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Exploring The Influence of Mediating Factors of Flexible Schedule, Job Satisfaction, and Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance In Hybrid Working Arrangements (HWAs): A Quantitative Research of Information Technology (IT) Organization in Klang Valley, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of hybrid work structures on employee performance, focusing on mediating factors such as flexible schedules, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Utilizing quantitative research methodology, the research targets information technology (IT) organization personnel who are experienced or likely to engage in hybrid work arrangements. The IT sector's early adoption of hybrid work models provides an ideal context, offering valuable insights for organizations and individuals in this technology-driven field. The study employs a non-probability and purposive sampling strategy, selecting IT employees in non-managerial positions who have experienced hybrid work arrangements and possess the necessary tools. A comprehensive survey instrument will be used to collect quantitative data, which will be rigorously analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS). The research aims to assess the effects of flexible schedules, job satisfaction, and work-life balance on employee performance within IT organizations. By quantifying these relationships and identifying key performance drivers, the study seeks to provide practical insights. These insights will empower both organizations and employees to optimize hybrid work models. The findings will help delineate how various elements of hybrid work contribute to employee productivity, satisfaction, and overall performance. This research promises to deliver pertinent findings that can enhance our understanding of how hybrid work environments influence various aspects of employee performance in the IT sector, potentially guiding future policies and practices in this evolving landscape.

1. Introduction

The global landscape of working arrangements has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, with Malaysia experiencing similar shifts. Traditional office-based work structures, characterized by fixed schedules and mandatory physical presence, were deeply embedded in organizational cultures and regarded as the standard for ensuring performance (Acedo et al., 2006). The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 significantly disrupted these norms. Social distancing mandates and lockdown measures led to adopting remote work and hybrid working arrangements (Barrero et al., 2023). As restrictions eased, organizations began to adopt more flexible approaches, blending remote work with in-office work. This hybrid model, offering enhanced flexibility and improved work-life balance, has garnered considerable attention, particularly during the pandemic (Bloom et al., 2021). Organizations benefit from reduced office space and infrastructure costs (Gallup, 2020), yet a comprehensive understanding of hybrid working's impact on employee performance remains essential.

In recent years, adopting hybrid work arrangements, which combine remote and in-office work, has accelerated in response to evolving workplace dynamics (Alfatihah et al., 2021). Although the potential advantages of hybrid work, such as increased flexibility and improved work-life balance, have been underscored, there is an urgent need to thoroughly understand the intricate relationship between these arrangements and employee performance.

Hybrid Working Arrangements (HWAs) have been hailed as the future of work, offering a balance between the freedom of remote work and the collaboration of in-person interactions. However, concerns persist about their potential negative impact on intra-organizational communication and the quality of work output, particularly in creative fields. Recent research suggests that remote work could put a damper on the performance of creative tasks if employees communicate less frequently with their colleagues (Yang et al., 2021). This raises important questions about the transition to the HWAs model. Previous studies have suggested that HWAs can have mixed effects on employee performance, depending on various factors such as the nature of the work, the degree of autonomy and flexibility, the level of communication and collaboration, and the availability of resources and support (Barrero et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024; Johnson et al., 2024).

Furthermore, HWAs can foster inequalities and conflicts among employees with varying work preferences, resource access, and expectations from their managers and colleagues (Bélanger et al., 2020; Kniffin et al., 2021). Understanding how HWAs impact the performance and outcomes of different types of work is crucial. Implementing strategies and practices to optimize performance in hybrid work environments is essential to address these challenges effectively.

Existing research reveals a discrepancy in the literature concerning the performance of dispersed employees during the pandemic, underscoring the importance of investigating hybrid working arrangements during normal circumstances and the post-pandemic era (Ozkan et al., 2022). However, most of these studies were conducted during the pandemic, potentially introducing confounding factors such as health risks, lockdown restrictions, and psychological stress. It remains undefined whether the findings of these studies apply to everyday circumstances and the post-pandemic era when employees and organizations have more freedom to design and implement HWAs tailored to their needs and preferences. Moreover, there needs to be more literature on optimizing performance in HWAs, including strategies and practices to enhance work quality and quantity, align goals and expectations, and improve feedback and recognition mechanisms in hybrid work settings.

