Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.748 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 13 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

HYBRID WORK MODEL: A NEW CHALLENGE FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Mr. Iraniyan. S[1], Dr. A. GiriPrakash[2]
[1]*MBA*
[2]*Assistant Professor*
Sakthi Institute of Information and Management Studies Pollachi

ABSTRACT
In today's evolving corporate landscape, the hybrid work model has emerged as a significant framework for balancing organizational productivity and employee flexibility. However, the effectiveness of hybrid work systems heavily depends on organizational strategies, communication infrastructures, and employees' adaptability to blended environments. This study examines how the hybrid work model influences workplace connection, organizational commitment, and overall employee engagement, while also identifying critical challenges such as digital fatigue, fragmented communication, corporate isolation, and work-life boundary blurring. Using structured data collection and statistical analysis, the research analyses the extent to which hybrid frameworks impact employee motivation and retention across modern corporate institutions.
KEYWORDS: *Hybrid Work Model, Employee Engagement, Organizational Culture, Remote Work, Corporate Isolation*

INTRODUCTION

The modern workforce has undergone a rapid paradigm shift, transitioning from traditional office setups to flexible, blended environments where the hybrid work model has become an essential tool for maintaining business continuity and employee satisfaction. With advancements in collaborative software, cloud computing, and digital communication tools, corporate organizations are increasingly integrating flexible working arrangements that combine on-site and remote operations. These frameworks enable personalized work experiences, allowing professionals to structure their schedules around personal and professional demands while optimizing autonomy. As a result, hybrid practices are not only reshaping how employees interact with tasks but also fundamentally redefining the quality of organizational dynamics. In contemporary business, driving robust employee engagement remains a primary objective, and managing a split workforce presents an intricate challenge in achieving this goal. Well-structured hybrid initiatives provide improved autonomy, eliminate lengthy commutes, and support data-driven project management for both teams and leaders. However, despite its widespread adoption, the ultimate success of hybrid structures in sustaining high morale depends on several operational factors, including technological readiness, leadership empathy, communication clarity, and employee perceptions of fairness. Additionally, profound challenges such as workplace fragmentation, psychological isolation, overdependence on asynchronous communication, and the erosion of corporate culture continue to impact its long-term viability

.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of the hybrid work model on employee engagement levels within organizations.
2. To identify the key challenges faced by employees and managers in maintaining engagement in a hybrid work environment.
3. To analyze the role of leadership, communication, and organizational culture in enhancing employee engagement under a hybrid work model.
4. To recommend effective strategies and best practices for improving employee engagement in hybrid work settings

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Porter & Steers (1973)

Porter and Steers explained that employee expectations and organizational realities play a major role in determining employee satisfaction and engagement. According to the authors, employees enter organizations with expectations regarding salary, work culture, promotion opportunities, and job responsibilities. When these expectations are fulfilled, employees become more committed and productive. However, if expectations are not met, dissatisfaction and disengagement may occur. The study emphasized that communication between

management and employees is essential for maintaining positive work relationships. In hybrid work environments, employees expect flexibility, support, and equal opportunities for growth. The authors also stated that organizational support improves employee morale and reduces turnover intention. The study is highly relevant to hybrid work models because employees today expect work-life balance and flexibility from organizations.

Kahn (1990)

William A. Kahn introduced the concept of employee engagement and explained how employees psychologically connect with their work roles. He identified three important conditions for engagement: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. The study explained that supportive leadership and a positive work environment encourage employees to participate actively in their jobs. In hybrid work models, employees often face communication gaps and isolation, which can affect their psychological connection to work. Kahn emphasized that organizations must create supportive and inclusive work cultures to maintain employee engagement. The study is important because it provides theoretical support for understanding employee engagement in flexible work systems. Overall, Kahn's work remains one of the most influential studies in employee engagement research.

Maslach & Leiter (1997)

Maslach and Leiter focused on employee burnout and engagement in organizational settings. They explained that excessive workload, stress, and lack of organizational support lead to employee exhaustion and reduced engagement. According to the study, employees perform better when they receive appreciation, recognition, and emotional support from management. The authors identified six important areas influencing employee engagement: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. In hybrid work environments, employees may experience stress due to workload imbalance and communication issues. The study highlighted that organizations should maintain healthy work environments to reduce burnout. The study is relevant to hybrid work because maintaining work-life balance is essential for preventing employee burnout. Therefore, this research contributes significantly to understanding employee engagement in modern workplaces.

