

Work From Home and Its Influence on the Modern Work Environment

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ABSTRACT

People's work habits have changed significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses now permit their employees to work from home. The effectiveness and productivity of working from home versus the office has been a topic of continuous discussion. This essay examines the body of research on the subject and weighs the benefits and drawbacks of various work arrangements. According to the research, working from home can lower expenses and commute times while improving productivity, work-life balance, and employee satisfaction. But it can also lead to loneliness, less teamwork and trouble juggling work and personal obligation, but it can also result in distractions, longer commutes and decreased job satisfaction. The study also recommends examining the nature of the work, personal preferences and organizational policies that will help a person decide whether to work in an office or from home. In the future many businesses may find that a hybrid model that incorporates both in person and remote work is the most effective strategy.

Keywords: Stress level, work-life balance, flexibility in the workplace, work from home and work from office

The advent of work from home (WFH) and remote work options has significantly changed how we work in recent years. Despite the continued prevalence of traditional office-based work, many people can now work remotely either full-time or part-time. proponents of both working from home and the office have been arguing for the advantages of their respective options in the ongoing debate.

The flexibility that WFH offers is one of its primary benefits. Employees are free to arrange their workday however they see fit, as they are not required to dress up or commute. Productivity and job satisfaction may rise as a result. Better work life balance can also result from WFH since it makes it easier for staff members to manage their personal and professional obligations.

WFH, however, can also present a unique set of difficulties. The inability to distinguish between work and home life is one of the most important, as it makes it challenging to achieve a good work-life balance. Furthermore, working remotely can be isolating for employees, who may feel cut off from their coworkers and the company culture. Finally,

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because workers may feel that they must be ‘always on’ and available, WFH can lead to increased stress.

However, there are also benefits to working from an office. Being physically close to coworkers can facilitate communication and problem-solving while also fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Furthermore, working in a professional setting can lower the risk of burnout by assisting staff in drawing boundaries between their personal and professional lives. last but not least, working from the office can give workers a respite from the distractions of home life, which can boost concentration and productivity.

But there are drawbacks to working from an office as well. The lack of flexibility it offers is one of its primary drawbacks. Workers may have to commute to and from work and follow rigid schedules, which can cause stress and exhaustion. Furthermore, working from the office might mean spending less time with friends and family, which could result in a worsening of work-life balance.

In the end, personal preferences and circumstances will determine whether to work from home or in an office. Employers and employees must decide which of the two options will benefit everyone the most, as each has pros and cons of its own.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The conventional office-based work environment has changed significantly over the past year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Hochschild, 1997). Employees all over the world are increasingly choosing to work from home (Susilo, D., 2020). The effects of working from home versus the office have been the subject of numerous studies. A review of some of the most important findings from the literature is provided here.

Work-life Balance: Employees can better manage their work-life when the work from home (Shamir, B., & Salomon, I., 1985). According to a Buffer survey, 22% of remote workers said they had a better work-life balance than their colleagues who worked in offices. Similarly, remote workers are more satisfied with their jobs and work-life balance, according to an owl labs study.

Productivity: Working from home increases output, per several studies (Sridhar, V., & Bhattacharya, 2021). Employees who work remotely are 13% more productive than those who work in offices, per a Stanford University study. Another study by Air Tasker found that because they worked an additional 1.4 days a month, remote workers were 16.8 days more productive than office workers.

Social Isolation (pang, Z., Wen, J., Hoque, S., O’Neill, Z., & Wu, T. 2021): Employees who work remotely could feel alienated from their coworkers feel excluded and passed over for assignments and promotions. But according to a buffer study, 19% of remote workers said they felt less alone than their peers who worked in offices.

The use of technology has increased as a result of WFH. One of the most important skills for workers nowadays is digital literacy. Tools have enabled real-time communication and workflow management, but they have also brought about problems such as cybersecurity threats, digital fatigue and the requirement for constant connectivity (Wang et al., 2021).

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The post-pandemic literature emphasizes a shift toward hybrid work models that blend remote and on-site work. According to a McKinsey report from 2022, 58% of employees in the organizations surveyed prefer a hybrid model. Scholars predict that this will alter office layouts, employee expectations, and organizational policies (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Work Environment: Remote workers have greater control over their workspace (Van Der Lippe, T., 2020). Remote workers can customize their workspace, which boosts job satisfaction, according to a study by Global Workplace Analytics.

In conclusion, work from home offers both benefits and challenges. While it enhances flexibility, boosts productivity and supports a better work-life balance, it also brings issues such as communication gaps, social isolation and a weakened sense of workplace culture. Nevertheless, continuous improvements in digital communication tools and virtual collaboration platforms have helped bridge these gaps, making remote work more effective and sustainable in the modern work environment.

