



Singaporean Journal of Scientific Research(SJSR)

An International Journal (AIJ)

Vol.17.No.1 2025,Pp.5-17

ISSN: 1205-2421

available at :www.sjsronline.com

Paper Received : 04-12-2024 Paper Accepted: 07-01-2025

Paper Reviewed by: 1.Prof. Cheng Yu 2. Dr.Yarab Baig

Editor : Dr. Chen Du Fensidal

Implementing a Hybrid Workplace Model – with Reference to IT Industries in Chennai, India

JENEFFER GNANA SOUNDARI W

Research Scholar

School of Management & Commerce

Takshashila University, Ongur, Villupuram Dist, India.

Dr.K.PRATHIBA

Assistant Professor

School of Management & Commerce

Takshashila University, Ongur, Villupuram Dist, India.

Abstract

The hybrid workplace is a concept on the lips of every industry trend in the world today. With digitalization becoming more normalized across every sphere in the global village. Every workplace needs to maximize and transcend obstacles and innovations to ease into the hybrid workplace. The CONID-19 pandemic brought a wave for an increased need for a hybrid workplace. Although some countries have relaxed the lockdown in their states, businesses are taking their time to set up a more formidable work arrangement. Many are already operating the hybrid system while others are running fully remote. The pandemic has taught the work a lesson of preparation and planning. Beyond that is also the lesson of flexibility and adaptability in the workplace.

Keywords: Hybrid Workplace, CONID-19, Pandemic, HMPN, Lockdown, Workforce:

1. Introduction

After pandemic so many scenario has changed at workplace such as work, workforce, working style, technology and even workplace. Among all one thing which catches' the eye of Business houses, Leaders and HR is workplace hybrid which is new conventional, more human centric, tech enabled and sustainable (Laker). Due to pandemic we are on the edge of disruption and there is a sudden shift to remote work. In May 2020, the CONID-19 epidemic caused a sudden change in the workforce throughout the world. Employees in all sectors were told to work from home amid lockdowns and stay-at home instructions. While most of the world's workforce cannot migrate to remote work, it is more prevalent in advanced economies including the US, UK, and Australia (McKinsey, 2020). In countries like India workforces faced a lot of challenge to shift from office to remote workplace. In industry if we talk about service industry such as IT, education, finance, consultancies, e-commerce, etc., was able to manage work from remote places more conveniently "Additionally, some areas, like technology, finance, and management, are better suited for remote employment" (McKinsey, 2020). From April 2021, number of cases decreases, because of strict precautions, steps taken by government and availability of vaccinations lives are getting normal again. Institutes, offices, industries, schools etc. are moving toward new normal with utmost precautions. The impact of pandemic is almost on everyone and everywhere. Hybrid workplace is comparatively a new concept in India as it mostly came into being after the pandemic hot in the year 2020. Even though hybrid workplace existed before the pandemic in India, many organisations did not found it to be a viable option. Work-from-home was considered to be less productive as compared to work-from-office by a number of organisations. One of the most significant modifications that people adopted as part of their "new normal" following CONID-19 was the alteration in workplace interactions. People went from rushing to offices at 9 AM in the morning to attending meetings from their dining room. As the lockdown forced people to attend offices from their house for more than a year, people got adjusted to this new normal. The occurrence of pandemic has changed the scenario of the workplace all over the world. The Indian population found it difficult to adjust to this abrupt change from Work-from Office to Work-from-Home. Many aspects of work, like workforce, working style, technology, and even the environment, have changed as a result of the epidemic. The workplace hybrid, which is new conventional, more human focused, tech enabled, and sustainable, is one thing that captures the notice of business houses, leaders, and HR. We are on the verge of being disrupted by the epidemic, and there has been a dramatic shift to remote work. In May 2020, the worldwide workforce was transformed overnight due to the Covid-19 epidemic. In the midst of lockdowns and stay-at-home instructions, workers from all sectors were instructed to work from home. Although most workers worldwide cannot work remotely, it is becoming more common in industrialised economies like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (McKinsey, 2020). Workforces in nations like India experienced numerous challenges when transitioning from the office to a remote location. Service sectors, such as IT, education, finance, consulting, e-commerce, and so on, were able to manage work from remote locations more easily. Additionally, some professions – such as those in technology, finance, and management – are better suited to remote work (McKinsey, 2020). The number of cases has reduced since April 2021 as a result of careful safeguards, government initiatives, and the accessibility of vaccines, and life is getting back to normal. Institutions, organisations, businesses,

