



Work from home (WFH) in the IT/ITeS corporate, a dilemma for the Human Resources and the Associates

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Abstract

Remote working, Telecommuting was an important of the Information Technology (IT)/Information Technology enabled Sector (ITeS) across the world, considering the fact the Global Delivery Model (GDM) architecture itself promoted an engagement with the corporates in the delivery of IT solutions. Whilst organizations had made internal rules vis-à-vis remote working, telecommuting for projects being delivered internally and even for client-based projects; where associates would be embedded in client location; the works of providing IT solutions was going on with ease. However, the pandemic of 2020 changed the scenario on a larger scale leading to many issues that hitherto were unseen in the IT/ITeS corporate on the Work from Home (WFH) scenario, as a large workforce (at times 100%) had to work from their respective homes. The Research paper, is a work in progress, wherein the researchers want to create a body of knowledge and base-line data, which will help in augmenting quality information for better understanding and analysis and generate strategy in the organizations which making decisions on WFH. The Researchers have spoken to a Human Resource (HR) Managers across organization to get a perspective about the same as well, which will be part of the research paper. This will help in articulation of thoughts which will further the interest of the HR Managers in particular and the organizations in general. As has been seen the HR Managers had to change their way of operations during the pandemic leading to short and long-term changes in the actions. The Research team has reached out to 2200 respondents/associates across the country from Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 IT/ITeS entities and are in the process of collating information for the base-line data generation. The respondents have been expressing their views through the digital questionnaire about i) the challenges of WFH, ii) the reasons for WFH preference, iii) views on hybrid work models, iv) WFH, impact on teams, team building, bonding and the finer aspect of collaboration. The results that we have been getting so far, reasonably look towards an acceptance of the WFH measures, and also apprehensions in various spheres which will be the deliberation of the research paper.

1. Introduction

Working (Work) from Home (WFH) has been rising for years, as more occupations use computers and telecommunications, more people have reliable home Internet connections, and more families have both parents working full time (Gibbs, Mengel, and Siemroth). The Covid-19 pandemic which started small in Wuhan, China in 2019 and spread like wild-fire globally, accelerated this process by forcing a large fraction of the global workforce to switch to WFH at least temporarily. Compared to Working (work) from the Office (WFO), WFH has the potential to reduce commute time, provide more flexible working hours, increase job satisfaction, and improve work-life balance (WLB). The increasing acceptance of WFH may be led by management because reduced labour costs and increasing productivity and profitability are expected (Bellmann and Hübler). However, little is yet known about some of the more fundamental consequences of WFH, including its effects on productivity and which factors play a role in making WFH more or less productive than WFO (Cutter).

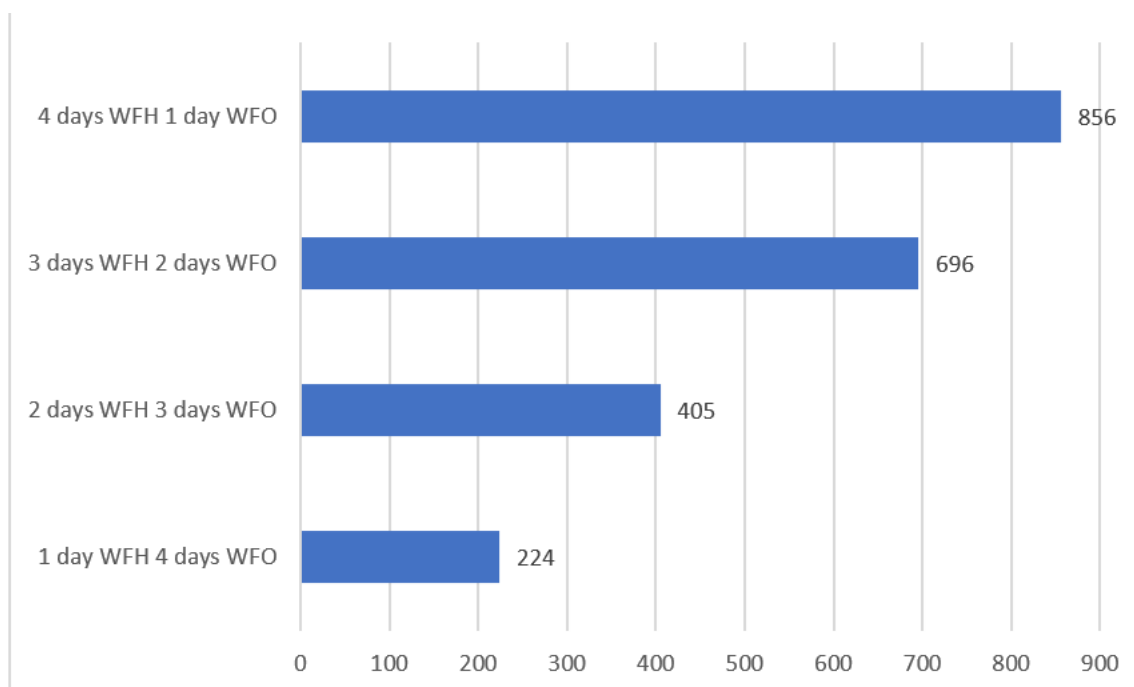
Mercer a leading human capital management firm in its 2022 Global Talent Trends report noted that, 'people no longer want to work for a company, they want to work with a company.' Business Standard(2022). "In an employee-centric labour market.." adds, Padma Ramanatha, Country Report Lead and Principal, Talent Advisory at Mercer, "where the majority of employees want choice, we are seeing organizations wanting to partner with employees to co-create work models based on where/when/how employees want to work and rethink pay and benefit strategies customised to target the human capital populations across organizations (Sarkar, 2022)." The Mercer (2022) research report adds that seventy-four per cent of employees would join a company only if they can work remotely or in a hybrid engagement. This is adding to the not necessarily woes of the Human Resources (HR) teams in Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled Services (ITeS).

