

The Impact of Work Mode on Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction: A Comparative Study of In-Office and Remote Work Environments

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ABSTRACT

Background: Flexible work modes such as remote and hybrid arrangements have become increasingly common, but their impact on employee well-being remains uncertain. This study explores how different work settings influence two critical workplace variables which are employee engagement and job satisfaction.

Aim: The aim of this study is to assess and compare levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction among individuals working remotely, in-office, and in hybrid environments.

Methods: A comparative study was carried out using a self-administered online questionnaire collecting data from 100 participants across India aged 20–50 years using standardized tools: the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI). Participants were divided into three groups: remote, in-office, and hybrid. The analysis, conducted using One-Way ANOVA and Independent Sample t-tests via SPSS to analyze the differences in satisfaction and engagement across the three work modes.

Results: Remote workers reported slightly higher job satisfaction, and hybrid employees demonstrated slightly higher engagement. However, differences across work modes were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). No significant variance was found in the hybrid subgroup's experiences between remote and in-office tasks.

Conclusion: Work mode alone does not significantly impact employee engagement or job satisfaction. Organizational factors such as autonomy, leadership quality, and interpersonal dynamics may play a more decisive role in shaping employee experiences.

Keywords: Work mode, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the modern workplace is rapidly evolving, placing greater emphasis on the employee experience and the role different work modes play in shaping it. With advancements in communication technologies and shifts in organizational practices, both remote and on-site work have become legitimate options for professionals (Bailey & Kurland, 2002).

Recent research shows that whether an employee works remotely, on-site, or in a hybrid model significantly impacts both engagement and satisfaction (Van Dick, Baethge, & Junker, 2024). However, these effects are not uniform and can vary depending on industry, job function, and personal preferences. Remote work tends to offer greater flexibility and autonomy, often enhancing job satisfaction, though it may reduce team connection and engagement over time. In contrast, on-site work supports direct interpersonal interaction and a structured routine, which may increase engagement but sometimes comes at the expense of personal freedom. Hybrid work seeks to strike a balance between the two but can pose challenges in coordination and consistency.

This dissertation explores employee engagement and job satisfaction through a comparative study of remote and in-office work environments. It offers insights for organizational leaders and HR professionals to develop work models that are both effective and aligned with employee needs.

Employee engagement represents the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural commitment that individuals show toward their jobs and the organization they work for. It is often demonstrated through enthusiasm, dedication, and deep involvement in work tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Job satisfaction refers to the positive emotional response individuals have when they assess their job and experiences within the workplace. Locke (1976) defined it as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences.” Several elements contribute to job satisfaction, including compensation, work conditions, job security, and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Spector, 1997).

Research by Gajendran and Harrison (2007) suggests that remote work is modestly but positively related to job satisfaction, largely due to increased flexibility and a reduction in work-family conflict.

The method by which work is conducted—whether remotely, in-person, or in a hybrid format—can significantly influence how employees experience their jobs and how engaged and satisfied they feel. Each mode presents distinct advantages and drawbacks, and their impact often depends on individual preferences, task characteristics, and the organizational context.

Neither remote nor on-site work is inherently superior. Outcomes vary depending on employee traits, job demands, leadership styles, and the availability of supportive infrastructure. Organizations must consider these contextual variables when designing work arrangements to maximize performance and well-being (Zalewska-Turzyńska, 2023; Choudhury et al., 2021).

The in-office work environment refers to a conventional setting where employees carry out their responsibilities from a centralized, physical location. Such environments are often characterized by structured schedules, direct supervision, and frequent face-to-face interactions, enabling immediate communication and collaboration.

Traditional offices support real-time conversations, spontaneous brainstorming, and hands-on managerial oversight. These dynamics can enhance interpersonal relationships, promote organizational identity, and create effective mentoring opportunities (Kurland & Bailey, 1999; Devi, 2024). Physical presence also facilitates clearer feedback and greater visibility, which may help employees feel more integrated into the organizational fabric (Ali et al., 2025).

Remote work refers to a flexible work arrangement where employees perform their job duties outside a centralized office, often from home or other non-traditional settings. This model has grown significantly, particularly in response to demands for greater autonomy and adaptability in the modern workforce (Tanskala, 2025; Raghuram, 2021).

