

Bahraini Women and Remote Work:

Findings from an Online Survey and Focus Group Discussion



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Abstract

This paper uses a combination of survey data and a focus group session to study the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Bahraini women and remote work. It explores women's attitudes toward remote work drawn from their direct experience, and makes a series of policy recommendations based on a synthesis of the findings.

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Executive Summary

During the period of May-June 2021, the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bahrain conducted an online survey to assess the impact of Covid-19 on women in Bahrain and to assess their perspectives on remote working. In October 2021, Derasat and UNDP conducted a follow-up focus group on the topic of Bahraini women and remote work to get a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of their views on remote work. The main findings from both the online survey and the focus group are as follows:

1. Bahraini women overwhelmingly appreciate the flexibility that remote working has provided for them.
2. Most Bahraini women believe that remote working has improved their work-life balance. Women with less supportive systems at home reported more difficulties with this modality.
3. Bahraini women prefer to see a hybrid work model introduced, where workers can choose their own hours and aren't restricted by a 9-to-5.
4. Remote working has the potential to increase retention among pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women with young children.

Based on these findings, this paper presents the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Introducing a hybrid working modality at offices, where employees benefit from a mix of remote and in-office work.
2. Switching to a deliverables-based system, rather than a system focused on working 8 hours a day.
3. Instituting and training employees in efficient online systems that allow for regular online communications.
4. Providing more flexible work options to pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women with young children.

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic that struck in early 2020 altered the world in many unexpected ways. People found themselves locked down in their homes, schools were shut down, and socializing outside of the home came to an abrupt halt. Alongside these ostensibly negative developments, one of the most significant changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic was the mass worldwide switch to remote work due to the social distancing restrictions.

This shift occurred in Bahrain, where the Civil Service Bureau, in line with a directive from the Government Executive Committee, announced plans to institute teleworking policies at ministries, government departments, and public institutions in March 2020 to curb the spread of the virus and maintain public health. Many private companies followed suit by introducing their own remote work modalities, and by the end of 2020 a substantial percentage of Bahraini companies were operating remotely. Moreover, further regulations were introduced to regulate remote work policies in Bahrain including the Civil Service Bureau's decision no. (24) of 2021 which lists articles for the application of remote work arrangements beyond the pandemic (<https://www.legalaffairs.gov.bh/HTM/RCAB5421.htm>).

It is worth noting that these directives were implemented considering the needs of women in the workforce as the guidelines specifically prioritize working mothers and mothers who care for young children to benefit from remote work arrangements during the pandemic. Additionally, in line with its efforts to achieve gender balance in economic participation, the Supreme Council for Women submitted a recommendation which was adopted by the government to grant the spouses of women who assume vital duties in the frontlines the opportunity to work remotely due to the closure of schools and the absence of mothers to care for their children (Supreme Council for Women, 2020). The impact of these guidelines is significant not only in supporting women achieve work-life balance, but also through reinforcing the notion of equally shared household responsibilities between spouses, thus supporting the retention of female workers.

The impact of this switch to remote work in Bahrain is an understudied phenomenon, thus many questions remain unanswered about its impact on employee productivity, company performance, employee wellbeing, and the future of remote work or other types of flexible work arrangements in the Kingdom. In an effort to address a subset of these questions, Derasat and UNDP Bahrain conducted a study on the impact of remote working on Bahraini women. To analyze this impact, the researchers organized an online survey and a focus group discussion to understand Bahraini women's perspectives and experiences with remote work, as well as their perspectives on the future of remote work. This study summarizes the research and proposes several recommendations based on the findings.

2. Method

To conduct this research, two primary research methods were implemented: an online survey and a focus group.

2.1. Online Survey

The online survey was made available to all female residents in Bahrain over the age of 18. It featured a range of questions about the impact of Covid-19 on their lives and family relationships. The online survey received 408 responses, with 381 of those responses coming from Bahraini women. See Al-Ubaydli and Almoayyed (2022) for full coverage of the survey.

Within this survey, respondents were asked whether they had experience with remote work. To those who did (55%), a subset of six questions were asked to gauge their perspectives and opinions on remote work. These questions are outlined in Figure 2.1.1.

Figure 2.1.1: Survey Questions Relating to Remote Work

Based on your experience with remote working, please rank how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes “Strongly disagree”, 3 denotes “Neither agree nor disagree”, and 5 denotes “Strongly agree”

- Remote working has made me more productive
- Remote working has improved my work-life balance
- I appreciate the flexibility that remote working has given me
- My working hours have increased since starting to work remotely
- Remote working is my preferred work method
- After the end of the Covid-19 crisis, I want to work from home at least one day per week.

Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

The full list of online survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2. Focus Group

Based on the responses from the online survey to the subset of questions on remote working, a focus group was organized to dig deeper into Bahraini women’s perspectives on this topic. The focus group was held online via Zoom and ran for one hour. The focus group discussion was semi-structured; several broad questions were asked, and participants were given the freedom to discuss the topic in whatever direction they saw fit. This structure was chosen to allow for a free-flowing discussion where the most important topics would come up organically from among the participants, rather than restricting them with too many leading questions. The broad questions asked to the focus group participants are shown in Figure 2.2.1.

Figure 2.2.1: Focus Group Questions

Question 1: Based on the online survey we conducted on this topic, we noticed that most Bahraini women prefer remote work over working from an office. Do you agree with this sentiment? Why or why not?

Question 2: During your time working remotely, did your hours worked increase, stay the same, or decrease? Why do you think that was the case?

Question 3: How would you describe the impact that working from home has had on your productivity?

Question 4: What do you see as the future of remote work?

Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

The focus group was attended by six Bahraini women from various demographic groups in order to receive a diverse array of perspectives. The demographic split of focus group participants was as follows:

1. Self-employed in the private sector; married with no children.
2. A manager in the private sector; married with no children.
3. A manager in a semi-public organization; married with two children.
4. A public sector worker; married with one child.
5. A private sector worker; single with no children.
6. A worker in a public-private enterprise; single with no children.

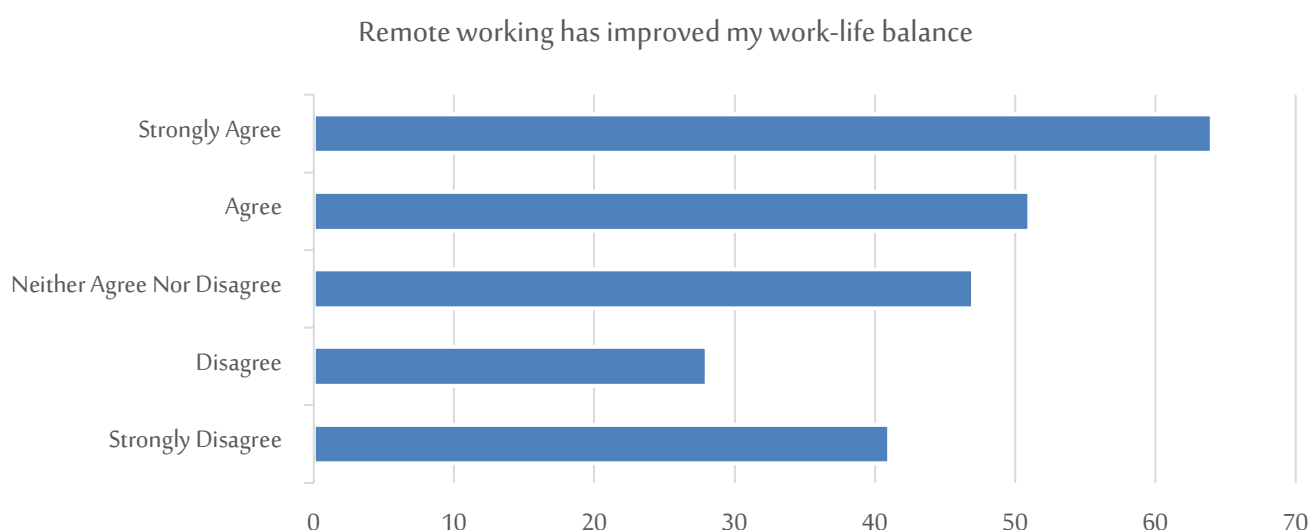
3. Results

3.1. Work-Life Balance

The first set of questions in the online survey pertained to women's perspectives on remote work as they related to their work-life balance and the flexibility it provided them overall.

When asked whether remote working has improved their work-life balance, exactly 50% of Bahraini women agreed, while 30% disagreed (see Figure 3.1.1.). This suggests that a large proportion of Bahraini women have experienced significant benefits in remote working because it has allowed them to better juggle their personal and professional lives.