When the current research team administered a questionnaire to 5857 prospective respective respondents for the independent research; it was responded to by 2181 associates of IT/ITeS organizations from across India and from various Tier 1, Tier 2 and other entities; the views on Hybrid Model was clear:

By analysing Graph(1) we get to know that 39.24% of 2181 (856) respondents were keen to come to the Work Place for only one-day and work remotely or WFH on four-days. Those associates who preferred coming to WFH for 3 days was 31.91% of the 2181 (696). The two variables clearly represent 71.15% of the respondents; which means the HR associates and the organizations have work at hand. For academic purposes we provide the metric for one day home and four-days WFO stood at 224 (10.27%) respondents and two-days at home and three-days at the work place numbers were: 405 (18.56%). This is a clear indication of what is to come in the future. In the United State (US) the companies that sent the employees to WFH found that their work done, seemingly without missing a beat. Executives were amazed at how well their workers performed remotely, even while juggling child care and the distraction of home. If some organizations like Twitter and Facebook (now Meta) quickly wanted to embrace remote work on a long-term basis; some even wanted to and vowed to give up their physical office spaces in its entirety (Cutter). In India, TCS, the IT leader is strategically planning to ensure that 25% of employees need to attend office from 2025 as per the statement of Mr. Rajesh Gopinathan, CEO, wherein he stated, "...it is about time, our current operating model is currently twenty year old legacy....in some ways, this crisis actually leapfrogs us into a new model. (Dogra)."

What then is WFH; was it created on account of Covid-19 or did it have a history

WFH, is currently known as an alternative working to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. However, WFH is not new and has been brought to the attention of several schools of thought for many years (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021). The WFH concept was initially mentioned by (Nilles) dating back to 1973, known as "telecommuting" or "telework" (Messenger and Gschwind). Vyas and Butakhieo (2021), though mention the acceptance of WFH being on the increase globally, there have been a multitude of arguments in regards to the pros and cons of WFH. (Tanzi) speaks of the fact that, remote work opportunities are especially growing in fields that emphasize technical and organizational skills. Discussing about telecommuting, (Gajendran and Harrison) have considered it as "an alternative work



Graph 1: Work from Home (WFH) and Work from Office (WFO) Hybrid Model of work.

arrangement in which employees perform tasks elsewhere that are normally done in primary or central workplaces, for at least some portion of their work schedule, using electronic media to interact with others inside and outside the organization,” notably, they indicated that “elsewhere” refers to “home.”

(Khetarpal) in a dispatch speaks of Infosys, India’s second position IT company mulling permanent WFH for 33 to 55% of the employees; (Krishna and Vishal) 99% of the 240,000 employees of Infosys were WFH, a clear indication what the future of work would look like for the Indian IT companies. The Indian IT market leader, TCS had made its plans sure and secure, with the adage of ‘25 by 25’ strategy (Moorthy et al.), wherein by 2025, only 25% of the employees would WFO. TCS had thence announced the permanence of the remote work strategy and at that point in time, TCS had a total of 5,28,000 employees across the globe, which would effectively mean, 1,32,000 employees would WFO in 2025. The question we can ask, is, were (are) the Indian IT entities, prepared for WFH, not as an option, but as a strategy? The answer is surely in the positive.

Reasons for employees laying importance on WFH

Sreekanth (2022) said that, “Productivity of my team members and all others was at the peak while WFH but now it appears reduced due to a multitude

of reasons.” When probed further by the research team, Sreekanth mentioned that, “WFH had ensured the expenses were reduced drastically, and once they start WFO, i.e., from the base location, then they are back to the expensive lifestyle.” This has been the reality for the IT professional, the lifestyle once they are away from home. But then other reasons provided by Sreekanth will stimulate a thought process that will help HR teams and the Organization Leadership to take lead and ensure the employees do not have a burn-out syndrome. Sreekanth, on a serious note mentions, “long commutes to the work place will be another bane to the employee, besides, in the WFO, employees often take breaks during the days’ work, which are multiple in nature and all adds up to lesser productivity on a daily basis.” Sreekanth, continues further, which appears alarming for the HR Strategy team, he says, “the team members are in shock after coming back to the WFO scenario, and in my team and so to others, most of them appear less motivated to work and think of the two-years of quality work they performed.” “Healthy food at home has been replaced by junk and hotel food, which is making the associates think twice in regards to WFO.” Laments Sreekanth.

