

Impact of Hybrid Work on Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract:

Hybrid work, which combines remote and on-site working, has become a defining feature of the modern workplace, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and sustained by changing employee expectations and advances in collaboration technology. As organisations adopt hybrid models, understanding their effect on employees has become a priority for human-resource management. This study examines the impact of hybrid work on two critical outcomes: employee engagement and organizational commitment. Adopting a descriptive and analytical research design supported by a structured questionnaire survey of employees, the study measures the extent and quality of hybrid work arrangements and relates them to dimensions of engagement, such as vigour, dedication, and absorption, and to dimensions of organizational commitment, such as affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The findings indicate that well-designed hybrid work is positively associated with employee engagement and organizational commitment, as flexibility, autonomy, and improved work-life balance enhance motivation and attachment. However, the findings also show that poorly managed hybrid work, marked by isolation, weak communication, blurred boundaries, and inequitable treatment, can weaken engagement and commitment.

Keywords — Hybrid Work, Employee Engagement, Organizational Commitment, Work-Life Balance, Remote Work, Human Resource Management, India

I. Introduction

The nature of work has undergone a profound transformation in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic forced organisations worldwide to adopt remote work on an unprecedented scale, and as conditions normalised, many organisations settled on hybrid models that combine remote and on-site working. Hybrid work allows employees to split their time between the office and home or other locations, offering flexibility in where and often when work is performed. In India, hybrid work has been adopted widely across the information technology, services, finance, and consulting sectors, supported by a young, digitally fluent workforce, improved connectivity, and collaboration technologies.

Hybrid work represents a significant change in the employment relationship. It alters how employees interact with colleagues and managers, how work is coordinated and monitored, and how employees balance their professional and personal lives. These changes have important implications for employee engagement and organizational commitment, two outcomes that are closely linked to productivity, retention, and organisational performance.

Employee engagement refers to the degree to which employees are psychologically invested in their work, characterised by energy, enthusiasm, and absorption. Engaged employees are more

motivated, more productive, and more likely to go beyond their formal duties. Organizational commitment refers to the strength of an employee's attachment and loyalty to the organisation, encompassing emotional attachment, the perceived cost of leaving, and a sense of obligation to stay. Both engagement and commitment are central concerns for human-resource management, particularly in competitive labour markets where attracting and retaining talent is critical.

Hybrid work can influence engagement and commitment in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, flexibility and autonomy can improve work-life balance, reduce commuting stress, increase job satisfaction, and signal that the organisation trusts and values its employees, thereby strengthening engagement and commitment. On the negative side, hybrid work can create feelings of isolation, weaken team cohesion and communication, blur the boundaries between work and personal life, and generate perceptions of inequity between remote and on-site employees, all of which can undermine engagement and commitment.

Understanding how hybrid work affects employee engagement and organizational commitment is therefore important for organisations seeking to design effective and sustainable work models. This study investigates these relationships with reference to employees in the Indian context, examining both the benefits of well-designed hybrid work and the risks of poorly managed arrangements.

II. Objectives of the Study

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To study the concept of hybrid work and its forms in the contemporary workplace.
2. To examine the extent and quality of hybrid work arrangements among employees.
3. To analyse the impact of hybrid work on employee engagement.
4. To analyse the impact of hybrid work on organizational commitment.
5. To identify the challenges associated with hybrid work that affect engagement and commitment.
6. To offer suggestions for organisations, managers, and policymakers.

III. Review of Literature

The study of hybrid work builds on established research in employee engagement, organizational commitment, and flexible work arrangements. Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of personal engagement, describing how employees bring themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally to their work roles. Building on this, Schaufeli and colleagues conceptualised work engagement in terms of vigour, dedication, and absorption, providing a widely used framework for measuring engagement.

Organizational commitment has been extensively theorised. Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed a three-component model distinguishing affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation). This model remains central to understanding how work arrangements affect employee attachment and loyalty.

Research on flexible and remote work predates the pandemic. Studies have long shown that flexibility and autonomy can improve job satisfaction, work-life balance, and commitment, consistent with the job demand-resources model, which holds that job resources such as autonomy and support foster engagement while excessive demands deplete it. The job demands-resources framework is particularly useful for analysing hybrid work, which simultaneously offers resources (flexibility, autonomy) and introduces demands (isolation, boundary blurring).

A growing body of post-pandemic literature examines hybrid work specifically. Studies and industry reports have found that hybrid arrangements are generally associated with higher employee satisfaction and retention, improved work-life balance, and sustained or improved

productivity, while also highlighting risks such as isolation, weaker collaboration, communication challenges, proximity bias favouring on-site employees, and difficulties in maintaining organisational culture.

In the Indian context, industry reports from technology and consulting bodies have documented the widespread adoption of hybrid work in knowledge-intensive sectors and its effects on engagement, well-being, and retention. The present study builds on this literature by empirically examining how hybrid work affects employee engagement and organizational commitment.

IV. Research Methodology

Research design. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. It combines primary data collected through a structured questionnaire with secondary data from industry and research sources to contextualize the findings.

Nature and sources of data. Primary data are collected from employees through a structured questionnaire covering their hybrid work arrangements, engagement, and organizational commitment. Secondary data are drawn from industry reports, research studies, and reputable publications to describe the broader adoption and effects of hybrid work in India.

Sample and sampling methods. The target population is employees working in organisations that have adopted hybrid work arrangements, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors such as information technology, services, finance, and consulting. A convenience and purposive sampling approach is used to reach employees with experience of hybrid work, with an effort to include a mix of age groups, genders, roles, and tenure levels.

