FMDB *Transactions on Sustainable Technoprise Letters*

A Comparative Study on Work from Home During Covid-19: Employees Perception and Experiences

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Abstract: This study examines how the COVID-19 epidemic affected employee work setup choices. Employees were questioned about work-from-home (WFH), in-office, and hybrid work arrangements during and after the epidemic. The 2020 study found that most employees were satisfied with the home facility during the crisis primarily because of COVID-19; otherwise, most people would want to work in their offices. This study will test the outcomes with a new group of volunteers with different demographics during the pandemic after two years of work-from-home. This research is descriptive and deductive. The quantitative approach uses a Likert scale survey to answer the study question and achieve its goals. Most respondents preferred work-from-home (WFH) over hybrid or office setups. Data factors, including age, gender, marital status, employment role, and firm tenure, did not significantly affect this preference. After the pandemic, 77.35 percent picked Work from Home (WFH), 19.38 percent chose a hybrid setup, and a few days can be spent in the office. Time and cost savings (89.28 percent) and convenience (85.70 percent) were the top two reasons respondents chose their preferred work setup. On other days, they work from home, and 3.42 percent prefer the office. Most people firmly agree that home experiences are friendlier when the company supports them in doing their jobs, supervisors provide help and direction, and all levels of the organization appreciate and communicate. The population strongly disputed that they experienced burnout and that WFH would reduce productivity.

Keywords: Work From Home (WFH); Office Work Setup; Covid-19 Pandemic; Hybrid Work Setup; Interim Solution; Several Businesses; Philippine Economic Zone Association (PEZA); Work Position Demographic.

Received on: 19/07/2023, **Revised on:** 22/10/2023, **Accepted on:** 10/11/2023, **Published on:** 24/12/2023

Cite as: C. Yturralde and J. Ramos, "A Comparative Study on Work from Home During Covid-19: Employees Perception and Experiences," *FMDB Transactions on Sustainable Technoprise Letters*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 231–243, 2023.

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Pandemic on March 11, 2020, after reporting over 118,000 cases in 114 countries. With the declaration of the Concern two months earlier and then escalated to a Pandemic status in March, the Philippine government released an Executive Order 168 s. 2014 established and mandated the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to prevent and minimize the spread of infectious disease through reinforcement and to establish systems to trace, screen, identify, and isolate affected individuals through quarantine and other measures. Executive Order 168 mandated the country under community quarantine or lockdown in March 2020, causing several businesses to convert their work operations from an in-office traditional setup to Work from Home (WFH). Companies organized skeletal staffing following the Flexible Work Arrangement guidelines released by the Department of Labor and Employment as a strategy to continue business operations despite the ongoing outbreak. The Work from Home (WFH) setup became an interim solution for several businesses whose

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work output is digital and computer-based and can be completed using the Internet. Employers allowed employees to bring their work equipment and perform their jobs at home.

Experiencing one of the longest government-mandated lockdowns in the world, employees gained different opinions and preferences, leaning towards a convenient setup and avoiding time spent on travel. Some employees left their apartments near work locations and returned to their parents' residences to save on rental expenses or care for their elderly [8]. Businesses and organizations have adjusted their processes and implemented innovative remote work tools to continue their operations while considering the government-mandated restrictions on spreading the virus by keeping employees isolated and home quarantined [9]. Now that the world has learned to live with the virus and the implementation of community lockdown mandates has slowly been lifted, different recommendations from private and public organizations have been shared to reinforce or deter the new work setup of Work from Home (WFH). In the recent Philippines government mandate related to the Philippine Economic Zone Association (PEZA) registered companies' Work from Home (WFH) setup, thirty-eight identified areas are encouraged to return to the offices by June and September 2022. This action responded to the declaration of Alert Level 1, where businesses, organizations, and public transportation will implement an enhanced capacity [10].

One of the surveys conducted by SEEK Asia concluded that 51% of Filipinos prefer the remote work setup after the COVID-19 experience [11]. This study was completed in 2020 and covered multiple countries with different levels of remote work exposure. It is essential to understand the perception of the employees around in-office and Work from Home setup, especially from the IT-Business Processing Outsourcing industry after the mandate from the government and Philippine Economic Zone Association (PEZA) for its locators to end the remote work and return to offices starting April 1, otherwise will stand to lose their fiscal incentives for non-compliance. This mandate was later amended due to the sector's clamor for an adjustment period and deadline extension [12].

