

Hybrid workplace, work engagement, performance and happiness: A model for optimizing productivity



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Abstract The workplace environment experienced tremendous transformation after the worldwide pandemic, with the hybrid model emerging as the most significant paradigm. For a considerable duration, organizations have faced challenges in creating an optimal work environment that fosters heightened productivity, well-being, employee performance, and overall job satisfaction. The present study aims to explore the transformation journey from crisis-induced hybrid work to the construction of a sustainable post-pandemic work environment, as well as the significant impact of the hybrid workplace on employee performance and job happiness. The researchers employed a quantitative method to collect data from 260 employees working in a hybrid work setting. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was applied to assess the data and examine the hypotheses. The findings indicate that hybrid work has a significant and positive effect on employee performance and job happiness. It also appears that hybrid work has a positive effect on work engagement and that work engagement considerably mediates the relationship between hybrid work and employee performance. However, the findings do not support the direct effect of hybrid work on job happiness, but rather the mediating role of work engagement in the proposed relationship between hybrid work and job happiness. The research introduces fresh insights by linking the hybrid workplace model to employee performance, job satisfaction and work engagement. Additionally, it extends the JD-R model into the hybrid workplace context. The practical implications of this study suggest that practitioners can leverage these findings to inform the development of policies and procedures aimed at enhancing employee performance and job satisfaction, particularly within the framework of the hybrid workplace model.

Keywords: hybrid workplace, employee performance, work engagement, job happiness, jd-r theory

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a tremendous transition from traditional to remote or hybrid workplaces (Harris, 2015). The term 'hybrid' is not a cutting edge in today's world. However, the term 'hybrid' has acquired widespread usage, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been used in various ways over the years in various depictions. However, when we discuss hybridity in the context of industry and the workforce, the global industrial workforce is undergoing a paradigm shift in how we perceive work arrangements in hybridity. Moreover, "to represent hybridity, especially in a workplace, the physical work arrangement and the work-from-home system are integrated" (Cook et al., 2020). The growth of technology, along with shifting employee expectations, has given rise to another paradigm—the hybrid workplace model. Workplace disruption has prompted many workers to react with fear and concern regarding the future (Curtain, 1998). In addition, the hybrid workplace model is the way in which the next generation works. The workforce demands their organization to serve kindly and to provide a novel regenerating environment as they transition from work-from home to the postpandemic future (Kumar et al., 2022).

According to the report by Deloitte (2022), approximately 60% of interviewed leaders believe that spending time in the office is required to sustain work culture. The majority of the employees globally agreed in one study, and 44% of the employees indicated that a hybrid approach was their chosen back-to-work decision. Therefore, working in a hybrid workplace offers organization's distinct opportunities that come with a mix of remote and traditional workplaces (Iqbal et al., 2021) and is presently desired by many employees (Oppong Pephrah, 2023). In summary, the hybrid model provides some work onsite at the workplace, whereas others operate remotely over the internet. This arrangement might also involve the same group of workers, who show up physically at the company's location and work remotely for the other days of the week (Iqbal et al., 2021b). Flexibility at work, lower labor costs, greater worker happiness, and improved environmental experiences are all part of the bundle that comes with remote work. The benefit of the traditional model is also included. There is a high possibility of hands-on involvement with the present culture in the workplace (Gupta & Kumar, 2023). This enables employees to integrate their work into their personal lives, reducing the stress of going to the office daily (Haas & Ferreira Major, 2022). Hence, working in this arrangement has an impact on employee performance, productivity, and well-being.



However, research shows that working in a hybrid model is favorable for the workforce worldwide (Johannessen, 2018). According to the report by Gartner (2021), Indian employees expressed better efficiency when working remotely, owing to the ability to avoid substantial traffic congestion, which might take up to three to four hours of their daily journey.

