

Work-From-Home and Hybrid Work Arrangements: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study of Productivity, Communication, Well-Being, Culture, and Career Development Outcomes

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Abstract

The context: The pandemic has driven an unprecedented and swift transition to remote and hybrid work, changing the way organizations are operating in relation to productivity, communication, employee well-being, culture, and career development. This study explores employee perceptions of the work-from-home (WFH) and hybrid work models within five conceptual dimensions of the work environment and productivity, communication and collaboration, work-life balance and well-being, organizational culture and inclusion and career development and how these dimensions relate to overall employee satisfaction. Participants: 105 employees were identified in both hybrid and fully on-site and flexible work arrangements.

Design, Development, Results: A semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 25 five-point Likert scale questions along with a few categorical demographic questions and open-ended questions for qualitative responses was administered.

Discussion: The results suggested that employees working under hybrid or fully on-site work arrangements were more supportive of the current work arrangements than their flexible counterparts. Conclusion: The findings highlight that employees in hybrid or fully on-site work arrangements are more supportive of current work arrangements than those in flexible arrangements. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive, reliability estimation, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, independent-samples t tests, one-way ANOVA, and chi-square tests of association. Qualitative answers related to perceived benefits, barriers and recommendations were analyzed thematically through frequency-based content analysis. Findings: The respondents' mean scores were uniformly high across five constructs: productivity, communication, well-being, culture and career development, with 94.3% saying that they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with the arrangement they are in. Type of work arrangement was significantly related to satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 10.66$, $p = .031$), with hybrid workers the most satisfied with their arrangement. Prospects for career development were significantly different by frequency of working from home ($F = 2.89$, $p = .039$), with occasional WFH Employees are having comparatively low career-development scores compared to full-time at home and full-time at work participants. Flexibility, supportive teams, and the decrease in commuter time were the most common benefits, whereas isolation, technical challenges, and problems with communication were the most common challenges, and communication and better recognition programs were the most requested organizational solutions. Extending the findings of the study, the author synthesizes his findings with two complementary literatures to support the managerial implications that HR functions need to view hybrid-work design as a problem of service quality/HR a metric rather than logistical issue. It builds on previous human-capital-market studies on service recovery and quality of hire and HR metrics in the pre-pandemic environment, and recommends an agenda for future research based on gaps.

Keywords: work from home, hybrid work, employee satisfaction, organizational culture, career development, human capital management, service quality

1.Introduction

The pandemic squeezed a 10-year shift to the workplace into months, compelling workplaces in all industries to implement unprecedented work-from-home (WFH) and later hybrid workplace arrangements. As this was an emergency continuity measure, it has become a fixture for many industries and firms are now bidding not just on salary, but on the flexibility, autonomy and quality of the remote and hybrid experience they can provide. This change has transformed the employee experience into a critical part of the human capital value proposition, and HR functions will need to take direct action to create, track, and improve it—it's not just an accidental side effect of people implementing technology. The flexibility of the work arrangement also has overlapping aspects with long-standing HR issues — measuring productivity, communicating effectively, ensuring employee health and safety, building inclusion and organizational culture, and developing careers, all of which are challenging to manage remotely. Previous studies on the human capital market have found that service quality, service recovery, and HR measures are key factors in human resource retention and development (Gupta & Bakshi, 2022; Gupta, 2021). This literature was largely created before, or outside of, the general adoption of hybrid work, however, and has not been developed to consider the new, "service encounter" between the employer and employee that is mediated through remote and hybrid technology instead of co-location. The present study attempts to fill that void by studying the perception of WFH and hybrid work among 105 workers with varied demographic, tenure, and work arrangements (fully remote, hybrid, and flexible). It was a two-part instrument comprising quantitative analysis of 25 Likert-scale items, grouped into five conceptual constructs, as well as qualitative thematic analysis of the open-ended responses for perceived advantages, challenges, and recommendations.

To this end, the study attempts to

- (a) provide a descriptive picture of the state of employee experience as a result of the different types of work arrangements,
- (b) examine the statistical relationship between employee experience dimensions and overall satisfaction and the relationship between employee experience dimensions and demographic and work-arrangement variables, and
- (c) draw managerial implications from the findings, and present them in the context of the broader literature of employee experiences in the human-capital-market and service-quality fields.

The main aims of the study were to:-

To examine employee experiences of productivity, communication, work life balance, organisational culture, and career development with working from home and hybrid work models.

To investigate the statistical relationship of these perception constructs and general job satisfaction among employees.

To assess whether there were significant differences in perception scores between age, gender, tenure and work-arrangement groups.

4. To qualitatively analyse the key benefits, barriers, and employee suggested solutions around remote/hybrid working using thematic analysis.

5. To place the results in the current body of knowledge on human-capital-market and service-quality research and pinpoint research areas in need of development.

1.2 Significance of the Study For HR professionals the results provide a reference point for designing the hybrid-work policy, communication and career development interventions based on what employees consider to be most impactful. For scholars, the study brings to the human-capital-market and service-quality research stream (which has been used in recruitment, placement and service recovery scenarios; Gupta, 2018; Gupta & Bakshi, 2018, 2020) into the realm of the ongoing experience of its employees while operating flexibly. The study is comparatively under-researched in that specific literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Applying the Principles of Work within a Global Environment The remote and hybrid work model has shifted from the fringes to the mainstream of organizational model. While the early WFH research focused on remote work as a specific accommodation for a subset of the workforce (usually

in terms of autonomy and work-life balance), the post-pandemic literature views hybrid work as a workplace model that impacts the entire organization and is reshaping recruitment, onboarding, performance management, and retention. This re-framing places WFH/hybrid research at the heart of the HCM literature, as it impacts on the entire employee journey, not just one sub-function of HR.