The COVID-19 pandemic may reach its endemic state, but new viruses or environmental disasters may still happen [13]. This study offers valuable information and insight into the workforce's perception regarding Work from Home (WFH) and understands the different components that affected the respondents' preferences and the reasons for such choices.

2. Study Objectives

2.1. General Objective

The study intends to investigate the perception of employees from a selected industry on Work from Home (WFH) arrangements during and after the pandemic.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the socio-demographic profile of respondents.
- To identify the respondents' work arrangement profile during the pandemic.
- To describe the respondents' perception of WFH during the pandemic.
- To describe the respondents' work preferences during and after the pandemic.

Based on the specific objectives identified, the following null hypotheses are developed:

- **Ho:** No significant difference exists in the respondents' socio-demographic profile and work arrangement preference during and after the pandemic.
- **Ha:** There is a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions towards WFH during and after the pandemic.

3. Conceptual Framework

The study considers the definition and description of Work from Home by the International Labour Organization as "a work arrangement in which a worker fulfills the essential responsibilities of their job while remaining at home, using information and communications technology (ICT). The definition is used to refer uniquely to home-based teleworking as a temporary, alternative working arrangement. It requires shared responsibility and commitment by both employers and workers to ensure business continuity and employment [14].

Perception is the process by which an individual gives meaning to the environment. The Research Clue study proved that employees' good perception creates a positive working environment, thus a significant factor in employees' job satisfaction. On the other hand, negative perception affects employee performance [15].

Understanding the two critical concepts mentioned, it is then emphasized that the perception of employees on Work From Home setup constructs an important area of study that becomes a resource and support to further research related to employee preferences such as satisfaction, productivity, and overall performance on work from home setup [16].

The study is anchored on the quantitative research conducted in 2020, which concluded that employees are satisfied with the Work-from-home setup only because of the pandemic and will choose to return to the office after the pandemic.

4. Review of Related Literature

The literature review focused on publications dated 2019 to 2021. The time range covered in the literature review is purposely limited to focus on employees' perceptions and experiences around Working from Home (WFH) during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beauregard et al. [1] surveyed and interviewed employees from the corporate sectors from March to June 2020. The study concluded that most employees were satisfied with the work from the Home facility during the crisis only because of the known impact of COVID-19. Otherwise, most people want to perform their work in their designated office premises. According to the research recommendations, organizations should provide work-from-home facilities during similar crises and support our government's decisions regarding lockdown rules to overcome such issues. The paper recommended that organizations provide employees with facilities like laptops, Internet, and flexible working hours, which will lead to the smooth functioning of work, and the organizations' objectives will be fulfilled along with the nation's objectives.

Sabarirajan et al. [2] said that the study surveyed 50 respondents from different professions, such as teaching, IT assistants, systems engineers, and executives. The research concluded that respondents working from home are willing to work if they have a good and supportive environment. It emphasized good connections between paid tasks and regular employee interactions. The daily work hour extensions are an essential aspect linked to over-employee tiredness. Customization and Flexibility of Kali Linux are highly adaptable, and users can adjust the operating system to meet their requirements better. Kali Linux allows us to do whatever we want with it to create a specialized distribution or add specialized tools. This versatility guarantees that the operating system may be fine-tuned to satisfy the specific requirements of a variety of different cybersecurity projects by being able to meet a wide range of scenarios.

Priyanka et al. [3] collected data from Information Technology (IT) professionals using a framed questionnaire supported by secondary data from books, websites, and journals. The research result showed that most employees were satisfied working from home, and some crucial aspects of job satisfaction factors were the support and encouragement provided by the employers. There are noted challenges identified through the study, such as internet connectivity issues that affected online meetings and the longer period for some employees to adapt to the work-from-home culture, which made employees feel returned to perform more compared to their effort when performing the job in the traditional offices or workplaces. The results indicated that most employees were satisfied with the work from home.

Rashi et al. [4] looked into 100,000 tweets around the globe with Work from Home or WFH word in it for a qualitative analysis using R. The research aims to examine the sentiments of people regarding the Work-from-home (WFH) concept by analyzing Twitter activities posted on social media. The results indicate that 73% of the people had positive sentiments toward the Work-from-home (WFH) concept. The emotions associated with most of the tweets were trust and anticipation, indicating that people welcome this concept.

Damodaran [5] concluded that Sixty-four percent of workers would prefer flexible hours. Only 36% want a traditional 9-to-5 job. One question in the survey asked the respondents where they worked after the pandemic. Ninety percent of the respondents said they wanted to work remotely, and the rest liked the combination of home and office work set up within a week. Further, the conclusion asserted that the flexibility that the employees seek made them choose the work-from-home option.

