

Hybrid Work Models: Examining Employee Productivity and Satisfaction

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Abstract

The hybrid work model, which combines remote and on-site work, has gained prominence in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper explores the effects of hybrid work arrangements on employee productivity and satisfaction. It reviews current literature, discusses theoretical frameworks, and presents findings from recent studies. The results indicate that hybrid work models can enhance employee productivity and satisfaction when effectively implemented, though challenges remain. Recommendations for organizations considering hybrid work models are provided.

Introduction

The shift to hybrid work models has transformed workplace dynamics globally. Hybrid work combines the flexibility of remote work with the benefits of in-person collaboration, potentially influencing employee productivity and satisfaction (Choudhury et al., 2020). As organizations adapt to these models, understanding their impact on employees is crucial for optimizing performance and well-being.

The emergence of hybrid work models is closely tied to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As organizations were compelled to adopt remote work to ensure business continuity and employee safety, many discovered the benefits of flexible work arrangements. The hybrid model allows employees to work from home for part of the week while still benefiting from the social interactions and collaborative opportunities present in a traditional office environment. This dual approach not only meets the diverse needs of employees but also aligns with evolving workforce expectations (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2020).

This paper aims to examine the relationship between hybrid work models and employee outcomes, specifically focusing on productivity and satisfaction. By analyzing existing

literature and empirical research, the study seeks to provide insights into how organizations can effectively implement hybrid work models to maximize employee engagement and performance.

Literature Review

Hybrid work models encompass various arrangements, allowing employees to split their time between remote and on-site work. According to Gajendran and Harrison (2007), such models can lead to increased job autonomy, which may positively influence job satisfaction and performance. The flexibility of choosing where to work can empower employees, leading to higher motivation and output.

- **Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2015).** This meta-analysis evaluates the effectiveness of telecommuting and identifies psychological mediators that influence productivity and satisfaction. It concludes that telecommuting generally has a positive effect on job performance and well-being, particularly when employees have autonomy and clear performance expectations.
- **Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007).** The JD-R model is explored, highlighting how job resources (like autonomy) can help mitigate job demands. This framework is useful in understanding hybrid work, where flexibility in work location serves as a critical resource that enhances employee engagement and reduces burnout.
- **Bloom, N., Liang, J., Roberts, J., & Ying, Z. J. (2015).** A field experiment in a Chinese company found that remote work led to a 13% increase in productivity. This study underscores the potential of hybrid models to improve performance, emphasizing the importance of effective management and technology.
- **Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2020).** This study investigates the productivity effects of work-from-home policies during the pandemic. Findings suggest that remote work increases productivity due to reduced commuting time and increased job satisfaction, which aligns well with hybrid work setups.
- **Gajendran, R., & Harrison, D. A. (2007).** A comprehensive meta-analysis reveals that telecommuting can enhance job satisfaction through increased autonomy but may reduce

social interaction, potentially affecting teamwork and collaboration. This duality is critical in assessing hybrid work arrangements.

- **Gordon, J. (2021).** Microsoft's study on remote work indicates that productivity has increased due to better work-life balance and flexibility. The research highlights the importance of organizations supporting hybrid models through robust technological infrastructure.
- **Kässi, O., & Lehtonvirta, V. (2020).** This paper examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on remote work in the platform economy, noting an increase in hybrid work adoption. It suggests that the transition has necessitated new management strategies to maintain productivity and employee satisfaction.
- **Kniffin, K. M., Narayanan, J., & Barrick, M. R. (2021).** The impact of the pandemic on employee engagement is explored, showing that hybrid work arrangements can enhance job satisfaction by providing employees with flexibility and control over their work environments.
- **O'Leary, M. B., & Mortensen, M. (2010).** This study discusses the challenges virtual teams face in collaboration and communication. It emphasizes the need for structured processes in hybrid environments to ensure effective teamwork and innovation.
- **Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000).** Self-Determination Theory is applied to workplace settings, highlighting how autonomy, competence, and relatedness are crucial for intrinsic motivation. Hybrid models can support these needs, enhancing employee satisfaction and performance.
- **Suleiman, A. A., & Stutz, C. (2021).** A review of telework's effects on mental health shows that while hybrid work can improve job satisfaction, it can also lead to feelings of isolation. Organizations must implement strategies to foster connection among remote and in-office employees.
- **Sullivan, C., & Lewis, S. (2001).** This research discusses how work-life balance is affected by flexible working arrangements. Hybrid work can enhance work-life integration, leading to greater job satisfaction, provided that boundaries between work and home life are managed effectively.

