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IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY BASED ON WORK FROM HOME VS PHYSICAL WORKSPACES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT :

The present study examines the impact of workplace flexibility on the psychological well-being of employees working in remote and physical workspaces in the IT industry of Delhi NCR. It focuses on stress management, mental relaxation, emotional stability, and the ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities. The study adopts a descriptive research design and stratified random sampling technique, covering 300 respondents, comprising 150 remote/WFH employees and 150 physical workplace employees. The findings indicate that remote employees generally experience more favourable psychological well-being due to greater flexibility, autonomy and convenience in managing their work routines.

Keywords: Workplace Flexibility, Psychological Well-being, Work from Home, Physical Workspaces.

INTRODUCTION

Flexible working practices (FWP) have gained considerable importance in the contemporary work environment. The COVID-19 pandemic further emphasized the significance of developing a flexible work culture (FWC), encouraging organizations to adapt their working arrangements in response to changing workplace conditions and emerging employee needs. Flexibility can be understood from both psychological and physical perspectives. Psychologically, it refers to an individual's willingness to adapt, adjust, or make compromises when faced with changing circumstances (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). From a physical perspective, flexibility represents the ability to bend, adjust, or undergo modifications without losing strength or stability. Both dimensions provide a broader understanding of flexibility, highlighting not only the willingness and capacity of individuals or organizations to respond to change but also their ability to accommodate new situations while maintaining their essential functions and stability. The concept of workplace flexibility emerged during the 1980s (Atkinson, 1984). However, its meaning and interpretation have evolved differently across various academic disciplines, particularly in the fields of strategic management and strategic HRM. Organizations that provide supportive working conditions, reasonable workloads, employee-friendly policies, and opportunities for professional development can contribute to improving employees' overall well-being.

Psychological well-being refers to employees' mental and emotional functioning, including happiness, self-esteem, autonomy, stress management, and the ability to cope with workplace challenges. Ryff and Keyes (1995) identified six dimensions of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life and self-acceptance.

The present study is significant as it examines the growing importance of workplace flexibility in the IT industry, particularly in the context of work-from-home and physical workplace arrangements in Delhi NCR. Although remote and hybrid working have provided employees with greater flexibility, concerns regarding psychological health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Deci & Ryan (2000) emphasized that flexible working arrangements, including remote and hybrid work, enable employees to manage their professional responsibilities alongside personal commitments more effectively. Greater control over working schedules reduces the pressure associated with rigid working hours and allows employees to organize their tasks according to their individual needs. Such flexibility represents an important factor in

promoting employee autonomy, W L B and overall well-being, particularly among Generation Z employees in contemporary workplaces.

Derks et al. (2015) highlighted that locational flexibility helps reduce commuting-related stress and enhances employees' autonomy in managing their work; however, it may also lead to social isolation and difficulties in maintaining a clear distinction between professional and personal life.

Kossek et al. (2018) emphasized that workplace flexibility is a multidimensional concept that offers significant advantages to both employees and organizations. However, its successful implementation requires fair access to flexible work arrangements, a supportive organizational environment, and regular policy improvements to maintain a balance between employee autonomy, organizational productivity and overall well-being.

Smith & Jones (2021) highlighted that flexible working hours allow employees to schedule demanding tasks during their most productive periods while incorporating adequate breaks to reduce mental fatigue and maintain consistent work performance. The study further suggested that hybrid working arrangements, which combine remote and office-based activities, offer an effective approach by integrating the advantages of both working environments.

Aleem et al. (2023) observed that the widespread adoption of remote working during the pandemic resulted in diverse and fragmented perspectives regarding its nature and implications. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of this emerging work arrangement, recent research has utilized artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to examine and analyze existing studies. Their findings suggest that well-balanced hybrid working models can promote greater flexibility and innovation within organizations.

Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2023) highlighted that remote working can minimize excessive work-related demands and provide employees with a conducive environment for focused thinking, thereby supporting their psychological well-being. However, the study also draws attention to certain challenges associated with remote work, particularly social isolation and feelings of loneliness, which may adversely affect employees' overall well-being.