If Sreekanth focussed on the social side of the WFH and WFO debate, Ravi Ganti, working as a Manager based in Hyderabad with Cognizant Technology Solutions (CTS) gives another twist to the

tale; which will make every HR practitioner think about a middle path that one needs to strive for in the long-run, with the short-run being volatile. Ravi is of the view that, "...most of the large customers prefer to work from Off-shore Development centres (ODC), as the customers need their data to be 'secure' and also the day-to-day meetings/conversations would enable deliverables that are pertinent to the project. In such cases, WFH options and interaction that ensue, will be not be in the expected scenario of the customer, and hence, WFH would not be an option at all." It is such a scenario and reading along the findings from Table (1), attrition would become the single most activity for the HR teams and the Management to grapple with. Ravi Ganti brings in a new aspect of Knowledge Transfer (KT) and the Learning Programme offerings, and mentions that, "efficient learning is possible only in the work place and in a controlled environment." This is sure challenge for the HR teams, as they need to have team of individuals depending on the project size and duration to be WFO. A HR professional who recently moved into Project Management Office (PMO) and wanted to remain anonymous mentions that, "managing attrition has become the most important job on a day to day basis." The Leadership team and HR, "is making the best of efforts to overcome such scenarios, which otherwise bring about disrepute to the organization not being able to deliver the project to the customers."

Diving into further details during the discussion Ravi of CTS mentions that, "we will and we can and we have to bring in a differentiation to the variety of projects that organizations have" and mentions the benefits of, "Time and Material (T&M) projects majorly would prefer WFO instead of WFH, as the billing rates, over time, associates working hours and other billable activities can be captured by respective PMO and others involved, which would ensure ease of work and business, leading to better documentation in the systems." Thence, Ravi agrees that, "in T&M projects WFO is the mandate and the HR fraternity will select associates as required." This will be in total contrast to the Fixed Bid projects, which Ravi concurs, "need not necessarily be WFO, but the associates can be placed into hybrid models and once a while one can report to the offices and cover up their whole responsibilities." However, all of what is said is not easy to implement

or monitor, as was experienced by a CEO of small IT firm in the Union Territory of Pondicherry, who expressed his views but did not want to be named. The CEO mentions that, "during the peak of Covid and the lock down; my small group of employee's number about 72, were on WFH; but when the customer provided the billing invoices for a particular duration, I realized that, instead of putting in eight-hours of billable work, the employees had put in three to five hours of 'actual work,' which led to the customer reducing payments on the man-hours achieved." The CEO goes on mention that, "though the employees argued that they had put in eight billable hours; but on researching further, it was realized that, during the eight-hour stint, the employees would idle away their time and hence the upset customer ensured the invoices were reduced." This the CEO agrees, "...would not have been the case, if the employees were stationed in the IT facility itself." So much for the facets of billing and billable resources and the options for WFH and WFO. Going back to the discussion with Ravi of CTS, it is clear that monitoring of the employees is easier in WFO options and when 'Right Resource for the Right Rate' (RRRR) model where the hourly rates for IT professionals is much higher than normal, WFO is the only mandate. Besides, the research team observes that, the domains viz., BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance) and Health sectors may usher in their own restrictions; where the possibility of WFH will have its own innate challenges. It is at this juncture the words of Mr. Satya Thopalli, a Senior HR Leadership having worked with Tier 1 IT companies for more than two decades and currently into HR Consulting mentions that, "one needs to find a mid-point for the associate and organization; it should be a win-win for both, not only both, even the customer whom they serve, both remotely and at customer location...the associate needs to create opportunities for herself/himself and ensure the organization succeeds in its endeavour of service delivery. The current scenario of WFH and WFO will continue for some time to come; but there will be consolidation of the scenario leading to the common goals being jointly achieved by the associates and the organization. The organizations have been adapting to the change and the associates too need to ensure."

One of the respondents who did not want to be

identified spoke about organizations developing and evolving the Remote Development Centre (RDO) to liaise with Customers and ensure for them. As researchers we need to see and understand the pros and cons of this model and what does it bring to the organization and employee.

Objectives of the Research Study

The following are the major objectives of the study

1. To find out the reasons for preference of Work from Home (WFH).
2. To explore Hybrid Model mix of WFH and from WFO, the choice the employees speak about.
3. To understand the challenges faced by the employees in the WFH option.
4. To analyse the WFH, the teams, team building, team bonding and collaboration.

Method

This study was conducted by using semi structured questionnaire.

Sample

The study was conducted by using random sampling of 5857 employees of IT sector. Out of which 2181 have responded and the same was used for analysis.

Tool

The semi structured questionnaire consists of four parts has been used to collect data from the IT/ITeS employees/associates.