2.2 HR Planning and Human Resource Management Strategy The human capital market approach of a stream of research looks at the service quality relationship between employers, employees and third parties that facilitate the human capital market (HR service providers such as recruiters, staffing agencies, training providers). In a recent paper, Gupta and Baksi (2022) reviewed HR metrics and quality of hire in the human capital market and concluded that having metrics that are quantitative and standardized would be critical to assessing the value of human-capital transactions (such as hiring, deploying, and developing humans) for both the firms and humans involved in these transactions. The orientation towards metrics is directly relevant to the present study approach, which measured the employees' hybrid-work experience through composite construct scores that were developed and tested for reliability (productivity, communication, well-being, culture, and career development), instead of using only one overall satisfaction item. In addition to the metrics perspective, Gupta (2021) examined service recovery strategies adopted by human-capital service providers, and found that the manner in which an organization recovers from service delivery failures (communication failures, unfulfilled expectations, or employee concerns that have not been addressed) is sometimes more significant for the relationship than the fact that they have occurred. The top three employee-recommended services to provide align with the present study's qualitative results, with the interventions most recommended (improved communication, better recognition programs) being also recovery-oriented responses to gaps (isolation, technology issues, communication breakdowns) that were also identified as the most pressing issues of remote/hybrid work. Gupta and Baksi (2020) followed this thread of thought by examining the perception of the client and the service provider of service recovery in the human-capital market, and arrived at the finding of systematic perception gaps between the two parties of the human-capital transaction. This two-way perspective approach is helpful in hybrid-work research; like the clients and the providers of the service, employees and organisations can differ in their perceptions of the quality of the service recovery, and likewise, it can be possible that they differ in their perception of whether the service delivery (technology provisioning, communication frequency, inclusion efforts etc) is sufficient for hybrid-work, a topic that the qualitative theme analysis revealed in the present study.

2.3 Work-Based Learning and Career Exploration Gupta (2018) examined how pre-hire orientation affects the quality of campus placement in the BPO/BSP industry, showing that a quality first experience of an employee correlates with retention, engagement, and service quality. While structured and well-communicated onboarding experiences are important in the pre-hire stage, the fact that the career-development perception varies significantly between the different WFH-frequency groups in this study indicates that the structure of an employee's continuing at-work experience mirrors that of the onboarding experience in how it influences perceived organizational investment. Gupta and Baksi (2018) explored the effect of technology on the recruitment process and its associated effect on service quality perception of HR service providers, which found that technology adoption alters, but not necessarily improves, the perceived service quality, depending on how well technology is integrated with the human part of the process. The qualitative data of this study results directly mirror in the literature that technology issues was reported by 28 out of 105 respondents (26.7%) as a major problem with remote/hybrid work, with most mean scores ($M = 4.25$) on the "Tools" item being generally high, meaning that technology provisioning is only part of the equation for a frictionless remote/hybrid work experience.

2.4 Productivity effects of remote and hybrid work A large stream of quantitative economic and management literature has directly addressed the link between remote and hybrid and productivity. In one of the initial randomized field experiments, Bloom et al. (2015) discovered that call center agents at a Chinese travel agency who teleworked for nine months had a 13% boost in performance, including more worked minutes per shift, fewer breaks and sick days taken, and increased self-reported job satisfaction. However, under the strictures of WFH that were forced during the pandemic,

Gibbs, Mengel, and Siemroth (2023) found the opposite trend, noting that the output dropped and that productivity suffered by 8–19%, driven mainly by increased coordination costs (more time in meetings, fewer uninterrupted working hours, and a reduced internal professional network within the firm). The reconciliation of these conflicting results led to the conclusion of Anakpo, Nqwayibana and Mishi (2023) in their systematic review of 26 peer-reviewed studies that the productivity impact of WFH depends on task types, employer and industry characteristics, and home-working context, with the majority of the studies reporting positive impacts, and a substantial minority reporting no difference or negative impacts. This is similar to the findings of the current study, which showed the aggregate Work Environment & Productivity construct to have a positive score ($M = 4.28$) with no significant association with the type of work arrangement. This work builds on these firm-level studies, using call-center data from a US retailer that shifted from a mixed to a fully remote model during the pandemic, Emanuel and Harrington (2024) found that workers who chose to work remotely prior to the pandemic were already more productive, which helped explain why previous literature comparing remote productivity to in-person productivity was confounded. The finding from this study that hybrid workers' satisfaction ratings were lowest and neutral, and the highest number of workers were satisfied with both, is consistent with the results from Choudhury et al. (2024), which was a field experiment conducted with a large non-governmental organization (NGO); their participants' profile also showed a pattern closest to the "best of both worlds," with the lowest and highest numbers of hybrid workers reporting neutral satisfaction ratings, and the highest reporting satisfaction with both, as did the participants in this study. The ability to use communication and collaboration tools and strategies to work effectively both independently and with others in distributed work environments. To investigate how firm-wide remote work impacts employees' collaborative networks, Yang et al. (2022) used communication-metadata collected prior to and following a remote-work mandate for more than 61,000 Microsoft staff across the entire firm and found that employees' collaboration networks became more "static and siloed" as a result of the mandate, and the volume of synchronous communication shifted to asynchronous communication. This large-scale causal evidence directly supports the qualitative finding of the present study as well as the quantitative finding that isolation and communication gaps were one of the most common challenges reported and that Team Comm was the lowest scoring individual Likert item. This finding emerged further when Emanuel, Harrington and Pallais (2026) extended this argument into the broader concept of well-being by analyzing nationally representative data on U.S. survey responses from over half a million people to find that the continued use of remote work after the pandemic negatively impacted several metrics of mental health, especially among employees who lived alone, a population-level corroboration of the isolation theme found in the present sample from a single organization.