Figure 3.1.1: Survey Responses Regarding the Impact of Remote Work on Work-Life Balance

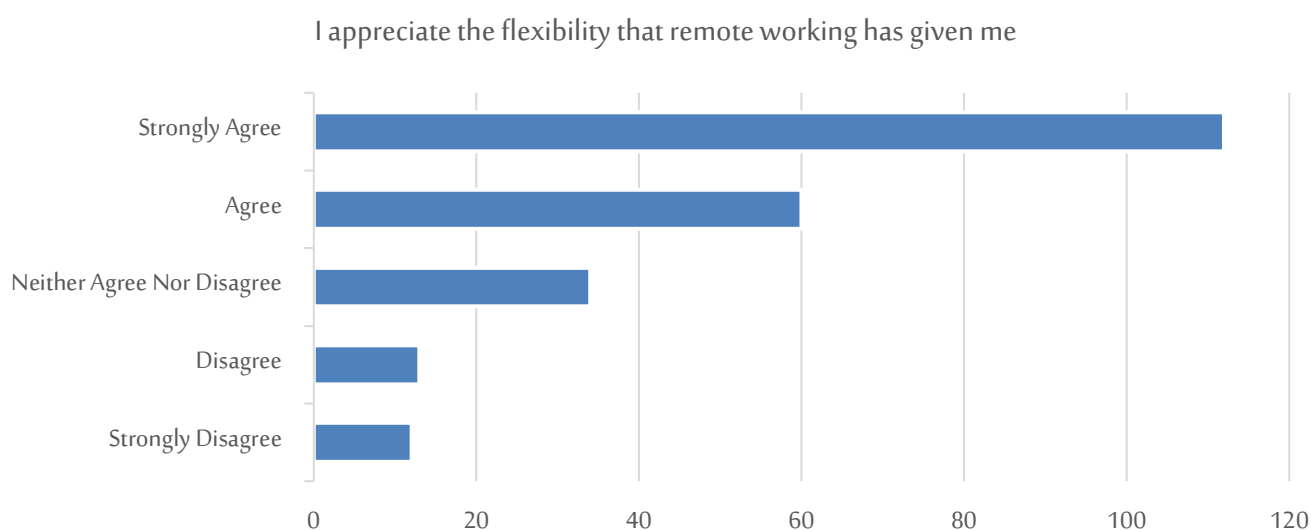


Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

The next question in the online survey asked women whether they appreciated the flexibility that remote working has given them. As Figure 3.1.2. shows, an overwhelming majority of women (74%) agreed with this sentiment, while only 11% disagreed.

This sentiment was unequivocally backed up by all participants in the focus group discussion, where the word “flexibility” was repeated constantly and in response to all the questions as one of the most important benefits of remote working, and is in fact the most salient takeaway from this study.

Figure 3.1.2: Survey Responses Regarding the Impact of Remote Work on Flexibility



Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

To build on this survey finding and better understand the reasons behind these sentiments, we asked our focus group participants whether they preferred remote working over working in an office and asked them to describe their reasons why.

In the discussion that followed, the focus group attendees touched on several points relating to the work-life balance and flexibility that remote working provided them. First, women with children were better able to attend to the needs of their children. This included being around for their children's nap times, mealtimes, and school drop-offs and pick-ups. In many instances, these women did not mind working longer hours if it meant being able to be around their children and have more control over what was happening during their days. For mothers who had recently given birth, having the freedom to breastfeed also came as a huge relief, as this was a freedom that not many women experienced at traditional office jobs due to various factors (no provisions provided for pumping, shyness especially around male colleagues, open plan offices, etc.). Women who had given birth during this period also expressed that they were able to do more things with their newborns that they weren't able to do in the past with previous children, and that going through pregnancy and childbirth was a much easier experience for them during this remote work modality.

Second, women who had medical obligations such as medical conditions that required operations or elderly family members who required regular hospital visits expressed that remote working allowed for them to attend to these medical needs more comfortably. According to one participant who underwent regular medical operations in the evenings, the flexibility of remote work allowed her to attend to her medical needs in the evening, then recovered slightly longer in the mornings, thus starting work slightly later and finishing later in the evening. Remote working thus allowed her to attend to her health without being absent from work. Meanwhile, another participant stated that remote working allowed her to accompany her elderly parents on hospital visits during the day, which would not have been possible during a traditional 9-to-5 job. This flexibility allowed her to attend to her family's needs and complete her required work on her own schedule before and after said obligations.