This research aims to understand the multifaceted influence of HWAs on employee performance, hence bridge the gaps by scrutinizing the mediating role of flexible schedules, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. These variables are significant mediators because they elucidate the mechanisms through which HWAs influence employee performance rather than merely moderating or influencing the strength or direction of the relationship. Mediators are intervening variables that represent the mechanism or process through which an independent variable affects a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In this context, the independent variable is HWAs, employee performance is the dependent variable, and three mediator variables exist.

Justifications

The choice of the IT organization as the focal point for this research is not arbitrary but rooted in the characteristics that make it an ideal context for investigating hybrid working arrangements and their influence on employee performance. The IT organization is renowned for its heavy reliance on technology and digital platforms, which inherently aligns with the nature of hybrid work models (Sokolic, 2022). The prevalence of flexible work arrangements and remote collaboration within this sector makes it a pertinent field for understanding how these practices influence and shape employee performance.

Evidence from previous studies in the IT organization has indicated a positive correlation between the implementation of hybrid working arrangements and enhanced employee performance. Research by Snow (2022) found that organizations in the IT sector experienced increased productivity and job satisfaction among employees when adopting hybrid working models. The digital nature of the industry allowed for seamless integration of hybrid working practices, emphasizing the industry's suitability for such arrangements.

Recent research by Chaudhury et al. (2022) observed that the IT organization's embrace of hybrid working arrangements positively influenced employee work-life balance. The research highlighted the industry's adaptability to remote work and its role in fostering a conducive environment for employees to balance professional and personal responsibilities. These findings justify focusing on the IT organization in exploring the dynamics between hybrid working arrangements and employee performance.

Malaysia's committed endeavors in technological advancement, particularly in the IT sector, provide a distinctive context for investigating hybrid working arrangements. As Soomro et al. (2021) emphasized, the Malaysian government actively endorses digitalization and Industry 4.0 initiatives, cultivating an environment where the Malaysian government intricately weaves technology into diverse business operations. This focus on technological progress makes Malaysia an intriguing setting for examining how hybrid working models align with and leverage the ongoing digital transition. The potential impact of this research on the IT industry in Malaysia is inspiring and exciting, as it could shape the future of work in this sector.

In summary, the rationale behind choosing the IT organization in Malaysia as the focus of this research is supported by evidence from prior studies in the field, emphasizing the industry's alignment with hybrid working practices. Malaysia's socio-economic and cultural context further enhances the research's relevance and potential contributions to understanding the intricate dynamics between hybrid working arrangements and employee performance.

Delimitations

The research focuses on understanding how hybrid working arrangements, combining remote and office-based work, affect employee performance. It explores the mediating factors of flexible schedules, regulatory or policy aspects, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and work characteristics and their influence on employee performance in this context.

This research is comprehensive in its scope, considering a specific geographic location, such as a country, region, industry, or sector. It also considers employees from various job roles, levels, and demographic characteristics, aiming to create a diverse sample that accurately represents the target population. By thoroughly examining these mediating factors, the research aims to uncover the intricate mechanisms through which hybrid working arrangements impact employee performance and identify potential areas for improvement or enhancement.

However, it is essential to note that the research has certain delimitations. It may focus solely on the identified mediating factors while excluding other variables that could influence employee performance. The sample size and selection criteria may be limited, which could affect the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. Additionally, the research may have a defined time frame within which data is collected and analyzed, potentially influencing the observed relationships between variables. It may rely on specific data collection methods or measurement instruments, which introduce their limitations and biases.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hybrid Working Arrangements (HWAs)

The discourse on employee performance and working arrangements has garnered substantial attention from experts and scholars, illuminating a multifaceted landscape shaped by evolving organizational dynamics. Seminal research by Bloom et al. (2015) stressed that the nature of working arrangements significantly influences employee performance. Their research highlighted a positive correlation between flexible working arrangements and increased productivity. The research identified remote work or flexible schedules as catalysts for enhanced job satisfaction and overall performance.

Moreover, Allen et al. (2015) delved into the effectiveness of telecommuting, a prevalent form of flexible work arrangement. Their findings indicated that telecommuting could positively influence employee performance and highlighted the potential for reduced commuting time and increased autonomy to contribute to heightened productivity. This positive outlook aligns with the idea that allowing employees flexibility in managing their work environment and optimal performance is crucial for exploring flexible work arrangements.

