Productivity of Employees within a hybrid Work Ecosystem

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Keywords

Employee productivity, Work environment, Training and development, Work models, Employee motivation and Technology

Abstract

Purpose of the research: The focus of this study pays critical attention on the new norm in the work environment, investigating how the workplace has change drastically and the employee behaviour has also been influenced by this so-called change. The productivity of employees within the organisation has also taken a new turn. Therefore, investigating the influence, actions and reactions of both the employees and organisations to this change has become extremely pivotal to this study. The literature review of indicated the evolving nature of the topic due to the fact that the topic is somewhat new, adapting sunders research onion explain the methodology.

Methodology: This research is quantitative Mono-method and Primary data collection engaged the participation of a sample size of 50 respondents that will include managers and employees. From data collection to analysis, Saunders research onion is adopted to explain in detail, each layer of the onion as applicable the research topic. The research onion may not be perfect but contributes immensely in making holistic decision in research methodology design and details.

Findings: This investigation indicated that the introduction of new productivity tools in a hybrid work environment amounted to personal development, effectiveness and growth among employee and management, with work environment being reinvented, motivation, job development and technology. Also, the post-pandemic workplace is more technological and has a very wide depts of new and updated productivity tools in line, calling for more training and of employee to attain efficiency.

Implications Practical: The findings of this studies imply that the adoption of new productivity tools promotes job effectiveness of employees, promotes job retention, and build motivated and relevant workforce. Therefore, employees are able to work well under any when they are adequately equipped with the right technology.

Conclusions: The study concluded that productivity tools are essential to the productivity of employees and organisational effectiveness. However new technology requires training to enhance the fluidity of employee workflow and keeps the organisation relevant.

Introduction

This shift from traditional workplaces has been extensively studied and documented, with research conducted by Waheed and Jam in 2010, Hanaysha in 2016 and Kurter in 2020. The idea of remote work was first proposed by Jack Nilles, a former NASA engineer, in his book "The Telecommunications-Transformation Tradeoff" in 1972. Nilles suggested remote work as a solution to traffic congestion and conservation. Remote work model has become an increasingly popular form of work in recent years, and experts have defined it in various ways.

This research discusses Productivity of Employees within a hybrid Work Ecosystem and the adaptation of flexible but workable work patterns looking at technology that empowers a balance corporate responsibilities and personal commitments. Pre-pandemic, companies like GitLab Automattic, InVision, Buffer, Zapier, Toggl, Doist and Scrapinghub were either predominantly remote or fully remote (Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020). Significant aspect of daily model for operation. However, in recent time remote and hybrid have become intricately woven into the fabric of the present-day organisations, institutions and businesses, including Government establishments and agencies. The dynamics of the Productivity of Employees within a hybrid Work Ecosystem as the topic implies, thrive on

the following key elements: the workplace flexibility, leadership support, technology and work design, motivation, social capital and work-life balance. The interaction of these elements creates the environmental dynamism navigation for employee in a hybrid work setting.

The employee productivity ecosystem is extensively characterised by the incorporation of technologies built for collaboration and work process efficiency that support Hybrid work settings, emphasising team performance and collaboration within the office and virtually (Bladen, 2022). Within this ecosystem, job design and motivation playa an important role also in the in structuring of employee productivity, performance and engagement. The hybrid work environment requires management support and leadership as key element in the creation of supportive hybrid work environment that is inclusive. Having a vibrant leadership approach that is supportive with clear communication and the right resources are pivotal to the employee well-being and productivity boost (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023). In addition, Productivity of Employees within a hybrid Work Ecosystem values employee well-being as integral fibre for the sustainability of productivity and job satisfaction in the hybrid work setting, hence work-life balance.

The multifaceted nature of hybrid work ecosystem and environment must be carefully considered flexibility within the workplace, collaboration, technological infrastructure, wellbeing, leadership support, and employee motivation to ascertain increase productivity of employees within the hybrid work model (Kohll, n.d.).