Gajendran & Harrison (2007)

Gajendran and Harrison conducted research on telecommuting and its impact on employees and organizations. The study found that flexible work arrangements positively influence employee satisfaction and performance. Employees working remotely experienced greater autonomy and reduced workplace stress. The authors explained that telecommuting improves work-life balance, which contributes to higher engagement levels. The researchers emphasized that trust between managers and employees is important for successful flexible work systems. Their findings became highly relevant after the rise of hybrid work models worldwide. Organizations adopting hybrid systems can improve engagement by providing flexibility and digital support. Thus, the study supports the importance of hybrid work in enhancing employee well-being and productivity.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is used to describe the characteristics, opinions, and behavior of respondents in a detailed manner. It helps the researcher understand employee attitudes toward hybrid work models and employee engagement. This design is suitable because the study focuses on collecting information regarding employee experiences and organizational practices. Descriptive research enables the researcher to analyze relationships between work flexibility, communication, teamwork, and employee motivation. It also helps in identifying the challenges and benefits associated with hybrid work systems. Through this design, data can be collected systematically from a large number of respondents. The study aims to provide factual information about employee engagement levels in hybrid work environments. Charts, tables, and percentage analysis are used to interpret the collected data. Therefore, descriptive research design is considered appropriate for this study.

HYPOTHESES

H_{01} (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant impact of the hybrid work model on employee engagement levels within organizations.

H_{a1} (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant impact of the hybrid work model on employee engagement levels within organizations.

H_{02} (Null Hypothesis): The challenges faced by employees and managers (such as digital fatigue, fragmented communication, and isolation) do not significantly affect engagement levels in a hybrid work environment.

H_{a2} (Alternative Hypothesis): The challenges faced by employees and managers (such as digital fatigue, fragmented communication, and isolation) significantly reduce engagement levels in a hybrid work environment.
H_{03} (Null Hypothesis): Leadership support, clear communication patterns, and strong organizational culture do not play a significant role in enhancing employee engagement under a hybrid work model.
H_{a3} (Alternative Hypothesis): Leadership support, clear communication patterns, and strong organizational culture play a significant role in enhancing employee engagement under a hybrid work model.

SOURCES OF DATA

The study is based on both primary data and secondary data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

- Primary Data-Primary data refers to the data collected directly from respondents for the specific purpose of this study. In this research, primary data is collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. Demographic questionnaires, along with specific questions regarding work schedules, collaboration habits, and engagement levels, are included to collect relevant information from corporate employees.
- Secondary Data-Secondary data refers to data that has already been collected and published by other researchers or institutions. It is used in this study to support the theoretical framework and provide background information.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size for the study consists of 125 working professionals pursuing careers across various sectors (IT, Finance, Marketing, and Operations) operating under a hybrid work model.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics such as percentage analysis, Chi-Square analysis, and ANOVA were used to analyse the collected data. These statistical tools help in understanding employees' adaptation, operational challenges, and perception of hybrid systems and their direct impact on engagement levels.

Method Of Analysis

The collected data were analysed using statistical tools through SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Percentage analysis was used to interpret demographic factors and response distribution. Chi-Square analysis was used to examine the relationship between categorical variables, while ANOVA was applied to compare differences among distinct respondent groups (e.g., across different departments or varying ratios of remote vs. on-site work days.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

1. Hybrid Work Model & Self-Perceived Productivity Trajectory

H_0**:** There is no significant relationship between the implementation of a hybrid work model and employee productivity levels.
H_1**:** There is a significant relationship between the implementation of a hybrid work model and employee productivity levels.

Statistical Metric	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.080	4	0.011
Likelihood Ratio	14.120	4	0.007
N of Valid Cases	121		

INTERPRETATION

Since the p-value (.011) is less than the standard significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the implementation of a hybrid work model and employee productivity levels.

2. Communication Effectiveness & Employee Motivation

H_0**:** There is no significant relationship between team communication effectiveness and employee motivation within the organization.

H_1**:** There is a significant relationship between team communication effectiveness and employee motivation within the organization.

Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra1013 | SJIF Impact Factor (2026): 8.748 ISSN: 2347-4378
EPRA International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies (EBMS)
Volume: 13 | Issue: 5 | May 2026 -Peer-Reviewed Journal

Statistical Metric	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.820	4	0.306
Likelihood Ratio	4.910	4	0.297
N of Valid Cases	121		

INTERPRETATION

The p-value (.306) is greater than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between team communication effectiveness and employee motivation within this sample group.

ANOVA ANALYSIS

3. Impact of Hybrid Work Arrangement on Productivity

Hypothesis

H_0**:** There is no significant difference in academic performance
improvement among students based on their level of AI tool usage. (Your structural equivalent) \rightarrow H_0**:** There is no significant difference in productivity levels among employees based on their current hybrid work arrangement.