Rhian & Prasetio (2023) emphasized that workplace flexibility can help reduce work-related stress by allowing employees greater control over their schedules and professional responsibilities. However, they also highlighted that flexible working may blur the boundaries between professional and personal life, making it difficult for some employees to mentally disconnect from work. This can result in persistent stress and exhaustion.

Gonzalez et al. (2024) examined the relationship between flexible working arrangements, job security, and employees' mental health. Drawing upon a large dataset comprising approximately 18,000 observations, the researchers investigated how flexible work schedules influence employees' psychological well-being. The findings indicated that employees with greater flexibility in their working hours tend to experience lower levels of work-related stress and anxiety, suggesting that flexible work arrangements can contribute positively to mental health.

Selander & Alasoini (2026) highlighted that employee autonomy has a positive influence on work engagement, while organizational support plays an important role in shaping the relationship between job demands and employee engagement. Their findings further emphasized the need to consider both psychological factors and organizational conditions when evaluating the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the impact of workplace flexibility based on work from home vs physical workspaces on psychological wellbeing.

RESEARCH DESIGN

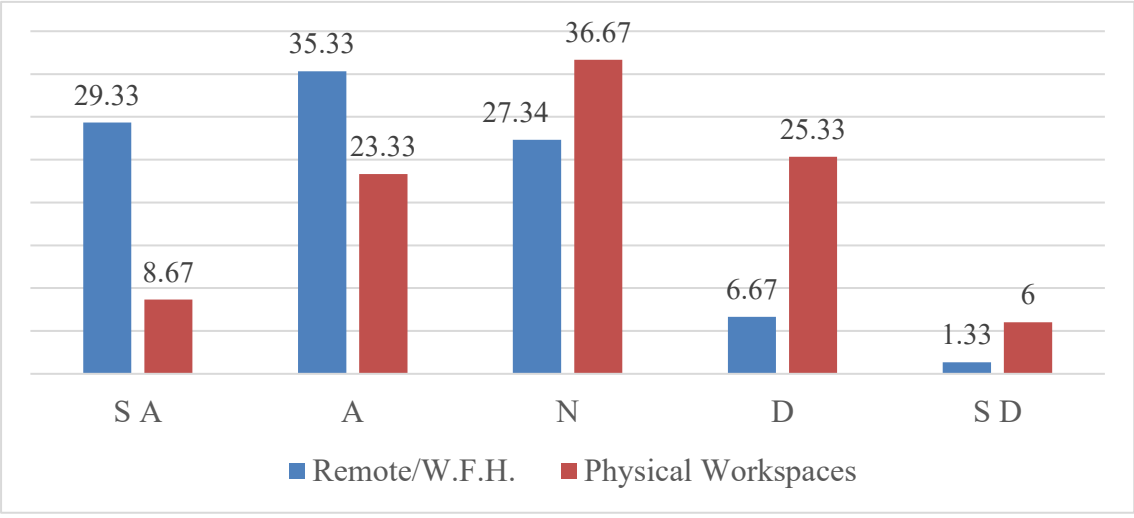
The present study adopted a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of workplace flexibility based on work from home vs physical workspaces on psychological wellbeing in Delhi NCR's IT industry.

SAMPLE DESIGN & SAMPLE SIZE

The study adopts stratified random sampling to select respondents that meet the specific criteria of the research. The sampling design divides the respondents into two major strata based on their working arrangements: Remote/WFH employees and employees working in physical office environments. A total sample of 300 employees was selected for the study, comprising 150 Remote/WFH employees and 150 physical workplace employees.

ANALYSIS

Figure 1: Response to question "My current work arrangement helps me manage work-related stress"



Analysis: The analysis examines the perceptions of employees regarding their ability to manage work-related stress under Work from Home (WFH) and physical workspace arrangements. Among WFH employees, 29.33% of respondents strongly agreed that their current work arrangement helped them manage work-related stress, while 35.33% agreed. Furthermore, 27.34% expressed neutral opinion, whereas 6.67% disagreed and only 1.33% strongly disagreed to it.