Finally, the research suggests that a focus evolves as a result of changing workplace dynamics and the growing relevance it has in today's workplaces. Although an immense amount of research has been carried out in the context of Work From Home (WFH), teleworking, Work From Office (WFO), etc., that looks into the impact of WFH & WFO on employee performance, limited research has been conducted on hybrid workplaces. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by focusing on the influence of a hybrid workplace on employee performance. Despite increased interest in the hybrid workplace model across the world, including in India, there is a paucity of empirical studies on its influence on employee performance. This gap was discovered by the researcher following an in-depth review of the literature. Therefore, the present research aims not only to fill this gap but also to provide policymakers, practitioners, and academicians with valuable insight into the impact of the hybrid workplace model on employee performance and job happiness through work engagement.

2. Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Hybrid workplace model: Evolution

For decades, alternative workplace arrangements (e.g., remote work, telework) have been a focus of discussion in research (DeSanctis, 1984). As indicated in the introduction, hybrid workplaces are becoming increasingly prevalent. These workplace models are divided into four types: flexible hybrid, fixed hybrid, office-first hybrid, and remote-first work models (Vidhyaa & Ravichandran, 2022). Following prior research, the idea of remote work refers to working from a flexible workplace rather than a physical office (e.g., from home) (Olson, 1983). In addition to remote work, hybrid work has been an explosive subject throughout the pandemic and post-pandemic eras. Remote and hybrid working should be options for flexible working, particularly in regard to work–life balance (Khatimah et al., 2022a). However, this conceptualization has boundaries, and this type of workplace arrangement has emerged as an outcome of recent disturbances (such as the pandemic, the 5.0 industrial revolution, and digital transformation) (Weritz & Braojos, 2022). The technological revolution and the industrial revolution often modify the macrolevel (e.g., the workplace) and microlevel (e.g., one's interests and actions) in the dynamic setting of organizations (Colbert et al., (2016), which is described as the hybrid workplace model. The present research will concentrate on the first kind—the hybrid workplace model that permits employees to select their place of work and working times according to what is important for the day.

With the widespread acceptance of working in hybrid workplaces, the work system changed from traditional workplaces to online workplaces, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Technological advancement is one of the fundamental steps in establishing the first pillar of the hybrid workplace paradigm (Radonić et al., 2021). A hybrid workplace was already in existence in India before COVID-19, with a limited number of sectors, but during the pandemic, it was adopted by almost all sectors across the country. During the pandemic, those who do not adopt flexible working could not survive. Furthermore, when discussing the preference for working in the hybrid model, a McKinsey (2021) survey was conducted, which revealed that, in a pre-covid-19 situation, 62% of workers work onsite, 30% hybrid, and 8% remote. In contrast, according to a post-covid-19 survey, employees' preferred workplace has switched from onsite (37%) to hybrid (52%). Workers have adopted the hybrid workplace model. The hybrid workplace model can focus on where to work, what days of the week to work, how many working hours to put in, whom to report to, and whom to keep track of (Iqbal et al., 2021b). Working under this framework allows employees to maintain their health and work–life balance better. Changes in the workplace influence performance and relationships between employees.

2.2. JD-R theory

In the present study, the JD-R model is employed to delineate the relationships among the hybrid workplace setting, work engagement, and job performance (Bakker et al., 2014). The JD-R model has been extensively utilized to explore the impact of work environments on employee well-being, encompassing aspects such as work engagement, burnout, health, and motivation, as well as job performance (Bakker et al., 2014). This approach divides all working circumstances or job characteristics into two major categories: job demands and job resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job demands and resources can encompass psychological, social, physical, or organizational facets of a work. While job demands are not essentially negative, they involve challenges that often require additional effort from employees to cope with the stress associated with the work. For instance, job demands include considerable time and workload pressures and role overload. In contrast, job resources provide positive reinforcement and organizational support (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

2.3. Hybrid workplace & employee performance

Employee performance is a top priority for organizations attempting to adapt to the changing environment of work arrangements, especially in the context of the hybrid workplace model. An immense amount of research investigates the complex character of employee performance in this scenario. Researchers have investigated numerous aspects of

performance, including productivity, job satisfaction, engagement, work–life balance, and the support of leaders, communication, and technology. Notably, (Khatimah et al., 2022b) discovered that the hybrid workplace can increase productivity by increasing employees' autonomy and flexibility in handling their jobs. On the other hand, Gupta & Kumar (2023) emphasized the multiple advantages of working in the hybrid model, one of which is enhanced employee performance as a result of the freedom to complete tasks when and how they choose. The theoretical foundation outlined above suggests that working in a hybrid workplace model is more likely to increase employee performance. On the basis of the theoretical foundation, the following can be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). The hybrid workplace model positively impacts employee performance.