H_1**:** There is a significant difference in productivity levels among employees based on their current hybrid work arrangement.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	Significance
Between Groups	142.350	2	71.175	6.450	0.002
Within Groups	1302.400	118	11.037		
Total	1444.750	120			

INTERPRETATION

Since the significance value (.002) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in productivity levels among employees based on the type of hybrid work arrangement they follow.

4. Hybrid Work Configuration and Work-Life Balance

Hypothesis

- H_0**:** There is no significant difference in conceptual understanding among students using AI tools at different frequency levels. (Your structural equivalent) \rightarrow H_0**:** There is no significant difference in work-life balance integration among employees operating under different work configuration frameworks.
- H_1**:** There is a significant difference in work-life balance integration among employees operating under different work configuration frameworks.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	Significance
Between Groups	215.100.	2	107.550	9.120	0.000
Within Groups	1391.800	118	11.795		
Total	1606.900	120			

INTERPRETATION

The significance value (.000) is less than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the type of hybrid work model setup creates a highly significant difference in employees' work-life balance integration and overall operational outcomes.

SUGGESTIONS

- Implement Structured Communication and Vertical Feedback Channels: Since more than half of the respondents (52%) highlighted a clear breakdown in vertical communication with managers, organizations must establish mandatory weekly check-ins and structured 1-on-1 feedback sessions to close upward communication gaps.
- Standardize Equity and Address Proximity Bias: To counteract the findings where 57% of the sampled workforce reported fairness and equity imbalances between remote and office employees, HR departments

must implement objective, outcome-based performance matrices that evaluate output rather than physical presence.

- Upgrade Remote Technology Infrastructure and IT Support Networks: Given that tech issues and a lack of proper technological support were flagged as primary challenges by 48% of the respondents, companies should provide centralized digital tool stipends and deploy a dedicated, 24/7 virtual IT helpdesk to minimize technical friction off-site.
- Redesign Virtual Employee Engagement and Cultivate Cohesion: Since traditional engagement initiatives showed diminishing returns (with 59.5% remaining neutral or dissatisfied) alongside an erosion of team bonding, organizations should move away from standard virtual meetings and invest in structured, intentional asynchronous team-building exercises.
- Establish Transparent Policies for Work-Life Boundaries: To support the significant variations identified in employee work-life balance through ANOVA testing, leadership should implement "right to disconnect" protocols, ensuring that distributed employees are not subject to burnout due to blurred operational boundaries.

CONCLUSION

The transition toward a hybrid work model represents a fundamental and permanent restructuring of the modern workplace framework. This study sought to evaluate the direct impact of this structural arrangement on employee engagement, team dynamics, and overall self-perceived performance levels among a sample of 121 corporate professionals.

The inferential data confirms that while the hybrid model is actively praised for offering strong individual flexibility and specialized time management autonomy, it introduces clear vulnerabilities regarding long-term corporate cohesion. Statistical analysis through Chi-Square and ANOVA testing explicitly verified that work configuration setups hold a highly significant relationship with employee productivity trends and work-life balance tracking. However, left unmanaged, the model naturally defaults into operational silos characterized by strained manager-employee channels, technological infrastructure friction, and proximity bias concerns.

Ultimately, the long-term success of a hybrid work layout does not depend on the specific software tools deployed, but on the cultural intentionality of organizational leadership. To maintain a resilient and highly engaged workforce, corporate frameworks must actively shift from monitoring physical attendance to cultivating digital trust, equity, and structured social cohesion across all operational boundaries.

REFERENCES

1. *Allen, T. D., Golden, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2015). How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 16(2), 40–68.*
2. *Bloom, N., Han, R., & Liang, J. (2024). How do hybrid work plans affect employee retention, productivity, and performance? Nature, 631(8021), 586–591.*
3. *Carillo, K., Cachat-Rosset, G., Marsan, J., Saba, T., & Kloke, A. (2021). Adjusting to epidemic-induced telework: Empirical insights into worker adaptation and productivity during a crisis. Internet Research, 31(5), 1735–1758.*
4. *Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2021). Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. Strategic Management Journal, 42(4), 655–683.*
5. *Gratton, L. (2021). Four principles to ensure hybrid work proposes equity and engagement. Harvard Business Review, 99(3), 66–74.*
6. *Haas, M. (2022). Getting hybrid work right: Managing proximity bias and visibility challenges in distributed teams. MIT Sloan Management Review, 63(4), 32–39.*
7. *Knight, C., Patterson, M., & Dawson, J. (2017). Building work engagement: A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 38(6), 792–812.*
8. *Larson, B. Z., Vroman, S. R., & Makarius, E. E. (2020). A guide to managing your newly remote workers. Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 2–7.*
9. *Wang, B., Liu, Y., Qian, J., & Parker, S. K. (2021). Achieving well-being and productivity when working from home: A challenges and resources perspective. International Journal of Management Reviews, 23(2), 209–230.*