schools, and other establishments are moving to a new normal with great caution. The effects of a pandemic are felt by practically everyone and everywhere. The crisis hit everyone hard, but it also presented a chance. It has been shown that employees with suitable jobs can operate from home productively and efficiently without suffering. This change coincides with a new employment model known as the hybrid workplace, in which some employees resume while others want to work from home. Businesses and workers' lives are gradually reverting to pre-pandemic levels, and it is possible to claim that houses have become new workplaces.

2. Literature Review

Danijela Sokolic (2022) noticed that Remote work, particularly performing from home, has become the foremost common kind of work in the third decade of the twenty-first century. What started at the start of the millennium as an Associate in Nursing experimental apply in some corporations (mainly within the IT industry) has become widespread and unintentional in 2020 and 2021, because of COVID nineteen pandemic. It modified a number of the foremost important options of the roles, like the communication patterns and also the conception of the workplace, leading not solely to vital changes within the method work is completed, but conjointly to a different psycho-emotional perception of labor within the context of adjusting socialization patterns.

Prithwiraj et.al (2022) said that Hybrid work is rising as a unique kind of organizing work globally. This paper reports causative proof on however the extent of hybrid work the variety of days worked from home relative to today worked from the office affects work outcomes. Collaborating with a company in an Asian nation, we tend to randomize the number of days that individual staff worked from the workplace for 9 weeks in the summer of 2020. 3. Methodology

First and foremost, a literature review of existing research was undertaken, which included, among other things, the benefits and challenges of Remote working vs Hybrid workplace model, as well as a compilation of earlier information on employees' satisfaction attitudes and perceptions of remote employment. Second, a questionnaire was used to find out more. Workers' perspectives on remote work, which served as the foundation for the most recent cost-benefit study examining the advantages and disadvantages of a hybrid mode.

3. Objectives of the Research

1. To find out our work from home before the pandemic
2. To Analyze the perceived your work life balance during the pandemic
3. To find out the pandemic your perception of the work home environment
4. To illustrate the work allows, would appreciate working remotely more often
5. To find out your experience decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings
6. To encourage you enjoy working from Home
7. To you perceived your productivity during the pandemic

3.1 Data Collection

Questionnaires are the most common means of gathering data from a group of people. A

questionnaire is a series of questions, each with a set of responses, and a framework for collecting standardized, reasonably organized data about many instances. Questionnaires are now widely used in social research at all levels, from students and community initiatives to large multinational surveys. The design of a series of questions to aid the researcher in answering research questions or testing a hypothesis is a typical feature of these surveys.

Questions asked in the survey

1. How often did you work from home before the pandemic?
2. How have you perceived your work life balance during the pandemic?
3. During the pandemic your perception of the work home environment?
4. If work allows, would I appreciate working remotely more often?
5. Have you experienced decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings?
6. Have you experienced your opportunity to take responsibility for solving your tasks in an adequate way during the pandemic?
7. How have you experienced your mental and physical health during the pandemic?
8. Have you experienced the opportunity to be physically active during the pandemic?
9. Did you enjoy working from Home?
10. How have you perceived your productivity during the pandemic?

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 Gender and Age Distribution

As can be seen in the data, the participants of the survey were distributed by 68.0% women and 32.0% men. Furthermore most respondents were of the ages between 20-30 years (8.0%) followed by ages 31-40 years (25.0%).