In comparison, among employees working in physical workspaces, 8.67% respondents strongly agreed and 23.33% agreed that their current work arrangement helped them manage work-related stress. Additionally, 36.67% are neutral while 25.33% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. The combined percentage of positive responses (strongly agree and agree) is 64.66% among WFH employees, compared to only 32% among physical workspace employees.

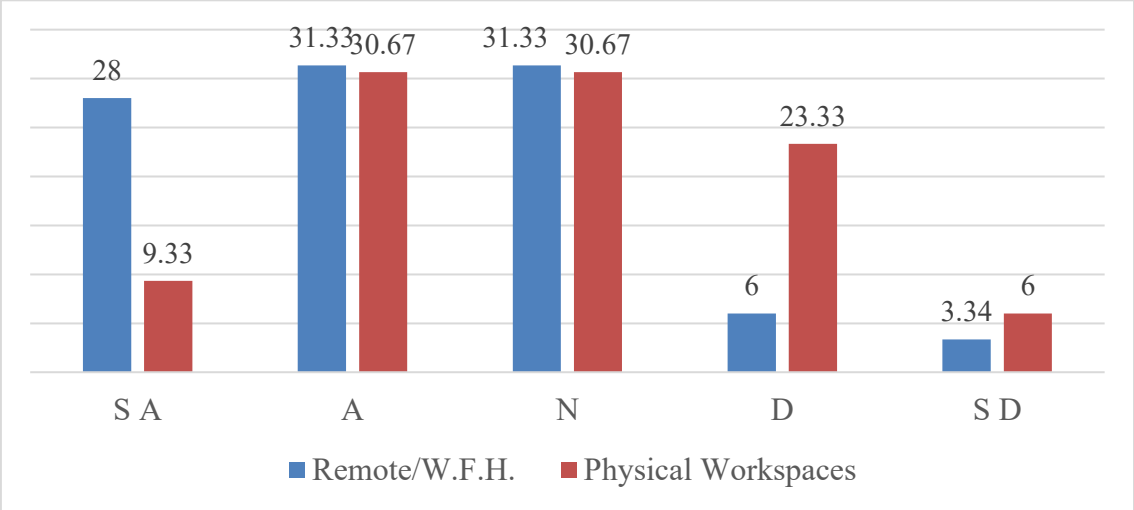


Figure 2: Response to question "I feel mentally relaxed while performing my job responsibilities"

Analysis: The analysis shows that employees working remotely experience comparatively higher levels of mental relaxation than employees working in physical workspaces. Among WFH employees, 28% of respondents strongly agreed that they felt mentally relaxed while performing their job responsibilities, while 31.33% agreed to it. Furthermore, 31.33% respondents having neutral opinion whereas 6% disagreed and 3.34% strongly disagreed to it.

In comparison, among employees working in physical workspaces, 9.33% respondents strongly agreed and 30.67% agreed that they felt mentally relaxed while performing their job responsibilities. Additionally, 30.67% are neutral while 23.33% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed to it. The positive responses (strongly agree and agree) is 59.33% among WFH employees compared to 40% among physical workspace employees.

