

Tracing the Evolution and Key Dimensions of Hybrid Work Culture: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, organizations across the world have steadily moved away from rigid and traditional work structures and begun embracing flexible work arrangements that provide employees with greater freedom in deciding when and where they work, a shift that gained significant momentum in the post-pandemic period and led to the widespread adoption of hybrid work models that blend in-office work with remote working. Today, hybrid work culture has become a normal practice in many organizations, with some functioning entirely in virtual environments while others follow structured schedules that balance office presence with work-from-home options, enabling employees to choose work settings that align with their personal comfort and professional efficiency. Such flexibility often improves motivation, job satisfaction, and collaboration, as employees feel trusted and empowered to manage their work routines more effectively. When implemented thoughtfully, hybrid work models can enhance productivity and overall performance by allowing employees to focus on outcomes rather than physical presence, while also fostering positive relationships among team members through purposeful in-person interactions. However, the adoption of hybrid work is not without challenges, as organizations may struggle to maintain consistent productivity, preserve organizational culture in the absence of frequent face-to-face engagement, and ensure fair career advancement opportunities for employees who may be less visible in remote settings. Additionally, managing hybrid arrangements can be complex due to the diverse needs of the workforce, including working parents balancing family responsibilities, individuals requiring health-related or accessibility accommodations, and employees affected by rising living and commuting costs that limit their ability to be physically present in urban offices. Despite these concerns, a well-designed hybrid work framework offers substantial long-term benefits by supporting work-life balance, strengthening employee engagement, improving productivity through flexible yet structured practices, and promoting diversity and inclusion by lowering traditional workplace barriers. Ultimately, organizations that adopt hybrid work culture with clear policies, supportive leadership, and an inclusive approach are better positioned to foster innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth in an increasingly dynamic world of work.

Keywords: Hybrid work culture, Work flexibility, Employee productivity, Work-life balance, Organizational performance.

INTRODUCTION

Hybrid work has evolved as a flexible employment model that integrates on-site, remote, and mobile forms of work within a single organizational structure. Rather than limiting work to a fixed physical location, this approach allows employees to select work environments and methods that best support their productivity and task requirements. Over time, hybrid work has developed into a people-oriented strategy that emphasizes employee autonomy, well-being, and performance while addressing challenges associated with fully remote work, such as social isolation, weakened team connections, and reduced informal interaction.

The evolution of hybrid work culture reflects a broader transformation in how organizations define the workplace. The traditional office has shifted from being the sole center of work to becoming one component of a wider network that includes homes, co-working spaces, and digital platforms. Employees increasingly move

between these spaces based on the nature of their tasks, combining focused individual work with opportunities for collaboration and relationship building. This transition highlights key dimensions of hybrid work culture, including flexibility, connectivity, and adaptability, which have been shaped by technological advancements and changing workforce expectations.

Hybridity in the workplace refers to the integration of physical and virtual work systems, enabling employees to perform their roles both on organizational premises and through online platforms. This integration may involve different employees working in different modes or the same employees alternating between office and remote work across the workweek. Such arrangements illustrate the growing importance of balancing organizational control with employee autonomy, a defining characteristic of contemporary work culture.

The hybrid working model brings together the advantages of remote and traditional work environments. It offers flexibility, cost efficiency, enhanced employee satisfaction, and reduced environmental impact, while simultaneously preserving the benefits of physical workplaces, such as direct engagement with organizational culture, informal networking, in-person collaboration, and structured settings that encourage creativity and innovation. The coexistence of these elements defines hybrid work culture as an evolving and multidimensional construct, positioning it as a sustainable and strategic approach to workforce management in modern organizations.

Effective Hybrid Work Culture Model

Flexibility in the workspace entails defining the minimum and maximum durations for remote work versus on-site presence, as well as the geographical parameters for remote locations, whether they are domestic or international.

Flexibility in work hours involves establishing the minimum and maximum time allocated for work during or outside of standard office hours.