2.5 Career Progression and Managerial Bias During Remote and Hybrid Work" was the subject of the second workshop. The second workshop focused on "Career Progression and Managerial Bias Under Remote and Hybrid Work". A separate line of research looks at the effect of remote and hybrid work on employees' careers, rather than on their performance. When identifying managers' preferences for promotion, salary increases or training allocation using a discrete-choice experiment with 937 managers from the UK, Kasperska, Matysiak, and Cukrowska-Torzewska (2024) found that the managers' preferences were consistently lower with respect to the remote-working employees, and that this result was not driven by information regarding their poor performance — it was a bias against the remote work, not a rational response to the observed underperformance. This literature suggests that the mechanism in the present study by which these scores were significantly lower among occasional (as opposed to frequent or never) remote workers could be that individuals who work from home intermittently may be the least visible to managers who make presence-weighted judgements, which is where this judgment is used.

2.6 Synthesis Together, these works set out five propositions that are the drivers for the design of the current study. First, as stated by Gupta & Bakshi (2022), the outcomes of human-capital should be measured by standardized multi-dimensional measures instead of single global measures. Secondly, service recovery, if gaps are identified, is a critical driver of the employee/client relationship, and it is not often measured (Gupta, 2021; Gupta & Bakshi, 2020). Third, investments in the employee experience must have an equivalent human investment into the system to manifest into the service

quality perceived by the customer (Gupta, 2018; Gupta & Baksi, 2018). Fourth, the productivity effects of remote and hybrid work depend crucially on the context, and often effects of coordination costs and network effects are a more important cause of the effects of work location on productivity (Bloom et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2023; Anakpo et al., 2023; Emanuel & Harrington, 2024; Yang et al., 2022). The fifth is that while employees' objective performance influences the nature of their career and communication outcomes, managerial visibility bias and the fragmentation of the work network also play a role (Kasperska et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2022; Emanuel et al., 2026). The present study tests these propositions simultaneously, in the specific context of WFH and hybrid work setups, an integration, to the authors' best knowledge, which has not been explicitly tested within the human-capital-market literature stream that the metrics and service quality framework used in this study stems from.-capital-market literature stream from which its core metrics-and-service-quality framework is drawn.

3. Research Gap Analysis

Based on the above literature review, four gaps are identified that justify the present study.

Gap 1: Extension of human-capital-market measures beyond the hybrid system. The HR-metrics framework by Gupta and Baksi (2022) focused on the outcomes of hiring and the quality of hire. No research in this area has used a similar multi-dimensional, reliability-tested metrics approach to the daily life of hybrid and remote workers. This study fills that void by creating and testing five composite constructs (productivity, communication, well-being, culture, and career development) based on Likert-item information.

Gap 2: Service recovery in relation to remote/hybrid friction points. The work by Gupta (2021) and Gupta and Baksi (2020) investigates the relationship between human-capital customers and human-capital service providers, but have yet to apply the framework to the internal employer-employee relationship, once the employee has entered the organization and is working remotely. This study fills this gap by providing the direct mapping of employee-identified problems (isolation, technology problems, communication problems) to employee-identified recovery actions (improved communication, recognition programs, training and development).

Gap 3: A linkage between technology and service quality in the context of sustained remote work. Gupta and Baksi (2018) examined technology's influence on service quality at the point of recruitment and tested for a similar technology-service-quality tension after the employees are on board and working remotely on a sustained basis, which they found exists (technology issues remain one of the top three challenges despite high scores on tool-provisioning).

Gap 4: Career development with different frequencies of WFH. Previous research on career outcomes of WFH (e.g., Kasperska et al., 2024) typically considers WFH as a binary or frequency-graded exposure, and does not examine potential non-monotonicity between WFH frequency and career outcomes. The finding of a significant effect of WFH-frequency on career-development scores in this study ($F = 2.89$, $p = .039$; with occasional, not frequent or never, remote workers being rated the lowest) is novel since existing frameworks have not anticipated such an effect, and future human-capital-market and managerial-bias research should consider it.

Gap 5: Putting productivity, communication network and service quality theories together in one instrument. The productivity literature (Bloom et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2023; Anakpo et al., 2023), the communication-network literature (Yang et al., 2022), the well-being literature (Emanuel et al., 2026) and the human-capital-market service-quality literature (Gupta, 2018, 2021; Gupta & Baksi, 2018, 2020, 2022) have largely developed in parallel, with different methods (natural/field experiments, large-scale communication metadata, nationally representative surveys, and service-quality case studies, respectively), and seldom used together across a single study. In this study, this gap is filled through assessing all four dimensions in the same integrated, reliable and valid instrument across one sample of respondents, allowing for direct comparison of the relative impacts of those four dimensions and their joint (or independent) relationship to overall satisfaction.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design This study uses a descriptive, cross-sectional, mixed methods approach, where quantitative survey responses are followed by qualitative open-ended responses in the same survey, providing a statistical association test that can be triangulated with the reasoning of the survey

respondents. In the next step students will learn to sample and collect data. The sample includes 105 employees who reported having one or more of three types of work arrangement: Hybrid (Office and Remote) (n = 57, 54.3%), Flexible Work Arrangement (n = 27, 25.7%), and Fully On-site (n = 21, 20.0%). Demographic composition is summarised in Table 1.

4.2 Instrument The questionnaire included 25 items using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/very poor to 5 = strongly agree/excellent) organized a priori into five concepts (Work Environment & Productivity (4 items), Communication & Collaboration (6 items), Work-Life Balance & Well-Being (5 items), Organizational Culture & Inclusion (5 items), Career Development (5 items)); a single item categorical measure of overall satisfaction (Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral); five open-ended qualitative items: Most valued form of flexibility, Biggest perceived advantage, Biggest challenge, Recommendations for the organization, and General comments.

