

Workplace Preferences of Fresh Graduates in the IT Sector: Hybrid Versus Office-Based Roles

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Abstract—This study seeks to find out whether fresh graduates in the IT sector prefer hybrid work schedules or fully office-based roles, and the reasons behind their choices. As work culture keeps changing, young employees today often look for comfort, flexibility, and a better balance between work and personal life. The rise of remote and hybrid jobs has given people new ways to work, but it is still not clear if hybrid work truly meets the needs and expectations of new graduates. Some may feel that traditional office roles still give more value through learning, teamwork, and clear structure. This research keeps an open view and does not assume one work model is better than the other. It focuses on how factors like flexibility, travel time, stress, independence, communication, and efficiency affect the preferences of fresh graduates. The study also looks at whether these choices change based on background, location, or education. The findings will help employers and HR teams understand what kind of work environment supports new IT professionals the most and how they can create workplaces that help them perform better and stay motivated.

Index Terms—Fresh graduates, IT sector, workplace preferences, hybrid work, office-based roles, work culture, employee motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

The IT sector has changed a lot in the way people work. Many companies now use hybrid work schedules where employees work both from home and the office. For fresh graduates, this change creates new questions about how they want to begin their careers. Some may like hybrid work because it gives them more freedom and saves travel time. Others may prefer office-based jobs because they offer better guidance and teamwork. Working in an office can help new employees learn directly from seniors and build stronger connections. At the same

time, hybrid work can reduce stress and give more personal time. The new generation of workers often looks for a healthy balance between work and personal life. But it is still not clear which type of work helps them grow faster or feel more satisfied. This study tries to find out what fresh graduates really prefer in the IT field. It also looks at what factors, like flexibility, comfort, or learning opportunities, affect their choices. The research does not take sides between hybrid and office-based work. Instead, it focuses on the real opinions and experiences of new employees. The goal is to find out what kind of work setup supports them best as they begin their professional journey.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To find out whether fresh IT graduates prefer hybrid work or office-based work.
- To understand what factors, influence their choice, such as flexibility, travel time, stress, and communication.
- To see if preferences change based on a person's background, location, or education.
- To learn how these preferences affect motivation and productivity at work.
- To suggest ways employers can create better workplaces for new IT professionals.

Hypothesis

- H1: Fresh graduates may prefer hybrid work because of factors like comfort, flexibility, and reduced travel stress.
- H2: Traditional office roles may still be preferred by some fresh graduates for reasons such as structure, mentoring, and career growth.

- H3: There may not be a single clear preference; fresh graduates could show mixed expectations depending on personal priorities.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The preference for hybrid work models has been widely studied across various sectors, including the IT industry. Research indicates that employees value the flexibility offered by hybrid work arrangements, which allow them to manage their work-life balance more effectively. A study by Gallup found that six in ten employees with remote-capable jobs desire a hybrid work arrangement, highlighting its growing popularity (Gallup, 2022). In the context of fresh graduates, studies have shown that this demographic is particularly inclined towards flexible work arrangements. A survey by Prospects at Jisc revealed that 60% of graduates preferred hybrid working, citing benefits such as improved productivity and overall well-being (Prospects at Jisc, 2022). However, the same study noted that many graduates felt pressure from employers to return to the office full-time, indicating a potential disconnect between employee preferences and employer expectations.

The IT sector, known for its reliance on digital tools and technologies, is well-suited to accommodate hybrid work models. Research by Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom found that employees working from home two days a week were just as productive and as likely to be promoted as their fully office-based peers, with reduced resignation rates (Bloom, 2024). This suggests that hybrid work can be effective in maintaining productivity and employee engagement. Despite these advantages, challenges remain in implementing hybrid work models. Issues such as communication barriers, feelings of isolation, and difficulties in team collaboration can arise when employees are not physically present in the office. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to develop strategies that mitigate these challenges while maximizing the benefits of hybrid work arrangements. Further studies have explored the impact of hybrid work on employee performance and job satisfaction. Research conducted by Kumari et al. (2025) introduced insights by linking the hybrid workplace model to employee performance, job satisfaction, and work engagement. The study found

that hybrid work had a significant and positive effect on employee performance and job happiness, with work engagement serving as a mediator between hybrid work and job happiness.