On the contrary, Golden et al. (2019) highlighted potential challenges associated with remote work. Their research not only underscored the flexibility that remote work offers but also raised a cautionary note about the potential for feelings of isolation and communication barriers, which can negatively affect employee performance. This view highlights the significance of considering the advantages and drawbacks of different working arrangements, a balance we should strive to maintain in our research.

A study by Jamaludin and Razak (2018) provided insights into the intersection of flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. Their findings suggested a growing interest in flexible work structures within Malaysian organizations, with a positive correlation between flexible arrangements and employee well-being.

As a researcher exploring the integration of Hybrid Work Arrangements (HWAs) to optimize employee performance, researchers find it crucial to consider these diverse perspectives. HWAs, combining remote and in-person work elements, have become a focal point in recent discussions. Research by Bloom et al. (2015), Allen et al. (2015), and Golden et al. (2019) sets the stage for understanding how the hybrid model might influence employee performance—however, the specific contextual nuances of the Malaysian business landscape demand a targeted investigation.

2.2 Hybrid Working Arrangement and Employee Performance

Hybrid working arrangements (HWAs) or combining remote and on-site work could significantly influence employee effectiveness, efficiency, and quality performance. These arrangements give employees flexibility and autonomy in managing their work environment, positively influencing their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance outcomes.

Adopting HWAs, which combine remote and on-site work, is expected to improve employee effectiveness, efficiency, and quality performance. HWAs provide employees with flexibility and autonomy in managing their work environment, positively influencing their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance outcomes (Kossek et al., 2014; Elst et al., 2012).

Studies have shown that telecommuting, a component of HWAs, can enhance task performance and productivity (Bloom et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Remote work options allow employees to tailor their work to align with their work styles and preferences, resulting in heightened job satisfaction and decreased conflicts between work and family responsibilities. (Allen et al., 2015; Golden, 2018). Furthermore, it suggests that HWAs contribute to improved work-life balance, positively impacting employee effectiveness and quality of their work, resulting in higher performance levels.

However, it is essential to consider the potential challenges and limitations of HWAs. Some studies have highlighted the potential negative consequences of blurring work and personal life boundaries, such as increased work-family conflict (Biron & van Veldhoven, 2016). Additionally, the risk of inefficiency and incompetence may increase due to longer working hours, isolation, and limited social support associated with remote work (Dhand, 2023). To optimize the benefits of HWAs and mitigate these challenges,

organizations should provide clear guidelines, training, and support systems to help employees maintain work-life balance and prevent inefficiency and incompetence.

The elaborated hypothesis states that implementing HWAs influences employee performance by enhancing effectiveness, efficiency, and quality. By providing flexibility and autonomy, HWAs positively impact employee motivation, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall performance outcomes. However, organizations must also address challenges associated with blurring boundaries and potential burnout risks to maximize the benefits of HWAs.

Based on these findings, implementing HWAs will improve employee effectiveness, efficiency, and performance quality. Hence, offering remote work options and flexible work schedules will create an environment that leads to job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall performance excellence.

2.3 The Mediating Effect of Flexible Schedules

A flexible schedule enables employees to align their work hours with peak productivity, improving task performance and job satisfaction. The availability of a flexible schedule allows employees to have control over their work hours, providing them with the opportunity to align their work with their peak productivity times and manage personal obligations effectively.

Recent research by Gratton (2021) investigated the implementation of hybrid work models during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings revealed that organizations that offered hybrid working arrangements reported higher levels of flexibility in work schedules compared to those that solely relied on remote work. The research emphasized the importance of hybrid models in providing employees the freedom to balance their work and personal commitments through flexible scheduling.

In another research by Jamaludin (2018), researchers explored the impact of flexible work arrangements, including hybrid work, on employee productivity and performance. They found that employees with access to flexible schedules, allowing them to choose when and where they worked, demonstrated higher task performance and job satisfaction. The research highlighted the positive influence of flexible schedules in hybrid work environments on employee outcomes.

Furthermore, research by Golden (2021) examined the relationship between flexible schedules and work engagement in hybrid work settings. The results indicated that employees with flexible schedules reported higher levels of work engagement, suggesting that the ability to determine one's work hours in a hybrid work arrangement contributes to increased motivation and commitment to work tasks.