4.3 Analytical Approach Four stages of quantitative analysis were followed. First, the scores for each of the five constructs were aggregated and Cronbach's alpha values were used to measure the internal consistency of each construct's items. Second, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations) were calculated for each construct as well as for the full satisfaction distribution. The third step of the analysis was inferential tests: Pearson correlations and the multiple linear regression were used to test the relationship between satisfaction scores and construct scores, independent-samples t-tests were used to test for differences in construct scores across the work-arrangement categories, and multiple one-way ANOVA were used to test construct scores across gender and age group categories; and chi-square tests of association between categorical variables (satisfaction and work arrangement) were used. All tests were performed at the conventional level of $\alpha = .05$. Qualitative responses were analysed by frequency based thematic content analysis: for each open-ended question, the types of responses were tabulated and ranked by frequency and then interpreted in terms of the quantitative construct scores.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

5.1.1 Demographic Profile

Demographic and work-arrangement profile of the 105 respondents is summarized in Table 1. The sample is dominated by young to middle managers (65.7% between 25 and 44 years old), has a fairly even gender distribution, and is weighted towards individuals with at least a Bachelor's Degree (52.6%).

Variable	Category	n	%
Age group	25–34	41	39.0
	35–44	28	26.7
	45–54	23	21.9
	55 and above	13	12.4
Gender	Male	56	53.3
	Female	49	46.7
Education	Bachelor's Degree	57	54.3
	Master's Degree	48	45.7
Tenure	0–3 years	29	27.6
	4–6 years	30	28.6
	7–10 years	27	25.7
	More than 10 years	19	18.1
Work arrangement	Hybrid (Office and Remote)	57	54.3
	FlexibleWork Arrangement	27	25.7
	Fully On-site	21	20.0

Table 1. Demographic and Work-Arrangement Profile of Respondents (N = 105)

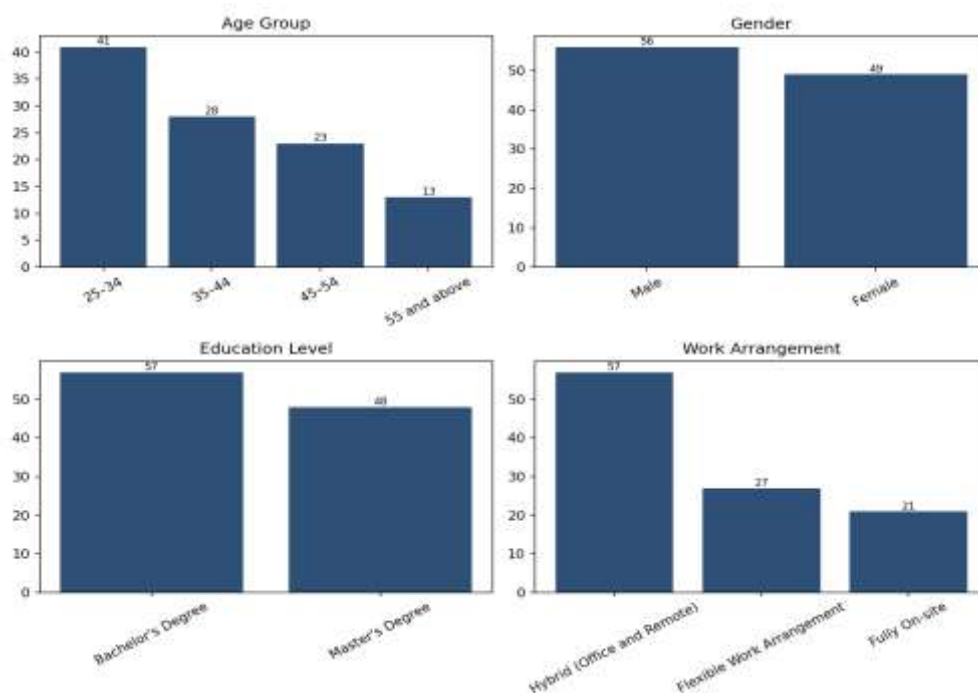


Figure 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age, Gender, Education, and Work Arrangement

5.1.2 Basic statistical and reliability analysis of the data. Each of the five a priori constructs was composed of Likert items and the scores were averaged to obtain composite scores. The five-to-six item scales had Cronbach's alphas ranging from -0.15 to 0.10 , which were unacceptable to low, so with the exception of the five items grouped into either subscale, the items did not covary strongly within each construct in this sample and should not be assumed to represent a tightly bound latent factor. This is reported transparently as a limitation in Section 8, and the means of these constructs themselves are informative as descriptive summaries of closely related item clusters; all subsequent inferential results should be interpreted with this reliability caveat in mind.

Construct	Items	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Work Environment & Productivity	4	4.28	0.40	-0.15
Communication & Collaboration	6	4.22	0.34	0.02
Work-Life Balance & Well-Being	5	4.23	0.36	-0.08
Organizational Culture & Inclusion	5	4.25	0.37	0.02
Career Development	5	4.24	0.41	0.10

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency of Composite Constructs