2.4. Hybrid workplace & job happiness

Job happiness is not confined to personal life but may also be discovered in the workplace (Wesarat et al., 2014). JD-R theory highlights the relationship between employee flexibility and job happiness (Hameduddin, 2021). However, job happiness in this emerging work model is influenced by flexible work arrangements, an emphasis on work–life balance, effective communication tactics, a supportive organizational culture, and leadership strategies (Anis Suraya Mohd Ayub Khan, 2023). The theoretical foundation outlined above suggests that working in a hybrid workplace model is more likely to influence job happiness. On the basis of the theoretical foundation, the following can be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). The hybrid workplace model is positively associated with job happiness.

2.5. Hybrid workplace & work engagement

The phrase "work engagement" has gained popularity in the previous 20 years. This popularity stems from the fact that work engagement appears to be strongly positively associated with change adaptation (Vakola et al., 2021). Schaufeli & Bakker, (2004) defined "work engagement" as a pleasant affective, motivational, gratifying, and work-related state of mind. Research on work engagement in the context of a hybrid workplace is largely underrepresented in the literature since most studies have contributed to the traditional workplace model (Mäkikangas et al., 2022).

Given the contradictory outcomes of telework and flexible studies, it remains unclear whether telework is useful. For example, Gerards et al. (2018) reported that the use of teleworking may improve employee job engagement. Teleworkers save the mental strain and energy of lengthy drives, which might otherwise lead to tiredness, by working from home or another desired location (Wilks & Billsberry, 2007). Furthermore, Naqshbandi et al. (2023) reported that telework has a detrimental effect on work engagement and that flexible work positively affects work engagement. With the theoretical framework outlined above, this implies that working in a hybrid workplace model is more likely to increase the work engagement of an employee. On the basis of the theoretical foundation, the following can be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). The hybrid workplace model is positively related to work engagement.

2.6. Work Engagement and Employee Performance

The more engaged an employee is, the more likely he or she is to offer wonderful employee performance; hence, engagement is the best predictor of employee performance (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). Performance is closely linked to an organization's level of commitment to transforming the compensation system that may match workers' intrinsic and extrinsic demands, boosting employee participation and making people the center of every function in the organization (Zeglat & Janbeik, 2019). Many studies have been conducted to demonstrate the link between employee engagement and employee performance. For example, Cesário & Chambel (Cesário & Chambel, 2017) reported that work engagement has been seen as a crucial success element in achieving greater levels of performance and has a significant connection with employee performance (Vance, 2006). Reported that the more focused work engagement is, the greater the probability that employees will achieve good performance. As a result of the aforementioned theoretical foundation, it is feasible to hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4 (H4) Work engagement is positively related to employee performance.

2.7. Work engagement & job happiness

The degree to which individuals experience good sentiment and satisfaction at work is referred to as job happiness (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Job happiness is not confined to personal life but may also be discovered in the workplace environment. Employees who are engaged frequently exhibit positive feelings such as happiness and excitement, as well as improved workplace well-being, and they can distribute energy to coworkers (Bakker, 2009). Employee engagement connects individual circumstances and mental states to positively understand and complete a profession. It is characterized by absorption, devotion, and strength, and it may be a valuable asset if well handled (Harter et al., 2002). According to Saks (Saks, 2019a), employees believe that the organization recognizes their presence and work outcomes, resulting in a sense of peace and happiness in the workplace. Furthermore, employee engagement increases happiness (Santhanam & Srinivas, 2020). A

happy, contented and engaged workforce ushers in increased productivity (Mishra et al., 2019). On the basis of the above-outlined theoretical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5 (H5) Work engagement is positively related to job happiness.