Research by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) examined the impact of flexible work arrangements, including flexible scheduling, on employee outcomes. The research found that employees with access to flexible schedules reported higher levels of job performance than those with rigid schedules. The authors suggest that flexible schedules enable employees to adapt their work hours to align with their preferences and energy patterns, resulting in improved performance outcomes.

Research by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) explored the relationship between flexible work arrangements and job performance in a virtual work context. The findings revealed that employees with the flexibility to control their work hours demonstrated higher levels of task performance and overall job performance. The authors propose that flexible schedules allow employees to optimize their work hours and engage in work when they are most productive, leading to enhanced performance outcomes.

Furthermore, most recent research by Hill et al. (2024) investigated the effects of flexible work arrangements on employee outcomes across various industries and occupations. The research revealed a positive association between flexible schedules and job performance. The authors suggest that the autonomy and control offered by flexible schedules allow employees to align their work with their personal preferences, resulting in improved performance.

Barrero et al. (2021) conducted research on the effects of hybrid working arrangements on employee productivity and performance. The research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found that employees with the flexibility to work remotely and adjust their schedules reported higher productivity and performance levels than those with rigid work arrangements. The authors propose that the autonomy and control over work hours offered by hybrid arrangements empower employees to customize their work according to their individual needs and preferences, resulting in enhanced performance outcomes.

In addition, research by Golden (2020) investigated the impact of flexible work arrangements, including flexible scheduling, on employee engagement and performance. The findings indicated that employees who had the option to set their work schedules reported higher levels of engagement and demonstrated improved job performance. The authors contend that adjusting work hours to personal circumstances boosts employee satisfaction and motivation, ultimately propelling performance.

Furthermore, Gensowski et al. (2020) examined the relationship between flexible schedules and worker productivity in large-scale research. The results revealed that employees who had access to flexible schedules exhibited higher productivity levels, indicating that the flexibility to adjust work hours positively affects performance outcomes. The authors suggest that flexible schedules allow employees to align their work with peak energy levels, enhancing efficiency and output.

However, contrasting viewpoints and contradicting evidence regarding the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and flexible schedules also exist. For example, research by Biron and van Veldhoven (2016) found that although hybrid work arrangements offer some flexibility, they may also introduce challenges and work intensification. Their research revealed that employees in hybrid work arrangements reported higher work demands, longer working hours, and increased difficulty in separating work from personal life, suggesting that the flexibility offered by hybrid work may only sometimes translate into better control over one's work schedule.

Additionally, research by Elst et al. (2012) examined the impact of job demands and resources on the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and work-related well-being. The findings showed that the availability of flexible schedules in hybrid work did not directly contribute to higher well-being. Rather than that, the research uncovered that job resources, like supervisor support and autonomy, played a more substantial role in alleviating the negative impacts of job demands and promoting well-being.

In more recent research by Dettmers et al. (2022), the researchers explored the relationship between hybrid work arrangements and flexible schedules in the context of employee performance. Their findings revealed a non-significant relationship. The research suggested that other factors, such as task autonomy and job control, might be more influential in determining employee performance outcomes in hybrid work environments.

These contrasting viewpoints and contradicting evidence highlight the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and flexible schedules. Although hybrid work may present flexibility opportunities, it is crucial to account for potential challenges and factors impacting the outcomes.

These recent studies and previous research provide robust evidence supporting the hypothesis that flexible schedules mediate the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and employee performance. The ability to control work hours and adapt them to individual preferences allows employees to optimize their productivity, engagement, and overall job performance.

Flexible schedules, characterized by the ability to vary work hours, adjust start and end times, and accommodate personal needs, have gained attention as a potential driver of employee performance (Berg et al., 2003). Proponents argue that flexible schedules enable employees to align work with their individual preferences and personal circumstances, increasing job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement and positively impacting performance (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Pedersen & Jeppesen, 2012).

Evidence from studies supports the positive relationship between flexible schedules and employee performance. For example, research by Hill et al. (2019) learned that employees with flexible schedules reported higher levels of job performance than those with rigid schedules.

Moreover, research by Golden (2021) examined the effects of flexible work arrangements, including flexible schedules, on various work-related outcomes. The findings revealed a small but positive relationship between flexible schedules and job performance. The research suggested that the autonomy and control over work hours provided by flexible schedules can lead to greater job satisfaction, reduced work-family conflict, and improved performance outcomes.