2. Results and Discussion

The data collected from the employees of IT sector have been analysed and tabulated

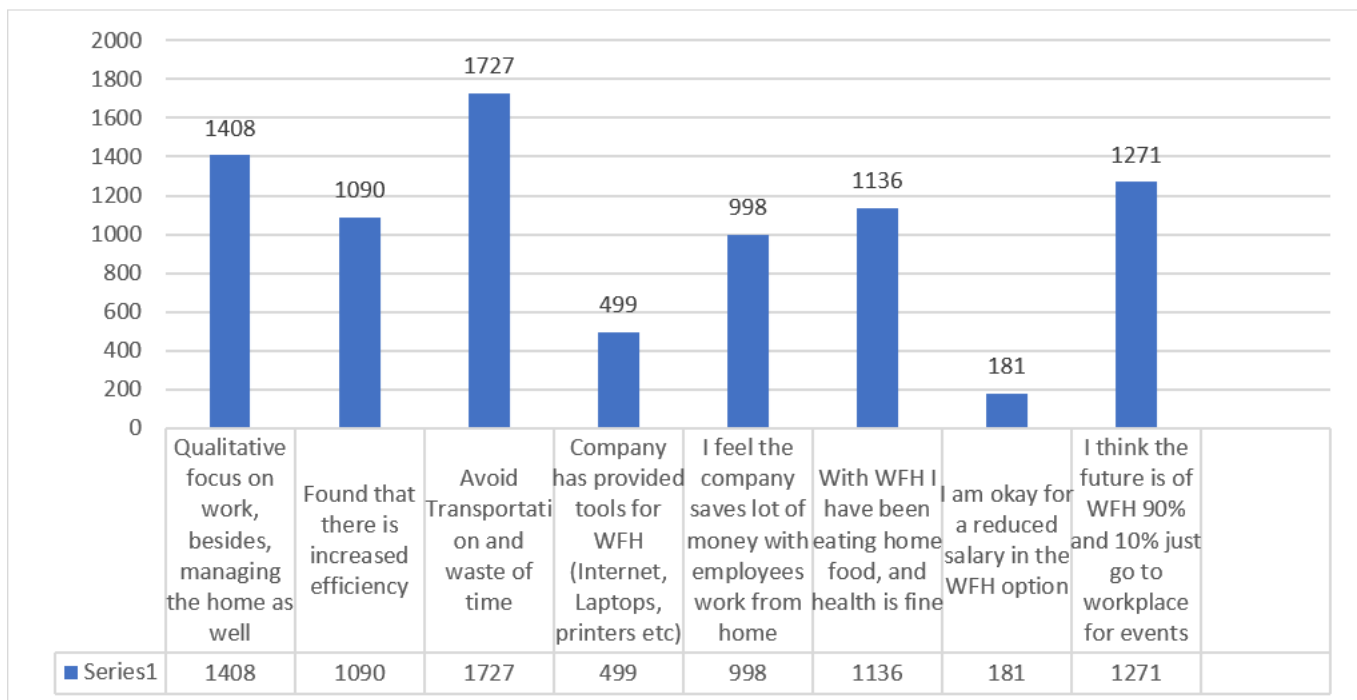
Associates and WFH

It is not that WFH is a new concept that has grown on account of the pandemic. IT companies and many others were practicing 'telecommuting' which helped employees to engage themselves better during time of need to work remotely.

The pandemic gave an opportunity to understand the facets of WFH, WFO, WLB and even the way one will be able to ensure job satisfaction for the associates and the organization as whole, besides of course the customers that the organizations serve. (Aczel et al.) speak of the fact that working away from the traditional office is increasingly an option in the corporate world of today; typically covers working from any location other than the dedicated area provided by the employer. The

research team provided for respondents to speak out in regards to the reasons for WFH and its preference; a record 1727 of the respondents confirmed to say that they preferred WFH as they avoided the issue of transportation, which in a way was a waste of time; this considering the fact that the travel time took away quality working hours of the employees. A total of 1408 agreed to the fact that they were able to focus on work besides managing the home as well; which ultimately speaks of WLB, as Rajendra Katare, an associate with a Tier 2 IT company in Bangalore put it. Rajendra, in fact mentioned, "I would start my work by 0500 in the morning to fall in line with the global engagements; by 0730 I would have served the Far East and requirements of Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) well; I would take a break for almost two-hours, where I would have breakfast, mingle with the family, get the children to be ready for online-class sessions; catch up with my aged parents, and then back to work holding the operations from India perspective." Rajendra believes that he 'felt fresh' each time he got into a call or a discussion with his Leaders and/or team; whilst the case in WFO, Rajendra mentions, "after 1100 a type of lethargy would creep in but then the work had to go on" Rajendra affirms that, "...not only was I able to get the work done in a qualitative way; the WLB that WFH provided; I thought I should have done for a longer time, even before the pandemic came into the picture" Having worked in different cities earlier, like, "Hyderabad, Pune and with the family in Bangalore" Rajendra mentions, "it was a real WLB that happened during the pandemic and I was very effective in my work and with the family" No doubt from the research we are able to establish a fact that of 2181, 1090 spoke of the fact that the work they were doing had become efficient and they were successful.

