

Navigating the Hybrid Work Paradigm: A Study on Women IT Professionals

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Abstract

The Hybrid work paradigm has altered the professionals scene, especially in the IT sector, providing flexibility but introducing distinct problems for women professionals. This article examines how women in IT manage the hybrid work paradigm, emphasizing its effects on work-life balance, professional advancement, and employee well-being. Although hybrid work inclined to work-life balance, but work-life balance (WLB) does not have a significant impact on employee performance. While a hybrid workplace provides greater autonomy and decreases distress, it also indistinct the boundaries between professional and personal life, often leading to become exhausted due to increased domestic responsibilities. Additionally, women IT professionals face reduced visibility in hybrid work environments, which can negatively impact their career advancement opportunities. To address these challenges, the present study aims to determine hybrid work inclusive policies that support employee work-life balance. This research enhances the equitable and supportive hybrid work environment thriving fair recognition, promoting mentorship and leadership programs that can empower women IT professionals both personally and professionally.

Keywords: Hybrid Work Paradigm, Work-Life Integration, Women in IT.

Introduction

The notion of Hybrid work paradigm has garnered considerable focus on employee productivity and overall well-being of employees. The progressive shift towards hybrid work has redefined professional environments, especially in the IT sector, where remote collaboration and creative methodologies of digital tools become the norm. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence tools has reshaped the way of business, market and industry growth, leading to a fundamental shift in work structure. The hybrid work model which integrates remote and office work has become a crucial feature of modern workplace. This usually requires digital transformation, cloud computing, data analysis, use of artificial intelligence tools relies on virtual collaboration. In modern workforce, companies across industries, particularly in IT sector, have embraced hybrid work as a sustainable model that balances employees personally and professionally.

Background of the Hybrid Work Paradiugn

Hybrid work models combining remote and in-office labor have gained popularity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hybrid work helps individuals combine personal and professional duties by allowing them to work from home or the office. Remote work gives flexibility for individuals to work when, when, and how they choose, while in-office work promotes collaboration and access to resources. Employee independence is a key benefit of mixed work arrangements. Remote employment enhances employees' emotional well-being by allowing them to spend more time with loved ones and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

From the standpoint of the employer, hybrid work arrangements provide a number of advantages. Allowing employees to work from home can help employers save on expenses such as maintenance, office rent, and power. Hybrid work models eliminate the need for huge physical office spaces, allowing firms to better deploy resources. These cost-cutting methods can help a company's overall financial stability. (Golden 2020)

Recent research has found that both hybrid work and solely remote work have been beneficial to employees' work-life balance (WLB) and efficacy, as perceived autonomy and flexible working hours are critical aspects of health and well-being in today's working environment (Gibson et al., Citation2023; Ipsen et al., Citation2021). Nonetheless, numerous firms wish to return their employees to the office (Gibson et al., Citation2023), and many individuals want a hybrid workplace option. Some firms have even used harsh measures like termination threats or compensation reduction if employees refuse to work onsite on a full-time basis (Tabahriti, Citation2022).

Hybrid Work Model

The hybrid work system typically allows split time where employees can chose their schedule between remote work and office work. According to Eurofound (2023), hybrid work is understood as work that is flexible in terms of the situation, place, and time, with work carried out partly from the employer's premises and partly from home or elsewhere with the help of digital tools and platforms facilitating the work itself, communication, and cooperation. [Crummenerl et al. \(2021\)](#) define hybrid work as a model where employees work from various locations, including traditional offices, factories, remote locations, or their own homes, whether that be a family house or a shared flat. This model is defined by the flexibility and choices it offers employees, providing a dynamic approach to enhancing agility, collaboration, and innovative ways of working. Summarizing above definitions, we employ hybrid work model: a flexible workplace that allows employees to perform their duties from a combination of different digital tools and platforms to facilitate communication, collaboration, and productivity, while emphasizing a results-oriented approach to meet the organizational needs.

A hybrid work model alters work processes, organizational structures, and employee scheduling and time allocation. This concept allows individuals to prioritize their time and focus on job activities, rather than commuting to the office. Work environments can alter, and some tasks may not require a physical workspace. This article focuses on a hybrid work model where workers divide their time between working from home and at their office. There are advantages to working both from home and in an office for both employers and employees, but could also result in a number of problems from both work settings. This concept allows individuals to prioritize their time and focus on job activities, rather than commuting to the office. Barath and Alshatti Schmidt (2022) suggest splitting the working day based on individual responsibilities and abilities to do both work and non-work-related duties. A mixed work style offers significant benefits for organizations, including enhanced employee productivity and dedication. Hybrid work allows for greater flexibility, concentration, and productivity, but requires good workflow organization at home.