Literature review

Literature review establishes the research topic through analysis. The research aim, discussion the research topic, analysis of research papers, opinion of diversity of authors, praised and adopted in relation to the topic from different perspectives (Antonio, n.d.).

lifestyle and work-related characteristics

An Austrian research team conducted an online survey to analysed how COVID-19 mitigation measures have affected Austrians' lifestyle and work-related characteristics. The survey was conducted during a three-week period from June 3 to June 23, 2020. This study included 1,010 participants who were chosen randomly from an online panel (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023).

The panel was meticulously sampled to ensure that it accurately represented the overall population of Austria in terms of age, gender, and county distribution. The purpose of the survey was to gather data on various aspects of the Austrian population and to provide insights into trends and patterns that can inform decision-making in business and academic settings. The survey results are expected to be highly valuable for researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in understanding the characteristics and preferences of the Austrian population. The participants rated any significant lifestyle and quality of life changes on a 5-point Likert scale. They perceived productivity during the COVID-19 mitigation period (March 16 to May 1, 2020) compared to before the pandemic. The scale ranged from "decreased importantly" to "increased importantly". The survey results reveal how COVID-19 measures affected Austrians' lifestyle and work. (Weitzer et al., 2021).

The Interrogate survey comprised 81 questions and lasted around 30 minutes. According to Weitzer et al. (2021), a survey was conducted to explore various topics, such as fluctuations in quality of life and productivity, factors responsible for positive and negative changes in quality of life, and the impact of working from home on changes in quality of life and perceived productivity. The survey results provide insights into the relationship between these variables. (p. 5).

The remote nature of Hybrid work setting

The pervasive adoption of digital technology, coupled with the rapid progress made in the field of information and communication technology, has significantly impacted the quality of work and personal life (McGregor and Bergmann, 2022). As a result, businesses and organisations have had to adjust their operations to remain competitive and relevant, while individuals have had to adapt to new ways of working and communicating. In light of recent changes, benefits and challenges have emerged, necessitating a continuous pursuit of innovation and adaptability to remain at the forefront of progress (Bladen, 2022). In order to stay ahead of the curve, it is imperative that we embrace a culture of agility and flexibility, one that

enables us to effectively respond to the ever-evolving landscape of the business or academic environment. With this in mind, we must remain vigilant in our commitment to excellence, constantly seeking new and innovative solutions to the challenges we face, while also recognising and capitalising on the opportunities that arise

(Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023). By putting in a deliberate effort to keep ourselves updated with the latest developments in our industry, we can guarantee that we keep on making impactful contributions to the progress of our sector (Morrison, 1994).

Additionally, we can also provide exceptional value to our customers or stakeholders. These findings have been supported by studies such as Elshaiekh et al. (2018) and Shahbaz et al. (2016), highlighting the impact of technology on various aspects of society. The emergence of Wi-Fi and internet-based tools has revolutionized the way people communicate and collaborate. These tools have enabled workers to seamlessly connect from remote locations, saving time and costs associated with in-person meetings and travel. Remote work has become more efficient and productive with the help of these tools. Recent research conducted by AlMarar et al. (2021) shows the significant impact of Wi-Fi and internet-based tools on modern workplaces. The availability of collaborative tools has revolutionised the way workers share information in real-time, regardless of their physical location (Kohll, n.d.).

A recent study underscores the advantages of these tools, which have facilitated an environment where workers can stay connected and collaborate effectively without the constraints of physical boundaries. In recent years, cloud services have gained immense popularity. This technology allows individuals to access work applications and tools from anywhere, thereby leading to the emergence of remote work, telework, and work from home (WFH) as viable alternatives to traditional workspaces (Ali et al., 2010; Monteiro, Straume & Valente, 2019).