Additionally, a study by Deloitte (2023) highlighted that hybrid workers appreciate the flexibility it provides, despite challenges such as shifting between home and office environments. The study noted that hybrid workers value the balance between in-office collaboration and remote work, which contributes to their overall job satisfaction. Although the above studies highlight general employee preferences toward hybrid work, few have specifically examined how fresh graduates in the IT sector perceive these work models. To address this gap, the present study collects and analyzes primary data directly from IT graduates to understand their workplace expectations and choices.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher felt inspired to choose this topic while going through the process of applying for jobs in the IT sector. During that time, the researcher faced long travel for interviews, odd timings, and stressful processes. These experiences made the researcher think about how such things might affect fresh graduates who are just starting their careers. The researcher also read news articles that talked about daily traffic problems in big cities and how this travel causes both mental and physical stress for employees. This daily routine not only wastes time but also affects their work and health.

The researcher also observed the heavy traffic in large metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, and Pune has become a daily struggle for working professionals. A major reason behind this problem is the massive number of employees commuting to offices every day during peak hours. This not only wastes hours of productive time but also causes physical and mental fatigue. The researcher felt that if organizations considered hybrid work models, it could help reduce traffic congestion to a large extent. With fewer people traveling every day, public transport and roads would be less crowded, and employees would reach work fresher and with less stress.

The researcher thought more about this topic after talking with IT employees and seeing how their day usually starts early and ends late, leaving them with very little personal time. Many of them said they felt tired and exhausted because of the daily travel and long working hours. These observations made the researcher wonder if hybrid work could make life easier and more balanced for such employees. Talking with other fresh graduates showed that many of them felt the same way. They agreed that while office work has its advantages, hybrid work gives a better balance of comfort, flexibility, and efficiency.

Based on these thoughts, the researcher made the hypothesis that most fresh graduates in the IT sector would prefer hybrid work over office-based work. Still, the researcher also thought that some people might like office work more because it gives more structure and social contact. So, the researcher kept the hypothesis open to all possible results. This study is based on primary data collection to understand the workplace preferences of fresh graduates in the IT sector. The data was gathered through a structured Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed online to recent IT graduates. The survey included both multiple-choice and checkbox questions, allowing respondents to express their preferences and opinions on hybrid and office-based work models. A total of 16 valid responses were collected and analyzed. The questions were designed to capture factors influencing their choices, such as flexibility, comfort, mentoring, and career growth. The use of primary data helped ensure that the findings reflected first-hand, current opinions of fresh graduates rather than relying on existing secondary research. In conclusion, the researcher felt that this topic is very important in today's changing work culture, especially for fresh graduates starting their careers in the IT field. The research method was made to include personal observations, information from previous studies, and direct answers from people who took part in the survey. This helped the researcher get a clear and balanced understanding of what kind of workplace fresh IT professionals prefer and why.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The purpose of this research was to understand workplace preferences among fresh graduates in the

IT sector and to determine whether they lean toward hybrid or office-based work models. The three hypotheses focused on identifying the reasons behind their choices and whether one model was preferred more clearly than the other. The first hypothesis suggested that fresh graduates may prefer hybrid work because of comfort, flexibility, and reduced travel stress. The second hypothesis proposed that traditional office roles might still attract some graduates due to structure, mentoring, and career growth. The third hypothesis assumed that there may not be one clear preference, and that responses would show mixed opinions depending on personal priorities. The collected data from sixteen participants helps explore these points in depth, reflecting how the new generation of IT professionals think about their ideal work environment.

The analysis of survey responses indicates a strong inclination toward hybrid work, clearly supporting the first hypothesis. Out of sixteen respondents, around 87.5%, that is fourteen people, preferred hybrid work models over other options. This overwhelming response shows that most fresh graduates believe hybrid arrangements allow them to enjoy both flexibility and structure. They appreciate being able to work from home part of the week, saving travel time and avoiding the stress of daily commuting. Many participants connected this to better mental balance, convenience, and the freedom to manage their own productivity hours. The few respondents who supported full-time office roles mainly emphasized factors such as guidance, mentoring, and teamwork, aligning with the second hypothesis. They believed that working physically in an office helps in learning faster through supervision and collaboration, especially in the early stage of a career. Hence, while both hypotheses find some degree of support, the data strongly tilts in favor of hybrid models being the preferred choice for most young IT professionals.

