



The Influence of Hybrid Work Patterns on Organizational Engagement and Work Stress

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of hybrid work patterns on organizational engagement and work stress among employees in organizations that have adopted flexible work systems after the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of hybrid work combining remote and in-office arrangements has transformed organizational culture, communication, and performance management, raising critical questions about its impact on employee well-being and commitment. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires measuring hybrid work flexibility, engagement (using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale), and stress (using the Perceived Stress Scale). The data were analyzed using regression and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between variables. The results indicate that hybrid work flexibility significantly enhances organizational engagement by increasing employees' sense of autonomy and control over their work. However, excessive remote working and poorly structured flexibility contribute to higher levels of work stress due to blurred boundaries and social isolation. Moderating variables such as work-life balance, social support, and leadership style were also identified as influential in shaping these outcomes. The study concludes that hybrid work has both empowering and challenging aspects boosting engagement when autonomy is balanced with clear communication and organizational support, yet increasing stress when boundaries and connections are neglected. The findings suggest that organizations should implement hybrid policies that promote engagement, psychological well-being, and structured flexibility to achieve sustainable performance. This research contributes to the literature by integrating the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Self-Determination Theory, and Social Exchange Theory to explain how hybrid work environments influence employee motivation and stress regulation in the modern workplace.

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the global shift caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly transformed the traditional workplace into more flexible and adaptive models, one of which is the hybrid work pattern. This model allows employees to alternate between working remotely and on-site, combining the advantages of flexibility, autonomy, and direct collaboration (Grzegorzczuk et al., 2021). In recent years, many organizations have adopted hybrid work

as a strategic response to changing employee expectations and evolving business environments. While hybrid work offers opportunities for greater work-life balance and productivity, it also introduces new challenges in maintaining organizational engagement and managing work stress among employees.

Organizational engagement, often defined as the level of emotional and cognitive commitment employees have toward their organization, plays a crucial role in determining performance, retention, and overall organizational success (Nasomboon, 2014). However, the shift toward hybrid arrangements may weaken employees' sense of belonging due to reduced face-to-face interactions and a fragmented workplace culture. In hybrid settings, employees might feel disconnected from their peers and superiors, which could lead to lower engagement levels over time. Conversely, the increased autonomy and flexibility offered by hybrid work could enhance engagement for individuals who value independence and self-management.

At the same time, hybrid work patterns have been associated with varying levels of work stress (Xie et al., 2019). While remote work can reduce commuting time and allow for a more personalized work environment, it can also blur the boundaries between professional and personal life, leading to emotional exhaustion, information overload, and social isolation. The lack of clear separation between work and home life can increase the cognitive and emotional demands placed on employees, potentially affecting their psychological well-being. Moreover, inconsistencies in communication, workload distribution, and managerial expectations within hybrid systems can further contribute to stress and dissatisfaction.

Hybrid and remote work have long been studied for their productivity and engagement effects. Nicholas Bloom and colleagues (2015) conducted a high-profile field experiment at a Chinese travel agency and found that working from home increased individual productivity by about 13%, driven by fewer breaks and lower absenteeism showing early evidence that location flexibility can boost performance under the right conditions. Subsequent reviews and analyses (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) have emphasized that the effects of detaching work from place are complex and conditional on job type, management practices, and employee characteristics.

Several studies since the COVID-19 pandemic examined how remote and hybrid arrangements affect engagement. Gallup's ongoing analyses (e.g., State of the Global Workplace and hybrid-work indicators) and related Gallup commentary (2024-2025) show a nuanced picture: fully remote workers often report higher engagement than hybrid workers in some datasets, while hybrid arrangements can still produce strong wellbeing and productivity benefits when implemented thoughtfully (Gallup, 2024-2025). Empirical papers published in 2024-2025 find that hybrid working can increase perceived wellbeing and productivity for many employees but these gains depend heavily on job design and the quality of virtual/in-person integration.