2.8. Work engagement: The mediating role between the hybrid workplace and employee performance

The following sections reveal a series of connections between the hybrid workplace model and employee work engagement, as well as between work engagement and employee performance. A hybrid workplace model may result in changes in work engagement, which may have a causal influence on job performance (Bakker et al., 2014b). In particular, hybrid work alters the working environment for employees, which might cause processes that positively (i.e., increased job resources, reduced job demands) and negatively (i.e., reduced job resources, increased job demands) affect job performance through work engagement (Naqshbandi et al., 2023). Several findings from empirical studies suggest that work engagement serves as a mediator. For example, work engagement has a substantial effect on employee performance, according to the data, and work engagement mediates the link between manager support and employee performance (M. Gupta et al., 2015). have shown that work engagement fully mediates the favorable influence of workplace resources, particularly autonomy, on Spanish employees' proactive actions (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008). On the basis of the above-outlined theoretical foundation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6 (H6). Work engagement serves as the mediator between the hybrid workplace and employee performance.

2.9. Work engagement: Mediating role between the hybrid workplace model and job happiness

The following sections highlight some links between the hybrid workplace and work engagement, as well as work engagement and job happiness.

Job happiness is one of many additional outcome variables of the hybrid workplace that may be researched further (Naqshbandi et al., 2023). Therefore, in light of the study's limitations, the current study sought to assess the influence of a hybrid workplace on job happiness through work engagement. On the basis of the above-outlined theoretical foundation, the following can be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 7 (H7). Work engagement serves as a mediator between the hybrid workplace and job happiness.

On the basis of theoretical background the following hypothetical model, depicted in Figure 1, is framed, for the present study. The figure 1 is comprised of exogenous, endogenous and a mediating variables. Whereas hybrid workplace is an exogenous variable, employee performance and job happiness are endogenous variables. Work engagement serves as a mediator between hybrid workplace and employee performance, as well as between hybrid workplace and job happiness.

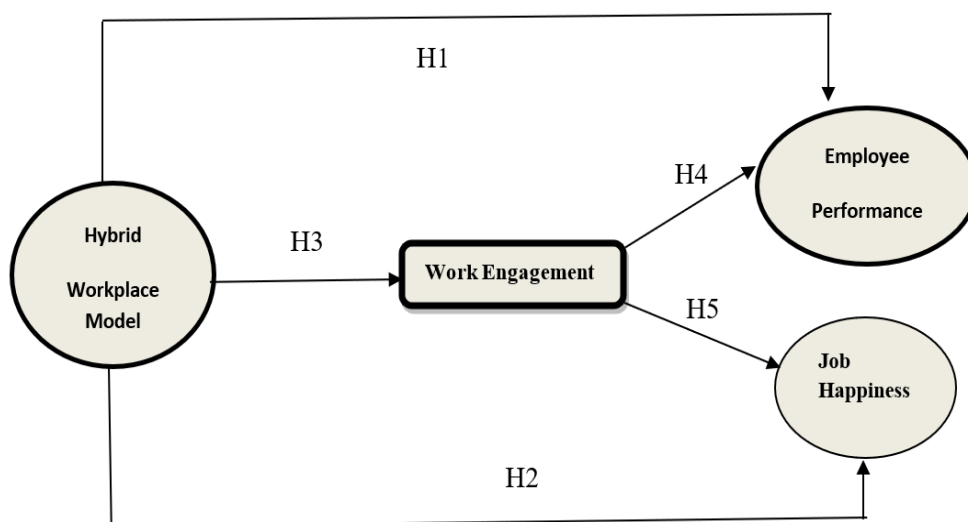


Figure 1 Hypothetical Model.

3. Materials and Methods

The impact of the hybrid workplace model on both employee performance and job happiness was explored through a descriptive and empirical research methodology. The mediation of work engagement was also investigated to comprehend both direct and indirect effects. For this purpose, the research utilized a quantitative survey method to gather information



from employees in India who are working in a hybrid mode. Employees who had the potential to respond received a survey link that could be reused and sent through both LinkedIn and official email addresses.