Frameworks for establishing and managing spatial and temporal flexibility include guidelines for determining compensation for remote or asynchronous work (on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual basis), along with considerations for fixed office days applicable to teams, departments, or entire organizations.

Types of Hybrid Work Models

- **Fixed (Structured) Hybrid Work Model:-** This model follows a predefined schedule in which employees are required to work from the office on specific days and remotely on others. The literature indicates that this approach emerged as an early transition from traditional office-based work, allowing organizations to retain control and coordination while introducing limited flexibility. It is commonly associated with large Indian organizations and multinational corporations operating in India, where consistency, compliance, and organizational culture are prioritized.
- **Flexible Hybrid Work Model:-** The flexible hybrid model grants employees the autonomy to decide their work location based on task requirements and personal preferences, subject to organizational guidelines. Studies highlight this model as a people-centric evolution of hybrid work culture, emphasizing trust, employee well-being, and outcome-based performance. It is widely discussed in the context of knowledge-driven sectors and globally oriented organizations.
- **Remote-First Hybrid Model:-** In this model, remote work serves as the primary mode of working, with physical office presence required only for collaboration, training, or strategic activities. The literature identifies this model as a response to technological advancements and global talent integration. It reflects a significant shift in work culture, particularly among foreign-based organizations operating in India and digital-first firms.
- **Office-First Hybrid Work Model:-** The office-first model prioritizes physical workplace presence while allowing limited remote work under specific conditions. Research suggests that this model is often adopted in organizations where face-to-face interaction, supervision, and operational control remain critical. It

represents a conservative adaptation of hybrid work culture, balancing traditional norms with emerging flexibility.

- **Role-Based Hybrid Work Model:-** The role-based hybrid model differentiates work arrangements based on job roles and functional requirements. Literature emphasizes that roles involving collaboration, customer interaction, or sensitive data may require on-site presence, while analytical or independent roles allow remote work. This model highlights the adaptive and differentiated nature of hybrid work culture.
- **Team-Based Hybrid Work Model:-** In this model, decisions regarding work location are made at the team or project level rather than individually. Studies indicate that this approach supports collaboration, accountability, and coordination, especially in project-based and cross-functional teams. It reflects the evolving cultural shift toward collective decision-making in hybrid work environments.
- **Hub-and-Spoke Hybrid Work Model:-** The hub-and-spoke model involves a central office supported by smaller satellite offices or distributed remote teams. The literature identifies this model as particularly relevant in the Indian context, as it enables organizations to access talent from non-metropolitan regions while maintaining organizational connectivity. It represents an evolution in spatial and cultural dimensions of work.
- **Time-Based Hybrid Work Model:-** This model requires employees to be physically present during specific phases such as onboarding, training, or critical project stages, while allowing remote work during other periods. Research suggests that this model balances flexibility with the need for socialization and cultural integration, making it an important dimension in the evolution of hybrid work culture.

Statement of the Problem

Hybrid work culture has emerged as a major shift in the way organizations design and manage work. Although many studies discuss remote and flexible work practices, the literature on hybrid work is scattered and lacks a unified perspective. Differences in definitions, models, and dimensions make it difficult to clearly understand how hybrid work culture has evolved and how it functions within organizations. This creates a need to systematically organize and interpret existing research.

Need for the Study

With hybrid work becoming a long-term practice in many organizations, there is a growing need to clearly understand its development and core characteristics. A systematic review helps bring together diverse studies, highlights important themes, and identifies gaps in existing research. Such understanding is essential for organizations and researchers to effectively design and sustain hybrid work practices.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the evolution of hybrid work culture as discussed in existing academic literature.
- To identify the key dimensions that define hybrid work culture across organizations.

METHODOLOGY

The study follows a systematic literature review on descriptive approach by analysing relevant peer-reviewed journal articles collected from major academic databases. Studies were selected based on predefined inclusion criteria and reviewed to identify recurring themes related to hybrid work culture. The findings were synthesized to present a structured understanding of its evolution and dimensions.

Limitations

- As a systematic literature review, the findings depend on existing research and do not include primary data or empirical validation.