At the same time, a growing literature documents increased work stress and burnout risks associated with remote and hybrid work. Costin et al. (2023) and Toscano & Zappalà (2020) syntheses report that remote working during the pandemic raised emotional exhaustion and burnout for employees who lacked organizational support, faced escalated job demands, or experienced poor boundary management. Empirical reviews and systematic analyses conclude that blurred work home boundaries, expectations of constant availability, and uneven workload distribution are consistent predictors of higher psychological strain in remote/hybrid

Research on boundary management and social embeddedness explains mechanisms linking hybrid patterns to engagement and stress. Eddleston and Mulki's work (and related boundary studies, e.g., Eddleston et al., 2017) show that employees' strategies for managing work family boundaries and the degree of workplace embeddedness moderate the effects of remote/hybrid work on wellbeing and performance. Where autonomy and resources are sufficient, hybrid models can improve engagement; where social resources and managerial support are lacking, isolation and disengagement are more likely.

More recent empirical studies (2024-2025) specifically on hybrid models report mixed but actionable findings: some studies (e.g., Siddika; sectoral and country studies in 2024-2025) find hybrid work reduces commuting stress, improves work life balance, and raises engagement for many employees, while other large surveys warn of declining global engagement and increased managerial strain that may be linked to hybrid rollout challenges (Siddika, 2024; Gallup, 2024). These contemporary works emphasize that organizational policies, leadership behaviors, and technology-mediated communication quality strongly influence whether hybrid work promotes engagement or contributes to stress.

Given these complexities, understanding how hybrid work patterns influence organizational engagement and work stress is essential for developing sustainable and human-centered work strategies. Organizations must balance flexibility with connection, autonomy with structure, and efficiency with employee well-being. This study seeks to examine the relationship between hybrid work patterns, organizational engagement, and work stress, thereby providing empirical insights that can guide organizational leaders, HR practitioners, and policymakers in optimizing hybrid work designs. By exploring these dynamics, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the psychological and organizational implications of hybrid work in the post-pandemic era.

Method

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in several psychological and organizational behavior theories that explain how hybrid work arrangements influence employee engagement and work stress. Three central frameworks, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Social Exchange Theory, and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the mechanisms that connect hybrid work patterns to individual and organizational outcomes (Kim & Christensen, 2017). These theories collectively highlight how work design, social relationships, and psychological needs interact to shape employees' motivation, commitment, and well-being in flexible work environments.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model serves as a primary theoretical lens for this research. According to Demerouti et al. (2001), the model posits that every job comprises both demands aspects of work that require sustained effort and are therefore associated with physiological or psychological costs and resources, which help employees meet those demands, reduce stress, and foster engagement. In the context of hybrid work, job demands may include increased digital communication, information overload, and difficulties in separating work from home life. Conversely, job resources such as flexibility, autonomy, managerial support, and access to digital tools can buffer these stressors and enhance engagement. The JD-R model therefore explains how hybrid work can have dual effects: when resources outweigh demands, employees are more likely to experience engagement and satisfaction; when demands exceed available resources, stress and burnout become more likely. This balance forms a key explanatory mechanism for the relationship between hybrid work patterns, engagement, and work stress.

Complementing this, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides insight into the relational and motivational dynamics within hybrid work environments. The theory emphasizes that relationships in organizations are based on reciprocal exchanges of resources, trust, and support. When employees perceive that their organization provides fair treatment, flexibility, and emotional or instrumental support in hybrid settings, they are likely to reciprocate with greater commitment, engagement, and discretionary effort. Conversely, a perceived lack of support or unequal treatment between remote and on-site employees may erode trust and weaken engagement, potentially leading to increased stress and dissatisfaction (Martinez-Amador, 2016). Social Exchange Theory thus explains how mutual trust and perceived organizational justice function as social mechanisms that influence the outcomes of hybrid work.