Recent evidence has also highlighted the potential benefits of flexible schedules for employee performance. In research conducted by Zhang (2023) exploring positive psychological resources like self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, psychological capital plays a pivotal role in investigating the

connection between flexible work arrangements and performance. They found that employees with higher levels of psychological capital exhibited better job performance when they had access to flexible work arrangements. Hence, individuals with a positive mindset and the ability to adapt to changing work schedules may thrive in flexible work environments.

Another research by Jindain and Gilitwala (2024) investigated the relationship between flexible schedules and various outcomes, including performance, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and mental health. They found that flexible schedules were associated with improved job satisfaction and work-life balance, contributing to better employee performance. Therefore, it highlights the indirect effect of flexible schedules on performance through its influence on job satisfaction and work-life balance.

Recent research has provided further insights into the relationship between flexible schedules and employee performance. Yang et al. (2023) investigated the mediating role of work-life integration and psychological empowerment in this relationship. They found that when employees could effectively integrate their work and personal life and felt psychologically empowered in their roles, the positive impact of flexible schedules on performance was enhanced. Thus, psychological processes and individual experiences play a crucial role in translating the benefits of flexible schedules into improved performance outcomes.

In research conducted by Attar and Abdul-Kareem (2021), the influence of flexible work arrangements on performance was investigated, considering the mediating factors of job satisfaction and work-life balance. The findings indicated that employees with access to flexible schedules reported elevated levels of job satisfaction and improved work-life balance, contributing positively to their performance. It supports the notion that flexible schedules can enhance employee performance indirectly by promoting job satisfaction and facilitating a better balance between work and personal life.

Contrary to the evidence, some researchers argue that the relationship between flexible schedules and performance may not be straightforward and can be influenced by various factors. For example, research by Kossek et al. (2018) highlighted that the relationship between flexible schedules and performance might be contingent upon factors such as job demands, task characteristics, and individual preferences. They found that for complex and demanding tasks, rigid schedules may be more effective in facilitating concentration and focus, leading to better performance outcomes than flexible schedules.

While Alfatihah et. al (2021) discussed the potential challenges and downsides of flexible work arrangements, they argued that while flexibility can offer benefits, such as increased autonomy and work-life integration, it can also lead to clouded limits between work and personal life, increased work intensity, and heightened expectations of availability. These factors can potentially hinder employee performance and well-being. Another research by Raghuram et al. (2019) explored the gig economy and alternative work arrangements, often involving flexible schedules. They highlighted the need to consider the power dynamics and labour conditions in such arrangements, as they can impact the relationship between flexibility and performance. They suggested that job security, social protection, and fair remuneration issues should be considered to ensure that flexible schedules contribute to positive performance outcomes.

Additionally, Hill et al. (2010) explored the potential negative consequences of flexible schedules on performance. They found that excessive flexibility, characterized by frequent changes in work hours and unpredictable scheduling, can disrupt workflow, coordination, and communication, resulting in decreased performance. The research emphasized balancing flexibility and stability to ensure optimal performance outcomes. While evidence supports the positive relationship between flexible schedules and employee performance, recent research has shed light on the contrasting viewpoint.

2.4 The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

Hybrid working arrangements, emphasizing flexibility and autonomy, can affect employees' job satisfaction, a significant aspect of employee well-being and organizational success. Proponents argue that the freedom to choose where and when to work can enhance job satisfaction by providing a better work-life balance, increased control over one's schedule, and reduced commuting stress (Elst et al., 2012). Employees who can work remotely or have flexible work hours may experience higher levels of job satisfaction due to reduced work-life conflict and increased autonomy in managing their work.

Evidence supporting the positive relationship between hybrid working arrangements and job satisfaction is emerging. Research by Elst et al. (2012) found that employees with more control over their working hours and location reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Another study by Connelly and Murphy (2018) revealed that telecommuting, a form of hybrid working arrangement, positively influenced job satisfaction by reducing commuting time and increasing work-life balance. These findings suggest that the flexibility offered by hybrid working arrangements can contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees.

However, some studies have highlighted potential challenges associated with hybrid work, such as isolation, blurring of work-life boundaries, and reduced social interactions with colleagues, which may negatively impact job satisfaction. For example, research by Golden et al. (2021) found that while employees appreciated the flexibility of hybrid work, they also expressed concerns about decreased social connections and difficulties separating work and personal life, leading to lower job satisfaction.