One variable that surprised the researchers, was, even though the organizers allowed for WFH, the provision for supporting with Internet, bandwidth, printers, cameras, which was the need for various discussions and planning. Only 499 of the 2181 responded in the positive. Though at least three of the HR team to whom the researchers spoke with confirmed, that they had provided for Internet options by paying for the same on a month-on-month basis, some associates really did have issues in the management of the same. "Much



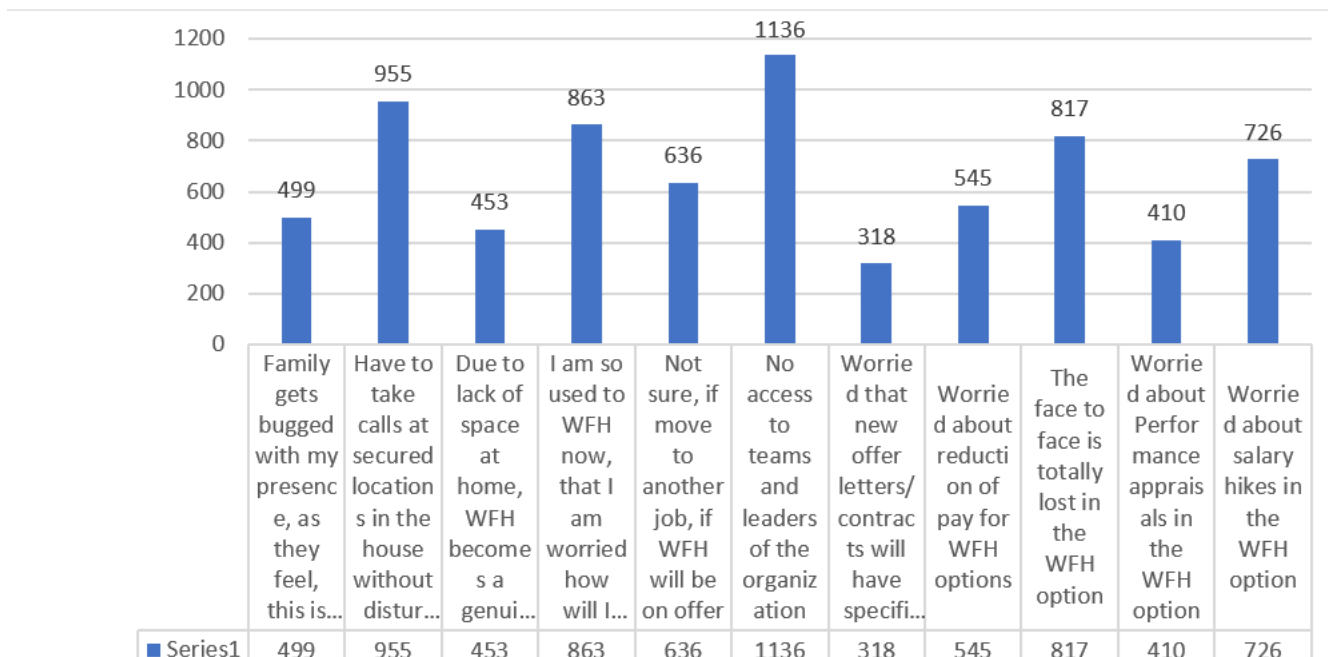
Graph 2: Reasons to prefer for Work from Home (WFH) options.

has to be done,” is what one HR Senior Executive who wanted to remain anonymous spoke of. As Sreekanth pointed, “health was an important aspect for many of the associates,” and they were happy eating home cooked food. Not surprising 1136 respondents agreed to the facet. However, when it came to ‘salary reduction’ on account of WFH, 2000 of the 2181 exhibited silence; and 181 were ok with a ‘salary reduction.’ Would this become a new bargain power for the HR and the employees whilst they negotiate the salary when they take to work. We will need to assess the case both ways. If the employees WFO, the employer pays for the facility where the employee sits, the air conditioning, lightning, travel, canteen facilities to mention a few; but when the WFH option comes in, all these aspects do not come up. Hence, Ram Kiran of Wipro says, “it becomes pertinent that the organization since they are saving on cost, should aptly the pay the employee as well.” The associates too argue, the electricity bills in the household goes up, the internet connectivity is mandatory, the mobile bills, all need to be paid by the employer. This surely is the win-win that Satya Thopalli, a Senior HR Leaders speaks of. Whilst TV Sharma currently with Coforge BPS (www.Coforge.com) and with nearly two decades of HR experience with Satyam Computers, Tech Mahindra, Infosys,

TATA Elxsi, Manipal Hospitals and Atkins Global mentions that, “...the good thing about WFH, is that it is an eco-friendly mode, also saves lot of travel time. But will be missing team bonding and behavioural aspects... which are very critical from a HR and Organizational Behaviour perspective.” Mr. Sharma concludes and says, “...Hybrid model is better option, lesser pollution, travel and now we are Work From Anywhere (WFA), this will be challenge when we as HR professionals focus on team bonding and the finer aspect of spirit de corps...”.

The challenges that employees faced during the WFH options that were provided by the companies were enormous. The challenges can be divided into i) issues faced at home, ii) issues faced with teams, and the managers, besides, iii) personal issues and doubts that the employees got during the WFH options and how they would look into the future.

