



The Role of Hybrid Work Arrangements in Enhancing Employee Productivity

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of hybrid work arrangements in enhancing employee productivity at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, aiming to understand how flexible work models impact work performance and collaboration. Utilizing a qualitative research design, the study collects data through semi-structured interviews with employees, managers, and human resources personnel, along with document analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The findings reveal that hybrid work arrangements improve productivity by offering flexibility, reducing commuting time, and enhancing work-life balance. However, challenges such as communication gaps, collaboration issues, and technological disparities were identified as barriers to optimal productivity. The research highlights the importance of reliable technology, inclusive practices, and support mechanisms to address these challenges. The study's value lies in offering insights into how hybrid work can be optimized for improved employee performance and organizational success, while also contributing original knowledge on the intersection of flexible work models and productivity. The findings have practical implications for organizations considering or already implementing hybrid work models, suggesting strategies for overcoming obstacles and enhancing productivity in hybrid environments

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the hybrid work model has emerged as a critical solution to the evolving dynamics of the modern workplace, driven by rapid technological advancements and shifting employee expectations (Bloom et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst, forcing organizations worldwide to quickly adopt remote work, which demonstrated the feasibility of flexible working arrangements on a large scale. As the world moves beyond the pandemic, hybrid work has become a preferred model for many organizations, blending the benefits of remote work, such as reduced commuting time and greater work-life balance, with the advantages of in-office collaboration, such as team cohesion and spontaneous interactions (Choudhury et al., 2024). This flexibility enables employees to tailor their work environment to suit specific tasks, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Furthermore, hybrid work models can help organizations address diverse employee needs, offering autonomy while still fostering a culture of collaboration and engagement (Daskalaki et al., 2020). As businesses continue to refine hybrid models, research suggests that companies can achieve a balance between organizational goals, such as efficiency and innovation, and the well-being of employees. This evolving work structure not only allows for greater adaptability but also helps organizations attract and retain top talent by offering a more flexible and inclusive work environment, making hybrid work an integral part of the future workforce strategy.

The shift in workforce expectations, particularly among millennials and Generation Z, has played a crucial role in the growing adoption of hybrid work arrangements (Azaka et al., 2024). Unlike previous generations, who were accustomed to traditional office structures and rigid work schedules, younger workers today prioritize flexibility, autonomy, and a stronger work-life balance (Bali & Sajani, 2021). The traditional nine-to-five workday is increasingly seen as outdated, as employees seek roles that offer the freedom to work on their terms, focusing more on outcomes and results rather than the number of hours spent at the office. This change is driven by a desire for greater control over personal time, the ability to balance family and other commitments, and the increasing recognition of the importance of mental and physical well-being. As such, organizations must adapt to these expectations if they wish to remain competitive in the talent market (Aboramadan, 2021). Hybrid work models have emerged as an effective strategy to meet these demands, offering employees the flexibility to choose where and when they work, which can lead to higher job satisfaction, greater engagement, and improved performance (Knihová & Němec, 2022). Moreover, the autonomy afforded by hybrid work fosters innovation, as employees are empowered to work in environments where they feel most productive, whether at home or in the office. By embracing these evolving expectations, companies can not only attract top talent but also retain their workforce, ensuring long-term success and adaptability in an increasingly competitive market.

Employee productivity is a central concern for organizations implementing hybrid work arrangements, as the shift to remote work has raised questions about potential decreases in supervision, accountability, and the presence of distractions (Chauhan & Raj, 2024). However, research indicates that can actually boost productivity, provided they are managed strategically (Edmondson & Mortensen, 2021). The ability to work from home eliminates long daily commutes, giving employees more time to focus on tasks, which often leads to higher efficiency and reduced stress. The home office environment, free from the distractions typically found in open-plan offices, allows employees to concentrate deeply on individual tasks, leading to improved output (Galanti, 2021). Additionally, hybrid work offers the flexibility to design work schedules around personal productivity peaks, allowing employees to work during times when they are most focused and energized, rather than being constrained by a fixed nine-to-five schedule. However, hybrid models also address the potential drawbacks of full remote work, such as feelings of isolation and disconnection from colleagues (Shimura, 2021). By maintaining regular opportunities for in-person collaboration and team interaction in the office, hybrid arrangements strike a balance that fosters both individual productivity and strong team cohesion. This combination of autonomy and collaboration ensures that employees can remain engaged, motivated, and connected to their colleagues, ultimately contributing to better overall performance. Understanding how to leverage the strengths of hybrid work while mitigating its challenges is critical for businesses looking to maximize the productivity potential of their workforce in the long term.