Damodaran et al. [6] conducted a sample of 526 responses from professionals from the IT sector around the globe. The results showed that two-thirds of the employees reported increased productivity while working from home. The time they saved from the commute allowed the employees to meet higher expectations. Organizational factors such as autonomy, empowerment, independence, and a supportive environment were necessary to support employees' productivity when working from home, and these factors showed a positive correlation to increased productivity. The author asserted that the findings presented are aligned with the large volume of studies conducted around work from home and productivity linked to organizational factors.

Lavanya et al. [7] conducted an online survey to analyze the Work-from-home experiences of 256 workers from 66 enterprises in China during the pandemic. The authors used to understand the impact of five job characteristics on home job satisfaction. They concluded that a suitable workplace, digital social support, and appropriate monitoring mechanisms promote employee job satisfaction.

4.1. Future Research Perspectives (highlight gaps, significance)

The current literature on work-from-home setup and employees focuses on employee productivity, employee satisfaction, work-from-home effectiveness, the organization's prediction of employee choices, and the influencing behavioral or organizational factors. This study addressed the need in the current literature to understand the perception of a group of respondent employees towards working from home, considering different demographic variables under the unique circumstances of a pandemic or after the pandemic [17]. The environment in which these respondents are is unique because they experienced the work-from-home setup when they took the survey and shared their perception of the work setup during and after the pandemic. This study's knowledge plays a critical role in future research. It is deemed a prerequisite to understanding work-from-home employees in a specific stage or transitioning from a traditional arrangement to work-from-home [18].

One study specifically focused on the employees' perception regarding Work-from-home during and after the pandemic. The results showed that employees would choose Work-from-home during the pandemic and in-office setup after [19]. It is interesting to prove whether or not the results will show the same with a different group with a unique circumstance. Various results are based on non-academic research conducted by many reputable global organizations. It is also critical to produce this study to add to the available research regarding this very relevant topic to aid other organizations in making the right decisions related to work setup strategy when another similar pandemic-like situation arises [20].

5. Methods

5.1. Study Design and Locale

The research design is descriptive and quantitative, using the data collected through a 31-survey questionnaire. Data collection happened from March to April 2022 using a secured and reliable online tool in Google Suite. The survey data is tested for internal validity and reliability using Chronbach's Alpha Formula. The analysis to describe the socio-demographics and significant differences between variables was tested using Data Descriptive Analysis and Chi-Square Test Formulation. These tools are available in Professional licensed Google Analysis Tools [21].

The research was conducted at an outsourcing company in Clark Green City (CGC) inside the Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone (CFEZ), located on the northwest side of Mabalacat City. The area has been redeveloped into a modern industrial estate that houses many corporations and organizations in business outsourcing, hotels, education, leisure, entertainment, and gaming [22]. It also has Clark International Airport and several health clinics and hospitals. Clark Green City is about 80 Kilometers away from Manila, Philippines. The companies in Clark Green City employ most of their workers from Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan, Pangasinan, Olongapo, Baguio, Zambales, Bataan, and Manila.

The survey participants are employed by a global company that caters to outsourcing services and digital solutions such as digital customer experience, trust and safety services, AI services, and consulting for high-growth and technical companies. The company prides itself on promoting an employee-first culture, wellness, and diversity. It is in the Philippines, Taiwan, Europe, the USA, Mexico, India, and Malaysia [23].

The survey respondents are limited to one company for convenience due to the limitations on mobility and coordination due to lockdowns. Despite the limitations, it is noteworthy that the data remains reliable due to the volume and the diversity of the employee respondents in terms of gender, age, years of work experience, work level, civil status, and educational attainment [24].

The study was conducted while the area was under the government-mandated community lockdown. The national and local government issues COVID-19 alert levels from 1 to 3 based on the pandemic alert levels guidelines. This period presented challenges and opportunities in studying the subject matter, thus the limitation on data collection [25].

5.2. Study Participants

5.2.1. Sample Size and Sampling

The respondents of the study came from one company for convenience. The active employee population is 4036 as of March 2022. All organization members were invited to participate voluntarily with no obligation [26]. Three thousand seven hundred eighty-two respondents participated, garnering a 93.70% participation rate within the survey date range. The participation rate is adequate to represent the whole population of the company.