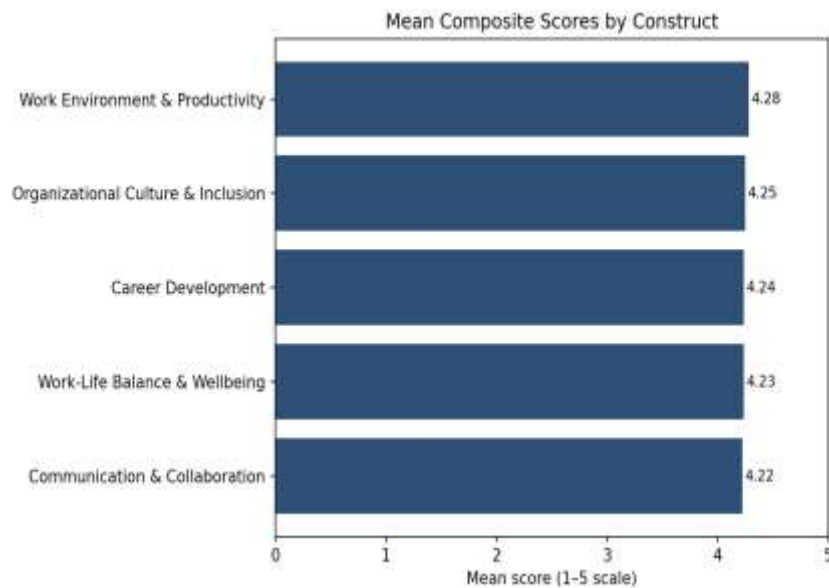


Figure 2. Mean Composite Scores by Construct (1–5 scale)

The highest mean agreement was found for the items "Focus" ($M = 4.34$) and "Valued" ($M = 4.34$), followed closely by "Stress Manageable" ($M = 4.32$), which indicates that participants' perceptions of being supported best in maintaining concentration and being personally valued were similar. The areas that were comparatively weaker (but still positive) in the hybrid-work experience were "Team Comm" ($M = 4.11$), "Disconnect" — the ability to completely disconnect from work ($M = 4.13$), and "Career Progression" ($M = 4.17$).

5.1.3 Overall Satisfaction

Over 60% ($n = 65$) of respondents were "Very Satisfied" and 32% ($n = 34$) were "Satisfied" with their current work arrangement, while 5.7% ($n = 6$) were "Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied" and none were "Dissatisfied."

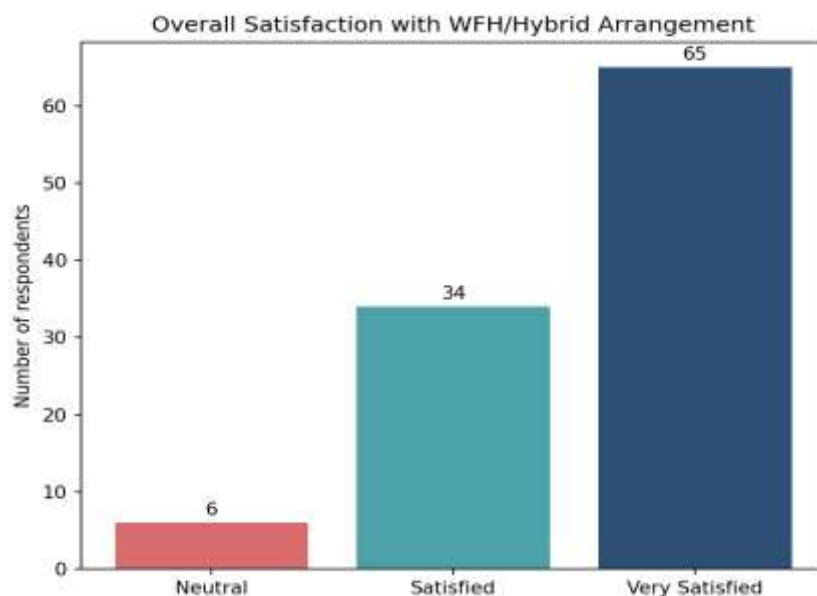


Figure 3. Overall Satisfaction with Work Arrangement (N = 105)

5.1.4 Relationship Between Construct Scores and Satisfaction

The relationship between the Construct scores and Satisfaction was examined. The correlation between Construct scores and Satisfaction was analysed. A multiple linear regression was run with overall satisfaction (coded 1 = Neutral, 2 = Satisfied, 3 = Very Satisfied) regressed on the five composite construct scores. The overall model was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .034$, adjusted $R^2 = -.014$, $F(5, 99) = 0.70$, $p = .622$, and none of the five models tested were statistically significant individually (all $p > .17$; see Table 3). This would mean that the five multi-item constructs do not strongly predict satisfaction within this sample – consistent with the ceiling effect in the distribution of satisfaction (94.3% Satisfied/Very Satisfied), that reduces the variance that could be explained by a model based on the constructs.

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
(Constant)	2.504	1.438	1.742	.085
Work Environment & Productivity	-0.062	0.152	-0.407	.685
Communication & Collaboration	-0.248	0.179	-1.381	.170
Work-Life Balance & Well-Being	0.063	0.166	0.381	.704
Organizational Culture & Inclusion	0.129	0.166	0.778	.439
Career Development	0.130	0.150	0.864	.390

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Overall Satisfaction ($R^2 = .034$, $p = .622$)