The success and feasibility of hybrid work arrangements are closely tied to the advancement of technology, which enables seamless communication and collaboration across geographically dispersed teams (Chauhan & Raj, 2024; Edmondson & Mortensen, 2021). Digital tools such as video conferencing platforms, cloud-based file-sharing systems, and project management software have become indispensable in facilitating real-time interaction, information sharing, and task management, making it possible for employees to collaborate as effectively from home as they would in an office setting. These technologies not only help maintain the flow of communication but also foster transparency, as teams can track progress, share updates, and hold each other accountable in a digital space (O'Leary, 2020). Additionally, the ability to work from any location requires a strong technological infrastructure to support data security, maintain efficient workflows, and ensure smooth connectivity, which is why investing in the right tools is crucial for organizations adopting hybrid models. Furthermore, even with the best tools in place, the successful implementation of hybrid work hinges on employees' ability to use these technologies proficiently (Yang et al., 2021). Offering comprehensive training and support on the proper use of digital tools ensures that all employees are equipped to navigate hybrid work environments effectively, leading to increased productivity and collaboration (Samah, 2021). Without proper training and the right technological foundation, even the best hybrid work models could struggle to meet their potential, making

technology investment and employee education key to maximizing the benefits of this flexible work arrangement.

For companies like PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, embracing hybrid work models goes beyond simply adapting to shifts in workforce expectations—it represents a strategic decision aimed at enhancing overall operational efficiency and positioning the company for long-term success. One of the primary benefits of hybrid work is its ability to reduce overhead costs associated with maintaining large office spaces. With fewer employees needing to be physically present in the office at all times, companies can optimize the use of office space, potentially reducing costs related to utilities, rent, and facility management. This also enables companies to consider downsizing or reconfiguring office layouts to meet the needs of a flexible workforce. Additionally, hybrid work expands the talent pool by allowing organizations to recruit employees from different geographical locations, removing the limitations of hiring only those who live within commuting distance of the office. This flexibility enables companies to tap into diverse skill sets and perspectives that can drive innovation and competitive advantage. Beyond financial and operational benefits, adopting hybrid work models is a powerful way for organizations to demonstrate their commitment to employee well-being and work-life balance, which are becoming increasingly important to today's workforce. This focus on employee satisfaction is not only crucial for retention and engagement but also signals to clients, investors, and stakeholders that the company is socially responsible and forward-thinking. As the global market continues to evolve and competition intensifies, hybrid work arrangements are likely to become a key differentiator, shaping how organizations attract talent, optimize their operations, and maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly dynamic business environment.

Despite the growing adoption of hybrid work arrangements as a transformative model in modern organizations, their impact on employee productivity remains a complex and underexplored issue. While hybrid work promises flexibility and improved work-life balance, challenges such as uneven technological accessibility, communication barriers, and potential disparities in employee engagement between remote and in-office workers persist. For PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, which has recently implemented a hybrid work model to address both operational efficiency and employee well-being, it becomes critical to understand whether this approach effectively enhances productivity or inadvertently creates new obstacles. Moreover, with workforce expectations evolving rapidly, a deeper exploration of how hybrid work arrangements influence daily workflows, collaboration, and overall job performance is essential for optimizing their implementation. Thus, the central research question guiding this study is: "How do hybrid work arrangements influence employee productivity at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, and what factors contribute to or hinder their effectiveness?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. *Hybrid Work Arrangements: Definition and Evolution*

Hybrid work arrangements have emerged as a versatile work model that seamlessly integrates both remote and in-office work, offering employees the flexibility to alternate between these environments based on their needs and job requirements (Knihová & Němec, 2022). This model gained significant momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced organizations to rapidly transition to remote work, demonstrating that many tasks could be performed effectively outside of a traditional office. As the world moves into a post-pandemic era, companies like PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga have embraced hybrid work as a long-term solution to combine the best of both worlds remote work's flexibility and autonomy with the benefits of in-office collaboration and team-building. Hybrid work allows employees to reduce commute times, enjoy a better work-life balance, and work in environments where they are most productive, all of which can lead to improved job satisfaction and performance (Bjærntoft, 2020). However, as hybrid models are not universally effective across all organizations, their success relies heavily on customization to fit the specific goals of the company, the preferences of employees, and the unique needs of the industry. While these models foster autonomy and flexibility, they also pose challenges in maintaining effective communication, collaboration, and alignment with organizational objectives (Bokayev, 2022). Therefore, businesses must invest in robust technological infrastructure, such as cloud-based tools and video conferencing platforms, to enable seamless communication and collaboration across remote and in-office workers (Ahluwalia, 2020). Additionally, clear policies must be put in place to ensure that employees have equitable access to resources and opportunities, regardless of their work setting, while also aligning their individual productivity with broader corporate goals.