5.2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Survey participants were provided disclosure of data and information usage consent for ethical data administration purposes. The survey is purely voluntary, and the participants may allow the researcher to use their data for study and analysis [27]. The data from participants who decided to answer the survey but did not agree to the consent will be excluded from the study. They will implement a data management process of deleting collected information [28].

5.3. Research Instruments

The research instrument is a survey questionnaire that has 31 questions, of which 2 are data privacy and confidentiality agreement and consent, seven questions are demographic questions, 1 question pertains to the current work setup of the respondents while taking the survey, three questions pertain to work setup preferences during and post-pandemic, and 17 questions pertains to the experiences while the respondents are in WFH setup. The questionnaire was created using a Google form for easy distribution, collection, and summarization [29]. This form also maintains the integrity of the data collection due to the real-time submission of responses with time stamps and details of the data source that are kept confidential based on the respondents' preferences [30].

5.4. Primary and Secondary Data

The nature of the study and the method used to collect the data for the research are descriptive and quantitative regarding data collection. Both primary and secondary data are collected.

5.4.1. Primary data

The primary data is collected from the organization that implemented the Work-from-home setup for all of their staff since the start of the pandemic. The survey questionnaire was created using Google Forms for easy distribution, collection, and summarization. The company owns the data, and the agreement to use the data is acquired through executive leaders' approval using electronic email communication. The raw data and the analysis documents are stored in the company data storage for data privacy compliance purposes. They are available upon review request when necessary, under complete confidentiality and documented non-disclosure agreement guidance.

5.4.2. Secondary data

The secondary data is collected from reliable online sources such as journals, news, government publications, and other reputable research centers and websites. The COVID-19 information is referenced from international and national health and government organizations considered to be the authority on the subject matter.

5.5. Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher regarded the ethical research guidelines and confidentiality, data privacy, and intellectual property rights of the participants, authors, and scholars. The survey disclaimer emphasized that participation is voluntary and that the participant's identity and choice will be protected and respected. The respondents who refused to provide documented consent for using their responses and information will be excluded from the data set. Excluded data is disposed of following the Data Privacy Act. In cases where an instrument needs to be modified, permission from the original author will be sought, and any changes made to the instrument will be appropriately cited.

5.5.1. Informed Consent Process, Duration of Participation, and Withdrawal Criteria

Participation in the research study is strictly preferential, anonymous, and voluntary. Informed consent is sought from the respondents with the assurance of their understanding of the activity's objective, purpose, method, scope, and potential outcome. It took approximately ten minutes to complete the survey questionnaire. The form is distributed online through the respondents' work email accounts. The participants can receive their responses as they wish and can choose to refuse to participate without obligations.

5.5.2. Risks and Inconveniences

There is no serious risk involved in participating in the study. The first part of the questionnaire (Part I) is intended to determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondent: age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, average monthly income, current position in the company/institution where employed, and length of service in the current company. The second

part (Part II) aims to describe respondents' work arrangement profiles during and after the pandemic. The third part (Part III) covers the respondents' perception of WFH during the pandemic, while the fourth part (Part IV) covers their perception of WFH after the pandemic. No other information will be collected, and only relevant data will be used exclusively for the study. Further, this study will only involve a survey questionnaire; therefore, the occurrence of either injury or illness because of your participation is very unlikely.

5.5.3. Benefits of the Study

The study results provide the author with a better understanding of the employees' perception of the Work-from-home set during and after the pandemic, considering factors such as socio-demographics and other experiences. It helps answer the trending questions around employees' Work-from-home preferences that many organizations are eager to know. The results are extremely useful for organizations of the same work sector or location to prepare for the post-pandemic work setup and human resource strategies to remain competitive [31]. It is useful for the local and national governments to understand the pulse of their constituents related to the evolving work setup. Scholars and the academe benefit from the result of the study as an additional reference in consideration of the research's demographic, industry, and time factors to further enrich any future research [32].

6. Statistical Analysis of Data

6.1. Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's alpha is used to test the reliability of the survey data. It is the most common measurement of internal consistency, especially for multiple Likert questions.

6.2. Demographic Description of Data

The survey data is described by showing the composition of the whole data against the different demographic characteristics available in the set. The following demographic characteristics are gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, work designation or role, and length of service with the current organization.

