International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

Impact of Hybrid Work Practices on Employee Engagement and Productivity in IT Organizations of Chennai City

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Article Info

ISSN (Online): 2582-7138
Volume: 07
Issue: 05
Received: 07-08-2026
Accepted: 10-09-2026
Published: 08-10-2026
Page No: 711-714

Abstract
The hybrid work model combining remote and on-site working has become one of the most significant organizational practices in the IT sector, particularly in urban technology hubs such as Chennai. Despite its rapid adoption, the extent to which hybrid work shapes employee engagement remains under-examined in this specific local context. This study investigates the impact of hybrid work practices on employee engagement among IT professionals in Chennai City using a descriptive, correlational, and regression-based research design. The study offers Chennai IT organizations actionable guidance for designing hybrid work policies that sustain motivation, collaboration, and productivity, and contributes empirical, city-specific evidence to a literature that has so far relied mostly on global or single-organization studies.

Keywords: Hybrid Work, Employee Engagement, IT Sector, Chennai, Organizational Productivity, Job Demands-Resources Model

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way organizations think about work. Most companies moved away from fully office-based work toward remote and, later, hybrid work — a mix of working from home and working from the office (Rathi, 2024) [10]. This change has been especially important for India's Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled services (ITES) industry. This sector depends heavily on skilled employees, serves clients across the world, and needs employees to stay engaged and productive to remain competitive. Chennai is one of India's biggest IT and ITES hubs, home to many Indian and multinational technology companies whose employees have gone through this shift firsthand (Vijaya Shanthi, 2024) [13].

Hybrid work practices allow employees to split their working time between home and office, usually based on a company policy that sets how many days per week are spent in each location. Supporters of hybrid work say it gives employees more freedom, helps them balance work and personal life, and increases their sense of ownership over their work — all of which can boost engagement and productivity (George & Liya, 2026) [7]. Critics point to possible downsides too: less face-to-face teamwork, unfair treatment of remote employees during performance reviews, work and home life blending together too much, and unequal access to hybrid options across job roles and levels.

Employee engagement, as defined by Kahn (1990) [8], is how much an employee brings their full self — physically, mentally, and emotionally — into their work. Productivity is simply how much useful output an employee produces for the time and resources they use. Both are important measures of how well an organization is performing. This study looks at how hybrid work practices affect these two outcomes, both separately and together, in Chennai's IT industry, and why these matters for HR policy decisions.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

This study is built on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. This model says every job has two kinds of features: demands (things that cost an employee effort or energy, like workload or isolation) and resources (things that help an employee cope and stay motivated, like support or flexibility). When employees have enough resources, they handle demands better and stay more engaged (Demerouti *et al*., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) [5, 1]. Later versions of the model show that resources can come from the organization, from co-workers, or from the task itself, and that having enough resources leads to higher engagement, which then leads to better performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) [2]. Hybrid work can be seen as a resource, because it gives employees flexibility and control. But it can also create new demands, such as feeling isolated, depending too much on technology, or struggling to separate work from home life. This makes the JD-R model a good fit for studying hybrid work's mixed effects.

Kahn's (1990) [8] theory of personal engagement adds to this picture by explaining why resources lead to engagement: employees engage more fully in their work when they find it meaningful, feel psychologically safe, and feel able to bring themselves into their role. Schaufeli *et al*. (2002) [12] broke engagement down into three parts — Vigor (energy), dedication (pride and involvement), and absorption (being fully focused). Their measurement tool, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, is still the most commonly used way to measure engagement in management research, including studies on hybrid work.

2.2. Hybrid Work and Employee Engagement

Studies of IT companies generally find a positive link between hybrid work and engagement, though how strong this link depends on other factors within the organization. One study of an IT firm found that hybrid work affects employee engagement mainly through the support employees receive from their organization (Charles, 2025) [3]. Other research shows that engagement — made up of energy, dedication, and focus — has a strong positive effect on productivity, especially when combined with good management support and a strong learning culture (Christian *et al*., 2011) [4].