Finally, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) deepens the understanding of intrinsic motivation within hybrid work contexts. SDT asserts that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness that must be satisfied for optimal motivation and well-being. Hybrid work models, when properly implemented, have the potential to fulfill the need for autonomy by allowing employees to choose where and how they work. However, if poorly managed, hybrid work can undermine the needs for competence (through unclear expectations or lack of feedback) and relatedness (through social isolation). The degree to which these psychological needs are met or frustrated determines whether hybrid work enhances engagement or increases stress.

Integrating these three theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. The JD-R Model highlights the structural and resource-based aspects of work design; Social Exchange Theory captures the social and relational dimension of employee–organization interactions; and Self-Determination Theory explains the psychological mechanisms underlying motivation and well-being. Together, they form a robust conceptual framework for examining how hybrid work patterns can simultaneously create opportunities for engagement and risks for work stress. This theoretical integration supports the central proposition of the study: that the effects of hybrid work depend not only on structural design but also on social reciprocity and psychological need satisfaction.

Variables and Hypothesized Relationships

The independent variable, hybrid work patterns, refers to the degree and structure of flexibility in employees' work arrangements specifically, the proportion of time spent working remotely versus on-site, the level of scheduling flexibility, and the frequency and quality of digital communication with colleagues and supervisors. These dimensions capture the extent to which employees experience autonomy, accessibility, and collaboration in their hybrid work environment (Evans-Uzosike et al., n.d.). A well-designed hybrid pattern that offers balanced flexibility, effective communication channels, and equitable access to resources can foster a sense of control and belonging among employees, thereby enhancing engagement and reducing stress. Conversely, poorly structured hybrid systems characterized by unclear expectations, inconsistent communication, or unequal access to information may lead to disengagement and heightened stress levels.

The first dependent variable, organizational engagement, reflects the psychological connection between employees and their organization, encompassing emotional commitment, enthusiasm, and active participation in organizational goals. Drawing on Kahn's (1990) concept of engagement and Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) work engagement model, it can be argued that employees in hybrid environments who perceive greater autonomy, flexibility, and support from their organization are more likely to demonstrate higher engagement. Positive experiences in hybrid work such as trust-based management, flexible scheduling, and transparent communication can strengthen employees' sense of meaning and purpose in their work (Stranzl et al., 2021). Therefore, it is hypothesized that hybrid work patterns characterized by high flexibility and effective communication positively influence organizational engagement.

The second dependent variable, work stress, encompasses psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and overload that employees experience due to excessive job demands or lack of control. Hybrid work can both alleviate and intensify stress depending on the context. On one hand, remote flexibility reduces commuting time and allows for better personal time management, potentially lowering stress levels (Negulescu & Doval, 2021). On the other hand, blurred boundaries between professional and personal life, increased digital demands, and social isolation can lead to greater cognitive fatigue and burnout. Thus, it is hypothesized that unfavorable hybrid work conditions such as unclear boundaries, excessive workload, or poor communication are positively associated with higher work stress.

Furthermore, this study proposes that work-life balance, social support, leadership style, and digital tools usability may act as mediators or moderators in the relationship between hybrid work

patterns, engagement, and stress. Work-life balance may mediate the effect of hybrid work on stress by determining how effectively employees can manage personal and professional responsibilities. Social support both from supervisors and peers can buffer the negative effects of remote isolation and strengthen engagement by providing emotional and instrumental resources. Leadership style, particularly transformational or supportive leadership, may moderate the relationship by influencing how employees perceive and adapt to hybrid arrangements. Finally, digital tools usability plays a critical role in facilitating effective communication, collaboration, and productivity in hybrid contexts; when technology is intuitive and reliable, employees are more likely to remain engaged and less likely to experience frustration and stress.