To align with the study's requirements, survey items were adapted from previous research. Snowball sampling was employed to collect the data. The data were collected from 300 respondents; after removing deviations, missing numbers, and inattentive replies, the researchers retained 260 appropriate responses for further analysis. The questionnaire has 26 items connected with the constructs HW (Lippens et al., 2020), WE (Schaufeli & Bakker et al., 2004), EP, and JH (Chen et al., 2022). All of these items were evaluated via a 5-point Likert scale (5-strongly agree to 1-strongly disagree)." Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	119	45%
	Male	141	54.23%
	Others	0	
Age Group	Gen Z (born 1997-2012)	144	55%
	Millennial (born 1981-1996)	88	33.84%
	Gen X (born 1965- 1980)	28	10.7%
	Boomer (born 1946- 1964)	0	

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Measurement model

The data analysis used a partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) and was evaluated via measurement and structural models. The measurement model evaluates the relationships between the indicators and their constructs, emphasizing validity and reliability. The structural model, on the other hand, investigates the prediction powers of the constructions themselves. The researcher opted for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) instead of covariance-based SEM because of its better alignment with the exploration of theoretical extensions for established models such as the JD-R model (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). This choice was made to enhance our understanding of the hybrid workplace within the Indian setting.

The construct reliability was assessed (Table 2) via Cronbach's alpha, rho_a, and composite reliability (CR) values (Cronbach, 1951). Each of the CA and CR coefficients is greater than 0.7, supporting the internal consistency of the measures (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The reliability measure rho_a is believed to be the best for measuring construct reliability since it has a 0.7 threshold limit (Hair et al., 2019). According to Diamantopoulos et al. (2012), a composite reliability number greater than 0.95 is considered detrimental since it indicates data duplication. The construct's convergent validity was assessed by calculating the average variance (AVE), and an AVE value exceeding 0.50 was deemed satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019).

The assessment of the measurement model also included an evaluation of discriminant validity. This was accomplished through the utilization of the Fornell–Lacker criteria (Table 3) and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion (Table 4) to gauge the discriminant validity of the construct. The values on the diagonal in Table 4, which represent the latent construct variances of indicators (indicated in bold), surpassed those of the other latent constructs, providing evidence of discriminant validity (Sarr & Ba, 2017). According to Henseler et al. (2015), the HTMT is considered a more precise method for appraising discriminant validity and is deemed acceptable if it falls below 0.85. The results obtained from this analysis confirmed the discriminant validity of the constructs.

The variance inflation factor (VIF) ranges from 1.481 to 4.343 for each component, as indicated in Table 2. These values are below the specified threshold of 5.0, as per F. Hair Jr et al. (2014), indicating the absence of multicollinearity in the structural model. Consequently, each concept is statistically independent, affirming the acceptability of discriminant validity.

4.2. Structural model

The structural model represents the subsequent step in the PLS process and is employed for the examination of the testing hypothesis (see Figure 2). Commonly used metrics to assess structural models include the coefficient of determination (R²) (R² values are 62.6% for EP, 29.9% for JH, and 58.1% for WE), the cross-validated redundancy measure (Q²) derived from blindfolding, and the statistical significance of the path coefficient (Nagvanshi & Popli, 2023). Furthermore, the R² for the endogenous variable (EP) was 0.626, and that for the exogenous variable (JH) was 0.299, both of which were above the stipulated minimum acceptable value of 10% (Falk, 1992). Notably, the exogenous variable accounts for 62.6% of the variation in employee performance and 29.9% of the variation in work happiness. Table 5 shows the route model's Q² values, which are 0.439 for EP, 0.217 for JH, and 0.574 for WE. Q² values greater than zero are considered relevant. Because all of the endogenous variables have a Q² value greater than zero, the model's predictive significance is demonstrated (Shmueli et al., 2016).