- The review is restricted to selected peer-reviewed academic journals, which may limit the coverage of broader industry and practitioner perspectives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. John, B. M. (2025). The Future of Work: Examining the Effectiveness of Hybrid Work Models on Employee Productivity. *International Journal of Commerce and Management Research Studies*. This study shows that well-implemented hybrid work models are linked to 9–14% increases in productivity among knowledge workers, highlighting the importance of technological infrastructure, outcome-focused management, and flexible policies in enhancing performance.
2. Barreto, A. (2025). The Impact of Hybrid Work Models on Employee Performance and Well-Being Post-Pandemic. *The Journal of Academic Science*. Research indicates hybrid work models can improve productivity, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, but also bring challenges like isolation and communication barriers, emphasizing the need for strong leadership and supportive policies.
3. **Parker, Knight, and Keller (2022)**, in their paper *Remote Working: A Design Perspective*, published in *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, examined how work design influences the success of remote and hybrid work. The study highlights that autonomy, task clarity, feedback, and social connection are essential for effective hybrid work arrangements. Poorly designed hybrid roles were found to reduce engagement and well-being. The authors emphasize intentional job design to sustain performance in hybrid settings.
4. **Kniffin et al. (2021)**, in *COVID-19 and the Workplace: Implications, Issues, and Insights for Future Research*, published in *American Psychologist*, analyzed how pandemic-driven remote and hybrid work reshaped organizational practices. The study notes that hybrid work is likely to remain permanent due to benefits such as flexibility and productivity. However, challenges related to inequality, mental health, and career development were also identified. The authors call for long-term research on sustainable hybrid work systems.
5. **Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2021)**, in *Work-from-Anywhere: The Productivity Effects of Geographic Flexibility*, examined the impact of hybrid and location-flexible work arrangements on employee performance. The study revealed that employees allowed to work across locations maintained or improved productivity levels while experiencing higher job satisfaction and retention. The authors argue that hybrid work enhances autonomy without disrupting coordination or accountability. Their findings support hybrid work as a sustainable post-pandemic work model.
6. **Wang, Liu, Qian, and Parker (2021)**, through *Achieving Effective Remote Working During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, explored how employees adapted to remote and hybrid work conditions. The study identified autonomy, trust, role clarity, and leadership support as key enablers of productivity and psychological well-being. Employees who received clear expectations and regular communication adjusted more effectively to hybrid work. The study emphasizes the importance of supportive management practices.
7. **Gibbs, Mengel, and Siemroth (2021)** conducted an empirical study titled *Work from Home & Productivity: Evidence from Personnel Data*. Their findings indicate that while individual task efficiency improved under remote and hybrid arrangements, collaboration and innovation declined. Reduced informal interactions were found to affect teamwork negatively. The authors conclude that hybrid models combining office presence with remote work are essential to balance productivity and collaboration.
8. **Felstead and Reuschke (2020)**, in *Homeworking in the UK: Before and During the 2020 Lockdown*, analyzed changes in work patterns during the pandemic. The study found that hybrid work reduced commuting stress and improved flexibility for employees. However, it also reported longer working hours and blurred work–life boundaries. The authors highlight the need for clear organizational policies to manage hybrid work effectively.