Remote work offers notable advantages, including personalized scheduling, elimination of commuting, and improved work-life balance. These features often result in increased focus, enhanced productivity, and greater job satisfaction—especially among employees who value autonomy (Chimienti, 2022; Shirmohammadi et al., 2022). Research has also shown that employees tend to report better well-being and lower stress levels when working remotely, provided the environment supports their needs (Dunne, 2025; Devi, 2024).

Theoretical models such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model help frame how work environments interact with employee motivation, satisfaction, and well-being (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023; Peter, 2025). These frameworks emphasize that work mode alone may not account for differences in employee outcomes.

There are some recent researches that have focused on this research area which includes of **Reece (2025)** who offered a generational perspective, using ANOVA to analyze engagement and satisfaction across different age groups under hybrid work. The research showed that younger employees—particularly Millennials and Gen Z—favored hybrid settings for their flexibility and autonomy. Reece concluded that generational preferences must inform hybrid policy design.

Also, **Varma (2025)** interviewed HR and project leads to explore how leadership practices affect engagement in hybrid work. It was found that direct, in-person leadership increased employee accountability and motivation. The study concluded that occasional face-to-face leadership remains essential in fostering commitment in hybrid teams.

As for Indian culture is concerned, **Babu and Suhasini (2025)** focused on Indian IT professionals to understand how hybrid and remote models influence satisfaction and well-being. Their quantitative analysis confirmed that hybrid models provided reduced stress and increased satisfaction, with flexibility ranking as the most valued feature. They concluded that a supportive and autonomous work environment is a critical ingredient in hybrid success.

This study explores employee engagement and job satisfaction across three work modes to determine whether the type of work environment significantly influences these outcomes, particularly in the Indian professional context where empirical data is limited.

The Rationale of the study was to focus whether the employee feels engaged and satisfied with these new work modes. This study aims to cover the same to help the organisational make the best choice for their employees and thrive in this new landscape.

The purpose of the study was to provide valuable insights to organisations so that they can create better work environments where employee feel satisfied and engaged, ultimately benefiting the organisations success. This study also focused on filling the gap about how the different work modes are impacting the employees, contributing to a bigger picture of future work environments by including working individuals from different backgrounds.

Objectives

1. To assess and compare level of job satisfaction in respect of work mode (remote, in-office and hybrid work environments)
2. To assess and compare level of employee engagement in respect of work mode (remote, in-office and hybrid work environments)

METHODOLOGY

The study comprised 100 employed individuals aged 20 to 50 years, selected through simple random sa-

mping. The sample included respondents from various organizations across India, representing remote (n=10), in-office (n=46), and hybrid (n=44) work modes. Inclusion criteria required participants to be currently employed within the specified age range, while individuals with known illnesses affecting engagement or satisfaction were excluded.

Data were collected via an online Google Form, with anonymity maintained and informed consent was taken from all participants.

Sampling

Simple random sampling was utilized in this study to select participants from a diverse array of organizations across India.

- **Inclusion criteria:** Participants included individuals within the specified age group of 20 to 50 years, who are typically working under any organization either remote, in office or in hybrid mode.
- **Exclusion criteria:** Individuals who are not currently employed will be excluded from the study to maintain the focus on the general working individual population.

Tools

Two standardized instruments were used to measure the primary variables of interest.

The Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) is an 18-item scale rated on a 5-point Likert scale, assessing satisfaction across various domains such as compensation, supervision, working conditions, and career advancement. It provides a comprehensive measure of employees' overall job satisfaction.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) consists of 17 items scored on a 7-point Likert scale, evaluating three key dimensions of employee engagement: Vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Both tools are validated and widely used in organizational settings, offering reliable insights into workplace attitudes across different work modes.

Design

This study employed a non-experimental comparative research design to examine the impact of work modes which were remote, in-office, and hybrid, on employee engagement and job satisfaction. The design enabled the researcher to compare group differences without manipulating variables, allowing for an objective analysis of naturally occurring variations in engagement and satisfaction across different work settings.

Variables

Independent Variable: Work Mode (Remote and In-Office)

Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional authority, ensuring adherence to research ethics involving human participants. A Google Form was used to distribute the survey, enabling wide accessibility and maintaining participant anonymity. Individuals were selected through simple random sampling from diverse professional backgrounds across India. After informed consent was secured, participants completed the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The collected data were compiled and analyzed using SPSS software to evaluate differences in job satisfaction and engagement across work modes.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS. One-Way ANOVA tested for differences between the three groups and independent t-tests compared remote vs. in-office scores among hybrid workers.

