

Remote, Hybrid, or In-Office: A Comparative Study of Productivity and Well-Being Among Indian IT Professionals

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Abstract - The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally restructured workplace arrangements across the globe, and the Indian information technology sector has been at the forefront of this transformation. While remote and hybrid work models were initially adopted out of necessity, they have since become permanent features of the employment landscape, prompting critical questions about how different arrangements affect employee productivity and psychological well-being. This study investigates these questions through a structured Google Form survey administered to 54 IT professionals in India. Respondents rated their current work arrangement across ten Likert-scale dimensions spanning task efficiency, focus, team collaboration, work-life balance, burnout, stress, job satisfaction, and retention intent, and also indicated their perceived most productive and personally preferred arrangement. Findings indicate that fully in-office workers report the highest productivity scores (mean = 4.17 on a 5-point scale) and the lowest stress levels (mean = 2.89), while remote workers report the strongest work-life balance (mean = 3.78) and personal-time separation (mean = 3.89). Despite an even distribution of current arrangements, 48% of respondents prefer a hybrid model going forward, particularly a hybrid-mostly-remote configuration, suggesting that flexible work structures remain the most desirable option in the post-pandemic Indian IT context.

Key Words: Work Arrangement, Remote Work, Hybrid Work, In-Office Work, Productivity, Well-Being, Indian IT Sector, Employee Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, Burnout

1. INTRODUCTION

The global shift in workplace arrangements triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has produced one of the most rapid and far-reaching organizational transformations in modern history. India's information technology (IT) sector, which employs over five million professionals and contributes approximately 7.4% of the country's GDP [1], was among the first industries to adopt large-scale remote work during the pandemic and has since remained a testing ground for

evolving work models. As organizations now navigate a post-pandemic landscape, three primary arrangements have emerged: fully remote work, hybrid work (a combination of home and office), and fully in-office work.

Each arrangement carries distinct implications for how employees manage their daily responsibilities, collaborate with colleagues, and sustain their mental and physical well-being. The academic and industry debate over which model is 'best' has intensified, yet empirical evidence grounded in the specific cultural, infrastructural, and professional context of the Indian IT workforce remains limited. Studies conducted in North American or European settings may not adequately reflect conditions in India, where factors such as household sizes, internet infrastructure variability, commuting conditions in major IT hubs like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune, and organizational hierarchies shape the work experience in distinct ways [2].

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to contribute original, survey-based evidence on how Indian IT professionals perceive their productivity and well-being across the three dominant work arrangements. By collecting structured responses from 54 respondents through a Google Form survey instrument, this paper examines whether significant differences exist across arrangements in productivity metrics, well-being indicators, and personal preferences, and explores what these findings imply for organizational policy in the Indian IT context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between work location and employee outcomes has attracted substantial research attention, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Bloom et al. [3] conducted one of the earliest large-scale experiments on remote work and found that remote employees demonstrated a 13% productivity improvement compared to their office-based counterparts in a call-centre setting, largely attributable to reduced commuting time and a quieter working environment. However, the authors also

observed that remote workers reported greater feelings of isolation and were less likely to be promoted.

Subsequent research has complicated this picture. Allen et al. [4] reviewed the literature on telework and reported mixed findings, with productivity gains contingent on job type, domestic environment, and the availability of appropriate technology. Knowledge-intensive roles such as those common in software development and data science tend to show greater flexibility effects than roles requiring physical presence or real-time collaboration.

In the Indian context, Mohanty and Tripathy [2] examined the experience of IT workers during the pandemic and highlighted that while many reported initial productivity gains, prolonged remote work led to increased blurring of professional and personal boundaries, heightened burnout, and reduced perceived support from supervisors. Kaushik and Guleria [5] similarly found that Indian employees working from home during the pandemic experienced higher levels of work-family conflict compared to those in Western samples, partly because Indian households tend to have more shared living spaces and higher family obligations.

The hybrid model has increasingly attracted attention as a potential middle ground. Choudhury et al. [6] found that a structured hybrid schedule led to increased job satisfaction without reducing productivity in a technology firm. Wang et al. [7] reinforced this by reporting that hybrid workers exhibited better work-life balance outcomes than either purely remote or purely in-office peers. On the well-being dimension, Tavares [8] noted that remote work's effect on stress and burnout is highly heterogeneous, mediated by individual preferences, job characteristics, and home environments. Collectively, the literature points to no single universally optimal arrangement and instead suggests that context-specific empirical evidence is necessary to guide organizational decision-making.