In 2020, remote work gained even more significance The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the COVID-19 outbreak to be a global pandemic. The illness is caused by a new strain of the coronavirus. This has had a major impact on public health and the global economy. According to the latest reports, millions of people worldwide have been affected by the pandemic, which continues to present a significant challenge to medical professionals and researchers. The World Health Organisation, along with other healthcare organisations, worked tirelessly to prevent the further spread of the virus and create a successful vaccine. As a result of lockdowns and regulations across countries, organizations had to adapt their business practices, and governments implemented measures to protect public health and prevent the virus from spreading. Employees were subsequently required to work from home (Bladen, 2022).

The definitions

According to the International Labour Organisation (2016), remote working refers to a type of work where individuals carry out their duties in a location separate from the central office or production facilities. This separation from co-workers allows for the use of new technology to facilitate communication. On the other hand, Elshaiekh et al. (2018) define remote working as a flexible work plan that enables employees to perform their duties from a worksite other than the company's premises, where an employee would typically report for work. Remote work is ideal for jobs that require output-based monitoring, independent work, and minimal face-to-face contact (Weitzer, J. et al. (2021) In a global economy, the efficiency of business operations is more critical than physical location (SHRM, 2021).

According to Cambridge English, teleworking refers to a work arrangement where an employee performs their duties remotely from their home, communicating with their employer and clients through phone or email (Rañeses, et al. 2022). This setup has recently gained popularity due to its numerous benefits, such as increased productivity and reduced commuting time. A study conducted by Ghanbari and Bakhtjoo (2017) identified three critical key factors for optimizing the benefits of remote work. These factors are people, process, and infrastructure. The people involved in remote work play a critical role, including stakeholders who are directly impacted by the work. Team members are responsible for managing different work-related tasks and technology assignments. The process factor addresses various questions related to remote work, such as what work needs to be done, what is the best way to complete it, and how remote workers will be assessed (Novotny, 2004). Policies and procedures should be established to manage or control remote working processes, including time management, information management, and virtual

organizational structures. Infrastructure is also critical in facilitating remote work. This includes the technological and physical aspects, particularly communication tools such as the Internet, messaging platforms, email, and other communication channels (Walker, 2006).

The key elements of the hybrid work ecosystem Flexibility in the workplace

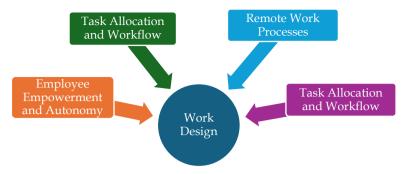
Flexibility in the workplace gives the employees the power to choose where, when, and how they work (Choudhury et al., 2024). In a hybrid work ecosystem, this flexibility allows employees to work from the office, from home, or from other remote locations (Kelly and Moen, 2007). This enables the employees to adjust work schedules to give room for personal responsibilities. With flexible work hours, employees are able to better their productivity. Working from different locations creates a balance in a hybrid work setting. According to Gajendran and Harrison (2007), workplace flexibility is extremely significant, as it enhances job satisfaction, creates a good work life balance that improves the well-being of employees. Stipulating the positive effect of flexible work pattern on the job attitudes contribute to a more robust levels of employee productivity and employee engagement (Petani and Mengis, 2023). The flip side of this is that the challenges of remote work environments post-pandemic can create professional isolation that may occur affecting job performance due to lack of effective communication-enhancing tools and face-to-face interactions mitigation (Song et al., 2022).

The role of technology in employee productivity

The contribution of technology in employee productivity plays an immense role in the enabling hybrid work ecosystem success (Jaiswal and Prabhakaran, 2023). Technology integration enabled effective communication, task execution and collaboration within a hybrid work arrangement. The digital collaboration tools such as project management software, virtual conferencing platforms, and other digital solutions enables seamless collaboration and communication for hybrid employees (Tang et al., 2024). Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, are essential for facilitating seamless communication and collaboration among remote and in-office employees. Features like screen sharing, virtual whiteboards, and breakout rooms facilitate interactive and productive meetings, bridging the physical gap between remote and in-office employees. as Asana, Trello, and Jira, plays a crucial role in organizing tasks, tracking progress, and managing workflows in the hybrid work setting. The use of technology effectively allows the employees to work efficiently in a hybrid work setting, gain access to resources needed wherever the location (Zenger and Folkman, 2022).