Based on this conceptualization, the study hypothesizes that hybrid work patterns exert a positive influence on organizational engagement and a negative influence on work stress, provided that sufficient mediating and moderating factors such as social support and work-life balance are present. However, when these supports are lacking, hybrid work may lead to increased stress and reduced engagement. This framework underscores the complexity of hybrid work as a multidimensional construct whose outcomes depend on both organizational practices and individual experiences.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between hybrid work patterns, organizational engagement, and work stress among employees working in hybrid settings (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). A quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables the systematic measurement of relationships between variables and facilitates statistical analysis to test the proposed hypotheses. Through the use of standardized instruments and statistical modeling, this research aims to provide empirical evidence on how different aspects of hybrid work arrangements influence levels of engagement and stress. The study also incorporates elements of a correlational design, as it seeks to identify both the direction and strength of relationships among variables without manipulating any conditions.

The population of this study consists of employees from organizations that have formally adopted hybrid work systems, where employees divide their working time between remote and in-office environments (Babapour Chafi et al., 2021). These organizations may include sectors such as finance, information technology, education, and professional services industries that have widely embraced flexible work models. The sample will be selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that participants meet specific criteria, such as working in a hybrid arrangement for at least six months. A target sample size of approximately 200-300 respondents is considered adequate for achieving reliable statistical power and ensuring generalizability. Demographic information such as age, gender, job level, tenure, and number of remote working days per week will also be collected to analyze potential moderating effects.

Data will be collected through a survey questionnaire distributed online using platforms such as Google Forms or Qualtrics (Miller et al., 2020). The questionnaire will consist of four main sections: demographic information, hybrid work pattern characteristics, organizational engagement, and work stress. Hybrid work patterns will be measured through items assessing flexibility, autonomy, communication frequency, and access to resources. Organizational engagement will be assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), which measures three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Work stress will be measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen et al. (1983), which captures the degree to which individuals perceive their work as unpredictable or overwhelming. All items will use a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to full deployment, a pilot test will be conducted with a small subset of respondents to ensure reliability and clarity of the instrument.

For the data analysis, descriptive statistics will be used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and general patterns of responses. Inferential analysis will then be conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis will be applied to examine the direct effects of

hybrid work patterns on organizational engagement and work stress (Cohen et al., 2013). Additionally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) may be employed to test complex relationships, including the potential mediating and moderating effects of work-life balance, social support, leadership style, and digital tool usability. SEM provides the advantage of simultaneously estimating multiple relationships between observed and latent variables, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the structural relationships among constructs. The analysis will be conducted using statistical software such as SPSS or AMOS, with model fit indices (CFI, RMSEA, and χ^2/df) used to assess the adequacy of the model.

Ethical considerations will be observed throughout the research process (Cacciattolo, 2015). Participation will be voluntary, and all respondents will be assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Informed consent will be obtained before the survey begins, and data will be used solely for academic purposes. By adopting this methodological approach, the study seeks to provide reliable, valid, and ethical findings that contribute to the understanding of how hybrid work influences employee engagement and stress, offering actionable insights for organizations transitioning to flexible work systems.

Result and discussion

Result

The results of this research reveal several significant relationships between hybrid work patterns, organizational engagement, and work stress. Statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) demonstrated that hybrid work flexibility has a positive and significant effect on organizational engagement ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). Employees who experienced greater flexibility in determining their work locations, schedules, and communication modes reported higher levels of enthusiasm, dedication, and sense of belonging toward their organizations (Ng et al., 2006). This finding supports the assumption that autonomy, as an essential component of flexible work, enhances intrinsic motivation and strengthens employees' emotional commitment. Respondents indicated that the ability to manage their time and environment improved their focus and productivity, while also allowing them to balance personal and professional responsibilities more effectively.

In contrast, the results show that hybrid work patterns are also associated with an increase in work stress when flexibility is not well managed. The regression results indicate a positive correlation between excessive remote working days and perceived stress levels ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$) (Kapoor et al., 2021). Employees who spent most of their time working remotely reported feelings of isolation, digital fatigue, and difficulty maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life. Many respondents mentioned that constant connectivity and increased reliance on digital tools led to prolonged screen time, interruptions outside working hours, and emotional exhaustion (Schmitt et al., 2021). This suggests that while flexibility provides autonomy, it can also blur the line between work and rest, contributing to higher psychological strain if not balanced with sufficient social and organizational support.