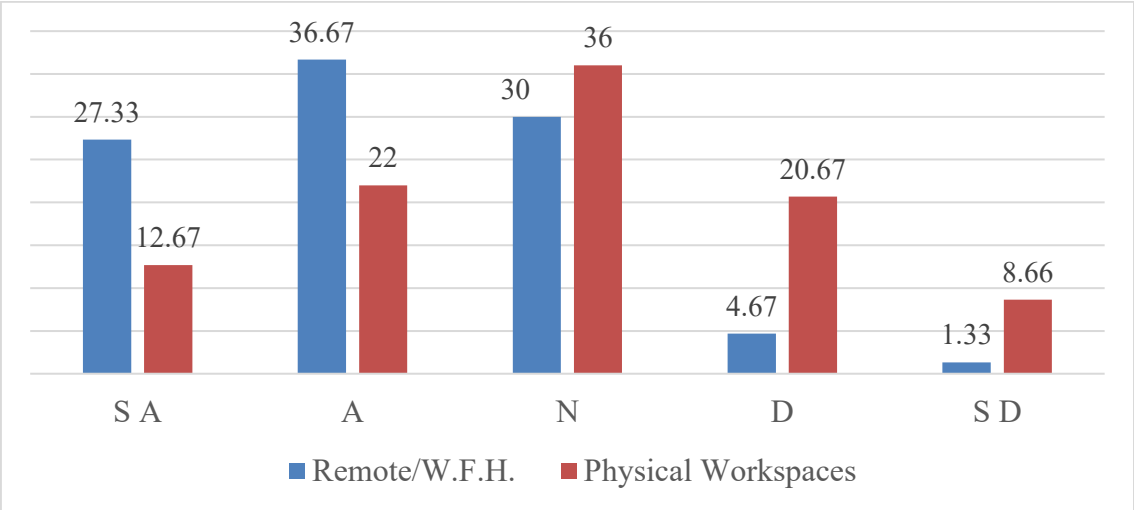


Figure 3: Response to question "I can maintain a healthy balance between my professional and personal responsibilities"

Analysis: Among WFH employees, 27.33% of respondents strongly agreed that they could maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal responsibilities while 36.67% agreed to it. Furthermore, 30% respondents having neutral opinion whereas 4.67% disagreed and only 1.33% strongly disagreed to it.

In comparison, among employees working in physical workspaces, 12.67% respondents strongly agreed and 22% agreed that they could maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. Additionally, 36% expressed neutral opinion while 20.67% disagreed and

8.66% strongly disagreed to it.

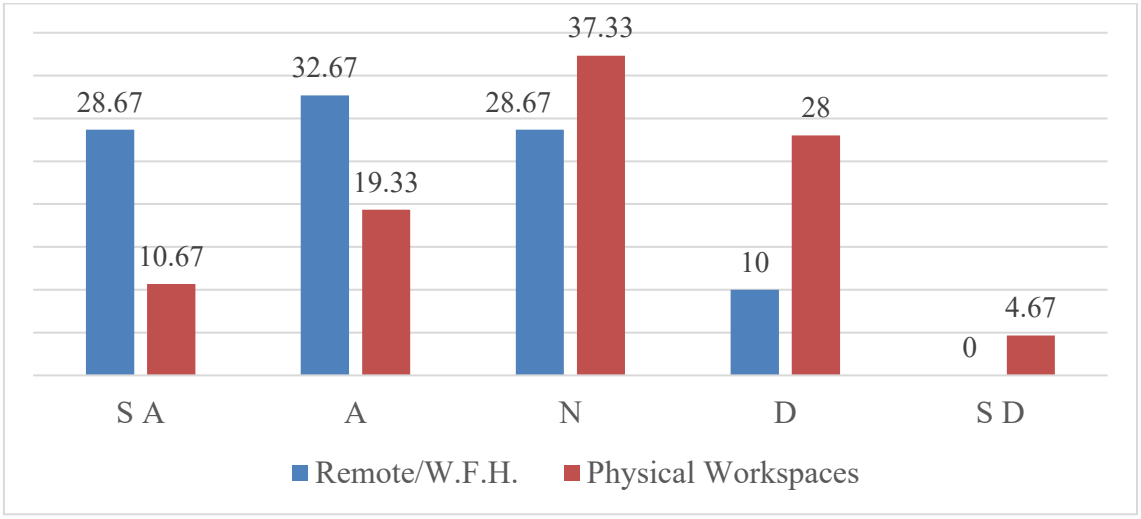


Figure 4: Response to question "My current work arrangement supports my emotional wellbeing"

Analysis: The analysis shows that employees working remotely generally perceive their work arrangements as more supportive of their emotional well-being than employees working in physical workspaces. Among WFH employees, 28.67% of respondents strongly agreed that their current work arrangement supported their emotional well-being, while 32.67% agreed. Furthermore, 28.67% respondents are neutral whereas 10% disagreed and none one is strongly disagreed.