Table 1: Classification of the Employees(n=150)

Factor	Classification	No.	of Percenta
Sex	Male	48	32
	Female	102	68
Age	20 - 30 yrs	12	8
	31 - 40 yrs	38	25
	41 - 50 yrs	80	54
	Above 51 yrs	20	13
Marital Status	Single	48	32
	Married	102	68
	Up to School Level	50	34

Educational Qualification	Graduate	60	40
	Post Graduate	18	12
	Others	22	14
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	12	8
	1 - 2 year	26	17.33
	2 - 5 year	42	28
	5 year and above	70	46.67

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 depicts that 8% of respondent under the age group of 20-30 years, 25% of respondents belonging to 31-40 years. 54% of respondents are 41-50 years and 13% of respondents are above 51 years. 32% of respondents are single and 68% of respondents are married. The educational classification of the respondents is 34% of respondents had studied up to School level only, 40% were graduate, 12% of the respondents were post graduate, 14% of the respondents were others. 8% respondents are working in the institution less than 1year, 17.33% respondents are 1-2 years, 28% respondents are 2-5 years and 46.67% of respondents are working in the institution above 5 years.

Table 2: Classification of the Employees

Factor	Classification	No. of Employees	Percentage (%)
How often did you work from home before the pandemic?	Never	82	54.67
	Rarely	29	19.33
	A few times in a Month	21	14.00
	1-2 times per a week	18	12.00
How have you perceived your work life balance during the pandemic?	A Far Inferior	12	8.00
	Inferior	32	21.33
	No Difference	53	35.33
	Superior	30	20.00
	A Far Superior	23	15.33
If work allows, would I appreciate working remotely often?	I have been able to work	42	28.00
	I had a good work space	68	45.33
	I had been furnished with superior	40	26.67
Have you experienced decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings?	Strongly Disagree	12	8.00
	Disagree	23	15.33

	Neutral	32	21.33
	Agree	46	30.67
	Strongly Agree	87	58.00
How have you experienced your opportunity to take responsibility for solving your tasks in an adequate way during the pandemic?	Yes	22	14.67
	No	69	46.00
	Maybe	59	39.33
If work allows, would I appreciate working remotely often?	I have been able to work alone	54	36.00
	I had a good workspace	84	56.00
	I had been furnished with superior equipment	12	8.00
Have you experienced decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings?	Strongly Disagree	11	7.33
	Disagree	21	14.00
	Neutral	28	18.67
	Agree	36	24.00
	Strongly Agree	54	36.00
How have you experienced your opportunity to take responsibility for solving your tasks in an adequate way during the pandemic?	Yes	34	22.67
	No	74	49.33
	Maybe	42	28.00
How have you experienced your mental health during the pandemic	Positive	104	69.33
	Negative	34	22.67
	Neutral	12	8.00

Remote Work Employee Perspective

How often did you work from home before the pandemic?

Most people, as shown in Figure 2, have never worked from home (67.3%), next largest portion of participants worked a few times a month (15.4%) and some 1-2 times per a week (7.7%) and lastly (9.6%) never worked from home before the pandemic.

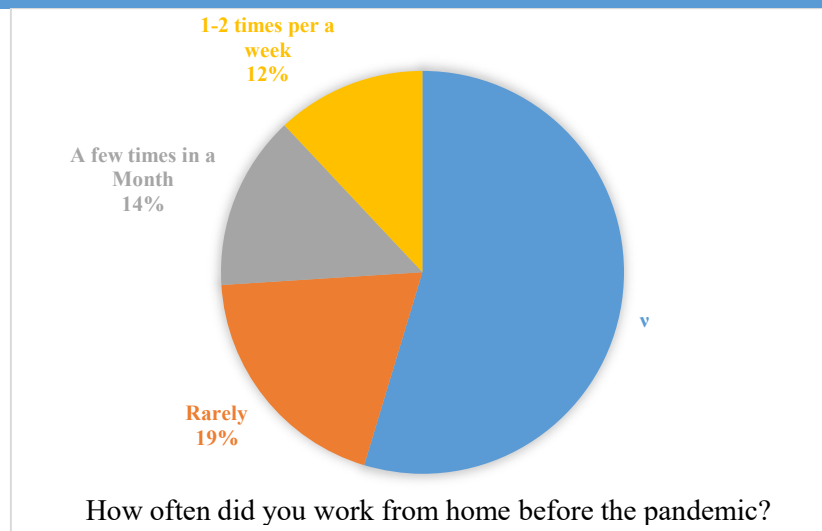


Fig.1 How often did you work from home before the pandemic?

How have you perceived your work life balance during the pandemic?