When analyzing the data in more detail, several patterns become clear. The majority of participants cited reduced travel time as one of the most significant benefits of hybrid work. Long commutes are often exhausting and expensive, particularly for fresh graduates living in cities where transportation can be a daily challenge. By working from home part

of the week, employees save not only time but also energy that can be redirected toward learning or upskilling. The responses also show that flexibility and comfort were highly valued. Many participants expressed that being able to choose when and where to work makes them feel more in control and leads to higher efficiency. This finding reflects a generational shift in work expectations, where comfort and productivity are now seen as complementary rather than opposing goals. Another insight from the responses is the appreciation for a balanced routine. Several participants mentioned preferring a model where they could work “three days in the office and two from home.” This hybrid blend was viewed as ideal since it maintains face-to-face interaction for collaboration while still offering the comfort of remote work. About 56.3% of participants supported this kind of mixed arrangement, showing that most graduates don’t completely reject the traditional office but rather want it to evolve into something more flexible.

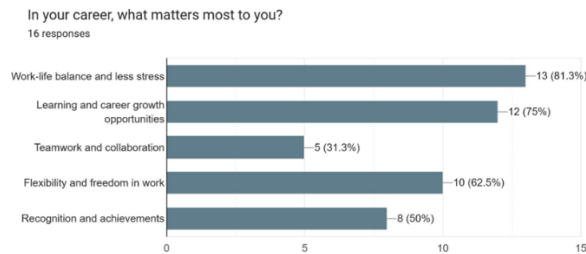
This supports the third hypothesis, suggesting that workplace expectations among young employees are diverse and adaptable. Rather than choosing one model entirely, many graduates desire a combination that fits their personal rhythm, lifestyle, and mental well-being. At the same time, the minority who favored fully office-based roles offered interesting perspectives. Two respondents, representing about 12.5% of the sample, indicated that being physically present in the office allows for better learning, discipline, and teamwork. They emphasized that mentorship and peer interaction are more effective in person and that early career professionals can benefit from structured supervision and social exposure. This reasoning aligns with the idea that some skills such as communication, coordination, and leadership are easier to develop in face-to-face environments. Hence, while this group is small, their perspective highlights that traditional work structures are not entirely obsolete, especially for those who value growth through guidance and networking. The open-ended responses in the survey further enrich this interpretation. Some respondents mentioned that while remote work or hybrid setups offer convenience, a full work-from-office phase might be necessary in the beginning of a career to understand company culture and build interpersonal confidence.

Others suggested that flexibility improves motivation and creativity, as employees can design their own work rhythm according to their peak focus hours. Interestingly, one participant also noted that hybrid work benefits not only employees but also employers, as it can increase satisfaction and productivity while maintaining teamwork. These reflections show that even though the majority favor hybrid work, their reasons extend beyond personal comfort. They see it as a sustainable and balanced model that benefits both sides.

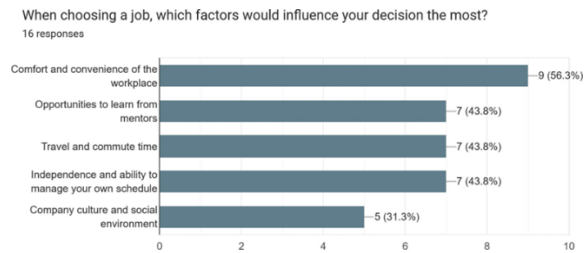
The overall distribution of responses demonstrates that the new generation of IT professionals no longer view the workplace only as a physical location but as a dynamic environment where productivity and well-being can coexist. The preference for hybrid work among 87.5% of respondents reflects a strong desire for autonomy, trust, and flexibility in modern work settings. However, the fact that a small segment continues to support traditional offices shows that in-person experience and mentoring remain valuable for professional growth. This balance supports the third hypothesis and reveals a blended mindset among fresh graduates. They do not see flexibility and structure as opposites but as complementary needs. The data, therefore, captures a transitional phase in workplace culture, one that merges the independence of remote work with the collaboration and guidance of office settings. Interpreting the overall findings, it becomes evident that all three hypotheses are supported in varying degrees. The first hypothesis receives the strongest support, as most participants prefer hybrid work due to the comfort and flexibility it provides. The second hypothesis is partially validated through the small but significant group that values in-office mentorship and structure. The third hypothesis stands confirmed because there is no single universal preference; responses reveal overlapping needs and mixed motivations. Some participants prioritize comfort and autonomy, while others focus on stability, guidance, and career learning. In short, fresh graduates in the IT sector want a workplace that allows them to be independent but not isolated, structured but not restricted. Their ideal environment is one that provides opportunities for learning, freedom for self-management, and a rhythm that promotes both efficiency and well-being.