Work Design

Work design involves structuring job roles, tasks, and responsibilities in a way that optimizes productivity, engagement, and well-being (Yang et al., 2022). In the context of the hybrid work ecosystem, effective work design encompasses the organization and allocation of tasks, the establishment of clear workflows and processes, and the consideration of job demands and the working environment. A well-designed work structure ensures that employees can perform their roles effectively, regardless of their work location, and supports their professional development and growth. Work design involves the strategic structuring of tasks, workflows, and processes to accommodate both remote and in-office work, ensuring optimal performance and collaboration. Grant, A. M., & Ashford, S. J. (2008) explores proactive behaviours and the influence of new adaptation within the organisational, focusing on the relevance of work arrangements and integration (Edleston, 2023). This study explores proactive behaviours and their influence on newcomer adaptation within organisational contexts, showcasing the relevance of adaptive work behaviours in the context of flexible work arrangements and newcomer integration (Dufour et al., 2021).



Social Capital

The networks, relationships, and social connections within an organisation is known as social capital which contributes to the effective success and functionality of organisations (Yang et al., 2022). Steigenberger, N., Wilms, K., & Schermuly, C. C. (2021) explores the effects of video-mediated communication on team trust formation, shedding light on the role of virtual interactions in building social capital and trust within distributed teams post-pandemic. Within the hybrid work ecosystem, social capital maintains the team collaboration, cohesion and effective communication in a hybrid work model as social capital supports team-building activities that foster strong relationships among employees (Teng-Calleja et al., 2023). A good social capital creates a positive work culture, enhances collaboration, and supports employee well-being. Building a strong social connections and network within a team of employees contribute immensely to the creation of a cohesive work environment that enhances productivity within hybrid place. The role of social networks in the creation of entrepreneurial capital, shedding light on the relevance of social connections and network resources in facilitating innovative and collaborative outcomes within hybrid work settings cannot be over emphasised (Evans, 2021).

Employee Motivation

Motivation as a key driver of employee performance and engagement. Kniffin, K. M., Narayanan, J., Anseel, F., Antonakis, J., Ashford, S. P., Bakker, A. B., Bamberger, P. A., Bapuji, H., Bhave, D. P., Choi, V. K., Creary, S. J., Demerouti, E., Flynn, F. J., Gelfand, M. J., Greer, L. L., Johns, G., Kesebir, S., Klein, P. G., Lee, S. Y., Ozcelik, H., ... & Vugt, M. V. (2021) discusses the implications of COVID-19 on workplace dynamics, addressing issues related to motivation, well-being, and future research directions, providing insights relevant to post-pandemic hybrid work environments (Kniffin et al., 2021). In the hybrid work ecosystem, maintaining high levels of motivation among employees is essential for sustaining productivity. This involves understanding individual and collective motivators, providing meaningful work, setting clear goals, and offering recognition for achievements. Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017) also view motivation from the standpoint of Self-Determination Theory within work organisations, highlighting the application of the theory in understanding employee motivation, engagement, and performance, particularly within the context of remote and hybrid work environments (Deci et al., 2017). Leaders and managers play a pivotal role in cultivating motivation by creating an inclusive and supportive work environment, empowering employees, and aligning individual goals with organizational objectives. Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000) highlights the significance of intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and competence in enhancing employee engagement and well-being to increase and sustained productivity hybrid work context.