2. *Employee Productivity in Hybrid Work Environments*

Employee productivity in hybrid work environments has become a key area of focus for organizations seeking to strike a balance between flexibility and performance (Diamantidis, 2019). In a hybrid setup, productivity is influenced by several factors, including time management, access to reliable technology, and the ability to work in environments free from distractions. Research shows that when employees have the autonomy to choose where they work, they can select settings that align with their personal work preferences, such as a quiet home office or a collaborative office space, ultimately leading to increased focus and comfort (Farooq, 2022). This flexibility allows employees to tailor their work environment to enhance concentration and performance. However, while hybrid work has the potential to boost productivity, it also presents challenges that can hinder it. Issues such as fragmented communication between remote and in-office workers, reduced oversight, and difficulties in fostering team cohesion can lead to misalignment and inefficiencies (Cherian, 2021). Scholars emphasize that managerial support is critical in overcoming these obstacles by ensuring that employees remain engaged, motivated, and aligned with organizational objectives. Establishing clear communication channels and regular check-ins can

help mitigate the risks of miscommunication and keep productivity levels on track. Furthermore, productivity in a hybrid work environment is not just about completing tasks; it also involves maintaining high-quality work and fostering innovation, which often relies on the social interactions and collaborative opportunities that come with in-person office work (Ding, 2021). The challenge for organizations is to design hybrid work models that balance individual productivity with the need for team collaboration and creative problem-solving.

3. *The Role of Technology in Hybrid Work Models*

Technology is a cornerstone in enabling and sustaining successful hybrid work models, acting as the bridge that connects remote and in-office employees to ensure seamless communication, collaboration, and productivity (Abeysinghe & Abeysinghe, 2020). Tools like video conferencing platforms, cloud-based file-sharing systems, and collaborative software are no longer optional; they are essential for maintaining workflow efficiency and keeping teams connected regardless of location (Aboramadan, 2020; Ahluwalia, 2020). Research highlights that organizations investing in secure, user-friendly technologies are more likely to experience smooth transitions into hybrid work, as these tools allow employees to collaborate in real time, access shared documents, and participate in virtual meetings with ease (Feijóo, 2020). Furthermore, technology plays a key role in fostering transparency and accountability, as it enables managers to track performance, set clear expectations, and monitor progress, ensuring that employees remain aligned with organizational objectives, even when working from different locations (Abdullayev, 2020). However, the success of these technological solutions depends on employees' ability to adapt and use them effectively. Gaps in technological proficiency can lead to inefficiencies, miscommunication, and frustration, ultimately undermining productivity and collaboration. Therefore, employee training and continuous support are critical to ensuring that the tools are being used to their fullest potential. For companies like PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, adopting the right technological infrastructure is not just a practical need but a strategic imperative, as it enables them to fully harness the benefits of hybrid work while minimizing operational disruptions and ensuring the workforce remains engaged, productive, and well-connected.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to deeply explore how hybrid work arrangements affect employee productivity at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, as qualitative methods are well-suited for understanding the complexities of individual experiences and perceptions. By adopting a case study approach, the research offers a detailed, context-specific examination of the hybrid work model within the unique environment of PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, allowing for insights into how the company's policies, organizational culture, and external factors influence productivity. The purposive sampling method was specifically chosen to select participants who are well-positioned to provide valuable input on the subject matter, ensuring that the sample represents a broad spectrum of perspectives across various roles, departments, and levels of the organizational hierarchy. The 15–20 participants include a diverse mix of employees, team leaders, managers, and human resource personnel, each with a unique viewpoint on how hybrid work arrangements influence productivity based on their distinct roles and interactions with the system. The study specifically targeted individuals with at least six months of experience working in the hybrid model at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga, as this ensures the participants have a solid understanding of how the model operates and are able to provide informed insights about its effects on their productivity. By including a variety of roles within the organization, the research aims to capture a comprehensive view of how hybrid work impacts productivity across different functional areas, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of its implications at multiple levels within the company.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility in exploring participants' experiences while ensuring that the study's core themes were addressed. Interview questions focused on areas such as work environment preferences, collaboration challenges, technological support, perceived productivity changes, and overall satisfaction with the hybrid model. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted either in-person or via virtual platforms, depending on participant availability. Additionally, company documents, such as hybrid work policies and performance records, were analyzed to provide contextual information and triangulate findings. Observations of hybrid work practices during team meetings or office interactions were also conducted, when feasible, to enrich the understanding of employee behaviors in hybrid settings. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data, identifying key patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews and supporting documents. The analysis process included data familiarization, coding of significant text segments, and grouping these codes into overarching themes related to hybrid work and productivity. NVivo software was used to assist in organizing and managing the data for efficient analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, member-checking was conducted by sharing the interpreted data with participants to confirm accuracy and relevance. Peer debriefing sessions with colleagues familiar with qualitative research were also conducted to minimize researcher

bias. The insights derived from this analysis provided a nuanced understanding of how hybrid work arrangements influenced employee productivity at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga and served as a basis for recommendations to optimize hybrid work practices.