- Gender - Described as male or female.
- Age - Described by group as 18 to 25 years old, 26 to 30 years old, 31 to 35 years old, 36 to 40 years old, and over 40 years old.
- Civil Status - Described as Single, Married, Separated, Widower.
- Educational Attainment - Described as high school graduates, College graduates, Graduate Degrees (post-graduate).
- The group describes monthly income as below P10,000, P10,000-P25,000, P25,000-P40,000, P40,001-P55,000, P55,001, and above.
- My current role is Teammate operations, Teammate support, Team leaders, Operations Managers, and Top management.
- Length of Service is described in groups as less than one year, 1 to 3 years, 4 to 6 years, 7-10 years, and more than ten years.

6.3. Respondent's Work Arrangement Profile:

This analysis shows the respondents' preferences regarding work arrangements during and after the pandemic.

- Count of Preferred Work Arrangements During and After the Pandemic
- Preferred Work Arrangement During the Pandemic.
- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic.

6.4. Respondents' Perception Towards WFH After Pandemic

The data below shows the respondents' preferences after the pandemic, organizing it based on demographic characteristics.

- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Work Position Demographic
- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Civil Status Demographic
- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Age Group Demographic
- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Civil Status Demographic

- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Educational Attainment Demographic
- Preferred Work Arrangement After the Pandemic by Gender Demographic

6.5. Study of Significance Based on Given Hypothesis

The respondents' socio-demographic profile and work arrangement preferences significantly differed during the pandemic. The survey data is analyzed to establish the significant differences between the variables, such as the demographic characteristics of the respondents against the work preference variable during the pandemic. A sample Chi-Square Test was used to establish the relationship between the identified variables.

Variables: Specific Demographic Characteristics and Work Preferences After the Pandemic

If the p-value is <= level of significance (Alpha),
then reject the null hypothesis.

If the p-value is >= level of significance (Alpha),
then fails to reject the null hypothesis

6.6. Hypothesis to be tested

Ho -No significant difference exists in the respondents' socio-demographic profile and **w**ork arrangement preference during and after the pandemic. The two sets of variables are independent.

Ha - There is a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of WFH during and after the pandemic. The variables have an association or are dependent.

The respondents' socio-demographic profile and work arrangement preferences significantly differed after the pandemic. The survey data is analyzed to establish the significant differences between the variables, such as the demographic characteristics of the respondents against the work preference variable after the pandemic. A sample Chi-Square Test was used to establish the relationship between the identified variables.

Variables: Specific Demographic Characteristics and Work Preferences After the Pandemic

If the p-value is <= level of significance (Alpha),
then reject the null hypothesis

If the p-value is >= level of significance (Alpha),
then fails to reject the null hypothesis

6.7. Hypothesis to be tested

Ho -No significant difference exists in the respondents' socio-demographic profile and **w**ork arrangement preference during and after the pandemic. The two sets of variables are independent.

Ha - There is a significant difference between the respondents' perceptions of WFH during and after the pandemic. The variables have associations or dependencies.

- Factors Affecting the Preferences of Work Setup After the Pandemic.
- Respondents chose the factors or the reasons that influenced their preferences for work setup after the pandemic. Respondents were allowed to choose one or more factors. The results below were derived using a qualitative approach of counting each factor chosen by the respondents and isolating each factor.

7. Results

7.1. Respondents' Work Arrangement Profile During the Pandemic

The respondents are 42.3% male and 57.7% female, of which 38.7% are 18 to 25 years old, 32% are 26 to 30 years old, 16.1% are 31 to 25 years old, 7.4% are 36 to 40 years old, and 5.7% are over 40 years old. The respondents' civil statuses are 76.2%

single, 21.9% married, 1.5% separated, and 0.4% widower. The respondents' educational attainment is 38.5% high school graduates, 59.7% college graduates, and 1.8% post-graduate degrees.

The monthly income of the population is 83.6% with Php10,000 to PhP25,000, 10.3% with Php25,001 to Php40,000, and 2.6% with Php40,001 to Php55,000, 1.7% with below Php10,000 and 0.69% with higher than Php70,000.

The respondents' current role is 66.9% Agents Operations Frontline, 22.8% Agents Support Frontline, 8.5% Team Leaders, 1.3% Operations Managers, and 0.1% Top Management. The length of services is 49% with less than one year in the company, 32.1% with 1 to 3 years tenure, 18.6% with 4 to 6 years tenure, 0.27% with 7 to 10 years tenure, and 0.03% with over ten years of tenure.

The respondents' preferred work arrangement during the pandemic when the survey was taken was 91.12% Worked from Home, 7.55% hybrid, where they worked at the office or home when needed, and 1.33% working at the offices during the period captured.