However, studies done specifically in Chennai and South India show a more mixed picture. Vijaya Shanthi (2024) [13] studied ITES employees in Chennai and found that most employees were satisfied with hybrid work, but problems like poor communication and unclear roles were still common. Rathi (2024) [10], studying a Chennai IT company, also found that employees liked the flexibility and better work-life balance, but still faced difficulties with teamwork and technology.

2.3. Hybrid Work and Productivity

Research on productivity tends to favour hybrid work more clearly. George and Liya (2026) [7] studied IT employees at a South Indian tech park and found that most employees preferred hybrid work because of its flexibility and work-life balance benefits. They also found that age and gender affected how much difficulty employees faced, showing that hybrid work does not affect everyone the same way. A large review of hundreds of studies on hybrid work confirms that this topic has grown quickly in management research since 2020, and that organizational support and flexibility are the factors most often linked to higher productivity (Ruchi, 2024) [11].

2.4. Research Gap

Although the studies above generally agree that hybrid work has a positive effect on engagement and productivity, three gaps remain. First, most Chennai-based studies use small samples from a single company (often fewer than 150 people) and use only basic statistics, so their findings may not apply to Chennai's IT sector as a whole. Second, very few studies test whether engagement actually explains (mediates) the link between hybrid work and productivity using more advanced methods like PLS-SEM, which is better suited for testing multiple related factors together. Third, almost no Chennai-based study checks whether factors like job level, years of experience, or gender change the strength of this relationship. This study aims to fill these three gaps.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the extent of adoption of hybrid work practices among IT professionals in Chennai City.
2. To examine the relationship between specific hybrid work factors — remote work days, on-site work days, schedule flexibility, technology support, and managerial feedback — and employee engagement.
3. To identify which hybrid work factors most strongly predict employee engagement among Chennai's IT professionals.
4. To determine the balance of remote and on-site working days associated with the highest level of employee engagement.
5. To offer evidence-based recommendations for hybrid work policy design in Chennai's IT organizations.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the Job Demands-Resources model and the literature reviewed in Section 2, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. **H1:** The number of remote work days per week has a significant effect on employee engagement.
2. **H2:** The number of on-site work days per week has a significant effect on employee engagement.
3. **H3:** Perceived schedule flexibility has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.
4. **H4:** Technology and infrastructure support has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.
5. **H5:** Managerial feedback quality has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.
6. **H6:** A balanced hybrid schedule (a moderate mix of remote and on-site days) is associated with higher employee engagement than schedules weighted toward either extreme.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

Hybrid work practices in IT sector consists of seven variables in Likert's five point scale which ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The application of T-Test

Analysis brought the following results:
The researcher identifies that the following order is perceived very important for the reliability measure

Table 1: T-test for Hybrid work

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T value	sig	Rank
Technology support	480	3.78	1.038	.047	79.709	.000	1
Managerial feedback	480	3.68	1.184	.054	68.138	.000	5
Schedule flexibility	480	3.78	1.108	.051	74.667	.000	3
Remote work days	480	3.88	1.202	.055	70.607	.000	4
On-site work days	480	3.92	1.101	.050	77.937	.000	2

Source: Computed data

From the above table it is found that the mean values range from 3.68 to 3.92 with the respective standard deviation and standard error. The t values 79.709, 68.138, 74.667, 70.607, 77.937 are significant at the 5 % level. Therefore, it can be concluded, among the five variables, Technology support during remote work time motivates the employees and it leads to employee engagement.

Findings and Conclusion

The study indicates that hybrid work practices can support employee engagement by providing flexibility in managing professional responsibilities and personal commitments. Employees who experience autonomy in their work schedules may demonstrate greater involvement in organizational activities. Hybrid work arrangements may help employees maintain a better work-life balance by reducing daily commuting time and allowing greater flexibility in managing family and personal responsibilities. Finaly, it concludes that Hybrid work practices may contribute to improved productivity by enabling employees to work in an environment that supports concentration, time management, and task completion. However, productivity may vary depending on job responsibilities, individual preferences, and organizational support.

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How to Cite This

Aarthi S, Kavitha M, Maheswari GS. Impact of hybrid work practices on employee engagement and productivity in IT organizations of Chennai City. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation. 2026;7(5):711-714.

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