Hybrid work reduces the negative aspects of traditional office environments, such as frequent monitoring and lack of personal space, which can lead to stress, decreased productivity, and burnout. Recent study on hybrid work suggests that striking a balance between in-person collaboration and remote work can lead to a more flexible work environment. Individual benefits of hybrid employment include reduced travel time and costs, as well as increased efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, the hybrid approach promotes

various forms of collaboration, which can boost innovation. Virtual meetings and digital brainstorming tools enable remote teams to contribute more diverse ideas and perspectives. While the pros and cons of hybrid work are still being explored, it appears to benefit both people and companies. This research emphasizes the importance of work-life balance as a key benefit of hybrid work models.

Work-Life Balance

According to Brough et al. (Citation2014, p.2728), WLB is "an individual's subjective appraisal of the accord between his/her work and non-work activities, and life more generally." WLB can be raised by reducing the influence of demands from non-work life on work activities and minimizing the influence of work life on non-work life activities (Becker et al., Citation2022; Grant et al., Citation2013). For instance, working from home or a nearby office hub can greatly reduce the amount of time spent commuting to and from work, giving you more time for activities unrelated to work. Work-life balance involves prioritizing and integrating professional and personal duties without compromising either. By enabling employees to combine their personal, professional, and familial obligations, hybrid employment, which provides flexibility in terms of both location and hours, can improve work-life balance (Krajčík, Schmidt, & Baráth, 2023). The need for a current, comprehensive understanding of the elements that positively impact organizational and psychosocial hybrid work environments will thus be addressed by this study (Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, Citation2020b, Citation 2021). We conducted a qualitative study to gather suggestions from workers on how hybrid work may be set up to encourage collaboration, work-related health, and WLB in order to better understand the current state of affairs.

Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance in Hybrid Working Conditions

Employees increasingly prefer separating their work and personal lives. Work-life balance, or balancing personal and professional responsibilities, is widely discussed. The hybrid work model has improved the ability to strike a balance between employees' and employers' needs. According to Tejero, Seva, and Fadrilan-Camacho (2021), remote work enables people to balance personal and professional duties, while also fostering flexibility and adaptability to changing demands. Employee autonomy is a key aspect in the hybrid work model, since it provides greater flexibility in working hours and office settings. Employee autonomy can improve work-life balance by allowing them to choose their hours and location to meet their requirements and preferences. The second component is the ability to manage one's own workload. In a hybrid work model, employees can disperse their workload independently based on their priorities for the day, week, or month. According to Yaroshenko et al. (2021), the ability to transfer energy and resources reduces burnout and tiredness, allowing for a better work-life balance.

Another crucial factor is effective communication between employers and employees is a crucial component. Effective communication provides timely and easy communication among personnel. Effective communication among employees in a mixed work arrangement promotes collaboration and alignment. Hybrid work arrangements offer flexibility, which is a key consideration. Flexibility refers to an employee's ability to choose their own schedule, allocate time to tasks, and choose their work location. Trusting employees to manage these aspects independently leads to increased dedication and productivity. Flexible scheduling enables employees to manage their responsibilities, including childcare, errands, and meetings, leading to improved work-life balance.

Impact of Hybrid Work Paradigm

The hybrid work model, give option for flexible working, particularly through remote and office work, has become a preferred choice for many IT professionals. Working from home can have both a beneficial and negatively impact on people' work-life balance. Work-life balance is shaped by clear criteria based on personal beliefs and goals. However, working from home might make it difficult to discern between

business and personal life. In contrast, remote work can improve work-life balance if people can successfully manage their time. Employees working from home have more flexibility, which can lead to a better balance between their professional and personal lives.

1. **Better Work-Life Integration**

One of the most significant advantages of hybrid work for female IT workers is the chance to better balance personal and professional duties. With the ability to work remotely on certain days, women can cut travel time, devote more hours to family or personal obligations, and plan their workdays to maximize productivity. This flexibility is especially advantageous for working mothers and those who have caregiving duties.