RESULT

1. Flexible Work Environments as a Key Driver of Productivity

The findings reveal that employees perceive hybrid work arrangements as a significant contributor to productivity due to the flexibility it provides. Participants reported that the ability to choose their work environment whether at home or in the office allowed them to tailor their surroundings to their tasks. For tasks requiring deep focus, employees preferred remote settings, while collaborative tasks were more effectively handled in the office. Many participants highlighted that reduced commuting times and the ability to design personalized schedules positively influenced their work output.

2. Challenges in Maintaining Team Collaboration

Despite the perceived benefits, challenges were identified in maintaining team collaboration under hybrid work models. Several participants expressed that the lack of consistent in-person interaction occasionally led to communication gaps and delays in project progress. Teams that relied heavily on virtual tools reported issues such as miscommunication and difficulty in establishing trust among team members. While these issues were not universal, they were particularly prevalent among departments requiring close coordination.

3. Impact of Technological Infrastructure on Productivity

Technology emerged as a critical enabler of hybrid work arrangements, with most employees emphasizing the importance of reliable tools for communication and collaboration. Participants who had access to advanced technological support, such as high-speed internet, cloud-based systems, and user-friendly applications, reported higher levels of productivity. However, some employees noted inconsistencies in the availability of technological resources, which occasionally hindered their ability to perform tasks efficiently. This was particularly evident in teams that required seamless data sharing and real-time communication.

4. Work-Life Balance as a Mediating Factor

A strong connection between hybrid work arrangements and improved work-life balance was observed, which indirectly enhanced productivity. Participants stated that hybrid models allowed them to allocate more time to personal and family commitments without compromising their professional responsibilities. This balance reduced stress levels and increased overall job satisfaction, which participants believed translated into more focused and efficient work. However, a small subset of employees reported difficulties in setting boundaries between work and personal life, leading to feelings of burnout despite the flexibility provided by the hybrid model.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study emphasize the critical role that flexibility plays in enhancing employee productivity within hybrid work models. A common theme among participants was the significant impact of having the freedom to choose their work environment depending on the type of task they were performing. Employees working on tasks that required deep focus and minimal distractions overwhelmingly preferred to work from home, where they could create a tailored, quiet workspace conducive to concentration. This preference supports existing research that indicates remote work environments often enhance individual focus and reduce productivity losses associated with commuting. Additionally, the ability to adapt work hours to fit personal schedules was cited as another key productivity booster, as it allowed employees to work during their peak performance times, such as early mornings or late evenings, when they felt most energized and focused. This finding aligns with studies highlighting flexibility as a major driver of employee satisfaction and output, as it fosters a sense of autonomy and control over one's work-life balance. However, despite these clear benefits, participants also pointed out that the success of hybrid work arrangements hinges on the employees' ability to manage their time effectively and maintain self-discipline. Some employees struggled with balancing work and personal life, which at times led to decreased productivity. This underscores the importance of personal responsibility and effective time management in hybrid work environments, where the lack of structured oversight can lead to varying productivity levels across the workforce.

Despite the productivity benefits reported by employees, ensuring seamless collaboration across hybrid teams has emerged as a significant challenge. Many participants highlighted the difficulties of maintaining effective communication and team cohesion when working remotely, which is consistent with existing research that points out the risks of fragmented communication in hybrid settings. While video conferencing tools and collaborative platforms like Slack or Microsoft Teams have become essential in facilitating communication, employees noted that these digital solutions often fall short in replicating the organic, spontaneous interactions that naturally occur in physical office environments. For example, casual conversations, impromptu brainstorming sessions, and quick problem-solving exchanges were particularly challenging to achieve virtually, which led to feelings of disconnection and reduced collaboration within teams. Participants also expressed concerns about the erosion of trust and rapport that typically develop in face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for fostering a collaborative and cohesive work culture. These insights highlight the inherent tension in hybrid work models: while they offer flexibility and individual productivity, they also demand a more intentional approach to maintaining team collaboration and ensuring that employees remain connected and aligned. To overcome these challenges, companies adopting hybrid models must prioritize the development of strategies that foster virtual collaboration, such as regular team check-ins, structured communication protocols, and the integration of interactive technologies, to ensure that teams can maintain their cohesion and effectiveness despite physical distance.