Table 2 Measurement model: reliability and validity (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Construct	Measurement Item	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite reliability (Rho_C)	AVE	VIFs
Hybrid Workplace model	HW1	0.746	0.903	0.907	0.924	0.634	2.130
	HW2	0.786					2.462
	HW3	0.775					1.945
	HW4	0.792					2.258
	HW5	0.776					1.989
	HW6	0.835					2.570
	HW7	0.857					2.992
Work Engagement	WE1	0.846	0.942	0.944	0.953	0.744	2.798
	WE2	0.852					3.004
	WE3	0.858					3.034
	WE4	0.813					2.708
	WE5	0.906					4.629
	WE6	0.867					3.434
	WE7	0.891					3.812
Employee Performance	EP1	0.782	0.917	0.920	0.932	0.632	2.081
	EP2	0.801					2.311
	EP3	0.817					2.573
	EP4	0.736					1.983
	EP5	0.835					2.702
	EP6	0.770					2.135
	EP7	0.831					3.128
	EP8	0.781					2.525
Job Happiness	JH1	0.860	0.897	0.906	0.928	0.764	2.653
	JH2	0.900					2.979
	JH3	0.842					2.421
	JH4	0.894					3.055

Table 3 Fornell-Lacker Criterion (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Constructs	EP	HW	JH	WE
Employee Performance	0.795			
Hybrid Workplace	0.669	0.796		
Job Happiness	0.663	0.476	0.874	
Work Engagement	0.783	0.762	0.537	0.862

Table 4 Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Constructs	EP	HW	JH	WE
Employee Performance				
Hybrid Workplace	0.725			
Job Happiness	0.725	0.525		
Work Engagement	0.834	0.819	0.576	

A reliable PLS bootstrap method involving 5000 resamples was applied to examine the proposed connection between latent variables. The model’s explanatory capacity was assessed via the R2 value. The categorization of a model as weak, moderate, or significant was determined according to Henseler et al. (2015) criteria of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75, respectively.

A beta coefficient (β) close to one indicates a substantial impact. Given the one-tailed nature of the study, a t statistic exceeding 1.645 was considered significant. When the p value exceeds 0.05, an insignificant association between variables is implied. Consequently, a hypothesis was deemed acceptable only when the p value was less than 0.05 (refer to Table 5). The results of the hypothesis, derived from PLS bootstrap estimates, are as follows:



The results supported Hypothesis 1: Working in a hybrid mode had a positive and substantial influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.021$, and $t = 2.033$). As a result, H1 was supported. Furthermore, Hypothesis 2: Working in a hybrid mode has no significant effect on job happiness ($\beta = 0.159$, $p = 0.103$, and $t = 1.267$). As a result, H2 was rejected. Hypothesis 3: Working in a hybrid mode has a positive and significant influence on work engagement ($\beta = 0.762$, $p = 0.000$, and $t = 22.854$). Hence, H3 was supported. Hypothesis 4: Work engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.415$, $p = 0.000$, and $t = 3.355$). Hence, H4 was supported.

Furthermore, the researcher investigated the role of job engagement as a mediator in the link between hybrid workplace performance, employee performance and job performance (shown in Table 6), as proven by PLS bootstrapping.

Job engagement served as a mediator between the hybrid workplace and employee performance ($\beta = 0.497$, $p = 0.000$, $t = 7.732$), as well as between the hybrid workplace model and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.317$, $p = 0.001$, $t = 3.228$) (see Table 6 for details). The total impact of work engagement on employee performance was 0.669 ($p = 0.001$), with a direct effect of 0.172 and an indirect effect of 0.497 attributable to the mediation of work engagement. This mediation was considered partial, as both the direct and indirect effects were found to be significant. Similarly, the total effect of a hybrid workplace on job happiness through work engagement was 0.476 ($p = 0.000$). The direct and indirect effects were 0.159 and 0.317, respectively. Given the insignificance of the direct influence and the significance of the indirect effect, the mediation was categorized as full.

Table 5 Structural Model (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Hypothesis	Dependency	Path coefficient (β)	(M)	(stdev)	t-values	P-values	Conclusion
H1	HW -> EP	0.172	0.169	0.084	2.033	0.021	Supported
H2	HW -> JH	0.159	0.161	0.126	1.267	0.103	Not Supported
H3	HW -> WE	0.762	0.765	0.033	22.854	0	Supported
H4	WE -> EP	0.652	0.656	0.072	9.093	0	Supported
H5	WE -> JH	0.415	0.416	0.124	3.355	0	Supported
Constructs		R-Square	R-square adjusted		Q ² predict		
EP		0.626	0.623		0.439		
JH		0.299	0.293		0.217		
WE		0.581	0.579		0.574		

Table 6 Mediation assessment (Given at the end as per journal guidelines).

