

Work from Home vs Hybrid Work Models: Strategic HR Adaptations in the Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented shift in work models globally, compelling organizations to embrace remote and hybrid formats. This study compares the Work from Home (WFH) and Hybrid Work Models to evaluate their impacts on employee engagement, productivity, work-life balance, and HR management strategies. Using a mixed-method approach—including survey data from employees and interviews with HR professionals—the research identifies both opportunities and challenges posed by flexible work arrangements. Key findings reveal that while WFH offers greater autonomy and balance, hybrid models foster better collaboration and engagement. The study provides actionable HR recommendations for creating inclusive, productive, and resilient work environments in the post-pandemic landscape.

Keywords: Work from Home, Hybrid Work Model, HR Strategy, Employee Engagement, Pandemic, Flexible Work, India

1. Introduction

The pandemic catalyzed a shift in workplace models, disrupting traditional office-based structures. In India, organizations transitioned rapidly to WFH or hybrid models, redefining HR roles in performance tracking, engagement, and well-being. This study aims to explore how these models compare in terms of strategic HR management and employee outcomes.

2. Literature Review

Remote and hybrid work have become critical themes in HR research post-2020. Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the JD-R model, the literature illustrates how flexible models impact motivation and stress. Insights from Deloitte, Gartner, and McKinsey suggest that organizations with clear hybrid strategies perform better in retention, communication, and morale.

3. Research Methodology

This mixed-method study draws from 40 respondents (30 employees, 10 HR professionals) from sectors like IT, education, finance, and consulting. Tools included online surveys and semi-structured interviews. Analysis used descriptive statistics for survey responses and thematic coding for interviews.

4. Results and Discussion

Hybrid workers rated their productivity slightly higher. WFH employees reported greater work-life balance but lower engagement and more digital fatigue. HR interviews highlighted a shift to outcome-based performance management and the importance of inclusive digital practices.

5. Strategic HR Recommendations

- Standardize hybrid policies
- Invest in virtual leadership training
- Promote digital inclusion
- Prioritize employee wellness
- Leverage HR analytics for decision-making

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that neither model is universally optimal. Hybrid models strike a better balance between structure and flexibility, while WFH enhances individual autonomy. HR must play a central role in designing adaptive, inclusive, and evidence-based frameworks.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The sample size is limited, and findings are India-specific. Future research could explore longitudinal impacts of hybrid work, sector-specific adaptations, and AI-assisted HR practices.

8. References

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