As Sreekanth of L and T says, “WFH was good for the first few days, for once it became the normal, the family members were at odds with how to manage this option, as I was eating into the space of the family.” Nearly 499 respondents concurred with this view, that the family members would be upset with the executives, “talking calls and not expecting noise, whilst the work was on,” as lamented by Rajendra Katare of Happiest Minds. Rajendra further mentions that, “taking calls from a secured



Graph 3: Challenges of Work from Home (WFH).

location was a sure challenge; as the houses would have two bedrooms, and with the spouse, children and parents in my vicinity, it was difficult to manage” 955 of the respondents also concurred with this view. (Song and Gao) find that working at home is associated with a higher probability of having unpleasant feelings relative to working in the workplace. 455 like Rajendra concurred on the view of the lack of space in the place of stay; which actually led issues. One respondent who went anonymous mentioned about the fact that, he had three people in the WFH genre, and that took the toll on the family in regards to finding adequate space to work along with the children who too were attending to their online classes. The findings of (Dockery and Bawa) however, provide for an alternative view that working from home is conducive to families achieving a better work-life balance (WLB). Wipro’s Muthu echoes the findings of Dockery and Bawa in all its efficacy, “with widespread growth in Internet infrastructure and availability of high-speed internet facilities across the country it has made it easier for family to adapt to the new normal and to address concerns regarding the space, since most of the Indian families currently reside in homes which has at least 2 rooms it has ensured less distractions for both the family members who are working to have dedicated space to continue their work without any interruption.” TV Sharma mentions that, “there are mixed

opinions like WFH is more stressful at times, especially when we are supporting global clients, WFO is better option as we meet in the same shift timings, whereas WFH/WFA its becoming challenging to conduct unplanned/unscheduled meetings especially when there is a breakdown or an outage”

1136 of the 2181 respondents were clear on the fact that they did not have access to their teams and their managers whilst they were on WFH. As one HR remarked, when it comes to ensuring teams working together and help build cohesion, WFH has created the opposite. It has become difficult to coordinate and ensure the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the project are met with. Fixing targets to ensure performance too have become a challenge. However, Chanakya Sehgal, Senior HR Leader with Edgeverve (<https://www.edgeverve.com>) a wholly-owned subsidiary of Infosys and who has worked earlier with Tier 1 Companies had a fresh view in regards to KRAs, performance and appraisals. From the research too, 410 respondents were worried about how performance appraisals will be done. Mr. Sehgal has an answer, which surely would engage the HR professionals and the delivery teams to engage the employees in a project. Mr. Sehgal mentions, “it is a fair view; the worry (about performance appraisal) is valid but why not look at no rating. Look at lower-level employees having only team goals. This will surely and securely mitigate

the issue along with quarterly check-ins”

It is clear that HR Leaders and Delivery teams are making efforts to mitigate the issues that are being raised by the employees in the all-important arena of performance appraisal; but one needs to wait and watch as to how the issues will be resolved. Co-terminus to performance appraisal, the issue of salary and its reduction on account of WFH still creates a doubt in the minds of the employees, and 726 of the 2181 respondents were worried about salary hikes in the WFH option. The HR leaders too did not speak out in regards to the same; but one of them expressed the view that, this view of the employees appears worrisome and we stare at a huge percentage of attrition which will become difficult to manage. However, a two-pronged strategy has emerged in regards to salaries (Verma and Prachi), wherein, i) no change in salaries is seen as of this moment for the existing employees in organizations; and ii) those who are being hired as new employees with WFH as a permanent option are getting 15% lower salaries.

The reduction in face-to-face interactions, as well as the lower frequency and richness of communication between telecommuters and other members of the organization, have weakened the interpersonal bonds they have with their co-workers or supervisors (Daft and Lengel). 772 and 998 respondents of the 2181 who were interviewed by the Research team, speak of the fact that face-to-face interactions amongst the team members has reduced drastically. There was a point made by Muthu of Wipro, who is in the process of moving to another entity, ”prior to Covid lockdown, the interactions were many; during the lockdown, we just did not know, who was where work was going on somehow. but the spirit-decorps was lacking. we would suddenly come to know that someone has left. . . . and that someone has joined the team as well. at times, it was only the virtual introduction and the spirit of team was totally lost. this meant the bonding between colleagues too was lost, the cafeteria discussion, which would lead to lot of solutions; the discussion on the floor too was lost. we now realized how important team bonding was to ensure a success for the team.” A similarity of view can be seen from a Business HR Leader, Mr. Sharma, who opines, “. . . though we can conduct virtual bonding and collaboration activities, it is difficult to gauge

the pulse of the program effectiveness.” This is a view expressed by most of the respondents as well. Mr. Sharma further adds, “ we are planning to get the associates in smaller groups to office in regular intervals to where WFA is given as long term option and there would also be team bonding, and collaboration which is essential in the functioning of the projects in particular and organization in general.”

Presumably peer effects would be weaker during WFH as there is no face-to-face interaction and probably less overall interaction. Supervisor effects might be stronger, if managers vary significantly in their ability to lead and coordinate virtual teams (Gibbs, Mengel, and Siemroth). Companies in India have started hiring employees on permanent WFH roles, while many others are either following a location-agnostic approach for certain roles or embracing partial remote working model, with employees coming to office for a couple of days in a week, in the long run (Verma and Prachi).