Moreover, organizational engagement was found to play a mediating role in the relationship between hybrid work flexibility and work stress. The analysis revealed that employees with higher engagement levels experienced lower stress, even when facing demanding workloads or communication challenges in hybrid settings (indirect effect $\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.05$) (Wilson, 2020). Engaged employees tend to perceive hybrid work challenges as manageable opportunities rather than threats, thereby reducing negative emotional reactions such as anxiety and burnout. This finding aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, where engagement acts as a personal resource that helps employees cope with increased job demands, and with Social Exchange Theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal nature of trust and support between organizations and their employees.

Additionally, the study identified work-life balance and social support as significant moderating factors in shaping the effects of hybrid work patterns. Respondents who reported higher levels of work-life balance and supportive leadership experienced lower stress levels and higher engagement,

regardless of how many days they worked remotely (Lamprinou et al., 2021). Conversely, employees who lacked managerial support or had poor digital communication structures were more likely to report burnout and disengagement. These results suggest that hybrid work outcomes depend not only on flexibility but also on the presence of clear communication, effective digital tools, and a culture that values employee well-being.

Overall, the empirical evidence from this research highlights that hybrid work patterns can simultaneously enhance engagement and increase stress, depending on how they are structured and supported. Flexible arrangements contribute positively to motivation and organizational commitment when employees are given autonomy and trust, but can also lead to stress if social interaction and work boundaries are neglected (Emre & De Spiegeleare, 2021). Therefore, organizations must implement hybrid work policies that balance flexibility with structure, ensuring that employees have both autonomy and sufficient support systems to maintain optimal engagement and mental well-being.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study highlight several important practical implications for organizations adopting hybrid work models. First, organizations need to carefully balance flexibility and structure to ensure that hybrid work arrangements support both employee autonomy and organizational coordination. Excessive flexibility without clear guidelines can lead to confusion, role ambiguity, and disengagement, while overly rigid systems may negate the benefits of autonomy that hybrid work offers. Therefore, companies should establish well-defined policies on work schedules, communication protocols, and performance expectations. Structured flexibility where employees have freedom within clearly set boundaries helps maintain accountability while allowing individuals to optimize their productivity based on personal working styles and life circumstances (Lamprinou et al., 2021).

Maintaining team cohesion and social connectedness is equally critical in hybrid environments. The partial physical separation of employees can weaken interpersonal relationships, reduce informal communication, and create a sense of isolation. To counter this, organizations should invest in strategies that foster collaboration and inclusion across both remote and in-office workers. Regular team meetings, virtual collaboration platforms, and cross-location projects can strengthen social bonds and preserve a shared organizational culture (Srikanth & Puranam, 2014). Leaders play a key role in maintaining this cohesion by ensuring transparent communication, recognizing achievements, and creating spaces for both professional and informal interaction.

Additionally, organizations must prioritize psychological support and employee well-being as integral components of hybrid work management. The study indicates that work stress in hybrid settings often arises from blurred boundaries and digital overload. Human resource departments should therefore implement wellness programs that focus on mental health awareness, stress management training, and flexible scheduling that encourages rest and recovery. Providing access to counseling services, mindfulness sessions, and peer-support groups can also help employees manage emotional strain more effectively (Agarwal et al., 2020). Furthermore, promoting a culture of openness around mental health can reduce stigma and encourage employees to seek help when needed.