- **Towers Watson (2014).** A global workforce study indicates that organizations that offer flexible work arrangements experience higher employee engagement levels. This report supports the idea that hybrid work models can lead to improved employee satisfaction.
- **Vlaar, P. W. L., van Fenema, P. C., & Tiwari, V. (2008).** This study on virtual teams highlights the importance of trust and communication in achieving team effectiveness. In hybrid models, building trust is essential to maintaining productivity and satisfaction among team members.
- **Wang, B., Liu, Y., Qian, J., & Parker, S. K. (2021).** This research analyzes the psychological implications of remote work. It finds that hybrid arrangements can help mitigate feelings of isolation by providing opportunities for in-person collaboration, which enhances overall employee well-being.
- **Weitz, B. A., & Bradford, K. D. (1999).** This study emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships in professional settings. Hybrid work models must address the potential for weakened relationships due to remote work, which can impact employee satisfaction and collaboration.
- **Worley, C. G., & Lawler, E. E. (2010).** The authors discuss how adaptive work systems can be designed to meet the needs of diverse employees. They suggest that hybrid work models must be flexible and responsive to individual preferences to optimize productivity and satisfaction.
- **Zhang, S., & Liu, X. (2021).** This paper explores the role of organizational culture in the success of remote work. A strong culture that promotes inclusion and communication is essential for maximizing the benefits of hybrid work environments.
- **Zhang, Y., & Niu, H. (2021).** The study investigates how hybrid work affects team dynamics. It finds that while hybrid models can lead to increased individual productivity, they may also create challenges in team cohesion and collaboration.
- **Zhang, Z., & O'Neill, H. (2020).** This research examines the effects of hybrid work on employee engagement. It highlights that providing employees with choices regarding their work environment significantly enhances engagement and satisfaction.

The reviewed literature collectively emphasizes that hybrid work models can enhance productivity and employee satisfaction through increased autonomy and flexibility. However, challenges related to collaboration, communication, and social isolation must be addressed to fully realize these benefits. Organizations looking to implement hybrid work arrangements should focus on supportive technologies, inclusive practices, and proactive management strategies to optimize employee experiences and outcomes.

Theoretical Frameworks

Understanding the dynamics of hybrid work requires a multidimensional approach. Two primary theoretical frameworks can be utilized:

- **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model:** This model posits that job resources (e.g., autonomy, social support) can mitigate job demands (e.g., workload, stress), ultimately influencing employee well-being and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In the context of hybrid work, flexibility serves as a critical job resource that can enhance productivity and satisfaction.
- **Self-Determination Theory (SDT):** SDT emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Hybrid work arrangements may support these psychological needs, enhancing employee engagement and performance.

Employee Productivity in Hybrid Work Models

Research indicates mixed results regarding productivity in hybrid work environments. Some studies show that employees working remotely report higher productivity levels due to fewer distractions (Bloom et al., 2015). For instance, a study conducted by Microsoft found that remote workers were more productive, as they had the autonomy to structure their work environments to suit their preferences (Gordon, 2021).

Conversely, other research suggests that a lack of face-to-face interaction can hinder collaboration and creativity (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). A study by O'Leary and Mortensen (2010) found that virtual teams often struggle with communication and trust, which can negatively impact productivity.

A meta-analysis by Allen et al. (2015) highlights that productivity outcomes depend significantly on individual work preferences and organizational culture. Employees who thrive in collaborative environments may find hybrid models less effective if they miss out on the spontaneous interactions that occur in traditional office settings.

Employee Satisfaction in Hybrid Work Models

Employee satisfaction is multifaceted and can be influenced by work-life balance, social interactions, and job autonomy. A study by Kniffin et al. (2021) found that employees in hybrid settings reported higher job satisfaction due to increased flexibility and better work-life integration. This flexibility allows employees to manage personal responsibilities alongside their professional obligations, leading to a more fulfilling work experience.

However, challenges such as feelings of isolation and lack of support may negatively impact satisfaction levels. Research by Suleiman and Stutz (2021) indicates that employees in hybrid environments may experience loneliness and disconnection from their teams, potentially leading to decreased job satisfaction over time.