Third, some participants expressed that remote working allowed for them to work during their "peak times", which in some cases was in the evening. As one participant explained, remote working allowed her to realize that she worked more productively in the evenings rather than in the mornings, and as such became a lot more productive at her job with this work format. Several participants agreed, and stated a preference for being able to choose their own hours, take regular breaks as needed, and work according to their personal peak productivity hours rather than work in line with the traditional 9-to-5 expectations.

It is important to note that not all women improved their work-life balance while working remotely. As the focus group discussion showed, this improved work-life balance was mostly experienced among women who had strong support systems at home, be it from their spouse, parents, in-laws, or hired help. As one participant put it, "without a support system in place I would not have been able to survive".

Meanwhile, women who worked remotely with little to no support systems at home reported much more difficulty with this arrangement. This difficulty stems from the fact that these women had to juggle their full-time jobs while being distracted by their children at home, being responsible for preparing meals, and being responsible for household chores. In their case, remote working did not improve their work-life balance, as can be seen by the 30% of women who disagreed with this sentiment (see Figure 3.1.1).

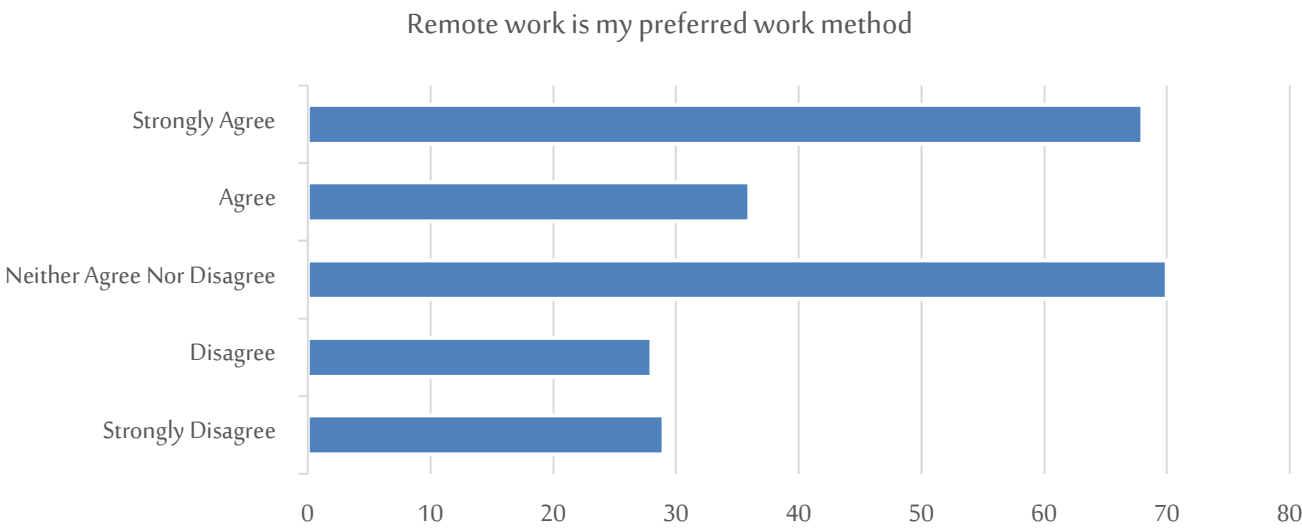
In a similar vein, women who lived in smaller shared spaces with no privacy to take meetings or calls without distractions also reported more difficulties with remote working. While these women stressed

that the flexibility of remote work was a plus for them, they were still unable to work without distraction, which posed many challenges for them. Thus, while remote work has provided a large proportion of Bahraini women the benefit of improved work-life balance, these benefits were mostly seen by women with existing support systems in place, and who could benefit from privacy in the home.

3.2. Remote Work as Preferred Method

The next question in the online survey asked women whether they believe remote work to be their preferred work method. As Figure 3.2.1. shows, women mostly either agreed (45%) or had neutral feelings (neither agreed nor disagreed, 30%). This suggests that while most women enjoy the flexibility of remote working and the improved work-life balance it has given to them, some reservations still exist that stop them from claiming it as their preferred work method.

Figure 3.2.1: Survey Responses Regarding the Remote Work Preferences



Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

To understand the reasons for this, we asked our focus group participants to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of remote working. The results showed a mixed view, which validates the survey results accurately. While all participants agreed that remote working had its benefits – outlined in Sections 3.1. and 3.2. of this paper – they believe that remote working had certain drawbacks that wouldn’t be present had they been working from the office.