RESULTS

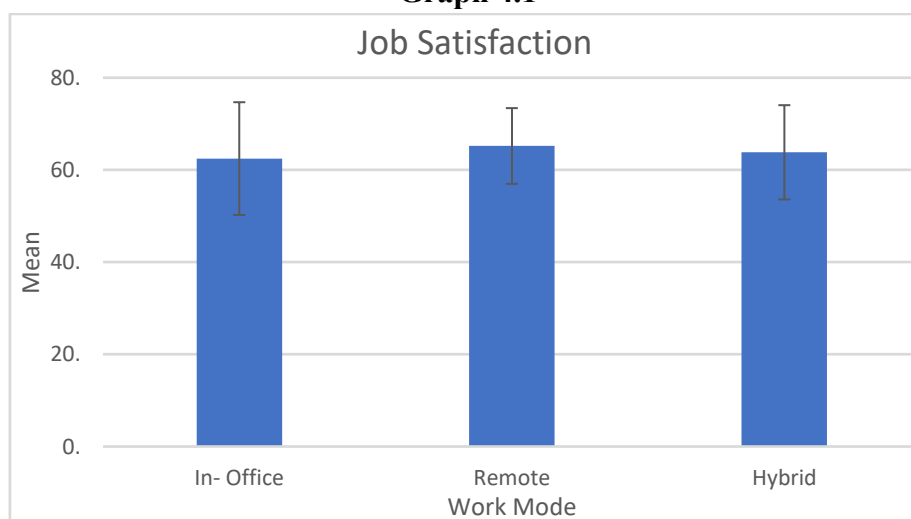
The present study aimed to investigate the impact of different work modes—remote, in-office, and hybrid—on employee job satisfaction and engagement using the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Data were collected from 100 participants, with 10 reporting remote work experience, 46 in-office, and 44 hybrid work experience. Statistical analyses were conducted using independent samples t-tests and one-way Anova

Table 4.1
Differences in work modes on job satisfaction and employee engagement

Variables	Mean			Standard Deviation		
	Remote	In- Office	Hybrid	Remote	In- Office	Hybrid
Job Satisfaction	65.2	62.45	63.82	8.21	12.23	10.22
Employee Engagement	67.1	64.71	68.15	16.83	20.23	15.22

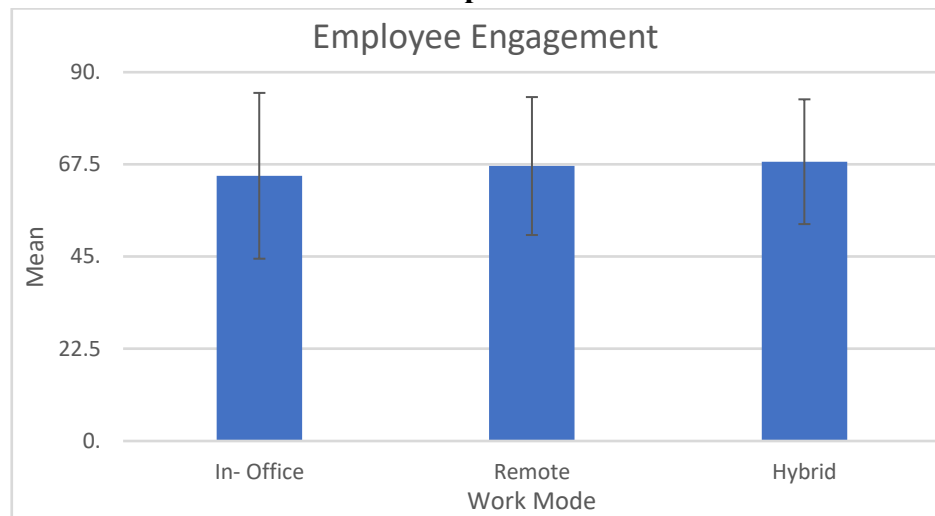
Table 4.1 describes the mean and standard deviation of Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement in all the three work modes. In case of Job Satisfaction, remote workers reported slightly higher mean score as compare to in office and hybrid workers, whereas in Employee Engagement, hybrid workers had the highest average mean score as compared to remote and in office. The data indicates slight variations in average scores, but these variations were not statistically significant, suggesting that the mode of work does not have a meaningful impact on how satisfied or engaged the employees feel.