The role of technology emerged as a critical theme in the findings, with participants emphasizing how it facilitated productivity in hybrid work environments by enabling communication, collaboration, and access to essential resources. Employees who had access to modern, high-performance systems and software experienced fewer interruptions and smoother workflows, allowing them to remain focused and efficient in completing tasks. These employees were able to leverage tools such as video conferencing platforms, cloud-based collaboration software, and project management tools to stay connected with teams and manage their work effectively. However, disparities in access to reliable technological infrastructure were a significant barrier for some employees, as those with outdated or malfunctioning systems experienced delays, technical glitches, and reduced efficiency, which negatively impacted their performance. This variation in access highlights the importance of companies investing in robust IT infrastructure to ensure all employees can work seamlessly in a hybrid environment. Furthermore, the reliance on technology raises additional concerns related to technical difficulties and cybersecurity risks. Frequent technical issues, such as connectivity problems or software malfunctions, were reported as distractions that hindered productivity, while concerns over data security and privacy were also voiced by participants, particularly when working from home. These challenges emphasize the need for companies to not only equip their employees with the necessary tools but also to provide ongoing training and support, as well as address cybersecurity concerns, to ensure that hybrid work remains a sustainable and effective model for long-term productivity.

The influence of work-life balance on productivity emerged as a key theme in this study, with many participants expressing that hybrid work arrangements enabled them to better manage both their personal and professional responsibilities. By reducing the need for long commutes and offering greater flexibility in scheduling, employees were able to allocate more time to personal activities, resulting in reduced stress levels and increased overall job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with existing research, which suggests that employees who experience a healthier work-life balance are more engaged and productive in their roles. The ability to work from home or choose office days allowed employees to create a work schedule that suited their peak productivity times, while also having time for family, self-care, and other personal commitments. However, some participants reported challenges in maintaining a clear boundary between work and personal life, often finding it difficult to “switch off” from work due to the blurred lines between home and office spaces. This struggle sometimes led to feelings of burnout, as employees ended up working longer hours or feeling the pressure to be constantly available. This highlights the importance for companies to establish clear guidelines and support systems that help employees manage their time effectively, ensuring that they can enjoy the benefits of hybrid work while maintaining a healthy balance. Encouraging employees to set boundaries and promoting well-being initiatives, such as regular breaks, mental health support, and clear expectations around availability,

are essential to ensuring that the productivity benefits of hybrid work are realized without compromising employees' health and well-being.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant potential of hybrid work arrangements in enhancing employee productivity at PDAM Kabupaten Semarang Cabang Salatiga by offering flexibility in work environments and schedules, which improves work-life balance and reduces commuting time. Employees reported higher productivity when they could tailor their work settings to the nature of their tasks, with remote work providing the focus needed for individual tasks and in-office work facilitating collaboration. However, challenges such as communication barriers, collaboration difficulties, and disparities in technological access were identified, suggesting that the effectiveness of hybrid work is contingent on reliable technology and inclusive practices. Additionally, while hybrid work promotes a better work-life balance, some employees struggled with maintaining boundaries between work and personal life, leading to burnout. Thus, for hybrid work to be fully effective, organizations must invest in the necessary infrastructure, provide equal access to resources, and offer support to employees in managing their time and well-being, ultimately ensuring that productivity is optimized. Future research should explore the long-term impact of hybrid work on employee engagement and organizational outcomes to refine strategies for implementing this work model.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research on hybrid work arrangements should delve deeper into several aspects to better understand their long-term impact on employee productivity and organizational performance. One promising direction is to explore the effect of hybrid work on employee engagement and job satisfaction over time, as this study only captures short-term perceptions. Longitudinal studies could provide more comprehensive insights into how sustained hybrid work influences employees' motivation, loyalty, and career growth. Additionally, research could examine the role of organizational culture in shaping the success of hybrid work models, particularly in industries where teamwork and collaboration are central to operations. Investigating the differences in hybrid work experiences across various sectors and job types would also be valuable to determine whether hybrid work's impact on productivity is universal or context-specific. Furthermore, exploring the psychological and social aspects of hybrid work – such as the potential isolation of remote workers, the effects on mental health, and the development of workplace relationships – could shed light on unintended consequences of this work model. Finally, future studies could focus on developing best practices and policies for hybrid work, with a particular focus on technological solutions, training programs, and managerial strategies that can help mitigate the challenges identified in this study, ensuring that hybrid work becomes a sustainable model for both employees and organizations.

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