Research Question

- **RQ1:** To investigate the benefits and drawbacks of working from home versus an office.
- **RQ2:** To ascertain additional elements influencing the organization's choice between working from home and the office.
- **RQ3:** Proposing an intellectual framework that supports a hybrid model that addresses both practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RQ1 To investigate the benefits and drawbacks of working from home versus an office.
Work from Home (WFH):

Advantages:

- **Flexibility:** WFH allows employees to have a flexible schedule that can be adjusted around their personal needs and obligations.
- **No Commute:** Eliminates daily travel, saving time, energy and transportation costs.
- **Better Work-Life Balance:** Enables employees to spend more time with family manage household responsibilities
- **Increased productivity:** Reduces workplace distractions and follows for a more focused work environment.
- **Customs Work Environment:** Employees can create a comfortable and personalized workspace at home.
- **Cost Savings:** Saves money on meals, transportation, and work attire.
- **Access to wider Talent Pool:** Employers can hire talent from different geographical locations without relocation constraints.
- **Reduced Absenteeism:** Employees are more likely to work through minor illnesses or personal constraints when working from home.

Disadvantages:

- **Communication Barriers:** Lack of face-to-face interaction may result in miscommunication and delayed feedback.
- **Technology issues:** Dependence on internet connectivity and devices can disrupt work during technical glitches.

- **Reduce Supervision:** Managers may find it challenging to monitor progress and provide timely support.
- **Inadequate Workspace:** Not everyone has access to a quiet, ergonomic or well-equipped work environment at home.

RQ2 To ascertain additional elements influencing the organization's choice between working from home and the office.

An organization's decision to mandate that employees work from the office or permit them to work from home can be influenced by a number of factors. These are a few of the most important elements.

- **Cost savings:** An organization can save a lot of money by letting employees work from home. For instance, a company can save money on utilities, office space, and other costs related to keeping a physical office. It's crucial to remember, though, that work from home arrangements could come with additional expenses, like giving staff members equipment and making sure they have a comfortable workspace.
- **Work nature:** While some jobs, like those in manufacturing or healthcare, require employees to be physically present in the office, others, like those in software development or marketing, can be done remotely. Therefore, whether an organization will permit work from home or require work from the office depends greatly on the nature of the work.
- **Technology:** Employees can now work remotely more easily thanks to technology, and many businesses have made investments in tools and platforms that support remote work. However, because they lack the technology infrastructure required to support remote work, some organizations might find it challenging to allow work from home.
- **Management style:** Some managers might favor having staff members in the office so they can keep an eye on their work and give direct feedback. Other managers might have a more flexible approach to work arrangements and feel more at ease leading remote teams.
- **Employee preferences:** An organization's decision to mandate work from the office or permit work from home is also influenced by the preferences of its employees. Due to personal preferences or family obligations, some workers might prefer to work from home, while others might prefer an office setting in order to preserve a work-life balance.

RQ3 Proposing an intellectual framework that supports a hybrid model that addresses both practices.

The success of a hybrid model that blends work-from-home (WFH) and work-from-office (WFO) requires a conceptual framework that considers a number of variables. A successful hybrid work model can be supported by the following framework:

- **Tasks and Job Roles:** Not all tasks and job roles can be completed remotely. It's crucial to think about which tasks and job roles can be completed efficiently from a distance and which ones call for face-to-face communication. The organization will use this information to determine who can work remotely and how frequently.
- **Work Schedule:** A flexible work schedule that supports both in-person and remote work is necessary for a hybrid model. Depending on their tasks and job roles, employees should be able to work from home or the office according to the work schedule.

- **Infrastructure and Technology:** To facilitate remote work, a hybrid model needs the appropriate infrastructure and technology. This includes dependable internet access, project management software, video conferencing software, and other teamwork tools that enable productive work from remote workers.
- **Communication:** The successful operation of a hybrid model depends on effective communication. To keep both in-person and remote workers connected, the organization should set up clear lines of communication. Regular check-ins, team meetings, and project updates are all part of this.
- **Employee Well-Being:** In a hybrid model, employee well-being is essential. The business should make sure that remote workers have the tools, ergonomic workspace, and mental health support they need to do their jobs well.

Problems with working from home

However, there are also disadvantages to working from home. There, you may find that. The primary focus of the study was on the following goals:

1. Isolation and loneliness
2. Poor work-life balance
3. Communication difficulties
4. Technical and internet issues
5. Lack of motivation and discipline
6. Inadequate home workspace
7. Stress level

CONCLUSION

conclusion, there are a lot of benefits to working from home, but there are also some drawbacks. These include difficulties separating work and home life, loneliness, distractions from household chores, and communication barriers with coworkers. To reduce these issues, remote workers must prioritize social relationships, establish clear routines and boundaries, and use technology to communicate with colleagues. Employers can also assist remote workers by providing tools and resources to promote work-life balance and by fostering an atmosphere of open communication and collaboration.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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