Findings

The arguments for and against the WFH and WFO of course will go on for the times to come, until a middle path is found by the organization and the employees. (Bellmann and Hübler) in their seminal research have argued for the following positives as the arguments for remote work are:

The counter arguments too have a bearing, which will ensure, further research will help the organization and the employee to move ahead. Bellman and Hübler (2020) have provided for the counter arguments which will provide for ample food for thought and an understanding that help in the movement forward. The following are the counter arguments:

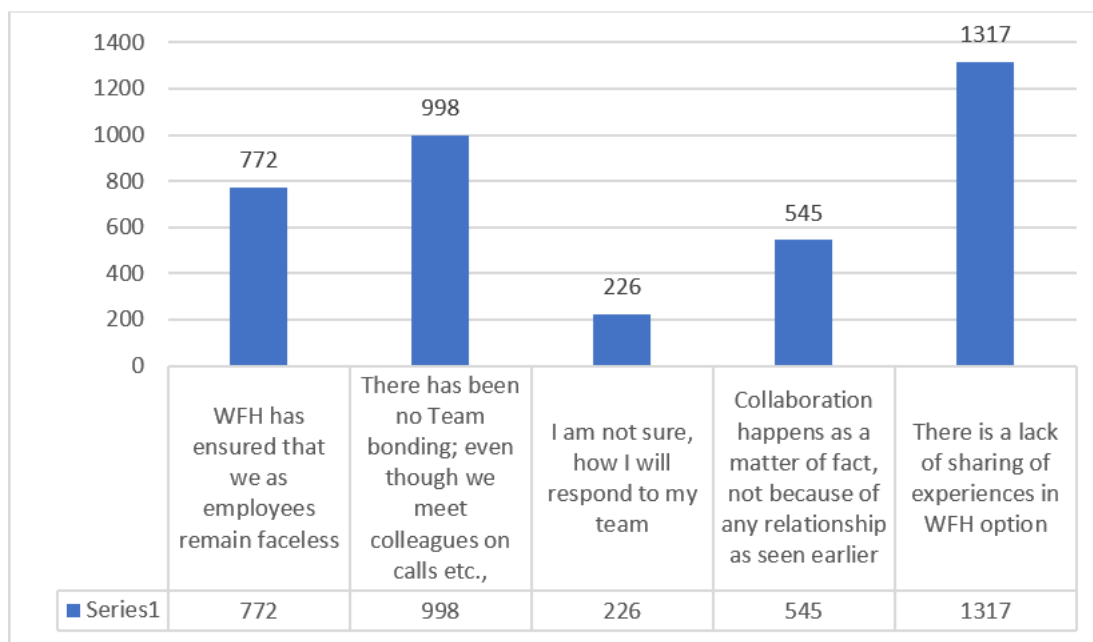
The researchers whilst discussing with various HR professionals found that two questions came up; one was put forward by Sreekanth of L and T Infotech and another by Ravi Ganti of CTS were pertinent to the discussion: Sreekanth speaks of the fact that WFH instead of WFO, does it improve job satisfaction? A very pertinent question. The question that Ravi asks is even more intriguing; is WFH related to what we refer to as better Work Life Balance (WLB). If these were practical asks that both Sreekanth and Ravi have seen in their day to working with their teams and other stakeholders; from an academic perspective and whilst working on the literature for the research paper, found that Bellmann and Hübler (2020) in their seminal work taken these

TABLE 1. Arguments for remote work

	From Bellman and Hübler	The Real Time scenario in the IT/ITeS world
i	Employees have a private working environment and autonomy	The organizations think so, but employees have a difference of view
ii	Employees are their own bosses	The employees are managed as per the norms of the organization
iii	Employees have flexible working hours	This is normal, unless one is in the Billable roles
iv	Employees do not have to deal with unpleasant colleagues	In the physical work environment leads to lot of confusion and work stoppage. True in regards to WFH
v	Employees are more comfortable	The employees feel so in the initial days, but as we progress, the factor of comfortability declines
vi	Employees' health is improved	All employees whom the research team spoke with agreed to the same
vii	Employees can prepare their own meals and eat healthier	For those with families, it is true
viii	Employees sleep better	WFH has provided an opportunity, but those with adopt global time-lines to work, they have their own issues
ix	Employees can follow their own biorhythm	True
x	Employees experience reduced stress	Many said, not seeing the reporting manager and even the peers and team, has ensured a stress-free life
xi	Employees can spend more time with family	Quality time is spent with family
xii	Employees are closer to their private life	Yes, the setting is the household
xiii	Employees enjoy greater childcare facilities	The women employees have truly benefited from WFH and have responded to the same positively
xiv	Employees save time	More research needs to be done. But a few answers, the facet of saving time, is a misnomer. Yes, if include travel to work place and return, it saves time. But from the perspective of actual work, not much information is available
xv	Employees have not to commute	This is much agreed and appreciated
xvi	Employees do not have to crowd into buses and trains	True
xvii	Employees' productivity increases	By and large, the answer is yes, but much research needs to be done
xviii	Employees endure fewer interruptions	This is in regards to the work environment