Moreover, the impact of hybrid working arrangements on job satisfaction may vary across individuals and contexts. Factors such as job role, personality traits, and organizational culture may moderate the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and job satisfaction. For instance, employees requiring high collaboration and face-to-face interactions may experience lower job satisfaction in hybrid work settings than those in more autonomous roles.

Additional evidence suggests a nuanced relationship between hybrid working arrangements and job satisfaction. Research by Allen et al. (2022) explored the impact of hybrid work on job satisfaction and found that while overall job satisfaction did not significantly change, there were variations based on individual preferences and job characteristics. The research emphasized the importance of aligning work arrangements with individual needs and preferences to enhance job satisfaction.

Furthermore, a recent meta-analysis by Raghuram et al. (2023) examined the relationship between flexible work arrangements, including hybrid work, and job satisfaction. The analysis revealed a small positive effect of flexible work arrangements on job satisfaction, indicating that employees with access to flexible schedules and remote work options reported slightly higher levels of job satisfaction than those with more rigid work arrangements.

Conversely, contradicting evidence comes from research by Biron and van Veldhoven (2016), which found that while flexible work arrangements, including hybrid work, were positively associated with work-life balance and job satisfaction, the relationship was weaker for individuals with higher job demands. Therefore, the benefits of hybrid work on job satisfaction may be more pronounced for employees in less demanding job roles.

Additionally, Kossek et al. (2022) examined the role of perceived flexibility in the relationship between hybrid work and job satisfaction. They found that employees who perceived higher levels of flexibility in their hybrid work arrangements reported greater job satisfaction. It highlights the importance of the actual flexibility provided by the work arrangement and the perception of flexibility in influencing job satisfaction outcomes.

Furthermore, the impact of hybrid working arrangements on job satisfaction may vary across industries and organizational contexts. Research by Cho et al. (2021) examined the relationship between hybrid work and job satisfaction in the healthcare sector and found mixed results. While some healthcare professionals reported higher job satisfaction with hybrid work due to increased flexibility, others expressed concerns about work intensification and the blurring of work-life boundaries, leading to lower job satisfaction.

Employees may experience higher levels of job satisfaction, leading to improved performance outcomes. For instance, research by Judge et al. (2001) originates a significant confirmed relationship between job satisfaction and job performance across various industries and occupations. They concluded that satisfied employees tend to invest more effort, exhibit higher levels of task performance, and demonstrate proactive behavior in their roles.

Some studies argue that while job satisfaction may contribute to increased job performance, the relationship could be more complex and direct. For instance, research by Riketta (2008) found that relationships are mediated by motivation, organizational commitment, and job complexity. They suggested

that job satisfaction indirectly influences performance through these mediators rather than having a direct impact.

Furthermore, contradictory evidence highlights potential moderating factors that influence the job satisfaction-performance relationship. For example, Bowling et al. (2010) examined the influence of job complexity on the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. They found that the positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance was more robust for employees in complex jobs than those in less complex roles. The nature of the work can affect the strength of the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. A meta-analysis by Chen et al. (2017) examined that organizational culture and job satisfaction performance are connected and have a moderating effect. They found that a positive organizational culture, characterized by supportive leadership, teamwork, and employee empowerment, strengthens the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. In contrast, a hostile or unsupportive organizational culture weakens the relationship, indicating that the organizational context is significant in shaping the impact of job satisfaction on performance.

However, some studies present contradicting evidence regarding the job satisfaction-performance relationship. For example, Li et al. (2020) found a curvilinear relationship between job satisfaction and performance, suggesting that extremely high or low levels of job satisfaction can harm performance. They proposed that moderate levels of job satisfaction are optimal for fostering higher performance levels, while extreme levels may lead to complacency or dissatisfaction.

2.5 The Mediating Effect of Work-life Balance

Hybrid working arrangements (HWAs), with their flexibility and potential for better integration of work and personal life, are often considered to enhance work-life balance. Proponents argue that the flexibility offered by HWAs permits employees to administer their work and personal responsibilities, leading to reduced work-life conflicts and improved work-life balance (Allen et al., 2015). This suggests a promising potential for HWAs to positively impact work-life balance.