Graph 4.1



The graph 4.1 describes the Job Satisfaction of working individuals across the three work modes showcasing the mean scores through the bar graph and standard deviation from error bar. The remote groups show a slightly higher mean score than the other two work modes. However, the overlapping error bars indicate that the differences in mean are not considerable enough to suggest that difference in significance levels.

Graph 4.2



The graph 4.2 describes the mean scores of Employee Engagement across the same three work modes. The graph uses bars to show average engagement levels and error bars to reflect the standard deviation. The remote and hybrid groups report higher mean score for engagement as compared to the in office group. However, the differences are not statistically significant due to overlapping error bars which indicate high variability in responses.

Table 4.2

Differences of Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement across different work modes

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
JS	Between Groups	77.290	2	38.645	.329	.721
	Within Groups	11405.257	97	117.580		
	Total	11482.548	99			
EE	Between Groups	270.798	2	135.399	.432	.651
	Within Groups	30430.112	97	313.712		
	Total	30700.910	99			

Table 4.2 describes that The One-Way Anova test was conducted to find the relationship of data in Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement between and within the 3 work mode groups. The overall significance value was 0.721 for Job Satisfaction and 0.651 for Employee Engagement. Both the significance values are greater than 0.05, which states that the mode of work does not have a significant impact on either employee satisfaction or engagement.

Table 4.3

Group Statistics for Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement Based on Remote and In-Office Experience Among Hybrid Employees

Group Statistics

	GRP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JS	1	44	64.68	9.661	1.456
	2	44	62.80	10.274	1.549
EE	1	44	69.27	13.916	2.098
	2	44	67.05	16.526	2.491

Table 4.3 describes the mean scores and standard deviation for Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement from the 44 hybrid employees based on their experiences in both remote and in-office work setting. The participants rated their satisfaction and engagement levels in remote work slightly higher than in office experience but the difference was not statistically significant which indicated that work mode does not significantly impact the satisfaction and engagement levels among the hybrid workforce.

Table 4.4

Independent Sample T-Test Comparing Remote and In-Office Experience among Hybrid Employees

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
JS	Equal variances assumed	.040	.842	.887	86	.377	1.886	2.126	-2.340	6.113
	Equal variances not assumed			.887	85.676	.377	1.886	2.126	-2.340	6.113
EE	Equal variances assumed	1.089	.300	.684	86	.496	2.227	3.257	-4.247	8.702
	Equal variances not assumed			.684	83.577	.496	2.227	3.257	-4.250	8.705

Table 4.4 displays the independent t-test being administered to compare the remote and in-office work experience of hybrid employees on their engagement and satisfaction levels. The Levene's test for equality of variance showcased that there was no significant difference in the variance between both work modes as the p value was more than 0.05 and hence equal variances were assumed for both variables. The results suggest that the hybrid employees reported a slightly higher satisfaction and engagement level in remote work experience as compared to the in-office work experience, but the difference was not statistically significant

Interpretation of Results

The aim of this study was to compare the impact of the 3 work modes which were remote, in-office and hybrid, on employee engagement and job satisfaction and using the Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

- **Group Comparison**
- **Job Satisfaction:** Remote workers scored marginally higher, but ANOVA showed no significant di

ference between work modes ($p = 0.721$).

- **Employee Engagement:** Hybrid workers had the highest mean engagement, but again, differences were not statistically significant ($p = 0.651$).
- **Subgroup Analysis**

Within the hybrid group, employees reported slightly greater engagement and satisfaction while working remotely compared to in-office. However, t-test results confirmed these differences were not significant. Compared to the common assumptions that work modes affects the engagement and satisfaction levels of employees, the results showcased that there were no statistically significant differences in the engagement or satisfaction levels of employees across the work environment.

Even though descriptive statistics revealed that the satisfaction levels were higher in remote group and engagement levels were higher among the hybrid group individuals, these variations were confirmed to not be statistically significant from the independent t-test and one way Anova comparisons.