When the respondents were asked what their preferred work arrangements were after the pandemic, they responded that 77.3% Work from home, 19.3% hybrid where they could work at the office and home when needed, and 3.4% preferred to be at the offices full time [33].

Comparing the results of the respondents' preference for work set up during and after the pandemic, the work-from-home preference during the pandemic decreased by 13.82%. The hybrid work setup preference during the pandemic increased by 11.75% after the pandemic, and the office full-time setup preference increased by 2.07% [34].

The respondents showed a positive perception of the work-from-home setup overall. Combining the agreeing and strongly agree scores, 93.07% of the respondents said they received enough support and guidance from their supervisors during the work-from-home setup [35]. 90.16% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed when asked if they find the work-from-home arrangement a friendlier working environment [36].

93.85% of the population agreed and strongly agreed that the company provided them with the equipment to work from home. When asked if the company reported positive cases of COVID-19 among employees, 75.72% of the respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed [37]. When the respondents were asked if they had enough opportunities to develop their professional skills while working at home, 89.75% agreed and strongly agreed. When the respondents were asked if they felt confident communicating with all levels during the work-from-home setup, 90.31% agreed and strongly agreed [38].

When asked if the respondents are experiencing issues coordinating with their co-workers during the work-from-home setup, 74.01% said disagree or strongly disagree, indicating that the majority did not have issues coordinating with others. 16.33% said they somehow agreed or were neutral, and 9.66% said they agreed and strongly agreed that they experienced issues coordinating with their co-workers [39]. When the respondents were asked if they were experiencing technical issues at home during the work-from-home setup, 57.63% said they did experience technical issues, choosing the options of disagreeing and strongly disagreeing. 35% responded somewhat neutral, and 7.16% said they experienced technical issues.

The respondents were asked if they are getting appreciation from their supervisors during work-from-home setup, and 90.08% responded with agree and strongly agree, with only 2.08% of the population who mentioned they did not get appreciation.

The respondents were asked if employers should be more flexible in requiring employees to go to the office; 69.96% chose to agree and strongly agree, 22.92% chose somewhat agree and neutral, and 7.13% chose to disagree and strongly disagree.

The majority of the respondents find themselves more productive with a flexible work schedule, with 74.15% choosing agree and strongly agree, while 20.52% choosing somewhat agree and neutral. Only 5.34% do not find themselves more productive in the said setup.

The respondents were also asked if they wanted flexibility in the amount of time they could go to the office, and 66.12% responded with agree and strongly agree, while 25.77% chose somewhat agree or neutral.

When asked if the respondents missed being around their co-workers, only 19.56% agreed and strongly agreed. 55.85% chose somewhat agree and neutral, and 24.6% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

When the respondents were asked if it's difficult to be productive at home, 86.53% disagreed and strongly disagreed. When asked if they feel distant or disengaged when working at home, 85.73% said no, choosing to disagree and strongly disagree with the options.

When asked if the respondents feel more burned out by work when working from home, 86.74% chose to disagree and strongly disagree.

When asked the question: "If the company expects me to work in the office full time, I will consider looking for another company given the same salary and responsibilities," 28.15% chose to agree and strongly agree, 39.86% chose somewhat agree or neutral, and 31.99% said no by choosing the disagree and strongly disagree options.

7.2. Respondents' Perception of Work from Home During the Pandemic

Perceptions of work-from-home setup after the pandemic showed a slight variation when demographics were considered compared to overall results.

Using the demographic variable under work position, the data showed that most of the respondents who hold a leadership position chose a hybrid work setup compared to the frontline employees such as Agents frontline and Agents support. The higher the work position rank is, the higher the percentage of the population choosing the hybrid work setup. Only 15% to 17% of the frontline employees chose the office or hybrid work setup, and over 80% chose the work-from-home setup. On the other hand, 43.75% of the team leaders, 57.14% of the Operations managers, 71.43% of the senior managers, and 100% of the top management chose a hybrid setup. Looking at the work tenure demographic, 4 of 5 tenure groups chose work from home with 72% to 100% aside from the 7 to 10-year group, in which 66% of the population chose hybrid, and 33.33% chose work from home [40].