Research methodology

This research is quantitative Mono-method and Primary data collection engaged the participation of a sample size of 50 respondents that will include managers and employees. From data collection to analysis, Saunders research onion is adopted to explain in detail, each layer of the onion as applicable the research topic. The research onion may not be perfect but contributes immensely in making holistic decision in research methodology design and details. Saunders research onion is engaged in this methodology from data collection to analysis, highlighting the methodology and describes the process of the research Saunders' (2007)

Philosophical resolve is positivism, Research Strategy (Methodological Choices), survey is select and more appropriate in this study, to investigate the productivity dynamics of hybrid work ecosystem. Research Choices is quantitative with deductive Approach. **Time horizon** is cross-sectional, and **Techniques and procedures** is data collection method and analysis (with random sampling) (Jansen, 2021). By using the Research Onion model, the research is systematically aligning with philosophical principles, and the nature of data collection and analysis which helps in developing a comprehensive and coherent research design that accommodates the dynamics of the hybrid work ecosystem.

Findings

The study indicated that hybrid work settings are the future of work about 70% of the survey participants are pleasantly very satisfied. The however indicated that the employees are motivated and productive with the advent of the This investigation indicated that the introduction of new productivity tools in a hybrid work environment amounted to personal development, effectiveness and growth among employee and management, with work environment being reinvented, motivation, job development and technology. Also, the post-pandemic workplace is more technological and has a very wide depts of new and updated productivity tools in line, calling for more training and of employee to attain efficiency. The primary findings of this research and secondary sources of data explored the integrated approach. This gives a clearer view on the impact of productivity of employees within a hybrid work ecosystem with technology in the nucleus of productivity within the organisation. Ultimately, the findings show that employees are better equipped to carry our corporate duties with the introduction and provision of new productivity enhancing technology also designing training packages that ultimately enhances and implore employee productivity within an organisation.

Discussions and conclusions

The findings of this studies imply that the adoption of new productivity tools promotes job effectiveness of employees, promotes job retention, and build motivated and relevant workforce. Therefore, employees are able to work well under any when they are adequately equipped with the right technology. This investigation indicated that the introduction of new productivity tools in a hybrid work environment amounted to personal development, effectiveness and growth among employee and management, with work environment being reinvented, motivation, job development and technology. Also, the post-pandemic workplace is more technological and has a very wide depts of new and updated productivity tools in line, calling for more training and of employee to attain efficiency (Oppong Peprah, 2023).

Limitations and direction for future research

The findings of this research indicated that limitations to consider in the research on the productivity of employees within a hybrid work ecosystem and addressing these limitations through careful study design, data collection strategies, and analytical approaches can strengthen the validity and relevance of the research findings. In this research however, the primary data is framed to the sample size. The pandemic which gave rise to the rapid evolution of remote work practices and technologies may impact the relevance of findings over time and productivity vary based on the nature of work, organisational culture and individual preferences, making it challenging to draw universal conclusions. Recognising these limitations is essential for designing robust research methodologies and interpreting the results effectively. Data privacy and security concerns are sensitive to productivity when working remotely, impacting data collection and analysis indicating the productivity of employees within a hybrid work ecosystem has improved creativity, technological Knowledge and team innovation by more than 60%, over 75% indicated employee productivity increase.

The secondary data is limited due to the newness of the topic and for the future researchers, the investigation will be more robust as the topic grows by the year and the conducting the research with a larger number of employees will create a more comprehensive coverage (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023). The disparities in access to reliable technology and internet connectivity among employees may affect the consistency of remote work experiences and productivity levels. Managerial styles and support for remote work arrangements may introduce confounding factors that influence productivity outcomes. Productivity

measurement within a hybrid work ecosystem may pose measurement challenges and complicate comparisons in diverse roles and industries. Poor employee well-being may cause a draw back for employee productivity since isolation can degenerate to mental breakdown

(Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023). Organisational Policies and Practices is the support structure that upholds remote or hybrid work and may also bring about inconsistencies in employee productivity measures and experience. Distractions forma a major obstacle in a remote work environment and can also affect hybrid work arrangement since they both have similar pros and cons. This may affect productivity immensely, although differing from one individual to another thereby influencing outcome of the study. Considering these potential limitations can guide researchers in designing comprehensive methodologies and interpreting the results within the appropriate context.

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