This provided us with the result that the type of work mode may have small practical influence but it is not the only factor that affects the engagement and satisfaction levels of individuals and there are other factors that have an equal role to play in the same like autonomy, personal preference, job role, team dynamics, management, etc.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to evaluate the significant difference in employee engagement and job satisfaction in respect of work mode (remote, in-office and hybrid work environments) focusing on how the different work modes impact our satisfaction and engagement levels. Results showed that there was no significant difference in engagement and satisfaction levels of employees with respect to their work mode. However, descriptive trends suggest that Remote workers feel slightly more satisfied and Hybrid workers report slightly more engagement. As human behaviour is very complex, it is difficult to pinpoint what exactly affects the satisfaction and engagement levels across various variables like work mode, leadership, team dynamics, etc.

This aligns with existing research indicating that interpersonal, organizational, and leadership factors might outweigh the structural format of work mode. Variables like recognition, feedback quality, job role autonomy, and psychological safety likely exert a stronger influence. These broader influences are also reflected in several contemporary studies that resonate with the findings of the present research. For instance, **Dhekial and Sujay (2024)** found that although hybrid work environments offer clear benefits in terms of work-life balance, they do not depict any significantly higher engagement scores compared to traditional in-office work settings. This reinforces the notion that structural flexibility in work modes may offer convenience but does not necessarily enhance deeper psychological outcomes like engagement.

Further supporting this, **Lakshmi and Kumar (2023)** investigated satisfaction differences between remote and hybrid workers within the IT sector. Although slight differences were observed, the study concluded that these were not statistically meaningful, much like the findings of the current research. In line with this, **Darlington (2024)** emphasized that it is managerial and interpersonal factors, rather than the physical or structural work setting, that more effectively account for variations in employee engagement. This reinforces the current study's suggestion that work mode alone is not a decisive determinant of employee experiences.

In another relevant contribution, **Budhkar et al. (2023)** explored hybrid work models and acknowledged that while they offer a better balance between work and personal life, the differences in satisfaction levels

among remote, hybrid, and in-office workers were statistically insignificant. This aligns directly with the results of this study, reinforcing the notion that perceived flexibility or balance may not translate into measurable differences in satisfaction. Similarly, **Ramli et al. (2024)** found that individual preferences, rather than the work mode itself, played a critical role in shaping employee satisfaction. Their statistical model also revealed no significant differences between different work modes, suggesting that deeper psychological or personal factors drive satisfaction outcomes more than external structural settings.

Moreover, **Lensink (2024)** conducted a comparative study on remote, hybrid, and in-office modes, concluding that satisfaction levels are influenced more heavily by factors such as autonomy, communication quality, and the level of support from management, rather than the work mode alone. This provides further support to the conclusion that the structure of work—while relevant—is not the primary driver of engagement or satisfaction.

Additionally, **several other studies**, including the reiterated findings from **Ramli et al. (2024)** and **Sharma (2024)**, further corroborated the conclusion that variables like leadership quality, organizational support, and individual preferences have a stronger influence on employee outcomes than the format of work mode. These findings also reflect the complexity and multifactorial nature of human behavior in organizational contexts.

Therefore, these studies support the current study's findings and the fact that work modes may differ in their structure and flexibility, but they are not the universal predictor of satisfaction and engagement levels of employees. Instead, a wide array of individual, managerial, and organizational variables exert greater influence—such as autonomy, leadership style, clarity of role expectations, psychological safety, communication effectiveness, and the quality of interpersonal relationships at work. These overlapping findings collectively underscore that employee engagement and satisfaction are not solely the result of where work happens, but are more deeply connected to how work is experienced, supported, and managed.

LIMITATIONS

This study has a few notable limitations. Firstly, the overall sample size was modest, and the notably smaller group of remote workers limited the statistical strength and representativeness of the findings. Secondly, reliance on self-report questionnaires may have introduced potential biases such as social desirability and memory inaccuracies. Lastly, although simple random sampling was employed, the resulting sample may not fully capture the diversity of the broader working population, which could impact the external validity and applicability of the results.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Future studies should include the comparison of impact of work mode on job satisfaction and employee engagement, then including a larger, diverse and balanced sample size can provide better results as well. Exploring other variables like task type, leadership, support, work autonomy, work life balance, team dynamics, managerial style, etc can help to understand what factors mediate the effects of work mode on satisfaction and engagement. Also, employing mixed methods like including qualitative data (interviews, observation, open ended survey, etc) can better capture their personal preferences related to their work mode.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to compare the satisfaction and engagement levels of working individuals across

different work modes (Remote, In- Office and Hybrid). Although the data was not statistically significant due to small and unbalanced sample size, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in employee engagement and job satisfaction in respect of work mode.

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