As Figure 3 represents 34.6% of employee’s had no differences during the pandemic and for some felt they had a same difference with high and low having 26.9%. Moreover some felt it was too good to maintain work life balance having 9.6% and for the other 2% it was hard in adjusting.

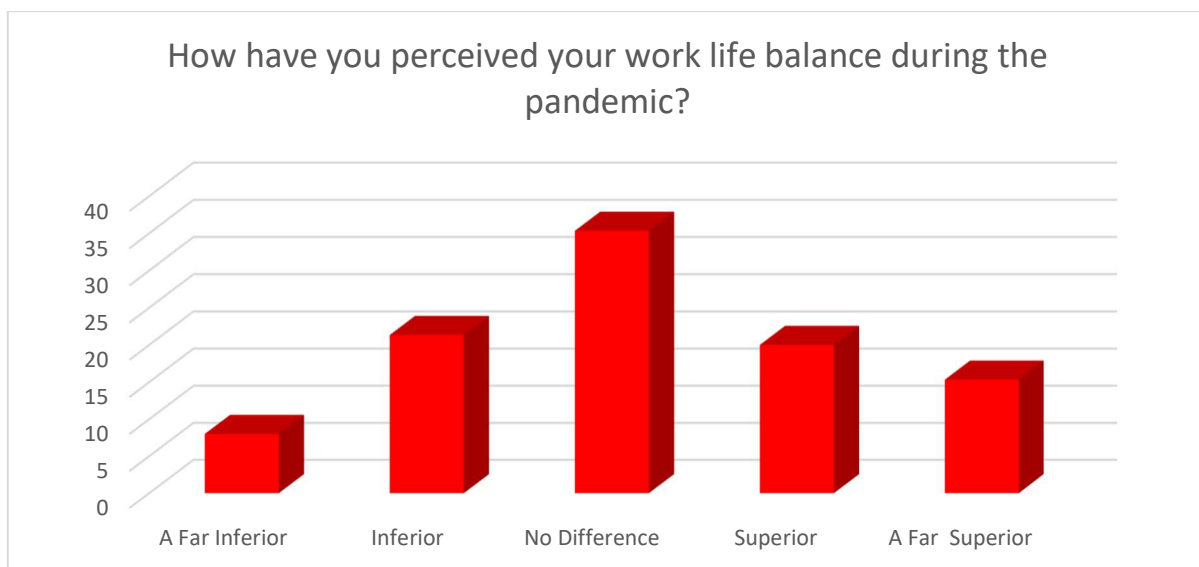


Fig. 2 How have you perceived your work life balance during the pandemic?

How have you perceived your work life balance during the pandemic?

As Figure 4 represents 34.6% of employee’s had no differences during the pandemic and for

some felt they had a same difference with high and low having 26.9%. Moreover some felt it was too good to maintain work life balance having 9.6% and for the other 2% it was hard in adjusting.