Variables and measurements. Hybrid work is measured through indicators such as the proportion of remote versus on-site work, the degree of flexibility and autonomy, and the quality of communication and support. Employee engagement is measured across dimensions of vigour, dedication,

and absorption. Organizational commitment is measured across affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Responses are captured on Likert-type scales and categorical items.

Hypotheses. The study tests the following working hypotheses:

- H1: Hybrid work has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.
- H2: Hybrid work has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment, which is weakened by challenges such as isolation and inequity.

Tools of analysis. The data are analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means), cross-tabulation across demographic groups, and comparative analysis of engagement and commitment across levels of hybrid-work quality. The direction and consistency of relationships are interpreted in light of the hypotheses.

V. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis examines the nature of hybrid work arrangements, their impact on engagement and commitment, and the challenges that moderate these effects.

[1] Nature and Quality of Hybrid Work Arrangements

Hybrid arrangements vary widely in structure and quality.

Dimension of hybrid work	Low quality	Moderate quality	High quality
Flexibility and autonomy	Rigid schedule	Some choice	High choice
Communication and support	Weak	Adequate	Strong
Technology and tools	Limited	Adequate	Well-equipped
Equity (remote vs on-site)	Perceived bias	Mixed	Fair treatment
Work-life balance	Blurred boundaries	Mixed	Clear boundaries

Employees in high-quality hybrid arrangements enjoy genuine flexibility, strong communication and support, good tools, equitable treatment, and clearer work-life boundaries. Those in low-quality arrangements face rigid schedules, weak support, perceived bias, and blurred boundaries.

[2] Impact on Employee Engagement

Comparing engagement across levels of hybrid-work quality reveals clear differences, summarised below.

Engagement dimension	Low-quality hybrid	High-quality hybrid
Vigour (energy)	Lower	Higher
Dedication (enthusiasm)	Lower	Higher
Absorption (focus)	Lower	Higher
Overall engagement	Lower	Higher

Employees in high-quality hybrid arrangements report higher vigour, dedication, and absorption. Flexibility and autonomy enhance motivation, reduce commuting stress, and improve focus, while strong support sustains enthusiasm. This pattern supports hypothesis H1, that hybrid work positively affects employee engagement.

[3] Impact on Organizational Commitment

Comparing commitment across levels of hybrid-work quality reveals the following.

Commitment dimension	Low-quality hybrid	High-quality hybrid
Affective (emotional attachment)	Lower	Higher
Continuance (cost of leaving)	Mixed	Higher
Normative (sense of obligation)	Lower	Higher
Overall commitment	Lower	Higher

Employees in high-quality hybrid arrangements report stronger affective and normative commitment, feeling valued, trusted, and emotionally attached to the organisation. Flexibility signals trust and care, strengthening loyalty. This

supports hypothesis H2, that hybrid work positively affects organizational commitment, though the effect depends on quality.

[4] Challenges that Moderate the Effects

The analysis highlights challenges that weaken the positive effects. Isolation and reduced social connection, weaker team communication and collaboration, blurred work-life boundaries leading to overwork, and perceptions of inequity between remote and on-site employees (proximity bias) all reduce engagement and commitment. These challenges explain why poorly managed hybrid work can undermine the very outcomes it is intended to improve.

VI. Findings and Discussion

The principal findings of the study are as follows:

1. **Hybrid work is widespread and varied in quality.** Arrangements range from high-quality (flexible, supported, equitable) to low-quality (rigid, unsupported, inequitable).
2. **Well-designed hybrid work raises engagement.** Flexibility and autonomy enhance vigour, dedication, and absorption.
3. **Well-designed hybrid work strengthens commitment.** Trust and work-life balance build affective and normative commitment.
4. **Quality is decisive.** The benefits of hybrid work depend on strong communication, support, equity, and clear boundaries.
5. **Challenges can undermine outcomes.** Isolation, weak collaboration, boundary blurring, and proximity bias weaken engagement and commitment.
6. **Hybrid work supports retention.** Where well-managed, hybrid arrangements improve satisfaction and reduce turnover intention.

These findings are consistent with the engagement, organizational-commitment, and job demands-resources literature, which hold that job resources such as autonomy and support foster engagement and commitment while unmanaged demands deplete them. The implication is that hybrid work can be a powerful driver of engagement and commitment, but only when

organisations deliberately manage its challenges rather than simply allowing remote work.

quantify the effects of hybrid work across sectors and employee segments.

VII. Limitations of the Study

The study is subject to several limitations:

1. The study relies partly on primary data collected through convenience and purposive sampling, which may limit the representativeness and generalisability of the results.
2. The study captures perceptions at a point in time and may not reflect how engagement and commitment evolve as hybrid models mature.
3. The analysis uses descriptive and comparative techniques rather than advanced multivariate or structural modelling, which could be pursued in future research.

VIII. Conclusion

Hybrid work has a significant and multifaceted impact on employee engagement and organizational commitment. The study finds that well-designed hybrid work, characterised by genuine flexibility, autonomy, strong communication and support, equitable treatment, and clear work-life boundaries, enhances employee engagement across vigour, dedication, and absorption, and strengthens organizational commitment, particularly its affective and normative dimensions. These effects reflect the genuine benefits of hybrid work in improving work-life balance, reducing stress, and signalling trust and care. At the same time, the study finds that the benefits are conditional on quality: poorly managed hybrid work, marked by isolation, weak collaboration, blurred boundaries, and perceptions of inequity, can weaken engagement and commitment. The study concludes that realising the benefits of hybrid work requires deliberate management: organisations should design clear and equitable hybrid policies; managers should invest in communication, inclusion, and outcome-based management; and policymakers and HR leaders should support well-being and address proximity bias. Future research could extend this analysis with larger, representative samples and structural modelling to

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