First, several participants stated that remote working impacted their ability to access co-workers during work hours. Since walking into a co-worker's office and accessing them physically was no longer an option, all communication had to happen over the phone, text messages, or communications software such as Microsoft Teams. While some women found this modality to be very effective at staying in contact with colleagues, several others outlined some difficulties. One participant stated that the inability to problem-solve and bounce ideas off each other very easily and quickly in the same room together was a drawback, as it became less efficient to get things done. On a similar note, another participant stated she was unable to access a colleague during work hours and they had to resort to sending each other voice messages throughout the day to communicate on important topics. Meanwhile, one participant stated that given the nature of her work at a large corporation, she often "got lost" within the team when she wasn't physically present and available to her team leaders, which impacted her ability to be involved in work projects.

Second, younger women and recent joiners to the workforce suggested that remote working has had a negative impact on their ability to learn about their industries and develop in their careers, because they are not physically available in the office to learn things and gain experiences.

Third, the expectation to constantly be "on call" by demanding managers led to several women feeling pressured to work longer hours and feel overworked in general. This expectation from managers was rooted in the assumption that since their employees are at home, then they were constantly available, constantly online, and could be contacted at all times, despite official check out times. In some cases, these women did not mind working longer hours if it meant having the flexibility of choosing those hours and being around their children. Overall, however, the participants agreed that in order for remote work to be a positive experience, there needs to be a strong support system from the office as well (i.e. supportive managers and colleagues).

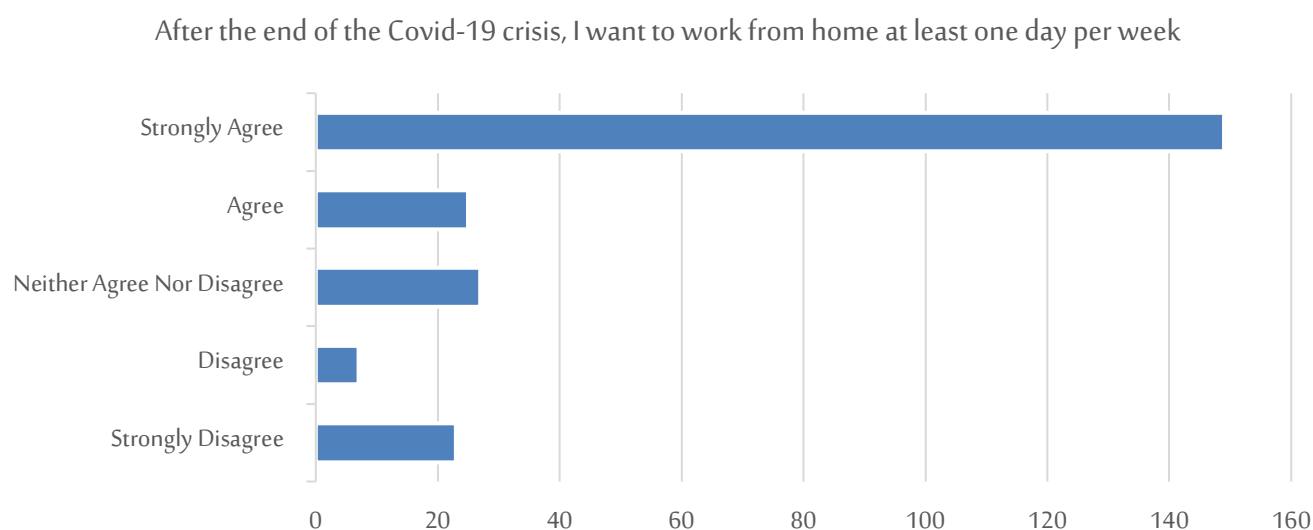
Fourth, and as mentioned in Section 3.1., several women found it difficult to concentrate at home due to distractions from children or family members, and this was particularly the case among women who had no support systems at home, or lived in smaller shared spaces where they could not find privacy to take meetings or calls.

Due to these factors, it is clear that while remote working provides many benefits to women, there are certain drawbacks that lead them to believe that a hybrid working model (of both remote and in-person) or other flexible work arrangements would be best. This is discussed in depth in the following section.

3.3. Future of Remote Work

The final question in the online survey on the topic of remote work asked respondents whether they would want to work from home at least one day per week after the end of the Covid-19 crisis. As Figure 3.3.1. shows, an overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) agreed, while only 13% disagreed. Thus regardless of the issues that women faced during remote working, Bahraini women viewed remote working as beneficial enough to their lives to want to do it at least one day per week moving forward.