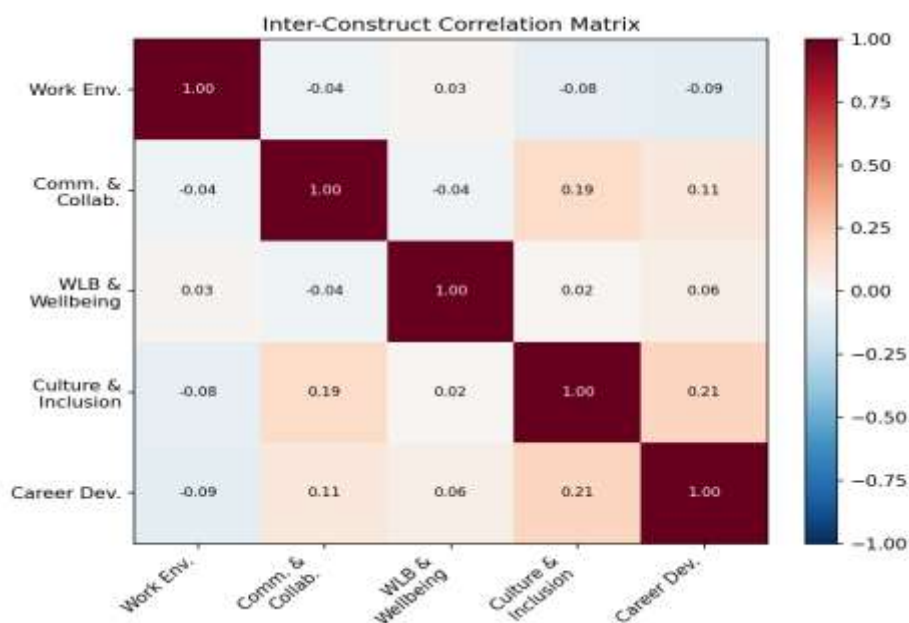


Figure 4. Inter-Construct Correlation Matrix

The inter-construct correlation matrix (Figure 4) indicates that the five constructs are all correlated at less than $|\cdot 15|$, which would support the conclusion that the constructs, in this sample, do not represent a single underlying "hybrid-work quality" factor, but are more independent aspects of the hybrid-work experience.

5.1.5 Group Comparisons

Independent-samples t-tests found no statistically significant gender differences on any of the five composite constructs (all $p > .44$). One-way ANOVA also did not show significant differences between the construct scores by age group (all $p > .07$, with Work Environment & Productivity

approaching significance at $F = 2.43$, $p = .070$) or by work arrangement (all $p > .11$). Two results, however, were conventionally significant. A chi square test of independence was significant between work arrangement and satisfaction rating (Table 4), $\chi^2(4, N = 105) = 10.66$, $p = .031$; suggesting satisfaction is not independent of the type of work arrangement: hybrid employees had the highest combined share at “Satisfied/Very Satisfied” (100% of hybrid, 0% neutral), fully on-site and flexible-arrangement employees each had a small segment of “neutral” rating.

Work Arrangement	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
Flexible Work Arrangement	4	5	18	27
Fully On-site	2	6	13	21
Hybrid (Office and Remote)	0	23	34	57

Table 4. Satisfaction by Work Arrangement — Cross-Tabulation ($\chi^2 = 10.66$, $df = 4$, $p = .031$)

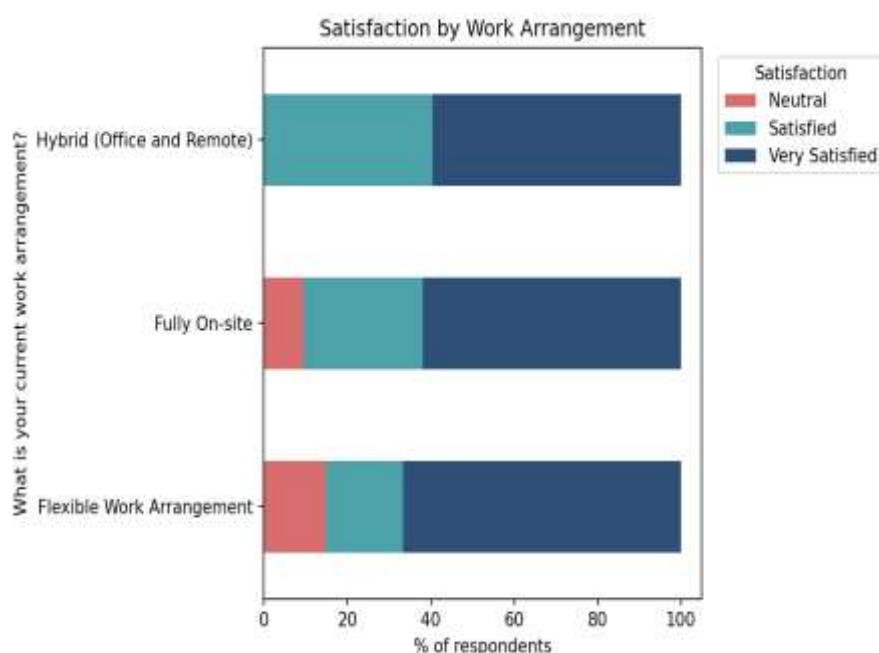


Figure 5. Satisfaction Distribution (%) by Work Arrangement

Second, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference among WFH frequency and Career Development scores, $F(3, 101) = 2.89$, $p = .039$. However, respondents who work remotely only occasionally ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.50$) perceive a lower level of career development support than do respondents who never work remotely or who work remotely frequently or rarely, suggesting that it is inconsistent, low-frequency remote work that is most correlated with weaker perceived support for career development, rather than the remote work itself; likely because respondents working remotely only occasionally lack the fully-embedded on-site development paths and the deliberately designed remote-development practices that consistent remote or hybrid arrangements are likely to require.

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

Five open-ended items asked respondents to reflect on the hybrid/remote-work experience from their perspective, including the most beneficial aspect of the flexibility dimension, how often they WFH, the greatest perceived benefit, the greatest perceived challenge, and their organization's top recommendation. Frequency-based thematic content analysis was used to analyze responses, which had been pre-categorized.