The existing literature suggests that hybrid work models can enhance productivity and satisfaction, but these outcomes are contingent on several factors, including individual preferences, organizational culture, and the availability of supportive resources. The successful implementation of hybrid work arrangements requires a balanced approach that considers both the benefits and challenges of flexible work.

Methodology

This paper synthesizes findings from recent empirical studies and theoretical articles to assess the relationship between hybrid work models and employee outcomes. The research incorporates both qualitative and quantitative analyses from various organizational contexts. Sources include academic journals, industry reports, and case studies, providing a comprehensive overview of current trends and practices in hybrid work.

Data Collection

To gather relevant data, a systematic review of literature published between 2010 and 2023 was conducted. Key databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate were

utilized to identify peer-reviewed articles, reports, and case studies. Keywords included "hybrid work models," "employee productivity," "employee satisfaction," and "remote work."

Data Analysis

The collected literature was analyzed to identify common themes, patterns, and discrepancies regarding the effects of hybrid work on employee outcomes. Both qualitative insights from case studies and quantitative data from surveys and experiments were examined to provide a holistic understanding of the topic.

Findings

The findings from the literature review on hybrid work models reveal several key themes related to employee productivity and satisfaction. Below are the main findings categorized into distinct areas:

1. Impact on Productivity

- **Increased Autonomy:** Many studies indicate that hybrid work arrangements enhance employee productivity by providing greater autonomy. Employees can choose their optimal work environments, leading to improved focus and efficiency (Choudhury et al., 2020; Bloom et al., 2015). This autonomy allows individuals to manage their time and work conditions to suit their preferences, which can significantly boost productivity.
- **Reduced Distractions:** Remote work components of hybrid models often reduce workplace distractions, enabling employees to concentrate better on their tasks. Research suggests that employees report higher productivity levels when working from home, primarily due to fewer interruptions and a more tailored work environment (Gordon, 2021).
- **Collaboration Challenges:** Despite the advantages, hybrid work can create challenges in team collaboration. The lack of face-to-face interaction may hinder spontaneous discussions and creative brainstorming sessions, which are often crucial for team success (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; O'Leary & Mortensen, 2010). This highlights the need for structured collaboration practices to maintain productivity. Despite benefits, reduced in-person interactions can hinder team collaboration, impacting overall productivity. For

example, teams that rely heavily on creative brainstorming may struggle to maintain momentum without regular face-to-face meetings (Suleiman & Stutz, 2021).

- **Technology as a Facilitator:** The effective use of technology plays a crucial role in enabling productivity in hybrid work models. Tools that support communication and project management can bridge gaps between remote and in-office employees, fostering better collaboration (Kniffin et al., 2021).

2. Effects on Employee Satisfaction

- **Improved Work-Life Balance:** Hybrid work models often enhance employees' work-life balance, leading to higher job satisfaction. The flexibility to manage personal and professional commitments allows employees to reduce stress and improve their overall well-being (Kniffin et al., 2021; Towers Watson, 2014).
- **Risks of Isolation:** While hybrid arrangements can improve satisfaction, they may also result in feelings of isolation, particularly among remote workers. The absence of regular in-person interactions can lead to disengagement and decreased morale (Suleiman & Stutz, 2021; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Organizations must address this by fostering connections among employees.
- **Organizational Support:** Employee satisfaction is significantly influenced by the level of support organizations provide for hybrid work. Access to mental health resources, team-building activities, and clear communication protocols can mitigate feelings of isolation and enhance morale (Suleiman & Stutz, 2021; Zhang & Liu, 2021).
- **Trust and Communication:** Trust and effective communication are essential for maintaining satisfaction in hybrid work environments. Teams that establish strong relationships and transparent communication channels tend to have higher satisfaction levels, even in hybrid settings (Vlaar et al., 2008; Zhang & O'Neill, 2020).

3. Overall Implications for Organizations

- **Tailored Policies:** Organizations need to develop tailored hybrid work policies that consider the diverse needs and preferences of employees. Flexibility in work

arrangements can lead to better engagement and performance (Wang et al., 2021; Worley & Lawler, 2010).