3. RESEARCH GAP

While a growing body of international literature examines the productivity and well-being implications of remote, hybrid, and in-office work, there remains a conspicuous scarcity of survey-based empirical studies that focus specifically on the Indian IT workforce across all three arrangements simultaneously. Most Indian studies conducted during or immediately after the pandemic either focused exclusively on the remote-versus-office binary or examined single organizations rather than drawing from diverse IT roles [2, 5]. Furthermore, few studies have captured employee preference data alongside performance

and well-being perceptions in the same instrument, leaving a gap in understanding whether employees' subjective arrangements differ from their preferred ones. This study addresses these gaps by surveying respondents across all three arrangements and collecting both attitudinal ratings and explicit preference data in a unified questionnaire.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As Indian IT organizations grapple with the question of whether to mandate a return to office, preserve remote flexibility, or institutionalize hybrid schedules, they lack sufficient India-specific empirical data on how each arrangement affects employee productivity and well-being. Anecdotal evidence and managerial assumptions frequently drive policy decisions, while the employee perspective particularly how workers themselves perceive their focus, collaboration, stress levels, burnout, and satisfaction across different settings remains underrepresented in the organizational discourse. Without this evidence, organizations risk making policy choices that compromise either productivity or employee well-being, or both.

5. OBJECTIVES

- To profile the demographic characteristics and current work arrangements of Indian IT professionals surveyed.
- To measure and compare self-reported productivity indicators (task efficiency, focus, collaboration, and team connectivity) across remote, hybrid, and in-office arrangements.
- To measure and compare well-being indicators (work-life balance, boundary separation, burnout, and stress) across the three arrangements.
- To assess overall job satisfaction and retention intentions by work arrangement.
- To identify which arrangement respondents perceive as most productive and most conducive to personal well-being.
- To determine the arrangement most preferred by respondents if given a free choice.
- To derive actionable insights for IT organizational policy in the post-pandemic Indian context.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A structured Google Form questionnaire was developed and distributed digitally to IT professionals in

India. The questionnaire comprised 20 questions organized into four sections: (i) demographic information, (ii) current work arrangement details, (iii) Likert-scale perception ratings, and (iv) preference-based questions.

6.2 Data Collection Instrument

- Section A (Demographic): Gender, age group, years of IT experience, and current job role.
- Section B (Arrangement Details): Current work arrangement (Fully Remote, Hybrid, or Fully In-Office) and duration in that arrangement.
- Section C (Likert Scale, 1–5): Ten statements rated from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), covering task efficiency (Q7), focus (Q8), communication and collaboration (Q9), team connectivity (Q10), work-life balance (Q11), personal-work time separation (Q12), mental exhaustion/burnout (Q13), stress and anxiety (Q14), overall satisfaction (Q15), and intention to stay (Q16).
- Section D (Preferences): Most productive arrangement (Q17), best arrangement for personal well-being (Q18), preferred future arrangement (Q19), and open-ended comments (Q20).

6.3 Sampling and Data Collection

A convenience sampling approach was used. The questionnaire was distributed via digital channels including LinkedIn, WhatsApp groups, and email among IT professionals in India. A total of 54 valid responses were collected. All responses were anonymous to minimize social desirability bias.

6.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics frequency counts, percentages, and arithmetic means were computed for all variables. Mean Likert scores were computed per question overall and segmented by current work arrangement (Hybrid, Fully In-Office, Fully Remote) to enable comparative analysis. Data processing was performed using Python.

7. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 54 survey respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile (N = 54)

Variable	Category	Freq	%
Gender	Male	32	59.3 %
	Female	22	40.7 %
Age Group	Below 22	8	14.8 %
	22–28	41	75.9 %
	29–35	1	1.9%
	36–45	4	7.4%
Experience	< 1 year	30	55.6 %
	1–3 years	17	31.5 %
	4–7 years	5	9.2%
	> 7 years	2	3.7%
Job Role	Data Analyst/Sci.	12	22.2 %
	Software Dev/Eng.	5	9.3%
	QA / Test Eng.	4	7.4%
	DevOps / Cloud	1	1.8%
	Business Analyst	1	1.8%
	Other	31	57.4 %

Fig 1: Current Work Arrangement Distribution (N=54)

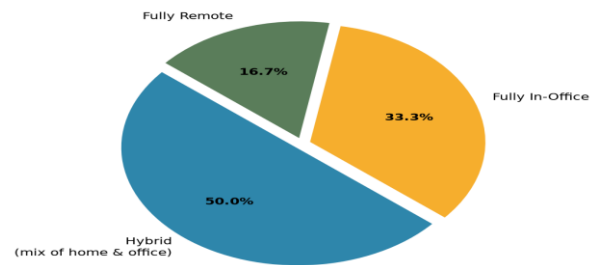


Fig 1: Current Work Arrangement Distribution (N=54)