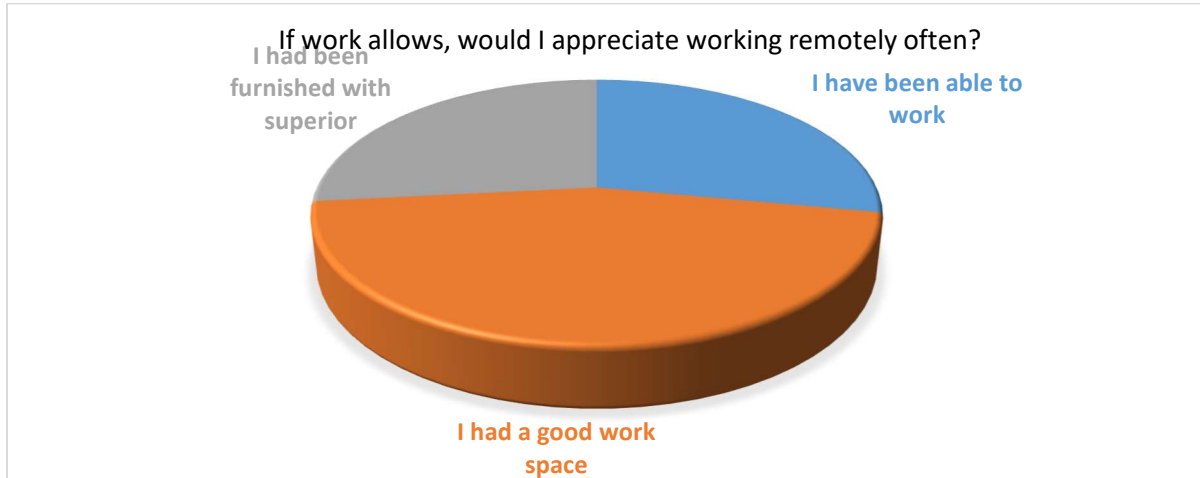


Fig.3 If work allows, would I appreciate working remotely often?

Remote work post pandemic

As indicated by Figure 6 below, 38.5% of participants would wish to work remotely more often if work allowed. 4.75% of respondents do not wish to work more remotely, while 30.8% state they have no opinion of the matter.

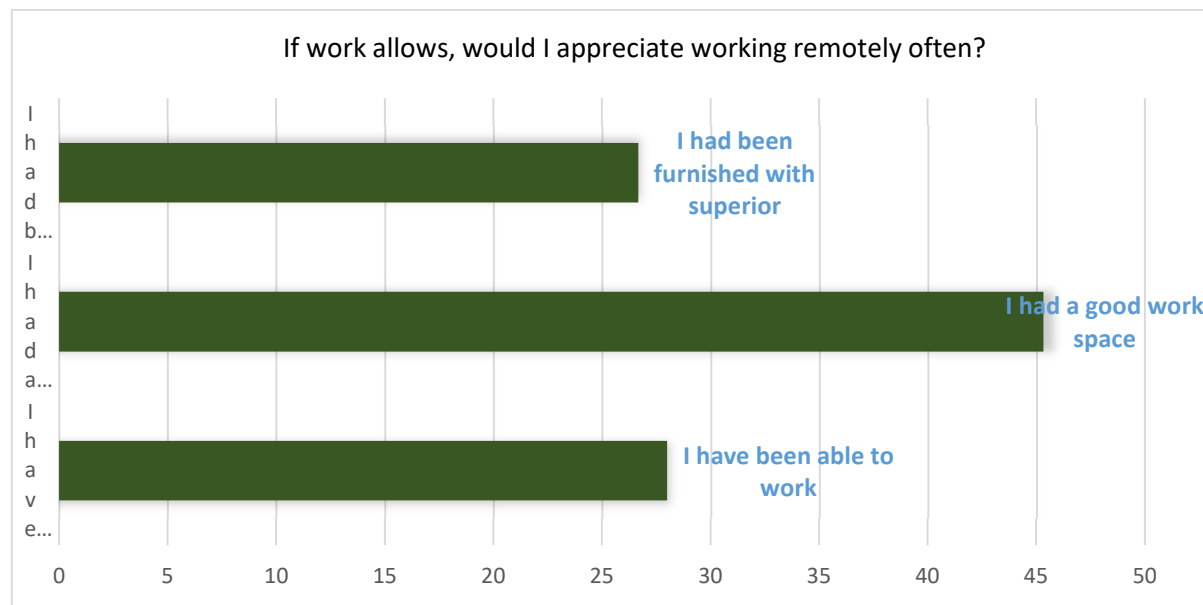


Fig 4 If work allows; would I appreciate working remotely often?

As illustrated in Figure 7, most respondents had kept their creativity (51.9%) even though they had fewer physical meetings. Nevertheless, almost 11.5% have experienced decreased creativity

due to fewer physical interactions while 36.5% remained indifferent.