Figure 3.3.1: Survey Responses Regarding the Future of Remote Work



Source: Derasat-UNDP Surveys

To build on these findings, the focus group participants were asked a similar question about their perspectives on the future of remote work. Would they like to see a full return to the office, a full switch to remote working, or a hybrid model (i.e. a mix of both)? Overwhelmingly, all participants stated a hybrid model would be best, with certain boundaries and rules set in place. The suggestions from participants are as follows.

First, all participants agreed that flexibility would be key in this hybrid arrangement. This means that employers should make allowances for times when individuals need to work remotely, whether this is to attend to family matters (childcare or elder care) or simply to work from the comfort of their home.

The participants also emphasized that this flexibility should be offered to both men and women, not only women. This was especially emphasized by the participants with children, who stated that having their husbands working remotely was a great relief to them, as it allowed for an extra set of hands of support at home. One participant discussed the importance of viewing this flexible arrangement as a way to support the family as a unit where everyone is responsible for its maintenance and care, not only the mother. This means introducing paternity leave and encouraging fathers to benefit from flexible work arrangements as well.

This flexibility was emphasized even further by one participant who, in her work with HR managers, employers, and companies in Bahrain, stated that many women often leave their jobs when they get pregnant or after maternity leave because of the lack of flexibility afforded to them. This was backed up by another participant who described a situation in her own office where a colleague was considering leaving the organization due to inflexibilities around her situation as a breastfeeding mother who had not yet taken the vaccine due to fears around it impacting her newborn.

A range of flexible working arrangements were suggested to allow for flexibility with both men and women, and these included: working from home, requesting a change of hours, taking a longer break mid-day then compensating in the late afternoon/evening, half-days, splitting the work with someone else, and requesting a change of contract. The participants believe that having these flexible options afforded to them would allow for a healthier working environment for everyone (not only women), while also increasing retention among pregnant women or women with childcare responsibilities.

Another participant stated that her organization had already introduced a hybrid work model where everyone sets up their own work schedule with their line managers, and timings are flexible. This modality has led to everyone showing up to the office every day and leaving in the afternoons to have lunch with their families and finishing their work later. The participant believes this has made the staff happier and has made the office a lot healthier overall.

Second, the participants agreed that this hybrid model should do away with the rigid structure of a 9-to-5 (or 7-to-2). As one participant emphasized, the 9-to-5 system no longer works because it was established during a period where men were the only breadwinners of the family while the women stayed at home to take care of the children. In the modern age, where women are equally as responsible to provide for the household, the 9-to-5 system no longer works for anyone. Many of the participants agreed that a hybrid system with no punch-in punch-out system would be best, where individuals are available between 9-to-5 but are not obligated to be constantly at their desks during this period. Instead, the hybrid model would emphasize a flexible work system that is more deliverables-based, or KPIs-based, where individuals can set their own hours and work within their own peak productivity times, while also being available for calls, discussions, and meetings between official office hours.

Some participants suggested that in order to address the issue of availability even further, weekly meetings should be set with the team where everyone can get together, questions can be answered, problems can be solved, and updates can be given.

Finally, participants discussed the ways in which a hybrid model would increase accessibility to work opportunities for women in the Gulf. As one participant put it, many women in Bahrain are unable to accept certain jobs that require travel because they are unable to commit to those travel arrangements (either due to family commitments at home or not being able due to other personal constraints). By having these opportunities available in a virtual format, these women are now able to accept these jobs without worries about not being able to attend to those commitments. In a similar vein, several participants mentioned that having conferences move to virtual platforms during Covid-19 allowed for more women to attend these events, which in some cases were usually attended by a male majority. As such, having events, meetings, and opportunities available online would continue to significantly increase women's access to many professional and career development opportunities.

4. Conclusions

In light of the data collected from both the online survey and the focus group discussion, we are able to make several conclusions regarding Bahraini women's perspectives on remote work.

First, Bahraini women overwhelmingly appreciate the flexibility that remote working has provided for them. This is the most salient takeaway from this study, as almost 74% of survey participants agreed with this statement, while the focus group participants consistently repeated the word "flexibility" as the main benefit they have experienced from this work modality.

Second, most Bahraini women believe that remote working has improved their work-life balance. Remote working has allowed women to better attend to the needs of their children, their elderly family members, and their own health, while also working on a flexible schedule and attending to all the requirements of their jobs. Similarly, women were better able to work according to their "peak times", rather than be committed to working in line with the traditional 9-to-5 expectations, thus improving their productivity.