8. CURRENT WORK ARRANGEMENT AND DURATION

Table 2: Current Work Arrangement (N = 54)

Work Arrangement	Freq	%
Hybrid (mix of home & office)	27	50.0%
Fully In-Office	18	33.3%
Fully Remote	9	16.7%

Table 3: Duration in Arrangement (N = 54)

Duration	Freq	%
Less than 6 months	27	50.0%
6 months – 1 year	14	25.9%
1–2 years	4	7.4%
More than 2 years	9	16.7%

9. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

9.1 Overall Likert Mean Scores

Table 4: Overall Mean Scores (Scale: 1–5)

Dimension	Q#	Mean
Task Completion Efficiency	Q7	3.78
Team Communication & Collab.	Q9	3.94
Team Connectivity	Q10	3.78
Work-Life Balance	Q11	3.59
Focus Without Interruptions	Q8	3.59
Personal-Work Time Separation	Q12	3.43
Overall Satisfaction	Q15	3.43
Mental Exhaustion (Burnout)	Q13	3.39
Intention to Stay	Q16	3.28
Stress / Anxiety	Q14	3.19

9.2 Comparative Analysis by Work Arrangement

Table 5: Mean Scores by Work Arrangement

Dimension	Hyb (27)	Off (18)	Rem (9)
Task Efficiency (Q7)	3.59	4.17*	3.56
Focus Without Int. (Q8)	3.52	3.72*	3.56
Team Communication (Q9)	3.89	4.17*	3.67
Team Connectivity (Q10)	3.78	3.83*	3.67
Work-Life Balance (Q11)	3.33	3.89	3.78*
Time Separation (Q12)	3.07	3.72	3.89*
Burnout (Q13) [lower=better]	3.52	3.11*	3.56
Stress (Q14) [lower=better]	3.26	2.89*	3.56
Overall Satisfaction (Q15)	3.33	3.39	3.78*
Intention to Stay (Q16)	3.19	3.44*	3.22

* Asterisk indicates best score for dimension.

Fig 2: Productivity Dimensions by Work Arrangement

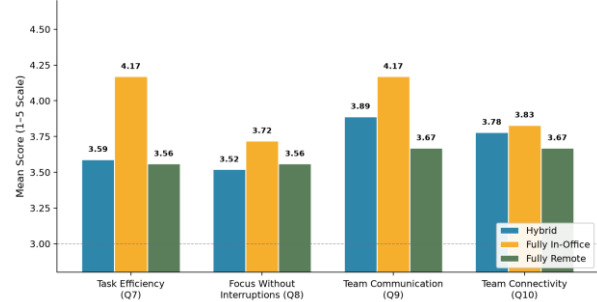


Fig 2: Productivity Dimensions by Work Arrangement

Fig 3: Well-Being Dimensions by Work Arrangement
(*Lower score = less burnout/stress = better)

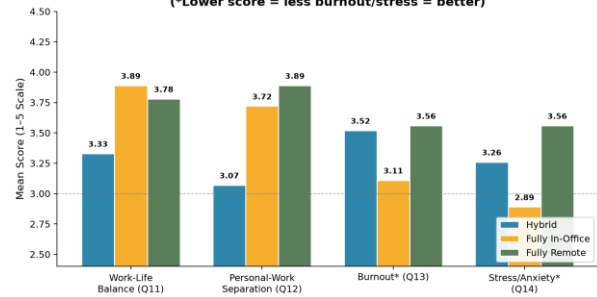


Fig 3: Well-Being Dimensions by Work Arrangement

9.3 Perceived Most Productive Arrangement

Table 6: Most Productive Arrangement (Self-Reported)

Arrangement	Freq	%
Hybrid	26	48.1%
Fully Remote	13	24.1%
Fully In-Office	11	20.4%
No Preference	4	7.4%

9.4 Best Arrangement for Personal Well-Being

Table 7: Best for Personal Well-Being (Self-Reported)

Arrangement	Freq	%
Hybrid	25	46.3%
Fully Remote	18	33.3%
Fully In-Office	9	16.7%
No Preference	2	3.7%

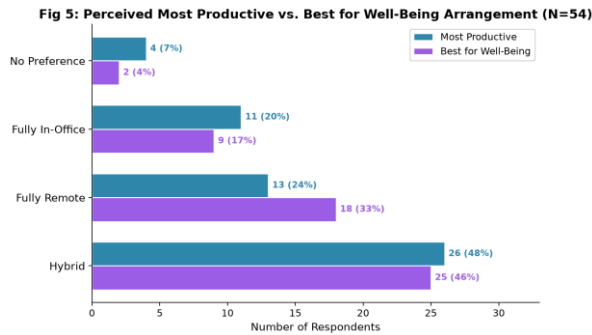


Fig 5: Perceived Productive vs. Well-Being (N=54)