The civil status demographic showed a consistent result across all groups, with 76% to 81% choosing to work from home. The different age demographics showed the same results across all groups, with 73% to 78% of the population choosing to work from home and 18% to 25% choosing a hybrid work setup [41]. The same results were observed when the educational attainment demographic was analyzed, showing that all groups, with 76% to 81% choosing work from home and 17% to 19% choosing hybrid work setup. The same result was observed when looking at the gender demographics of both female and male groups, with 74% to 79% of the groups choosing to work from home and 17% to 21% choosing a hybrid work setup.

7.3. Proving Significant Differences in Respondents' Demographics and the Work Setup Preference During the Pandemic

A two-sample chi-square test was conducted to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis (**H0)** states that there is no significant difference in the respondents' socio-demographic profile and their work arrangement preference during and after the pandemic, and the alternative hypothesis (**Ha)** states that there is a significant difference between the respondents' perception of WFH during and after the pandemic. The test results between the demographic variables and the work preferences during the pandemic proved a significant difference in work setup preference and the gender, age, and work designation variables.

Using gender and work set up as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 28.7 and the p-value at 0.0000. Using age group and work set up as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 21.42 and p-value at 0.00611. Using work designation and work setup as the two samples, the Chi-Square value produced at 219.25 and p-value at 0.0000. Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis for these three variables as association was determined against work set up variable during the pandemic

On the other hand, the test results from the demographic variables educational attainment and civil status during the pandemic proved no significant difference. Using the educational attainment and work set up as the two samples, the Chi-Square value produced at 2.01 and the p-value at 0.73386. Using the civil status and work setup as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 6.86 and the p-value at 0.33426. The $p>0.05$ value for these samples indicated that it is not statistically significant and indicates strong evidence for the null hypothesis. This means we failed to reject the null hypothesis, and the identified variables were independent of the work setup preference variable during the pandemic.

7.4. Proving Significant Differences in Respondents' Demographics and the Work Setup Preference After the Pandemic

The test results between the demographic variables and the work preferences after the pandemic proved a significant difference in work setup preference and the gender, age group, civil status, and work designation variables. Using gender and work set up as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 13.81 and the p-value at 0.0010. Using age group and work set up

as the two samples, the Chi-Square value produced at 19.54 and p-value at 0.0122. Using civil status and work setup as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 18.21 and the p-value at 0.00432. Using work designation and work setup as the two samples, the Chi-Square value produced at 204.59 and p-value at 0.0000. Thus, the null hypothesis for these four variables was rejected as the association was determined against the work setup variable after the pandemic.

On the other hand, the test results from the demographic variable educational attainment proved no significant difference. Using the educational attainment and work set up as the two samples, the Chi-Square value was produced at 2.03 and the p-value at 0.73041. The $p>0.05$ value for these samples indicated that it is not statistically significant and indicates strong evidence for the null hypothesis. This means we failed to reject the null hypothesis, and the variable is independent of the work setup preference variable after the pandemic.

7.5. Reasons for Choosing the Work Set Up After the Pandemic

The respondents were given multiple options to choose from as the factors that affected their work setup preference. The top reasons chosen by the respondents are convenience at 90.68%, Improved productivity at 81.57%, time or expense savings at 93.64%, and work-life balance at 87.69%. The distribution of the choices across these four options is consistent across the office, work-from-home, and hybrid work setup.

8. Discussion

The study results proved that most employees prefer to work from home during the pandemic. This preference is expected and recommended based on the health professional's advice and the employees' increased health awareness about the Coronavirus and the steps to mitigate the spread of the virus through lockdowns and social distancing. The employees who experienced working from home for over two years prefer to stay working from home after the pandemic not because of health reasons but due to convenience, perceived improved productivity, cost and time savings from transportation, and the benefit they experienced spending more time for self and with family that is described as work-life balance.

While the frontline employees prefer to work from home during and after the pandemic, the employees who are part of the leadership or management members prefer the hybrid setup where they can work from home or at the offices when needed. These results differ from the earlier studies where employees will return to the office full-time after the pandemic and only choose to stay home for health reasons.

The high preference of frontlines for working from home may be connected to their experience during the pandemic, where employee respondents find themselves productive when working from home. They did not experience burnout and received enough support and guidance from their supervisor. The respondents were provided with WFH equipment by the company and were provided with regular COVID-19 updates.

It is noteworthy that when employees receive enough support, they are provided enough opportunities to develop their professional skills and share confidence in communicating with all levels of employees while working from home. They consider themselves productive, not burnt out, and appreciated. They consider their homes a friendly place to work despite not seeing their colleagues face to face.

Positive leadership perception and ample management support enabled high perceived productivity, making the employees think that work can be done well without returning to the offices. They did not need to see their colleagues more often and were satisfied with online meetups.