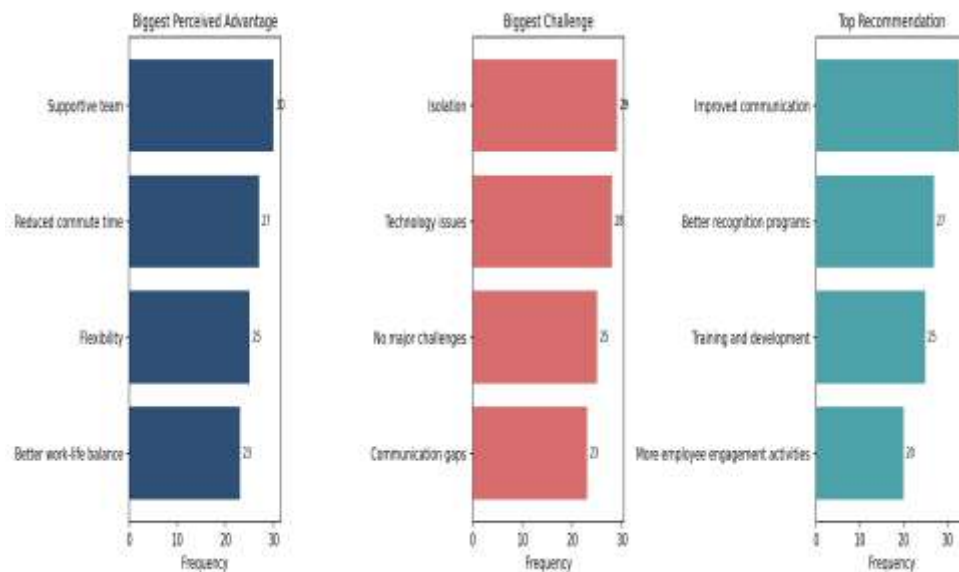


Figure 6. Frequency of Qualitative Themes — Biggest Advantage, Biggest Challenge, and Top Recommendation

5.2.1 Most Valued Form of Flexibility

The most popular way of valued flexibility is 'flexible working hours' (45.7%, $n = 48$), followed by 'autonomy' (29.5%, $n = 31$) and 'work from home options' in particular' (24.8%, $n = 26$). This indicates that the control over when people work is as important or more important than control over where they work, which has policy implications (see Section 7).

5.2.2 Biggest Perceived Advantage

The most-cited advantage was "Supportive team" (28.6%, $n = 30$), followed closely by "Reduced commute time" (25.7%, $n = 27$), "Flexibility" (23.8%, $n = 25$), and "Better work-life balance" (21.9%, $n = 23$). The importance of team support as the greatest advantage (in front of the more commonly assumed logistical advantage of commute-time) supports the quantitative finding that "Valued" was one of the highest-rated individual items ($M = 4.34$), implying that positive aspects of the hybrid work experience relate to interpersonal/team level factors, rather than logistical convenience alone, is what anchors the positive experience for this sample.

5.2.3 Biggest Challenge

The two most common challenges mentioned were "Isolation" (27.6%, $n = 29$) and "Technology issues" (26.7%, $n = 28$), with "No major challenges" (23.8%, $n = 25$) and "Communication gaps" (21.9%, $n = 23$) coming in next. The high levels of isolation and communication challenges as the top two issues directly confirm the comparatively low quantitative scores for "Team Comm" ($M = 4.11$) and "Disconnect" ($M = 4.13$), and the high prominence of technology issues despite a relatively high score on "Tools" ($M = 4.25$) proves the technology–service-quality tension as identified by Gupta and Baksi (2018) in the recruitment-technology context: having sufficient tools does not mean there is no technology friction in daily use.

5.2.4 Top Recommendations

The most common organizational responses were: "Improved communication" (31.4%, $n = 33$), "Better recognition programs" (25.7%, $n = 27$), "Training and development" (23.8%, $n = 25$), and "More employee engagement activities" (19.0%, $n = 20$). These suggestions are interpreted as direct employee-stated "service recovery" requests as per Gupta (2021), who argues that employees are not simply stating issues, but are stating the expected organizational actions that would address the gaps

that they experienced (e.g., better communication protocols, recognition, development investment, engagement activities etc.).

6. Key Findings

1. Overall satisfaction with WFH/hybrid work arrangements is very high, with 94.3% of the sample being Satisfied or Very Satisfied (0% Dissatisfied), suggesting that a large proportion of the population is experiencing an acceptable flexible-work experience within the organisation. At the overall level, none of the five experience constructs was seen as a clear weakness in the organization, though they were all rated positively (with scores higher than 4.2 on a 5-point scale).
2. Satisfaction is statistically related to the type of work arrangements: hybrid workers had the most uniformly positive profile of satisfaction (no neutral ratings), indicating that hybrid arrangements may be the most well-suited work arrangement in this organizational context compared to fully on-site and fully flexible work arrangements.
3. While remote work itself does not account for the differences among WFH frequency, an inverted-U relationship in career-development perceptions is found, with occasional (rather than frequent or never) remote workers reporting the lowest career-development scores ($F = 2.89$, $p = .039$). Interconstruct correlations were generally low and overall satisfaction was not explained by simple linear combinations of the measured constructs ($R^2 = .034$, $p = .622$), suggesting that satisfaction in this sample may be explained by other factors, such as individual disposition, role type, or satisfaction with the manager, not captured by the instrument, or by a ceiling effect due to the ordinal near-invariance of the satisfaction outcome itself.
- 4 qualitative themes that emerge are related to and build upon the quantitative results: Team Support, Reduced Commute, isolation, Technology, and Communication, and Training/Development, all represent a perceived advantage, while Improved Communication, Recognition Programs, and Training/Development, represent employee requested organizational responses. The results highlight that
5. Flexibility in working hours is at least as valued by employees as the use of location-based flexibility, indicating that time-based flexibility (schedule autonomy) is currently less leveraged than location-based flexibility in policy design.