Hypothesis	Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Mediating Effect	Conclusion
H6	HW -> WE ->EP	0.669	0.172	0.497	Partial	Supported
H7	HW -> WE ->JH	0.476	0.159	0.317	Full	Supported

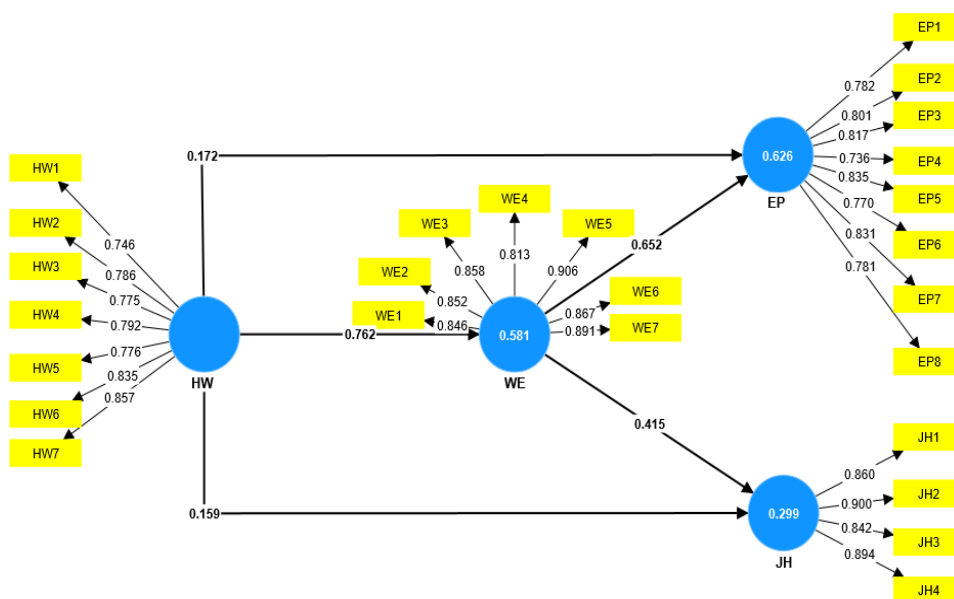


Figure 2 The results of structural model. *Source:* Smart PLS

Based on the statistical inferences, this research developed and assessed a research approach rooted in the JD-R model to investigate the connections between employee performance and job happiness in the hybrid workplace model, with work



engagement serving as a mediating factor. The findings of this study provide statistical support for six out of the seven hypothesized correlations.

The findings of the present study indicate that hybrid workplaces have a positive effect on employee performance. Similar to the findings of Naqshbandi et al. (Naqshbandi et al., 2023), flexible work has a positive influence on job performance. This finding is also in line with previous research (Sekhar & Patwardhan, 2023). This suggests that individuals who have control over their schedules can enhance their workplace efficiency by optimizing their most productive periods, leading to improved employee performance. This viewpoint agrees that people have a set period during which they function optimally or seem ready to contribute their best (Pierce et al., 1989). Hence, the advantages of having autonomy over working hours can assist individuals in managing their professional and personal obligations with flexibility. The present findings align with earlier studies that underscore the importance of flexible work setups in promoting a balance between work and personal life, particularly in developing countries such as India. Other research highlights the significance of work hours, flexible work schedules and workplace choices in improving work–life balance (Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2019). The findings supported the assumption of the JD-R model, which highlights the relevance of job demand, job autonomy, and time control in offering flexible work (a component of a hybrid workplace) and increasing job performance (Bakker et al., 2014c).

Contrary to our predictions, the outcomes of this study show that the hybrid workplace has an insignificant effect on job happiness. One possible interpretation of these findings is that the hybrid workplace model, while providing flexibility in terms of work location, may not directly lead to an increase in job happiness. As Onyeukwu et al. (2020) stated, the primary problems impeding the effectiveness and efficient utilization of distant work activities include poor energy power distribution and poor network service.