One factor that will benefit from further review and consideration is the technical issues at home. Over one-third of employees experienced technical issues that can entail decreased productivity if not resolved by companies implementing work-from-home setups. It is also critical to consider that 7% to 10% of the population may have worse technical issues at home, and losses can be material if not resolved.

The flexibility of work schedules and office visits became necessary for employees who experienced working from home effectively during the pandemic. This is why a quarter of the employees may resign if forced to return to the offices when the same job with the same pay is available in the market. With the higher risk of resignation when forced to return to the offices, employers should start creating mitigating actions to counter these resignations with benefits focusing on the top drivers that caused the perception. These factors have cost and time savings directly connected to pay and overall compensation increase. Increase convenience in performing work, increased productivity through effective tools, and work-life balance for workers.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has scientifically proven the following conclusions and would like to assert the recommendations as follows:

9.1. Conclusions

Frontline employees perceive work from home as a viable and effective way to conduct work across all genders, age groups, work tenures, work roles or designations, and civil statuses. Management members perceive work-from-home and hybrid work setups as viable options for work across all genders, age groups, work tenures, work roles or designations, and civil status. Frontline employees who experienced ample management support, appreciation, work opportunities, open communication, and career development while working from home have perceived increased productivity, less work burnout, and engaged with their teams without the need to see them face to face frequently. A quarter of the employees will choose to leave the company if the flexibility of returning to the office setup is not provided or offered when the same job with the same pay level opportunity is available. The test results between the demographic variables and the work preferences after the pandemic proved a significant difference between work setup preference and variables such as gender, age group, civil status, and work designation variables. Thus, the null hypothesis for these four variables was rejected as associations were determined against work-set-up variables after the pandemic. The test results from the demographic variable educational attainment proved no significant difference. This means we failed to reject the null hypothesis, and the variable is independent of the work setup preference variable after the pandemic. Mitigate the loss in productivity by monitoring and resolving technical issues from employees who experience technical difficulties. Allow employees the flexibility to visit the offices when needed to resolve technical issues or mitigate productivity loss.

9.2. Recommendations

Consider the options of work setup conversion and adapt to the work-from-home models wherein work can be done using a computer, internet access, and work types that are not prone to security violations outside the secured office facilities. Create business protocols to support and engage employees when working at home. Consider factors such as company and business-related communications protocols, availability of leaders for interaction, appreciation and recognition, career development activities, and provision of effective work-from-home equipment and tools. Explore the impact of the factors that affect the employees' perception of choosing a specific work setup, such as cost and time savings traveling from home to the office, convenience, improvement in productivity, and work-life balance. Improving these decision factors for employees who must be in the offices to perform their duties and work from home is impossible. Further study is necessary to determine if the presented results will be consistent with respondents from a different location, period, work setup during the pandemic, nature of work, and management level of support.

Appendix-A

1. Approvals: Inserted as an electronic file saved in a secured data repository. Access links as provided below:

Location: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mmuaSOWWikdxrHSTaeihMpFcxh-XfjDP/view?usp=sharing

2. Survey Material - Inserted as an electronic file saved in a secured data repository. Access links as provided below:

Location:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdhcz4zpnUSxzFzEyY84_fWFjCWagN1tL4ATr4zimamm7UJJw/viewform?usp=sf_link

3. Survey Data- Inserted as an electronic file saved in a secured data repository. Access links as provided below:

Location: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12n_B_3dEAa6oreYN5SF8K7hdckhKsjFA/view?usp=sharing

Data Repository: The data storage, access, and destruction comply with data privacy law and must comply with the company data privacy protocols

Designated Storage: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10ZRPixl2sikFd88WJcnC47LkwX-ew9CK

Acknowledgment: The research is personally funded. The approval to survey for research purposes was secured from the company executive leaders, legal department, internal marketing, and branding department with an agreement of compliance with the Data Privacy Law, Company core values, branding protocols, and ethical guidelines.

Data Availability Statement: The researcher ensures that the identity of the respondents remains confidential. All other pertinent information collected, including the answers to questions, are kept private and used solely for the study's objective.

The survey responses and the participants' master list are secured in a protected online location. Data destruction is performed one year after the completion of the study following the data privacy protocols of data treatment.

Funding Statement: No funding was obtained to help prepare this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest Statement: There is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

Ethics and Consent Statement: The consent was taken from the colleges during data collection, and they received ethical approval and participant consent.

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