These results highlight a major cultural change in how new employees define success and satisfaction at work. Instead of strictly valuing presence or position, they value balance, choice, and adaptability. The hybrid model appears to be the most suitable response to these evolving needs. It gives them space for personal growth while maintaining the collaborative spirit essential in IT projects. In conclusion, the findings reveal that young professionals entering the IT field expect organizations to move toward more flexible, human-centered work arrangements, where both personal comfort and professional progress can thrive together.

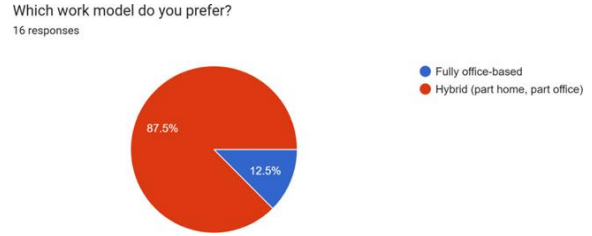
A. Visual Representation of Data



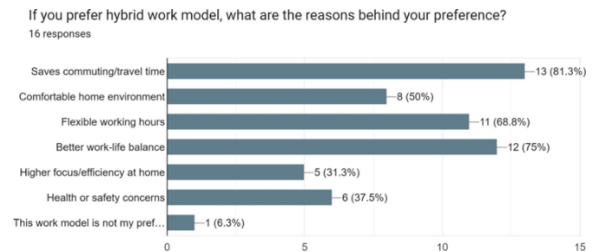
Interpretation: The chart shows the largest share of respondents choosing work-life balance and less stress, indicating that fresh graduates place priority on well-being and balance over other career factors. This suggests their job choices will strongly favor roles that support flexibility and lower daily pressure.



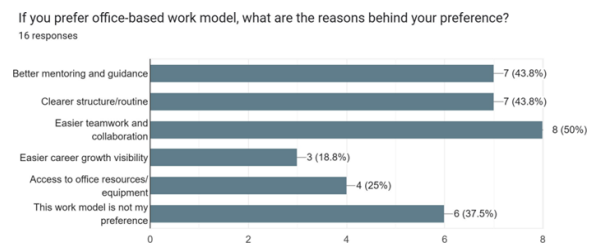
Interpretation: The chart indicates that most respondents selected comfort and convenience of the workplace as the most influential factor when choosing a job. This reflects that young IT graduates highly value a stress-free, flexible, and supportive work environment over traditional motivators like hierarchy or prestige.



Interpretation: The chart clearly shows that a strong majority of respondents prefer the hybrid work model (14 out of 16 respondents), while only a small number favor fully office-based setup. This demonstrates that most fresh graduates desire a balanced arrangement that combines both flexibility and opportunities for in-person interaction.



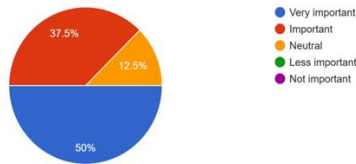
Interpretations: The chart reveals that most respondents chose saving commute time, better work-life balance, and flexible working hours as their main reasons for preferring hybrid work. This suggests that convenience, personal comfort, and time efficiency are key motivators influencing the work preferences of fresh graduates.



Interpretations: The chart shows that respondents who favor office-based work mainly selected better mentoring and guidance, teamwork, and structured routine as important reasons. This indicates that while fewer in number, these graduates value direct learning, collaboration, and a clear professional structure.

offered by traditional office settings.

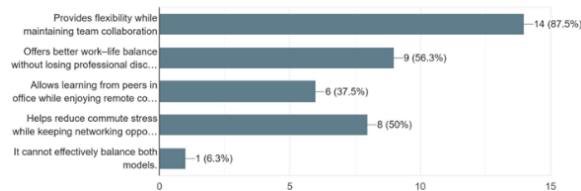
How important is it for an individual to have the opportunity to choose the work model that best suits their preferences and lifestyle?
16 responses



Interpretation:

The chart demonstrates that the majority of respondents rated flexibility as very important, showing that fresh graduates strongly associate job satisfaction with having control over their schedules and work environment. This highlights that autonomy and adaptable work conditions are key priorities in their career expectations.

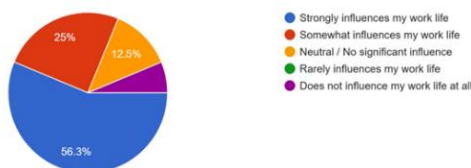
In what ways do you think a hybrid work model could balance the advantages of remote and office-based work model?
16 responses



Interpretation:

The chart shows that 87.5% of respondents believe hybrid work provides flexibility while maintaining team collaboration, making it the most valued benefit. A majority also see it as offering a better work-life balance (56.3%) and reducing commute stress while preserving networking opportunities, indicating that fresh graduates view hybrid work as an effective and well-rounded model that combines comfort, efficiency, and professional growth.