Research by Eversole and Crowder (2022) supports this viewpoint. They found that employees who could work remotely experienced higher work-life balance levels than those who exclusively worked in the office. They observed that the flexibility of hybrid working arrangements enabled employees to allocate their time more effectively, resulting in a better balance between their work and personal lives.

Alternatively, research indicates that hybrid working arrangements may introduce challenges in maintaining work-life balance and exacerbate work-life interference. Hill et al. (2010) conducted research revealing that employees engaged in remote work reported higher levels of work-life interference compared to their counterparts who solely worked on-site. Integrating work and personal life boundaries inherent in hybrid working arrangements can make it more challenging for individuals to detach from work and effectively manage their commitments.

Moreover, research by Cech and Blair-Loy (2014) highlighted the role of gender in the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and work-life balance. They found that women in hybrid working arrangements faced more work-life balance challenges than their male counterparts. Gendered expectations and societal norms surrounding caregiving responsibilities can influence the experience of work-life balance in hybrid working arrangements.

Recent findings and evidence have shed light on the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and work-life balance. One study by Khalid et al. (2022) explored employees' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic when hybrid working became more prevalent. They found that employees who had control over their work schedules and could adapt their working hours to their personal needs reported higher levels of work-life balance, suggesting that the flexibility inherent in hybrid working arrangements can contribute to improved work-life balance.

On the other hand, research by Wheatley (2016) provided contrasting evidence by highlighting the potential negative impact of hybrid working on work-life balance. They found that employees who frequently worked from home as part of hybrid arrangements experienced increased role blurring and difficulty in separating work and personal life. This blurring of boundaries resulted in higher work-life

conflict and reduced work-life balance, acknowledging the valid concerns and challenges that can arise in hybrid working arrangements.

Furthermore, a recent review by Morikawa (2021) examined the impact of hybrid working on work-life balance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The review highlighted that the relationship between hybrid working arrangements and work-life balance is complex and influenced by factors such as individual characteristics, job demands, and organizational support. It emphasized the empowering role of individuals and the importance of organizational support in maintaining a healthy work-life balance in hybrid working arrangements.

A harmonious work-life balance is a crucial element impacting employee performance. Allen et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis investigating the correlation between work-life balance and various performance indicators. The results revealed a positive association between work-life balance and employee performance, implying that individuals who effectively manage the equilibrium between their professional and personal spheres are likelier to demonstrate enhanced job performance.

Contrastingly, Clark's (2000) research provided insight that challenges the direct relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. The research argued that work-life balance is a subjective concept, and its impact on performance may vary depending on individual differences and job characteristics. For some employees, a higher degree of work-life balance may lead to a reduced commitment to work and lower motivation, resulting in decreased performance.

More recent research by Brough et al. (2014) explored the complex relationship between work-life balance and performance. They found that the relationship is contingent upon individual and contextual factors, such as job demands, organizational support, and personal resources. Their findings suggested that employees who perceive a high work-life balance and have access to supportive resources are more likely to experience improved well-being and subsequently exhibit higher performance.

Barber et al. (2019) conducted research indicating that mediating factors like job satisfaction and organizational support might influence the association between work-life balance and performance. The authors proposed that although work-life balance is significant, its impact on performance might be indirect, operating through its influence on these intermediary variables.

Furthermore, more recent research by Zhang and Li (2021) examined the moderating role of job demands in the relationship between work-life balance and performance. They found that when employees face high job demands, the positive relationship between work-life balance and performance weakens. This suggests that the impact of work-life balance on performance may be contingent upon the specific demands and challenges employees face in their work environments.

Barrero et al. (2021) researched the dynamic nature of work-life balance and its connection to performance. Their findings indicated that work-life balance is not static and can vary over time. They also discovered that fluctuations in work-life balance may have varying effects on performance outcomes. Thus, it emphasizes the significance of considering the temporal dimension of work-life balance and its influence on employee performance.