9.5 Preferred Future Arrangement

Table 8: Preferred Future Work Arrangement

Arrangement	Freq	%
Hybrid (mostly remote)	28	51.9%
Fully Remote	17	31.5%
Hybrid (mostly in-office)	8	14.8%
Fully In-Office	1	1.8%

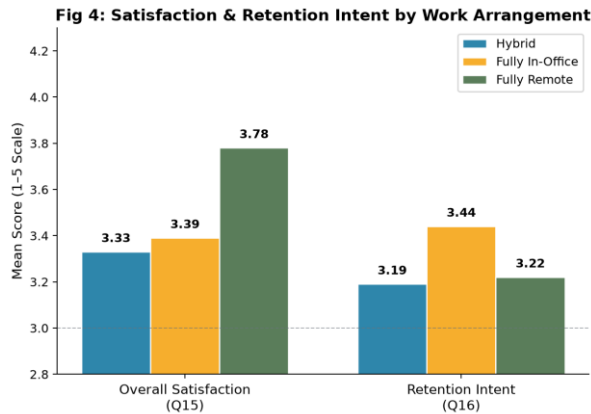


Fig 4: Satisfaction & Retention by Arrangement

Fig 6: Preferred Future Work Arrangement (If Given Free Choice, N=54)

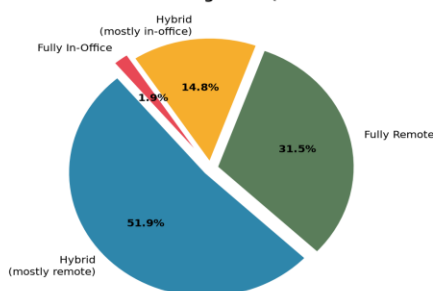


Fig 5: Preferred Future Work Arrangement (N=54)

10. DISCUSSION

The results of this study offer several nuanced insights that extend existing literature on work arrangements in the Indian IT sector. The finding that fully in-office workers score highest on task efficiency (4.17) yet only 20.4% of all respondents perceive in-office work as most productive reveals a critical gap between measured and perceived productivity. This is consistent with the broader psychological literature on autonomy and control: employees who feel they have chosen their work setting tend to report higher satisfaction regardless of objective output, a phenomenon documented by Deci and Ryan [9] in their self-determination theory framework.

Hybrid workers score the lowest on personal-work time separation (3.07) and work-life balance (3.33), despite most respondents preferring this model. This paradox aligns with findings by Charalampous et al. [10], who noted that hybrid arrangements can create 'boundary ambiguity' workers are neither fully at home nor fully at the office, making it difficult to develop stable routines. Organizations offering hybrid work should invest in clear scheduling norms and boundary-setting resources.

Remote workers report the highest personal-work time separation (3.89) and overall satisfaction (3.78). With only 9 fully remote respondents who may have self-selected into this arrangement because they thrive in it, these high scores likely reflect some degree of survivor bias. Longitudinal studies with larger remote samples would be needed to confirm this pattern. Across all three arrangements, burnout scores remain in the moderate-to-high range (3.11–3.56), reflecting the broader challenge of managing mental health in India's high-pressure IT industry.

The predominantly young respondent base (75.9% aged 22–28, 55.6% with less than one year of experience) suggests that findings may be especially representative of entry-level IT professionals. Early-career workers may place higher value on in-person mentoring and team integration factors that could explain why in-office arrangements produce higher productivity for this cohort despite a strong preference for flexibility.

11. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on how remote, hybrid, and fully in-office work arrangements affect the productivity and well-being of Indian IT professionals. Analyzing 54 survey responses, the following key conclusions can be drawn:

1. Fully in-office workers demonstrate the highest self-rated task productivity and team communication, along with the lowest stress and burnout levels, highlighting the structured advantages of co-located work for early-career IT professionals.
2. Fully remote workers report the highest work-life balance, personal-time separation, and overall satisfaction, suggesting that remote work can be deeply fulfilling for employees who can establish effective home-based routines.
3. Hybrid workers form the largest current group (50%) yet paradoxically report the lowest work-life balance and boundary separation scores, pointing to the need for better structure within hybrid policies.
4. Preference data overwhelmingly favours flexibility: 83.4% of respondents prefer hybrid or fully remote work going forward, with only 1.8% preferring fully in-office a finding with direct implications for talent attraction and retention strategies in the Indian IT sector.

Organizations should recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach to work policy is unlikely to serve diverse employee needs. Future research should employ larger samples, longitudinal designs, and stratified analysis by experience level and role type to build a more comprehensive evidence base for workplace policy in post-pandemic India.

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