- **Fostering Inclusivity:** Promoting inclusivity within hybrid work models is crucial. This includes creating opportunities for informal interactions and maintaining strong team dynamics, which are vital for overall satisfaction and productivity (Zhang & Niu, 2021).
- **Long-Term Strategies:** Organizations must adopt long-term strategies to continuously assess and improve hybrid work arrangements. Regular feedback from employees can help identify challenges and opportunities for enhancement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In summary, the findings suggest that hybrid work models offer significant potential for enhancing productivity and satisfaction among employees. However, successful implementation requires careful attention to the challenges posed by remote work, particularly regarding collaboration and employee engagement. By prioritizing autonomy, leveraging technology, and fostering a supportive organizational culture, organizations can maximize the benefits of hybrid work arrangements.

Discussion

The exploration of hybrid work models reveals nuanced insights into their impact on employee productivity and satisfaction. As organizations increasingly adopt these arrangements, it is essential to understand both the benefits and challenges associated with hybrid work to optimize outcomes for employees and the organization as a whole.

1. Balancing Flexibility and Collaboration

Hybrid work models inherently offer flexibility, allowing employees to choose their work environments. This autonomy is a significant driver of productivity and job satisfaction, as many employees thrive in settings that align with their personal preferences (Choudhury et al., 2020; Bloom et al., 2015). However, this flexibility can come at a cost. Reduced face-to-face interaction may hinder collaboration and creativity, particularly in roles that rely heavily on teamwork (O'Leary & Mortensen, 2010). Organizations must find a balance between granting employees the freedom to work remotely and ensuring that collaboration remains effective.

Implications: To foster collaboration, organizations should implement structured communication practices that facilitate regular check-ins and team-building activities. Utilizing technology effectively is crucial; investing in tools that enhance virtual communication can help bridge the gap between remote and in-office employees.

2. Addressing Feelings of Isolation

While hybrid work can enhance work-life balance, it can also lead to feelings of isolation among employees who primarily work remotely. The lack of daily interactions can decrease engagement and morale (Suleiman & Stutz, 2021). This highlights the need for organizations to proactively address the social aspects of work, ensuring that employees feel connected and valued.

Implications: Organizations should consider initiatives that promote social interaction, such as virtual coffee breaks or team outings, to strengthen relationships among team members. Furthermore, implementing mentorship programs can help new employees integrate and feel more connected, regardless of their work location.

3. The Role of Organizational Support

The literature consistently underscores the importance of organizational support in enhancing employee satisfaction within hybrid work models. Access to resources that promote mental health and well-being is critical, especially as employees navigate the challenges of remote work (Zhang & Liu, 2021). Additionally, clear communication regarding expectations and performance can significantly influence employee engagement (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Implications: Organizations must prioritize providing comprehensive support systems, including wellness programs and resources for managing work-life boundaries. Regularly soliciting employee feedback on hybrid work experiences can help organizations identify areas for improvement and enhance satisfaction.

4. Fostering a Culture of Trust and Communication

The success of hybrid work arrangements hinges on a culture of trust and open communication. Employees are more likely to feel satisfied and productive when they trust their leaders and colleagues and when there are clear channels for sharing ideas and concerns

(Vlaar et al., 2008; Zhang & O'Neill, 2020). Building this culture is particularly vital in hybrid environments, where employees may feel disconnected from their teams.

Implications: Organizations should focus on cultivating transparency in communication and decision-making. Regular updates from leadership about organizational goals and changes can enhance trust. Training programs that promote effective communication skills among employees can also support this goal.

5. Long-Term Strategic Considerations

As hybrid work models continue to evolve, organizations must adopt long-term strategies to ensure their effectiveness. This includes continually assessing the impact of hybrid arrangements on employee performance and satisfaction and adapting policies as necessary (Wang et al., 2021).

Implications: Establishing a feedback loop where employees can share their experiences and suggestions for improvement is essential. Organizations should conduct regular surveys and focus groups to gather insights and adapt their hybrid work policies accordingly. Additionally, investing in leadership training to equip managers with the skills to support hybrid teams can foster a more resilient and adaptive workplace.

The discussion underscores the potential of hybrid work models to enhance employee productivity and satisfaction while also highlighting the challenges that organizations must address. By fostering a culture of flexibility, inclusivity, and support, organizations can optimize the benefits of hybrid work arrangements. A proactive approach to managing the dynamics of hybrid work will be essential in navigating the future of work, ensuring that both employees and organizations thrive in this new landscape.

Challenges and Considerations

While hybrid work models offer numerous benefits, organizations must also navigate challenges such as equity among employees. Ensuring that all team members have access to resources and opportunities is crucial for maintaining morale and productivity. Furthermore, organizations should be mindful of the potential for burnout among remote employees. The blurring of boundaries between work and personal life can lead to overwork, highlighting the need for clear policies regarding work hours and availability.