That said, women with less supportive systems at home reported more difficulties with remote work. Women who had to juggle their full-time jobs while also being responsible for childcare, household chores, and preparing meals, experienced less of a work-life balance and found the remote work modality to be much more challenging.

Third, Bahraini women prefer to see a hybrid work model introduced, where workers can choose their own hours and aren't restricted by a 9-to-5. Almost 75% of women surveyed agreed that they would like to work from home at least one day per week after the end of the Covid-19 crisis, meanwhile all focus group participants agreed that a hybrid model, with a mix of remote and in-person work, would be the best arrangement for the future. Bahraini women believe that flexibility should be at the forefront of this work modality, where a 9-to-5 is less important than meeting deliverables/KPIs.

Fourth, remote working has the potential to increase retention among pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women with young children. According to the focus group discussion, women who had

recently given birth appreciated the ability to breastfeed their children freely without being constrained by their offices, as well as the ability to work according to a flexible arrangement that allowed them to ensure the safety and health of their children while still continuing in their jobs. Similarly, women with young children appreciated the flexibility provided to them while working remotely, as it allowed them to stay committed to their jobs while still being present for their children during mealtimes, school drop-offs/pick-ups, and other important moments during the day.

Based on these findings, we have the following recommendations:

First, introducing a hybrid working modality at offices, where employees benefit from a mix of remote work and in-office work. This hybrid working modality is recommended for both men and women, and includes providing the flexibility in offices for any or all of the following: working from home, requesting a change of hours, taking a longer break mid-day then compensating in the late afternoon/evening, half-days, splitting the work with someone else, and requesting a change of contract.

Second, switching to a deliverables-based system, rather than a system focused on working 8 hours a day. As many focus group participants emphasized, the 9-to-5 system (or 8-hour work system) does not allow individuals to work at peak hours, is inflexible, and does not take into consideration the needs of employees to tend to children, elderly family members, health issues, or otherwise. By implementing systems focused on deliverables, or KPIs, individuals will be able to set their own hours and work within their own peak productivity times, while also being available during the 9-to-5 work period for calls, discussions, and meetings.

Third, instituting and training employees in efficient online systems that allow for regular online communications. Some focus group participants suggested that certain drawbacks they experienced in remote working – including not being able to get a hold of colleagues, or not having regular meetings where office matters are discussed – can be addressed by holding regular team meetings online where everyone can get together, questions can be answered, problems can be solved, and updates can be given. In cases where online systems (for example, Microsoft Teams) are not actively instituted, then these must be introduced and all employees must be trained in how to use it in order to ensure efficient remote communications.

Fourth, providing more flexible work options to pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women with young children. Many studies have shown that pregnant women and women with young children tend to leave the workplace due to inflexibilities and an inability to tend to both the needs of their children and the demands of a full-time job. By providing more flexible work options (as outlined in the first recommendation), this will help to increase retention among this demographic.

The findings from this study can be contextualized with related research carried out in other countries in Europe and the US. While there is ample evidence that the pandemic has adversely affected disproportionately women in the workforce, this is the case especially where flexible arrangements were not viable and/or digital technology unavailable or incompatible with the job. Additional evidence shows that women that are able to make transitions to higher-skilled jobs (that are also more productive and better-paid) will be able to take advantage of more flexibility, so as to avoid a growing wage gap or be left further behind, as we know that progress toward gender parity in work is already slow.

Finally, this study indicates the need for further research on Bahrain's experience in the application of the remote work policy to build on this experience and further develop it. These include a deeper look at the nature of existing flexible work arrangements in Bahrain, and on the potential for their development; the support systems for remote work that are most desirable for women working from home; the potential impact of a broader rollout of hybrid working systems; and the long-term impact of remote work on worker retention, especially for women who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or have young children, due to its proven importance in maintaining the levels of women's economic activity.

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Appendix 1: Women Online Survey

(Arabic, Hindi, and Tagalog language versions of the online survey are available on request)

Welcome to the Derasat-UNDP Bahrain COVID-19 survey. This survey has 18 questions and takes 5 minutes to complete. This survey is for female residents of the Kingdom of Bahrain, who are at least 18 years old. Do you satisfy these conditions?

- Yes/No

Evaluate how each of the following has affected your relationship with your immediate family and your mental health since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes “Extremely negative effect”, 3 denotes “No effect”, and 5 denotes “Extremely positive effect”. If the issue does not apply to you, please select “Not applicable”:

- Spending more time at home.
- School closures and homeschooling.
- Decrease in social interaction with people outside my household.
- Time spent interacting with family (virtually and in-person).
- Simultaneously balancing childcare/family care while working remotely.
- Increased time on social networking apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.).