Conceptual Framework

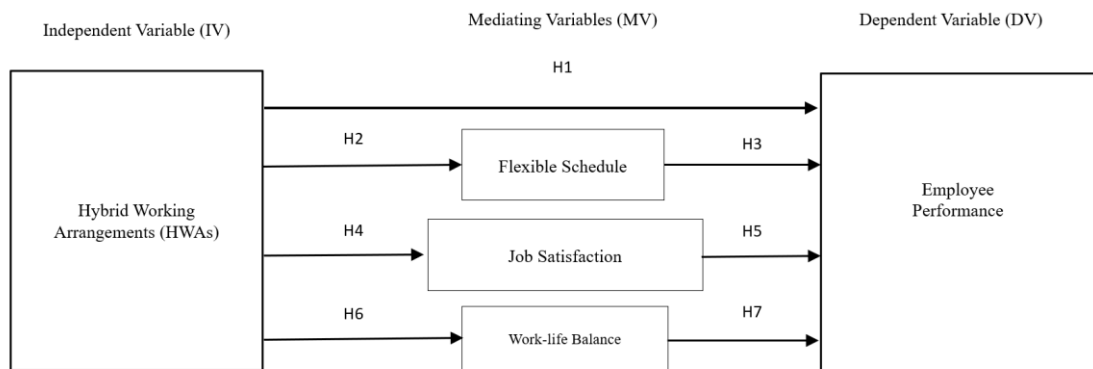


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

- H1 The increase in hybrid working positively correlates with improved employee performance.
- H2 An increase in hybrid working arrangements positively correlates with an increase in flexible schedule options.
- H3 An increase in a flexible schedule positively correlates with improved employee performance.
- H4 The increase in hybrid working arrangements positively correlates with higher levels of job satisfaction
- H5 Higher job satisfaction positively correlates with improved employee performance
- H6 The increase in hybrid working arrangements positively correlates with improved work-life balance.
- H7 Improved work-life balance positively correlates with improved employee performance

The conceptual framework above uses hybrid working arrangements (HWAs) as the independent variable (IV) and employee performance as the dependent variable (DV). This study uses Flexible Schedules, Job Satisfaction, and Work-life Balance as mediators. Figure 1 above depicts the proposed conceptual framework of the hypotheses examined in the current research.

3. Methodology

The methodology employed a quantitative approach, utilizing surveys to collect data on the relationship between Hybrid Working Arrangements (HWAs) and employee performance. A quantitative research approach involves systematically collecting and analyzing numerical data to understand relationships between variables. Surveys are a standard tool in quantitative research for gathering structured data from participants to measure specific constructs or variables. The sample frame included diverse job roles and demographic characteristics to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the mediating factors influencing employee outcomes. A diverse sample helps capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing the generalizability of the study findings to a broader population. By including participants from various job roles and demographic backgrounds, the research can provide a more holistic view of how HWAs impact employee performance across different contexts.

We conducted thorough validity and reliability assessments as part of our commitment to rigorous research. These assessments play a crucial role in enhancing the credibility of the study findings. Validity ensures that the study accurately measures the concepts it intends to, while reliability confirms the consistency and stability of the research findings over time and across different conditions. By conducting these assessments, we have fortified the trustworthiness of our survey instrument and data collection procedures, thereby bolstering the overall quality and credibility of the study.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research delved into the intricate relationship between Hybrid Working Arrangements (HWAs) and employee performance, considering mediating variables such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and other work characteristics. Through a comprehensive literature review and a well-defined research methodology, this study aimed to shed light on the impact of HWAs on employee outcomes in the evolving landscape of modern work practices. The expected findings from this research underscored the significance of HWAs in shaping employee performance and well-being. The flexibility offered by hybrid work models positively influenced job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall performance outcomes among employees. However, challenges such as work-life interference and social isolation in remote work settings were also identified, emphasizing the importance of focusing on these issues to optimize the benefits of HWAs.

This study, employing a quantitative research design and robust data collection procedures, provided valuable insights into the mechanisms through which HWAs impact employee performance. The survey instrument used in data collection, coupled with validity and reliability assessments, ensured the accuracy and credibility of the study findings.

Moving forward, organizations can leverage the findings of this research to design and implement effective hybrid work arrangements that promote job satisfaction and work-life balance and ultimately enhance employee performance. Organizations can create a conducive work culture that fosters productivity, creativity, and overall success by prioritizing employee well-being and engagement in hybrid work environments.

In essence, this research significantly contributes to the growing body of knowledge on HWAs and their implications for employee performance. By recognizing the mediating effects of job satisfaction, work-life balance, and other key variables, organizations can navigate the complexities of modern work arrangements and allow their employees to thrive in a vibrant and ever-changing work landscape.

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