In comparison, among employees working in physical workspaces, 10.67% respondents strongly agreed and 19.33% agreed that their current work arrangement supported their emotional well-being. Additionally, 37.33%neutral while 28% disagreed and 4.67% strongly disagreed. The analysis indicates that WFH arrangements are perceived more favourably in terms of emotional well-being than physical workspace arrangements.

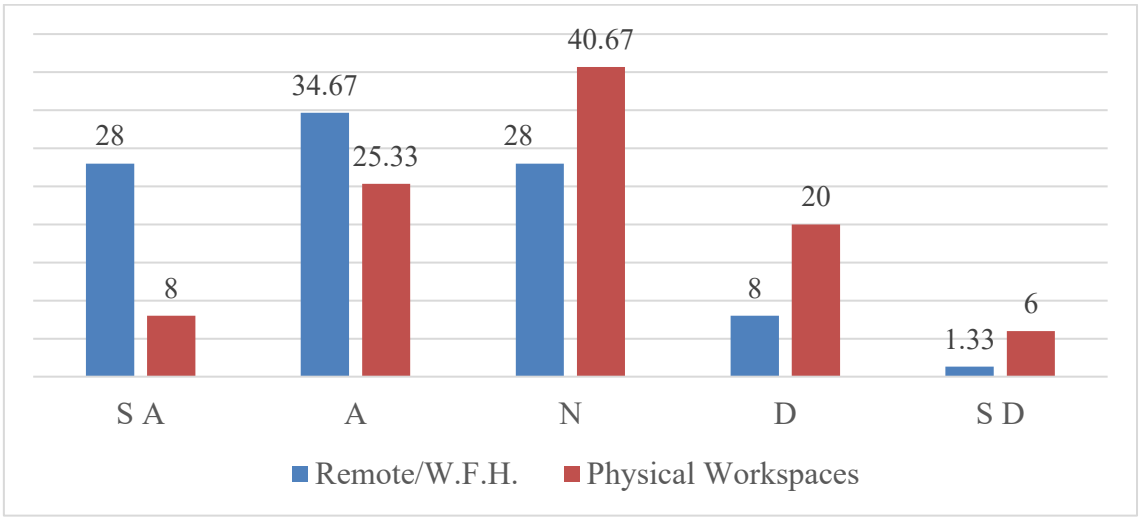


Figure 5: Response to question "My current work arrangement supports my emotional wellbeing"

Analysis: The analysis considered that employees working remotely experience comparatively higher psychological comfort than employees working in physical workplaces. Among WFH employees, 28% strongly agreed that they felt psychologically comfortable with their current work arrangement while 34.67% agreed. Furthermore, 28% are neutral whereas 8% disagreed and only 1.33% strongly disagreed.

In comparison, among employees working in physical workspaces, 8% strongly agreed and 25.33% agreed that they felt psychologically comfortable with their current work arrangement. Additionally, 40.67% are neutral while 20% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed. The combined percentage of positive responses (strongly agree and agree) is 62.67% among WFH employees, compared to 33.33% among physical workspace employees. Similarly, combined percentage of negative responses (disagree and strongly disagree) is considerably lower among WFH employees at 9.33%, whereas it is 26% among physical workspace employees.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that WFH arrangements are perceived more favourably in terms of employees' psychological wellbeing. Remote employees generally report better experiences in managing work-related stress, maintaining mental relaxation, balancing professional and personal responsibilities and experiencing emotional and psychological comfort. The flexibility of remote working may help employees manage their professional activities according to their individual needs and personal circumstances.

Employees working in physical workspaces report comparatively mixed experiences regarding psychological wellbeing. Workplace schedules, commuting demands, and limited control over working routines may create additional psychological pressure for some employees.

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