7. Managerial Implications

7.1 Design a Human-Capital Service-Quality Function for a Reframe Hybrid-Work Design As Gupta and Bakshi (2022) argue, human-capital outcomes need multi-dimensional metrics, in addition to being standardized. Organizations should track the five constructs in this study (or similarly organization specific constructs) as recurring HR metrics, rather than as one-time survey items, so that any changes in perceptions of team communication, disconnect/boundary setting or career progression can be identified and addressed before they negatively affect satisfaction.

7.2 The right to disconnect and team communication practices will be prioritized. The lowest scoring quantitative items were Team Communication and Disconnect, while the top three qualitative challenges were isolation and communication gaps. HR and people managers need to focus on structuring team communication norms (synchronous touchpoints, escalation procedures, etc.) and setting after-hours boundaries explicitly, instead of relying exclusively on individual manager-employee communication (which fared comparatively better) to address both team level and boundary setting needs.

7.3: Do not consider Tech Friction a Provisioning Problem, but rather a Service Recovery Problem As "Technology issues" was a top challenge despite reasonable tool-provisioning scores, it is important to take the extreme insight of Gupta and Bakshi (2018) which states that the technology should not be an issue but rather the service-quality; ensure that not only are tools provided but that they are integrated into the daily workflow and that a quick recovery channel for technology issues is in place, directly aligned to the service-recovery logic described by Gupta (2021) so that friction is resolved quickly enough to prevent its influence on overall perceptions.

7.4 Redesign Career Development Pathways for the occasional (remote) worker specifically Generic "remote-friendly" development programs are not likely to be effective at narrowing this gap: employees whose location to work is not consistent—occasional, but not frequent or never—reported the lowest career development scores and they should be targeted for explicit and scheduled

development touchpoints (e.g., guaranteed 1:1 check-ins, ensure visibility during promotion review cycles) to level the playing field against those always on-site or always remote. This recommendation is supported by the experimental study conducted by Kasperska, Matysiak and Cukrowska-Torzewska (2024) which found that managers' preferences for promoting, paying and training people who work remotely, when their performance is equal, is biased, and therefore such policies will have to be made explicit, not assumed to be fixed. While Yang et al. (2022) identified that working remotely throughout the firm also decreases bridging ties in the organizational network, occasional teleworkers might be at a double disadvantage as they are not only not seen often enough but also not seen often enough to practice the bridging ties strategies that consistent remote workers can adopt.

7.5 Increase Time Based Flexibility in addition to Location Based Flexibility Organizations which have focused mainly on enabling employees to work from different locations should consider whether they are providing enough schedule flexibility (core hours, asynchronous working norms, etc.) compared to the overall most desirable form of flexibility – flexible working hours. Establish Recognition and Engagement Programs as retention “levers”

7.6 Although satisfaction levels were already high, recognition programs and engagement activities were among the top employee recommendations, suggesting that these investments are being made proactively before employees become dissatisfied with service — as in service-recovery, the long-term value of perceived service quality is maintained by proactive investments in the relationship, rather than just in repairing the problem (Gupta, 2021; Gupta & Bakshi, 2020).

8. Limitations of the Study

The current study has a number of limitations:

- The sample (N = 105) may not be representative of the industry, organizational size, or geographic/cultural context and generalization beyond similar populations should be considered with caution.
- Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) for the five a priori composite constructs was low, meaning that items within each construct did not cover strongly in this sample and findings based on composite scores should be viewed as descriptive summaries of the related item clusters, and item groupings should be re-explored or re-specified (e.g., exploratory factor analysis) for further use.
- The satisfaction outcome variable had a significant ceiling effect (94.3% Satisfied/Very Satisfied), reducing the amount of variance available for regression-based prediction of satisfaction and potentially accounting for the absence of significance in the regression model; studies that include more varied satisfaction outcome variables or a continuous multi-item scale of satisfaction may identify such relationships.
- All data are self-reported and are cross-sectional in nature, so that causal inference, such as between the frequency of WFH and career-development perceptions, or between WFH and role type/seniority/manager quality, cannot be made.
- Qualitative responses were coded using a single select option style, rather than free text, allowing for frequency analysis and a cleaner and more efficient codebase but lack the depth and nuance that would be found in an open-ended narrative style of coding.

9. Conclusion

A total of 105 employees were selected for this study and the quantitative construct analysis results were supplemented with qualitative thematic analysis and positioned in the human-capital-market and service-quality literature developed by Gupta and colleagues (Gupta, 2018, 2021; Gupta & Bakshi, 2018, 2020, 2022). There is a positive overall satisfaction with current work arrangements, and all five measured dimensions of experience: productivity, communication, well-being, culture, and career development are rated positively. Statistically significant trends were found, however, under the positive overall impression of remote work: satisfaction does vary significantly across work-arrangement types, and perceptions of career development vary across WFH frequency, but it is notable that those who work remotely occasionally are less satisfied with the nature of their work than those who work remotely consistently. Qualitative results come together to identify team support, reduced commute, flexibility as the biggest strength and isolation, technological problems and

communication as the biggest issues, and employees clearly calling for better communication, recognition and investment in their development.

The research's main contribution is that it brings the human-capital-market service-quality and HR-metrics approach, which has been applied to hiring, placement, and service recovery, to the area of continuing employee experience in hybrid and remote work. By doing so, it shows that the same conceptual frameworks that are applied to understanding the recruitment and human-capital transactions of flexible work can be adapted with relatively little change to the post-hire, daily experience of working flexibly. Future research would benefit from the development of longitudinal design, refinement of the construct measurement model, and the testing of the managerial interventions proposed here for their causal relationship with satisfaction and retention, specifically a managerial intervention for occasional remote workers supporting their career development, as well as a managerial intervention for developing technology services-recovery channels that are structured.

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