TABLE 2. Counter arguments

	From Bellman and Hübler	The Real Time scenario in the IT/ITeS world
1	Employees lack productivity	In informal discussions with the HR fraternity, the issues of productivity did come up. There is sure burn-out syndrome, which needs to be investigated further
2	Employees lack motivation	After a given point in time, yes
3	Unhealthy lifestyle	Was really probed into
4	Employers provide offices with ergonomic chairs	All support is provided for the employee
5	Employers develop a bad reputation	If there is no WFH
6	Employees are exposed to potential distractions (e.g., watching the newest episodes of their favourite Netflix series or any other)	Many of the respondents agreed to this, though none wanted the same to be recorded
7	Employees find it hard to separate private and business life, requires a lot of discipline	There is a phenomenal overlap
8	Employees have no human interactions	This is the bane of the Virtual World
9	Employees lack social interactions	The employees get stuck in their virtual world, which reduces social interaction
10	Employees are more often sick	The research team, did not establish the same
11	Employees can still work at home are too ill to go into the office	This is a surprise, as even if one is sick, the employees may work. A few respondents mentioned that,
12	Employee supervision is difficult	WFH will establish digital supervision; but real time supervision will be lacking
13	Employees lack opportunities to learn on the job from colleagues	Interactions are limited, hence, the learning opportunities as well
14	Employees cannot engage in teamwork	Even though the concept of Virtual Teams is unique, there is a lack in the engagement
15	Employees engage in less brainstorming	Considering that most of the employees are in the digital world with a digital footprint, the efficacy of brainstorming is also on the lesser side
16	Employees work longer hours; employees work unpaid overtime	WFH appears to be easy, but with the focus on work in the WFH environment, time is a casualty, employees work more than the time assigned
17	Employees are expose to more safety hazards	The research has not probed into this area



Graph 4: WFH, Teams, Team building, Team bonding, collaboration.

facets as a hypothesis to the study. It is therefore not surprising to see that the academic bent of mind and the practicalities are having outreach to one another, and if both the academic world and the practitioners work along, and the data generated will help in establishing a success story through a scientific perspective to the WFH, WFO and WLB facets.

Muthu, the Finance Associate of Wipro, has an emphatic, “Yes”, and continues, “certainly WFH has brought in WLB. The employees who previously had to moved away from their families to cities due to work commitments and who couldn’t be with their parents in times of difficulties with WFH options were able to take care of their parents and also balance their work commitments in tandem. Also, the parents are able to take better care of their children and give more time for their personal and educational requirements.” Muthu, futher adds, ”WFH has also helped employees to utilise the extra time they spend on travel to take time to rest more and which in turn help employees to get their daily 8 hours of sleep and also having their daily meals on time due to WFH which was previously taken at odd hour.” Bellmann and Hübler (2020) find that working remotely has no long-run effect on work-life balance (WLB), and that a switch to WFH increases job satisfaction only temporarily. Clearly a lot has to be understood from the perspective of all the stakeholders in an organization, be it the Management, the employees, the customers, the families

and we have a long way to go to ensure a qualitative understanding of the scenario as at present and the scenario that may come in the near and far future.

3. Conclusion

When the researchers juxtapose the objectives along with the findings of the research study, we have been able to arrive at the following conclusions that would help others in academia and the practitioners to undertake further deep-dive studies of a similar to arrive at what interventions the organizations will have to adopt in the future.

Reasons for preference of WFH: The inputs received for the preference of WFH included i) Qualitative focus on work and home; ii) Efficiency in delivering the KRAs of the project; iii) Transportation from home to workplace and back was completely avoided, as was mentioned by a HR professional, “...we can surely calculate and evaluate the carbon footprint in the current environment and in the future....” iv) healthy home food availability to the employees which ensured good health; v) some were even ‘okay’ to work with reduced salaries if WFH options were provided.

Hybrid Model mix of WFH and from WFO, the choice: An overwhelming 39.24% of 2181 (856) respondents were keen to come to the Work Place for only one-day and work remotely or WFH on four-days. Those associates who preferred coming to WFH for 3 days was 31.91% of the 2181

(696). The two variables clearly represent 71.15% of the respondents; which clearly meant, the plan and strategies that the large (and small) IT/ITeS organizations were hoping for the future of minimizing WFO was on track. The best of examples comes from TCS, the market leader and their “25 by 25” is a clear indication.

The challenges employees faced in the WFH option: some of the issues that came up were, i) the size of the home; ii) issues of space sharing; iii) secured locations at home; iv) zero access to the teams and the leaders in the organization; v) the issues of performance appraisals; vi) salary hikes or ‘no salary hikes’ if WFH continued. These were clear indications of what to foresee for the future in the WFH/WFO options.

WFH, the teams, team building, team bonding and collaboration: Every HR professional makes the best of efforts along with the delivery teams and the Project Management offices (PMO) to ensure a cohesion in the team. This has been breaking up on account of WFH. The HR professionals are finding it difficult to manage the same. The employees on the floor and in billable units too have mentioned in responses about the nuances of team bonding and building and the larger facet of collaboration has taken a beating.

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