How does commuting affect your work life?
16 responses



Interpretation:

The chart indicates that 56.3% of respondents feel commuting strongly impacts their work-life balance,

while smaller portions feel it doesn't influence much. This suggests that long or tiring commutes are a major reason why fresh graduates prefer hybrid models, as reducing travel time directly contributes to lower stress and better daily productivity.

Any other work model you prefer? Why? 6 responses

Remote work model is also preferable and implemented in many industries and in many countries.

I prefer the flexible work model, where employees can choose when and where they work. it

promotes better work-life balance, higher production and allows individuals to perform at their best based on their personal schedule and preferences.

At starting work from office as we are new, we need to grow more as soon as possible

Yes, I would like to work 3 days in office and 2 days at home so it's easy for companies and staff also to be happy and get work done and make good profit

Work from Home is my preference for now as it is more convenient as a fresher who is also busy with college.

No

Interpretation:

The responses show diverse opinions, with some participants favoring remote or flexible models for better work-life balance and convenience, while others believe starting from the office helps gain experience and growth. Several also mentioned a 3-days office, 2-days home setup as ideal, reflecting that most fresh graduates seek a balanced and adaptable work style rather than a fixed model

VI. FINDINGS

The data collected from sixteen IT graduates clearly shows a dominant preference for the hybrid work model, with 87.5% of respondents favoring it over other options. This finding strongly supports the first hypothesis, which suggested that fresh graduates prefer hybrid setups for reasons such as comfort, flexibility, and reduced travel stress. The responses and chart interpretations consistently point toward the same conclusion: young professionals value work-life balance, personal well-being, and autonomy more than traditional factors like hierarchy or office

routine. The second hypothesis also finds partial support, as a smaller portion of participants (12.5%) indicated a preference for office-based roles due to the advantages of mentorship, structured routines, and teamwork, emphasizing that face-to-face interaction and guided learning remain relevant for professional growth. The data thus reflects a changing work mindset where fresh graduates seek both independence and collaboration without being confined to one fixed structure.

Further findings confirm the third hypothesis, showing that there is no single universal preference, as responses vary based on individual priorities and situations. Open-ended feedback reveals that while most participants favor flexibility, some still see value in starting their careers in an office environment to build foundational skills. A few also mentioned hybrid combinations such as “three days in the office and two days at home,” indicating that they prefer a balanced and adaptable approach. The insights from each chart show that flexibility, reduced commute time, and work-life balance are the most influential factors shaping preferences, while mentoring and teamwork remain secondary yet significant motivators. Overall, the results suggest that fresh graduates want a modern, balanced work culture, which blends the best aspects of remote and office-based work to enhance both personal satisfaction and professional development.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand whether fresh graduates in the IT sector prefer hybrid or office-based work and the reasons behind their choices. Based on the collected primary data, it is clear that most fresh graduates strongly favor the hybrid work model, mainly because it provides comfort, flexibility, and less travel stress. This supports the first hypothesis and shows that young professionals value a healthy work-life balance and control over their schedules. A smaller group preferred traditional office-based work, which supports the second hypothesis, as they believe face-to-face mentoring, teamwork, and structure help in faster learning and career growth. The third hypothesis is also supported, as some responses showed mixed opinions like many graduates want a balance between the comfort of

home and the discipline of the office. Overall, the findings suggest that fresh IT graduates do not want extreme work setups; instead, they prefer a balanced, flexible, and supportive environment where they can grow professionally while maintaining personal well-being. This shows a shift in workplace expectations among the new generation, emphasizing that future work policies in the IT sector should combine both flexibility and collaboration to meet the evolving needs of young professionals.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests that companies should accept and implement the hybrid work model, not only in the IT sector but in as many other sectors as possible. Allowing employees to work from home on some days can help them manage their time and energy better. This change can also reduce stress and travel problems, making employees happier and more focused on their work. The researcher recommends that, if possible, companies should follow a five-day work schedule in which one or two days are work-from-home days, and holidays on weekends. This balance will help maintain both employee satisfaction and productivity. Every company should remember that the well-being of its employees is just as important as profit. Treating employees with care and understanding, rather than as tools for profit, will lead to long-term success for both the workers and the organization.

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