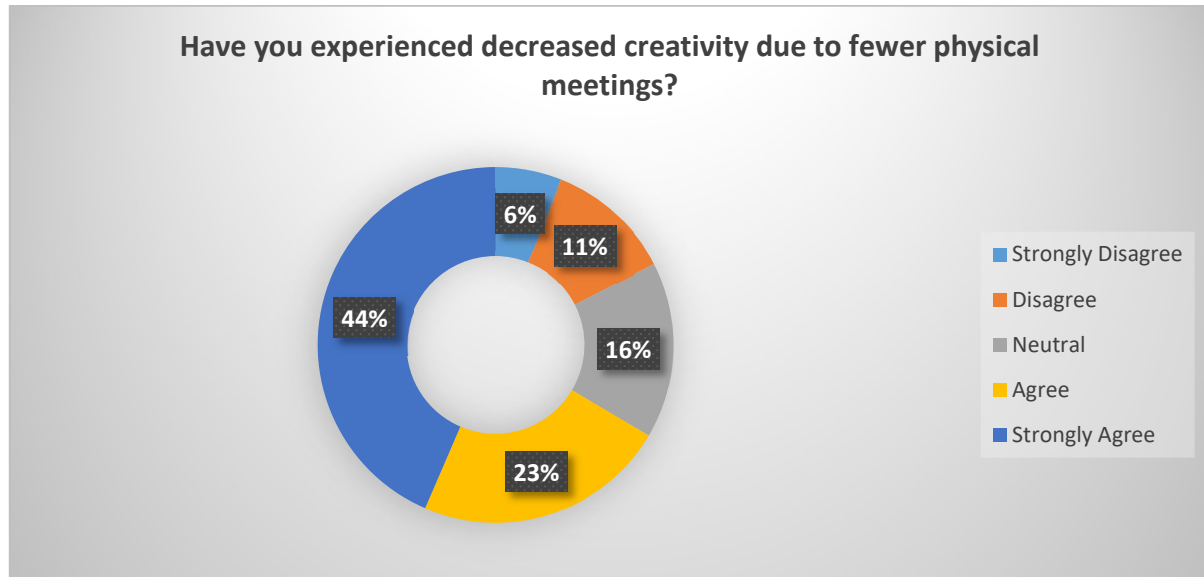


Fig. 5 Have you experienced decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings?

Figure 8 below demonstrates that a vast majority of respondents (69.2%) have experienced their opportunity to solve their tasks in an adequate way during the pandemic. 28.8% of participants state it has remained unaltered and a minority (2%) of employees indicate their opportunity to solve tasks has been negatively impacted.

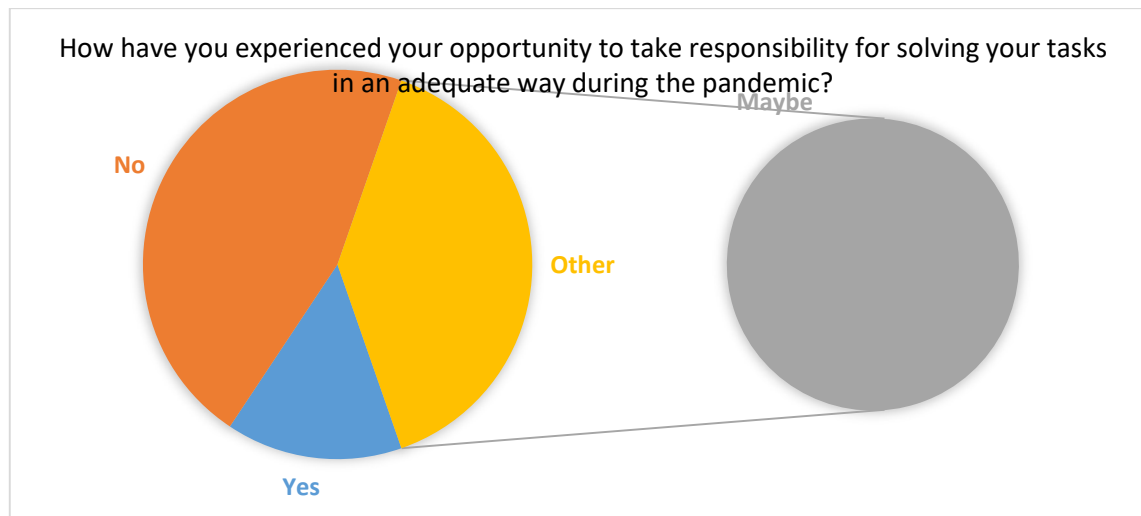


Fig 6: How have you experienced your opportunity to take responsibility for solving your tasks in an adequate way during the pandemic?