While hybrid work models offer numerous advantages, they also present specific challenges that organizations must address to optimize employee productivity and satisfaction. Understanding these challenges is crucial for creating effective hybrid work policies.

1. Collaboration and Communication Barriers : One of the primary challenges of hybrid work is maintaining effective collaboration and communication among team members. Remote workers may miss out on spontaneous discussions and brainstorming sessions that typically occur in a traditional office setting, potentially stifling creativity and innovation (O'Leary & Mortensen, 2010).

Considerations: Organizations should establish structured communication protocols that encourage regular check-ins, updates, and collaborative sessions. Leveraging technology—such as video conferencing, collaborative platforms, and project management tools—can help bridge the gap between remote and in-office employees, fostering a more integrated team environment.

2. Isolation and Mental Health Issues : Employees working remotely may experience feelings of isolation and disconnection from their teams. This social isolation can lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased stress, potentially affecting overall mental health (Suleiman & Stutz, 2021).

Considerations: Organizations must actively combat isolation by promoting social interaction through virtual team-building activities and informal gatherings. Providing resources for mental health support, such as counseling services or wellness programs, can also help employees navigate the challenges of remote work.

3. Equity and Inclusivity Concerns : Hybrid work models can create perceptions of inequity among employees. For example, those working in the office may have more visibility and opportunities for advancement compared to remote workers, leading to feelings of resentment or exclusion (Wang et al., 2021).

Considerations: Organizations should ensure that all employees, regardless of their work location, have equal access to opportunities, resources, and support. Establishing clear criteria for promotions and performance evaluations can help mitigate perceptions of bias and foster a more inclusive workplace culture.

4. Managing Performance and Accountability : Assessing employee performance in a hybrid environment can be challenging. Managers may struggle to evaluate the contributions of remote employees fairly, leading to potential biases or misunderstandings regarding productivity and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Considerations: Organizations should adopt clear performance metrics and evaluation processes that apply equally to all employees, regardless of their work location. Providing training for managers on remote team management can enhance their ability to support and assess hybrid teams effectively.

5. Work-Life Balance and Boundaries : While hybrid work can enhance work-life balance, it can also blur the boundaries between personal and professional life. Employees may find it challenging to "switch off" when working from home, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction (Zhang & Liu, 2021).

Considerations: Organizations should promote healthy work-life boundaries by encouraging employees to set specific work hours and providing guidelines on availability. Offering flexible scheduling options can help employees better manage their time and personal responsibilities.

6. Technology Dependence and Security Risks : Hybrid work heavily relies on technology for communication, collaboration, and productivity. This dependence can expose organizations to security risks, particularly if employees use personal devices or unsecured networks for work (Gordon, 2021).

Considerations: Organizations must invest in secure technology solutions and provide training on cybersecurity best practices. Implementing clear policies regarding acceptable technology use and data protection can help mitigate potential risks.

7. Cultural Shifts and Adaptation : The transition to hybrid work may require significant cultural shifts within organizations. Employees accustomed to traditional office environments may need time to adjust to new ways of working, which can lead to resistance or confusion (Towers Watson, 2014).

Considerations: To facilitate a smooth transition, organizations should communicate the benefits of hybrid work clearly and provide ongoing support for employees as they adapt.

Training programs focused on hybrid work skills, such as remote collaboration and digital communication, can also help employees feel more comfortable in this new environment.

Navigating the challenges of hybrid work models requires a thoughtful and strategic approach. By recognizing and addressing these challenges—such as collaboration barriers, isolation, equity concerns, and technology dependence—organizations can create a more effective and supportive hybrid work environment. Proactive measures, clear policies, and strong communication are essential for ensuring that both employees and organizations can thrive in the evolving landscape of work.

Conclusion

Hybrid work models present opportunities for enhancing employee productivity and satisfaction. However, successful implementation requires careful consideration of individual and organizational needs. The findings indicate that while hybrid work can lead to increased autonomy and work-life balance, challenges such as social isolation and collaboration difficulties must be addressed. Organizations that invest in supportive resources, promote inclusivity, and leverage technology are likely to experience positive outcomes from hybrid work arrangements. Future research should explore long-term effects and develop frameworks for optimizing hybrid work models to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of the workforce.

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