According to the findings of the present study, a hybrid workplace could lead to greater work engagement in India and significantly affect work engagement. According to Schaufeli et al. (2006), this implies that giving employees some control over when and how much they work allows them to be highly energetic, excited about their work, and completely involved in it. This arises from employees having increased procedural autonomy in managing their work, encompassing job expectations and resources (Bakker et al., 2011). A positive correlation between hybrid work and work engagement is anticipated in the Indian context, as it has been observed that employees generally opt for hybrid work arrangements (Kabir et al., 2023). Consequently, adopting a hybrid work model enables employees to organize their time effectively and concentrate entirely on job-related responsibilities. This inference aligns with previous studies that underscore the advantages of hybrid work in enhancing work engagement (Ugwu et al., 2023). Therefore, when individuals become strongly engaged in work, there is a greater likelihood that they will allocate substantial resources to their jobs, leading to enhanced employee performance. This finding aligns with prior studies that underscore the advantages of adaptable work arrangements in boosting work engagement (Gerards et al., 2018).

The results of this study align with existing research (Saks, 2019b), indicating a positive connection between work engagement and employee performance. From a theoretical standpoint, experiences of work engagement can impact how employees perceive and utilize diverse workplace resources to fulfill their job expectations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hence, the results of our study are to be expected, as employees who are energized, motivated and engaged demonstrate greater proficiency in utilizing a variety of job resources to accomplish tasks and attain objectives (Naqshbandi et al., 2023). Therefore, when individuals become highly engaged in their work, there is a greater likelihood that they will commit substantial resources to their responsibilities, leading to enhanced performance.

Similarly, the findings of the present study indicate a significant positive association between workplace engagement and job happiness. This finding highlights the critical role that workers' engagement in their jobs plays in their happiness and satisfaction at work. The positive effect is consistent with the current literature emphasizing the relevance of employee engagement as a fundamental predictor of job-related well-being, and employees who are thoroughly involved in their tasks tend to feel more fulfilled and pleased, which contributes greatly to their total job happiness (Kustiawan et al., 2022).

Conversely, the confirming factor in the association between the hybrid workplace and employee performance is the validated mediating role of work engagement. The study results indicate that while hybrid workplaces can have a direct effect on employee performance, the use of work engagement as a mediator has a significant effect. On the other hand, the confirmed mediating effect of work engagement on the connection between the hybrid workplace and job satisfaction is evident. Our data indicate that although a hybrid workplace does not immediately impact job happiness, the presence of work engagement as a mediator enhances the positive impact. Consequently, our study reveals that work engagement acts as a link between a hybrid workplace and employee performance and job happiness. This outcome aligns with the JD-R concept, which asserts that job resources, including time autonomy, can foster work engagement and commitment, leading to enhanced performance and job happiness (Naqshbandi et al., 2023).

6. Final Considerations

The present study's investigation has significant implications for both theoretical frameworks and practical implications. Theoretically, our study advances and employs the JD_R model within the context of the hybrid workplace model. By integrating the hybrid workplace concept, the present research focuses on employee performance, job happiness, and work

engagement among hybrid employees in India. The conceptual framework formulated in this study enhances strategies to enhance employee performance and job happiness within the hybrid workplace model. Additionally, it sheds light on the role of contingent factors, such as work engagement, in mediating connections between hybrid workplaces, employee performance, and job happiness. The findings enhance JD-R theory, revealing that engagement in a hybrid workplace does not directly affect job satisfaction; however, it significantly influences job happiness through the intermediary factor of work engagement.

Organizations adopting the hybrid workplace model enable employees to work across different geographical locations, fostering enhanced performance and job happiness. Research findings delineate the conditions under which the hybrid workplace can positively or negatively impact employee outcomes, offering valuable insights for managers involved in policy development and procedural decisions. Consequently, organizations should prioritize hybrid work schedules that empower employees to adjust their working hours and locations, thereby optimizing job performance and aligning with organizational goals. Moreover, the significance of this study in terms of its predictive role in employee work engagement should be recognized, especially within the context of implementing the hybrid workplace model.

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Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to the highest ethical standards, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy of all participants. Additionally, the data and research paper are original and have not been submitted anywhere else.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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