According to the findings as shown in Figure 9, 9.6% of respondents believe that the ergonomic

work environment has deteriorated because of the epidemic. Furthermore, 59.6% say the pandemic had no effect on their mental health, while 30.8 percent say it has improved.

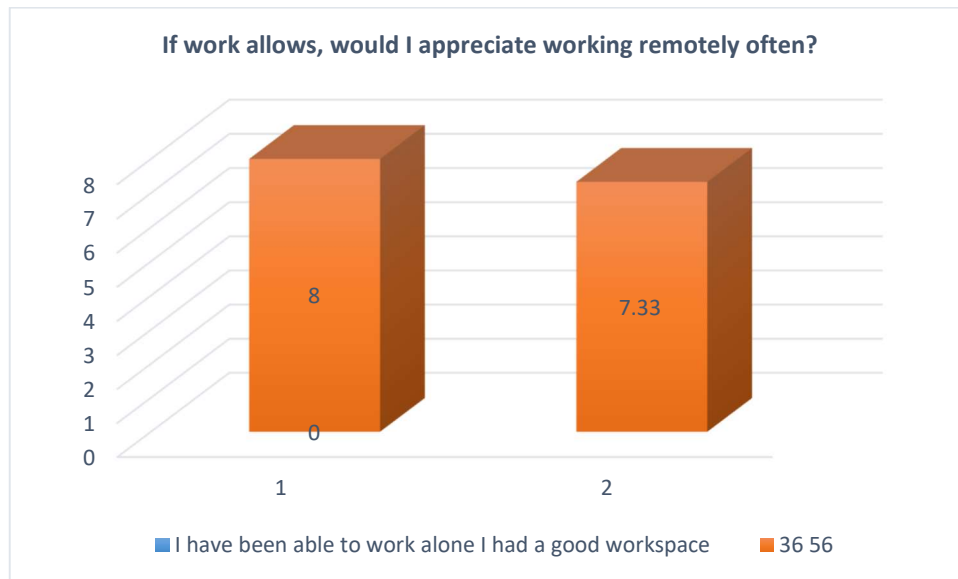


Fig 7: If work allows, would I appreciate working remotely often?

As shown in Figure 10 below, physical well-being has improved by 42.3 percent while 28.8% of the respondents

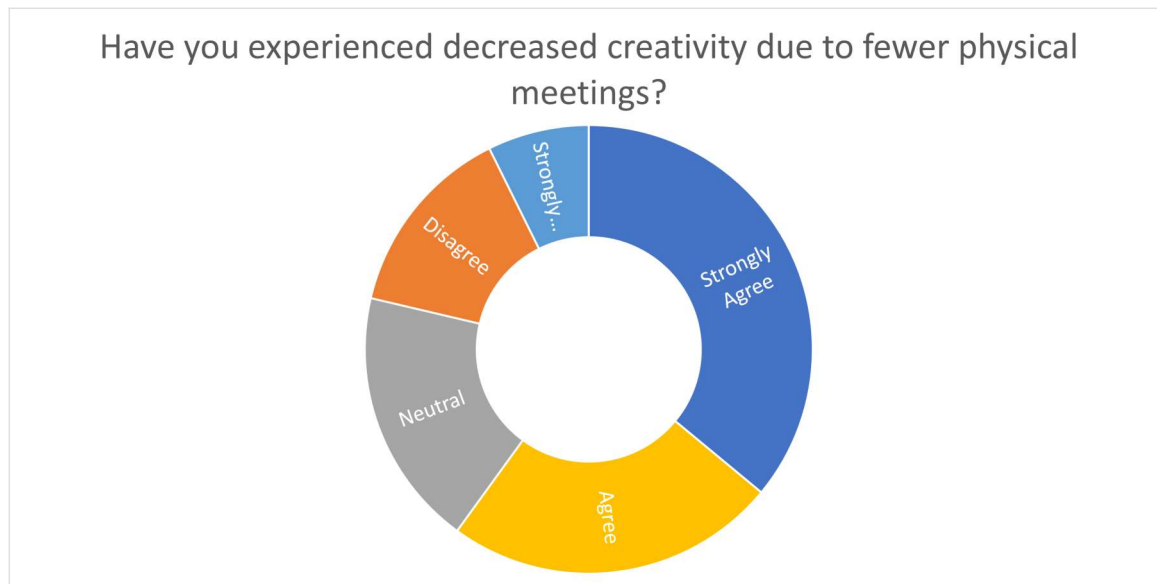


Fig 8: Have you experienced decreased creativity due to fewer physical meetings?