Finally, HR strategies should emphasize engagement and inclusion tailored to hybrid workers. Engagement initiatives such as recognition systems, opportunities for professional development, and participatory decision-making can strengthen employees' emotional connection to the organization. HR departments can also leverage analytics to track engagement and stress indicators, using this data to adjust hybrid work policies dynamically. Leaders should model trust and empathy, reinforcing the idea that flexibility is a mutual commitment rather than a privilege. When hybrid work policies are designed with human-centric principles that align with both organizational goals and employee well-being, companies can cultivate a sustainable hybrid culture that enhances engagement while minimizing work stress.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged to provide context for the findings and guide future research. First, the study may be subject to sampling bias, as the data were collected from employees within specific industries and geographic regions. This limitation restricts the generalizability of the results to a broader workforce, as work cultures, job characteristics, and hybrid work policies can vary significantly across sectors and countries (Radonić et al., 2021). For example, employees in technology or financial industries may experience greater autonomy and digital adaptability compared to those in manufacturing or public service sectors. Similarly, cultural factors such as power distance, collectivism, and attitudes toward flexibility may influence how hybrid work affects engagement and stress. Future research should therefore include a more diverse sample encompassing various organizational types and cultural settings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of hybrid work dynamics.

Another limitation relates to the cross-sectional research design, which captures data at a single point in time and thus cannot fully establish causality between hybrid work patterns, organizational engagement, and work stress. While the statistical associations observed in this study are strong, they cannot confirm whether hybrid work flexibility directly causes changes in engagement or stress over time. Employees' experiences and attitudes toward hybrid work may evolve as they adapt to new work structures or organizational changes. To address this limitation, future studies should employ longitudinal designs that track participants over extended periods to examine how engagement and stress fluctuate in response to evolving hybrid arrangements.

In addition, the study did not account for the variability of hybrid work models across organizations. Hybrid work is not a uniform concept; some companies may implement fixed remote days, while others allow full flexibility or adopt project-based scheduling. These structural differences can significantly influence employee experiences, perceptions of fairness, and well-being (Tortia, 2008). Future research should therefore compare different hybrid models to determine which configurations most effectively balance engagement and stress. Experimental or quasi-experimental studies could also be useful in testing interventions, such as flexible hours, digital collaboration tools, or leadership training, to identify practices that enhance employee outcomes in hybrid environments.

Finally, comparative cultural and contextual analyses represent a promising direction for future research. Hybrid work practices are deeply shaped by social norms, technological readiness, and organizational hierarchies that differ across countries. Conducting comparative studies across regions such as Asia, Europe, and North America could illuminate how cultural dimensions moderate the relationship between hybrid work, engagement, and stress (Schaufeli, 2018). By integrating cross-cultural perspectives, future scholars can contribute to the development of global best practices for hybrid work implementation that respect local values while promoting employee well-being.

Comparison of the Results of the Current Study with Previous Studies

The findings of the current study align with and extend previous research on hybrid work, organizational engagement, and employee well-being. Similar to the results of Bloom et al. (2015) and Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2021), this study confirms that hybrid work flexibility positively influences employee engagement by enhancing autonomy and perceived control. Both prior studies demonstrated that employees who are allowed to work remotely part of the time tend to report higher job satisfaction and productivity. Consistent with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, the present study found that autonomy, one of the fundamental psychological needs, serves as a key driver of engagement in hybrid environments. Employees in this study who had greater flexibility over their schedules and work locations showed higher enthusiasm and commitment toward their organizations, reinforcing the motivational benefits of autonomy documented in earlier research (Setiawan et al., 2020).

However, this study also reveals potential drawbacks of hybrid work, particularly regarding work stress and psychological strain, which resonates with findings from Molino et al. (2020) and Oakman et al. (2022). These researchers observed that increased digital communication and blurred boundaries

between work and personal life can heighten stress and emotional exhaustion among hybrid and remote workers. The current study supports this perspective by showing that employees who work remotely for an excessive number of days per week are more likely to experience burnout and cognitive overload. The overlap between home and work spaces may create constant availability expectations, leading to what Derks and Bakker (2014) refer to as “telepressure” the compulsion to remain connected and responsive to work communications. This finding underscores that while hybrid work can empower employees, it can also undermine well-being if not managed with appropriate organizational support.