9. **Oakman et al. (2020)**, in *A Rapid Review of Mental and Physical Health Effects of Working at Home*, examined health outcomes associated with remote and hybrid work. The review found that hybrid work supports mental well-being when employees have ergonomic workspaces and manageable workloads. Poor work design and lack of boundaries were linked to stress and fatigue. The study stresses the importance of organizational support systems.
10. **Toscano and Zappala (2020)**, through *Social Isolation and Stress as Outcomes of Remote Work*, investigated psychological consequences of remote and hybrid work. Their findings suggest that hybrid workers experience less social isolation compared to fully remote employees. Regular face-to-face interaction was found to strengthen team relationships and emotional well-being. The study supports hybrid work as a socially sustainable arrangement.
11. **Molino et al. (2020)** explored technology-related stress in *Wellbeing Costs of Technology Use During COVID-19 Remote Working*. The study found that while hybrid work increases flexibility, excessive digital connectivity leads to emotional exhaustion. Constant availability expectations were identified as a major stressor. The authors recommend setting digital boundaries to protect employee well-being.
12. **De Vries, Tummers, and Bekkers (2019)**, in their study *The Benefits of Teleworking in the Public Sector*, published in *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, examined flexible and hybrid work arrangements among public sector employees. The findings indicate that teleworking improves job satisfaction and perceived autonomy while maintaining performance levels. However, managerial trust and outcome-based evaluation were identified as critical success factors. The study supports hybrid work as an effective governance tool.
13. **Kelliher, Richardson, and Boiarintseva (2019)**, in *All of Work? All of Life? Reconceptualising Work–Life Balance*, examined how flexible and hybrid work affect employees' role management. The study revealed that hybrid work improves work–life balance by allowing better control over time and location. However, role overload was observed when boundaries were unclear. The authors emphasize the need for structured flexibility.
14. **De Menezes and Kelliher (2017)** conducted a systematic review titled *Flexible Working and Performance*. Their analysis showed consistent positive relationships between hybrid work arrangements and organizational outcomes such as engagement, commitment, and performance. The study highlights that effective implementation and managerial support are crucial. Poorly managed flexibility was found to reduce its benefits.
15. **Eurofound and the International Labour Organization (2017)**, in *Working Anytime, Anywhere: The Effects on the World of Work*, provided a global overview of hybrid and flexible work practices. The report concluded that hybrid work enhances productivity and flexibility across sectors. However, it also warned of increased working hours and work–life conflict. Regulatory frameworks were recommended to ensure sustainable hybrid work.
16. **Messenger and Gschwind (2016)**, through *Three Generations of Telework: New ICTs and the Transformation of Work*, traced the evolution of telework into modern hybrid models. The study explains how advances in information and communication technologies enabled hybrid work to become more structured and reliable. Organizational trust and performance-based evaluation were identified as key success factors. Hybrid work was positioned as a mature form of flexible work.
17. **Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015)**, in *How Effective Is Telecommuting? Assessing the Status of Our Scientific Findings*, reviewed empirical evidence on telecommuting and flexible work. The study found that hybrid work improves job satisfaction and reduces turnover intentions. However, excessive remote work was associated with weaker workplace relationships. The authors recommend balanced hybrid arrangements.

18. **Bloom, Liang, Roberts, and Ying (2015)** conducted a controlled experiment titled Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment. The results showed significant productivity gains and higher job satisfaction among remote workers. However, employees working entirely from home experienced fewer promotion opportunities. The study strongly supports hybrid work over full-time remote work.
19. **Peters, Den Dulk, and Van der Lippe (2009)**, in The Effects of Time-Spatial Flexibility on Employees, examined the impact of flexible work locations and schedules. The study found that hybrid work increases perceived control and motivation among employees. Reduced stress and improved job satisfaction were also reported. The authors highlight flexibility as a key driver of positive work outcomes.
20. **Bailey and Kurland (2002)**, in A Review of Telework Research: Findings, New Directions, provided one of the earliest comprehensive reviews of telework. The study concluded that flexible work increases autonomy and satisfaction but poses coordination challenges. Strong organizational culture and management support were identified as essential. This work laid the foundation for later hybrid work research.

CONCLUSION

Hybrid working is a flexible work arrangement in which employees divide their time between working from the office and working remotely, based on both personal and organizational needs. After the COVID-19 lockdowns, several hybrid work models emerged, offering flexibility that was rarely practiced earlier. Employees following hybrid work arrangements generally view their organizations positively, especially appreciating their ability to adapt during the pandemic and manage remote work challenges. Even in the post-pandemic period, hybrid employees report higher productivity while working from home due to a balanced mix of remote and office work. They also experience better job satisfaction, well-being, and mental health compared to employees working entirely from home or solely from the office.

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