As can be seen in the figure 11, 73.1% of the respondents have the opportunity to be physically active during the pandemic, while 26.9% do not have the opportunity to be physically active during the pandemic.

How did you enjoy working from Home?

The results of the survey indicate that 48.1% of IT company members enjoy working from home, 51.9% remain moderate because they feel the same working from home and none of them feels working from home is bad.

4. Recommendations and Suggestions Recommendations

To optimize the benefits of a hybrid workplace model, management should:

1. Evaluate the benefits of remote work arrangements in a small area of their organization or within a single team before considering a large-scale implementation.
2. Ensure that remote working rules, arrangements, and contracts are evaluated consistently to provide the greatest outcomes from both management and remote workers' viewpoints.
3. Provide appropriate training for remote employees and their managers.
4. Assist with the setup of a home office.
5. Provide enough technology/IT assistance to distant workers.
6. Line managers should provide outstanding assistance for remote personnel.
7. Calculate the economic, environmental, and social benefits of remote labor, both the organization and the society
8. Communicate early on how your company regards remote work in the aftermath of the epidemic.
9. Employees prefer to work remotely when they need to focus and in a traditional office when they want to be creative and sociable, according to research and polls. Make the workplace a place where people can be creative and sociable.
10. Gather input from employees on how things are going today and what help they require from home. Employees should be involved in how the company envisions its future workplace.
11. During the start-up period, new workers profit from working in their normal workplace. From a typical workplace standpoint, on-boarding is the most beneficial.
12. If an organization needs new capabilities, it may now recruit from a broader geographic area.
13. Concentrate on quality and outcomes; the location of the job is unimportant.
14. In an ideal world, all employees in the same field would report to work on the same days.
15. Consider how meetings are scheduled throughout the day, as well as natural breaks, especially if you work remotely.
16. An employee's ability to work remotely increases as she works more independently.
17. If a hybrid model is used in a company, management must adhere to the rules for it to be effective have said it has decreased. 28.8% of the respondents have said it has remained neutral.

5. Conclusion

The goal of this research was to see if a hybrid workplace model might disrupt a typical office-centric workplace while also considering economic and social sustainability. The conclusion is separated into two research questions to address the purpose.

5.1 What are the social and economic benefits and challenges of remote work?

With the epidemic prompting the largest remote work experiment in modern history, most people have now experienced the benefits and problems of distant work. Increased productivity, better mental and physical health, creativity, and better work life balance are just a few of the advantages as found from the survey. Additional advantages include lower real estate, commute, and staff expenditures. Absenteeism and voluntary turnover are two of the most common causes of employee turnover. Remote work can be a competitive advantage for firms to tackle that problem. Remote work problems like increasing inequality and deteriorated inequity can be difficult to overcome if handled incorrectly.

5.2 Is it possible for a business to benefit socially, ecologically, and economically by allowing people to work remotely as well as in the office, as opposed to the previous typical office-centric form of employment?

Many more businesses, functions, and teams might become entirely or largely remote with the correct approach, technologies, organizational procedures, and, most importantly, leadership. The question isn't whether a hybrid model is possible, but rather what it will take to make it so. Management is the quick solution to this question. If the bulk of top managers work at the office, employees will flock there to receive some face time. Hybrid organizations could emerge as the future of work if managers support synchronous and asynchronous communication, problem-solving, and brainstorming, as well as encourage virtual socialization, mentoring, and team building, ensure regulatory compliance, invest in, and enforce data security, and set an example by engaging in remote work.

6. Suggestions for the Future work

A suggestion for future research on this topic is to do a case study on a formerly office-centric business that has established a hybrid workplace post pandemic to investigate the benefits and problems that have arisen because of the change. Furthermore, future research might examine the adoption of a hybrid regime on a minor organization vs a larger one. In comparison to a large and established organization, a start-up knowledge work business in the IT industry may be ideally positioned to implement such a model.

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