2. **Flexibility and Autonomy** The hybrid model allows women to schedule work around personal commitments like childcare, family responsibilities, or self-care, leading to increased flexibility and autonomy. This flexibility is especially useful to women, who have traditionally carried a greater share of caring and domestic responsibilities. Women may establish a more comfortable workspace, whether at home or in the office, allowing them to promote productivity and reduce stress.

3. **Reduced Commuting Time**

Commuting can be a significant drain on time and energy, therefore working remotely alleviates this load. Women benefit from spending more time with their families, pursuing personal interests, or focusing on their health. It can also help alleviate the tension associated with long daily trips. For women in IT who may have limited access to onsite mentorship and networking opportunities, a lack of office presence may result in career stagnation or a sense of detachment from the industry.

4. **Job Satisfaction and Retention**

The hybrid work paradigm has contributed to improved job satisfaction among women in IT by allowing them to design a work environment that meets their specific demands. Many professionals feel more in control of their schedules, which leads to higher morale and a greater sense of autonomy. As a result, organizations that offer hybrid work options may have reduced attrition rates among female employees.

5. **Diverse Workforce Inclusion**

Hybrid work models can help to create a more inclusive workforce by accommodating a variety of requirements, such as those of women with caregiving obligations, persons with impairments, and those who encounter gender discrimination. This model can assist retain female professionals in the industry by providing an atmosphere that understands their different requirements, potentially reducing the gender gap in IT.

Challenges in Hybrid Work Model

1. **Challenges in Career Progression**

Despite the perks, hybrid employment can be a barrier to professional advancement for women in IT. Reduced in-office presence may result in lower visibility among managers and executives, restricting possibilities for promotions, leadership positions, and high-impact projects. Many firms continue to operate under a "proximity bias," in which employees who

are seen at the workplace more frequently are seen as more dedicated and engaged. Because of personal obligations, women who work remotely more frequently may be at a disadvantage.

2. Increased domestic responsibilities

While hybrid work provides flexibility, it may also reinforce established gender norms. Studies have revealed that women, even in dual-income couples, frequently bear a disproportionate share of domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Working from home can sometimes blur the distinction between work and personal life, resulting in greater stress and an unbalanced burden. Women in IT may find themselves juggling between work meetings and home obligations, which can impair productivity and professional concentration.

3. Mental Health and Work-related Stress

If not managed effectively, the hybrid work style might lead to mental health issues for female IT professionals. The expectation of being "always available" due to digital connectivity might lead to burnout. Furthermore, a lack of social interactions in remote work environments can lead to feelings of isolation, lowering motivation and engagement levels. Companies that fail to address these concerns risk losing talented female employees due to stress-related attrition.

4. Limited Access to Skill development

Many IT talents, such as dealing with modern software, cloud computing, or cyber security solutions, necessitate practical experience. In the office, professionals can collaborate on problem solving, shadow senior colleagues, and receive instant feedback. However, remote employment may limit such possibilities, making it more difficult for women in IT to obtain practical experience with emerging technology.

5. Reduced Participation and Visibility

Companies frequently hold skill development programs, technical workshops, and leadership training sessions in-house. Employees who work remotely frequently may lose out on these programs, or they may be given just restricted virtual options. In hybrid work situations, women who are less visible in the workplace may be passed over for high-impact projects that are often critical for career advancement. Without these opportunities, they may struggle to acquire leadership and technical abilities.

6. Need for Inclusive Workplace Policies

To harness the benefits of hybrid work while tackling its problems, businesses must create policies that promote female IT experts. This contains clear performance evaluation criteria that equalize contributions regardless of physical office presence.

- Implemented career development programs to ensure women are not ignored for promotions.
- Provides mental health support and wellness efforts to minimize burnout.
- Offers flexible scheduling alternatives to meet various personal and professional demands.

Conclusion

The hybrid work paradigm has changed the IT business, giving women with new options while also presenting obstacles that must be carefully managed. While flexibility and autonomy have helped to enhance work-life balance, concerns about decreased career visibility, increasing domestic workload, and mental health must be addressed. Organizations may guarantee that hybrid work supports women IT

professionals rather than limiting their career opportunities by promoting inclusive workplace rules and supporting women's professional progress. The hybrid approach was well appreciated since it provides flexibility and improves work-life balance. Despite challenges such as expanded remote availability and workloads, employees reported improved work-life balance.

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