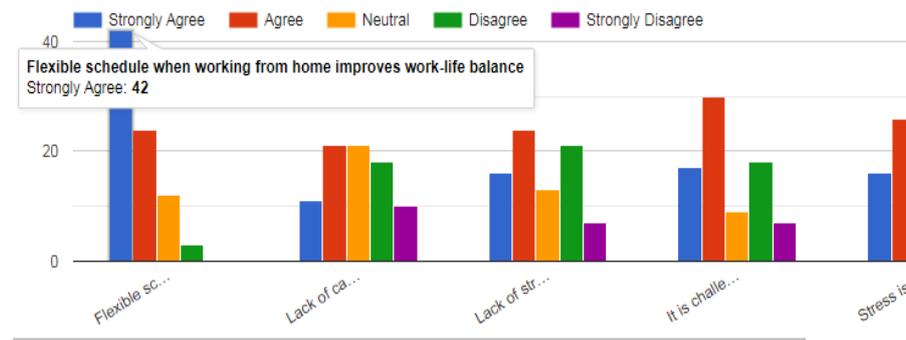


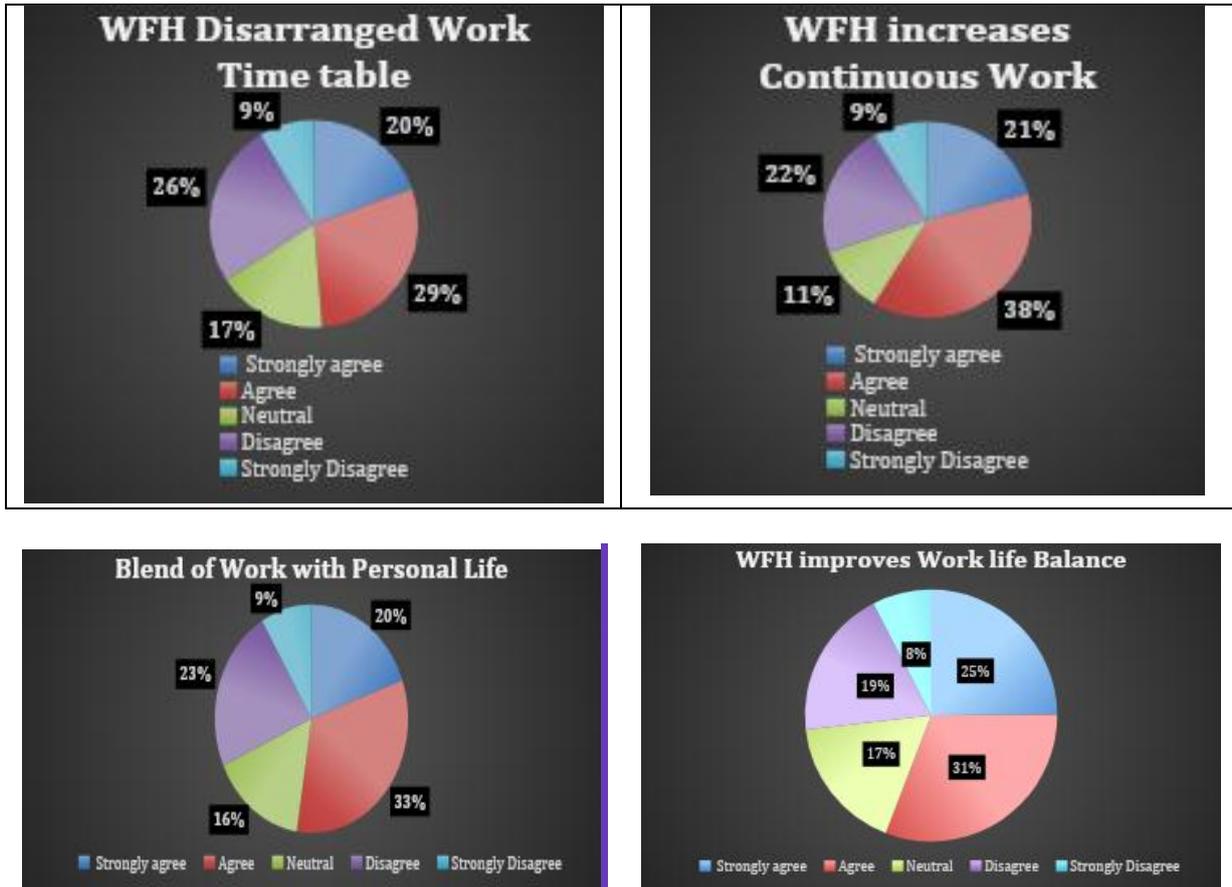
**Communication and Collaboration**





**Work Life balance**





V. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In this paper, the researchers surveyed “The impact of alternative work arrangement on productivity and well-being” and tried to understand the multiple facets of “remote working”, and “office working” and the mixture of these two from top to bottom level employees in various organisations..

According to the authors, the foremost challenge here is the absence of any regulatory body defining and ensuring the working mode and verifying their implementation at the organizational level. The second challenge arises from “conflicts of interests”, which may be due to factors such as nature of work, gender bias, work-life balance, impact on physical, mental, emotional, health etc. Since these challenges are relative and vary from organisation to organisation, person to person and time to time, it is challenging to come up with any one solution which may prove to contribute to personal, and organisational growth.

	Work From Home	Work From Office
Opportunities	Saved time and money	Effective communication

	from commuting resulting in reduced stress and fatigue, thus enhancing overall quality of life	and collaboration
	Increased job satisfaction	Efficient resolution of issues
	Save environment	Concentration at work
	Flexibility in terms of location, schedule	Work in shifts to handle time zone issues
Challenges	Needs self discipline and time management	Poor work-life balance
	Lack of one-on-one mentoring	Unhealthy team dynamics Toxic work environment

	Isolation and distraction at home	Harm to environment
	Boundary issues and burnout	Compromise at expertise available
	Time zone challenges	Reduced rate of employee retention

VI. CONCLUSION

WFH vs WFO

Working from home has many aspects in terms of flexibility of work whereas work from office is bound to only commuting and working around colleagues. The views vary drastically person to person as per their nature, work habits, family support, space. A typical Indian working woman has multiple responsibilities to handle, especially when two generations, kids and old-age people stay together. In such a scenario, WFH culture helps work-life balance. On the other hand, to achieve the deadlines and thereby handle the work pressure, a person needs a calm environment so as to concentrate fully on work. Many times, face to face interactive sessions, meetings help to clarify things better.

Electricity, Internet connection, separate workspace are the basic requirements of WFH culture. A person working from the office need not worry about these factors but need to worry about commuting hours and related exertion.

A person always loves to work in freedom or independence. Freedom at work can convert to efficiency and productivity. Here freedom means flexibility. WFH requires - ironed clothes, formal shirt with tie, polished shoes; a perfect attire is expected before leaving home. Right from waking up, till getting ready for office, the person needs to run around the clock. Sometimes, breakfast needs to be skipped if the minute-hand runs faster than usual.

Whereas, WFH gives much flexibility. It gives relaxation in waking time, relaxation in getting ready, relaxation in enjoying breakfast. It also offers reduced expenses for ironed clothes, shoes and commuting.

Productivity is the main and basic expectation from employers which can be achieved in either way. So checking the pros and cons in terms of questionnaire

through the survey will surely help in analysis of WFH vs WFO.

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