Evaluate how each of the following has affected your relationship with your immediate family since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes “Extremely negative effect”, 3 denotes “No effect”, and 5 denotes “Extremely positive effect”. If the issue does not apply to you, please select “Not applicable”

- Financial problems due to loss of income/job.
- Inability to perform usual personal care and/or health routines including exercise.
- Decrease in leisure time due to increased responsibilities (work or otherwise).

Evaluate whether you approve of each of the following statements since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes "Strongly disagree", 3 denotes "Neither agree nor disagree", and 5 denotes "Strongly agree". If the statement does not apply to you, select "Not Applicable":

- My spouse participates more now in caring for our children compared to before COVID-19.
- My spouse participates more now in caring for the elderly compared to before COVID-19.
- My spouse participates more now with household chores (including cleaning, meal preparation, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.
- My spouse participates more now in helping with schoolwork (including homework, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.
- My parents (grandfather/grandmother) participate more now in caring for our children compared to before COVID-19.
- My parents (grandfather/grandmother) participate more now with household chores (including cleaning, meal preparation, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.
- My parents (grandfather/grandmother) participate more now in helping with schoolwork (including homework, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.
- My female children (8 years or over) participate more now with household chores and caring for their siblings (including cleaning, meal preparation, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.
- My male children (8 years or over) participate more now with household chores and caring for their siblings (including cleaning, meal preparation, etc.) compared to before COVID-19.

Evaluate how the following has changed since the start of the COVID-19 crisis on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes "Deteriorated a lot", 3 denotes "Did not change", and 5 denotes "Improved a lot". In cases that do not apply to you, please select "Not applicable":

- Your relationship with your spouse.
- Your relationship with your children.
- Your relationship with your siblings.
- Your relationship with your parents.

- Your relationship with persons with disability in your household.
- Your relationship with your extended family.
- Your relationship with your friends.
- Your relationship with your coworkers.
- Your mental health.
- Your ability to provide for yourself and your family.
- The degree of autonomy in making plans and decisions independent of influence from your spouse or other family members.

Evaluate whether you approve of each of the following statements since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes "Strongly disagree", 3 denotes "Neither agree nor disagree", and 5 denotes "Strongly agree". If the statement does not apply to you, select "Not applicable":

- It has been easy for me to access support and other resources to address unfortunate domestic actions and events in the form of violence.
- It has been easy for me to access support and other resources to address the effects of COVID-19 on women's mental and emotional health.

What is your employment status?

- Self-employed
- Full time employment
- Part time employment
- Job seeker
- Retired
- Full time student
- Full time student who is employed
- Housewife
- I do not work

Please rank how much you agree or disagree with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes “Strongly disagree”, 3 denotes “Neither agree nor disagree”, and 5 denotes “Strongly agree”

- The increase in the availability of remote jobs will make me more likely to enter the labour force.
- The increase in the availability of part-time jobs will make me more likely to enter the labour force.
- After the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of childcare services in the workplace will make me more likely to enter the labour force.
- The provision of retraining opportunities (e.g. CV skills, soft skills training, etc.) will make me more likely to enter the labour force.

Do you have any experience working remotely?

- Yes
- No

Based on your experience with remote working, please rank how much you agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes “Strongly disagree”, 3 denotes “Neither agree nor disagree”, and 5 denotes “Strongly agree”:

- Remote working has made me more productive.
- Remote working has improved my work-life balance.
- I appreciate the flexibility that remote working has given me.
- My working hours have increased since starting to work remotely.
- Remote work is my preferred work method.
- After the end of the COVID-19 crisis, I want to work from home at least one day per week.

For each of the following ways of supporting your household in the near future until the COVID-19 situation improves, please indicate whether you will use it a lot, use it a little, or not use it at all:

- Seeking financial support from the government.
- Seeking financial support from non-governmental organizations.

- Seeking financial support from family/friends.
- Seeking social support (from society groups, hotlines, etc.).
- Seeking psychological support.
- Seeking more support at home (childcare, elderly care, meal preparation, etc.).
- Seeking support in home schooling.
- More flexible work arrangements.

What is your nationality?

What is your age group?

Which governorate do you live in?

What is your highest completed educational qualification?

What is your marital status?

How many children do you have under the age of 18?

How many elderly family members do you assist?

How many persons with disabilities do you assist?