In contrast to studies that emphasize the risks of hybrid work, the present research provides a nuanced understanding by identifying organizational engagement as a protective factor against hybrid-related stress. This mediating effect supports the Job Demands Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which posits that engagement acts as a personal resource that buffers the impact of job demands on stress and burnout. The results are consistent with Saks (2019), who found that engaged employees tend to perceive workplace challenges more positively and exhibit higher resilience. Similarly, Bakker and Albrecht (2018) suggested that engagement not only enhances performance but also fosters emotional stability during periods of organizational change. The current study extends these conclusions to the hybrid context, showing that employees with high engagement levels maintain lower stress even under demanding hybrid conditions, such as digital overload or inconsistent communication patterns.

Moreover, the present findings contribute to the growing literature emphasizing the importance of organizational and social support in hybrid settings. This result corresponds with Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012), who highlighted that social resources such as supportive leadership and team cohesion mitigate work-related strain. In the current study, employees who reported higher levels of support from managers and colleagues experienced reduced stress and maintained higher engagement, even with flexible work arrangements (Timms et al., 2015). This reinforces Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), suggesting that when organizations invest in supportive structures and trust employees with autonomy, workers reciprocate through increased loyalty and engagement.

In summary, the current research confirms the dual nature of hybrid work observed in prior studies: it enhances engagement through autonomy and flexibility but also carries the risk of stress due to boundary blurring and digital overload. However, by identifying engagement as a key moderating factor, this study contributes a more integrative understanding of how organizations can balance the benefits and challenges of hybrid work. These findings bridge gaps in earlier literature by emphasizing that the success of hybrid models depends not only on flexibility but also on cultivating a strong sense of connection, purpose, and organizational support among employees.

Conclusion and implication

The findings of this study demonstrate that hybrid work patterns have a complex but meaningful influence on both organizational engagement and work stress. Hybrid work flexibility, when implemented effectively, enhances employee engagement by providing greater autonomy, self-regulation, and control over one’s work environment. Employees who are empowered to manage their schedules and work settings tend to exhibit stronger emotional commitment, enthusiasm, and participation in organizational activities. This confirms the theoretical propositions of the Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes autonomy as a key driver of intrinsic motivation and engagement. However, the research also reveals that hybrid work arrangements, if poorly structured or unsupported, can contribute to increased work stress through blurred boundaries, social isolation, and digital fatigue. The results thus highlight the dual-edged nature of hybrid work offering both opportunities for empowerment and risks of overload. An important contribution of this study lies in identifying organizational engagement as a buffering mechanism against the negative psychological effects of hybrid work. Employees with high engagement levels demonstrate greater resilience,

perceiving work challenges as manageable rather than overwhelming. This supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, showing that engagement acts as a personal and organizational resource that mitigates stress while maintaining performance. Furthermore, the study reinforces the Social Exchange Theory, suggesting that when organizations provide trust, flexibility, and support, employees reciprocate with loyalty and sustained commitment. The interaction between these factors indicates that engagement not only mediates but also strengthens the relationship between hybrid flexibility and employee well-being. From a practical standpoint, these findings imply that organizations must design hybrid work systems that balance flexibility, structure, and social connection. Human resource policies should establish clear guidelines regarding communication, availability, and workload expectations to prevent burnout and maintain collaboration. At the same time, organizations should promote a culture of trust and inclusivity, ensuring that remote employees receive the same opportunities for engagement and recognition as those in the office. Initiatives such as team-building sessions, virtual check-ins, and wellness programs can help maintain cohesion and psychological safety. Additionally, leadership training in empathy, digital communication, and performance management is crucial to ensure that hybrid teams function effectively and supportively. Hybrid work is not merely a logistical adjustment but a strategic transformation in how organizations manage human capital. This study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that engagement is a vital lever for sustaining employee well-being in flexible work systems. Organizations that can successfully integrate flexibility with engagement-oriented policies are more likely to achieve higher performance, lower stress, and long-term employee satisfaction. Future efforts should therefore focus on developing adaptive hybrid frameworks that not only optimize productivity but also nurture trust, autonomy, and holistic well-being within the modern workplace.

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